

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



We would like to thank all those who have written letters of support and encouragement to us and hope that readers will come to feel that the Chronicle provides an open forum for discussion and ideas. We would like to add our special thanks to Mike Martin's father, John Martin for his help in making sure that the first issue arrived back on the Island in time for the first visit of the Waverley in April. Much seems to have happened over the past few months — some of the more outstanding items are reported in this issue and we hope that you will be interested to read about them.

We are pleased to know that Patsy and Dave and their daughter Rowena have settled happily into their new home in Appledore. They left in April after Dave had been asked to crew on the Clovelly Lifeboat — a commendable job which will still leave him some time to go potting with his boat 'Netta' between shifts. Our youngest Islander, Claire Melhuish misses her playmate Rowena who was born whilst Dave and Patsy were living on Lundy and we all miss the contribution they made during the 4 years they were here. Dave ran the Island ship to shore service which often meant being out at all times and in all weathers — easy for us to take for granted and not too late to say 'Thank you!' Patsy started her work in the shop until she began finding it difficult to fit behind the counter! Even since Rowena was born in Christmas '79 everyone will agree Patsy made an invaluable contribution to Lundy's workforce, both as Chief Cottage Lady and her willingness to help anywhere it was needed. We look forward to their return visits to the Island.

We would like to thank Rebecca Herd for her help in Millcombe during June and also welcome the 'Americans' — David Tansey and Cynthia More who are with us till the 'fall'. David and Cynthia are here primarily to help with landscaping and conservation work but have already been roped in for rolling fleeces (see 'Fleeced Again') and seem to be enjoying Lundy Life altogether.

The Island is sure to benefit from the greater involvement of John Smith's son Barty, in Lundy's Administration. Barty has been making regular visits on behalf of the Trustees since April and his enthusiasm is encouraging to us all.

Louise Melhuish and Wendy Puddy

Lundy Island Chronicle



Much interest has been shown in the above ink drawing by Dr. John Dollar MScPhd, a geologist who first visited Lundy in the spring of 1930. He made the drawing into a Christmas card, one of which we found displayed in the Tavern. We've been told that each of the characters featured in the picture represents a known visitor to Lundy and would be interested to hear from anyone who can tell us more about it.

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Claire Melhuish and her dog Pippa relaxing amongst the bluebells. Pippa gave birth to seven puppies on the night of 1st July. Her attempts to have them in her specially constructed cave in Millcombe Valley were thwarted, when

her whereabouts was eventually ascertained by some particularly vigilant Millcombe Hotel guests... Mr & Mrs Thompson — not surprisingly we learn that he is a policeman by profession.

OUT AND ABOUT ON LUNDY

Update on the Aerogenerator

by J. Puddy
During May the aerogenerator developed a fault in the alternator which necessitated its removal for repair. Our regular 'ace' pilots from Castle Air Charters were called in to perform the unusual and tricky task of removing a 9 cwt alternator from the



top of the 15m tower. Although not easy the job was carried out without a hitch thanks to the flying skills of Jerry and Keith. The alternator was then sent ashore on the Polar Bear for repair and returned about two weeks later. At this point our airborne heroes returned the alternator to its lofty pedestal. Within a few hours the final connections were made and we were once more enjoying the delights of wind powered electricity.



You are invited to contribute articles or letters to future issues of the Lundy Island Chronicle. Please write to the Editors.

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OUT AND ABOUT ON LUNDY

Waverley Visit

The paddle steamer Waverley has continued to be well subscribed on its June trips following the successful visits in April bringing the Lundy Field

Society Charter and North Devon Hospital Charter (740 and 850 passengers respectively). The Waverley is run and financed by members of the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society whose total dedication to the age of steam has impressed us all. Waverley's financial viability rests, from year to year on a permanent knife edge and we would like to echo the Society's own call to travel on the Waverley as often as you can and take your friends — particularly when she visits Lundy!

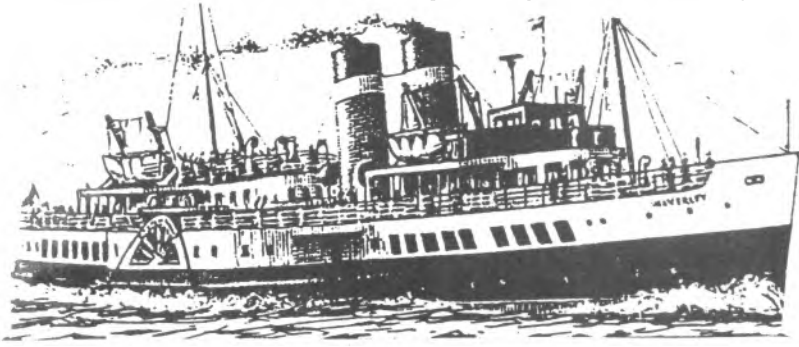


Photo contributed by Mrs Betty Morris

Bird Log

by Keith Mortimer



After a long winter it was very refreshing to see Sand Martins flying around the village again and see Wheatears feeding in the lighthouse field at the beginning of March and to see their numbers steadily increase as the first few weeks of spring went by. The highlight of March was a nice female Hawfinch flying around the bottom gardens in Millcombe on the 25th.

April saw an increase in the number of birds on the Island with the arrival of most of the regular spring migrants including, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Pied and Spotted Flycatcher, Tree Pipit, Swallow, House Martin and Cuckoo. April also saw the arrival of one or two rarer birds. A Glaucous Gull was seen on the 12th April flying along the east side and again on the 16th in the landing bay whilst the paddle steamer Waverley was in. Finally a very

rare Little Crake turned up at the North end on the 17th.

May saw an even larger increase in migrant numbers with Whimbrel, Turtle Dove, Dunlin, Grasshopper Warbler, Sedge Warbler and Firecrest all adding to what was to be a very interesting month. On the 3rd there was a very nice singing Nightingale in Millcombe which I managed to ring and on the 19th whilst watching a Woodchat on the west side Tim Cleeves saw a Shorelark for a few seconds, only the 3rd spring record. On the 28th a Red Backed Shrike was seen moving North along the east side and later the same day a Dotterel was seen near Tibbetts.

By the beginning of June the main movement of migrants had just about



finished with just a small trickle of Swifts, Swallows and Willow Warblers moving through, not it's time to concentrate on our seabird colonies and we have just found out from the R.S.P.B. Seabird Census that the Puffin, Razorbill and Guillemot numbers are up — let's hope this continues over the following years.

Studying Lundy's Marine Life

by Keith Hiscock

Over the past twelve years, I have brought parties of marine biologists — amateur and professional — to Lundy to study the island's marine life. The latest of these expeditions was the Underwater Conservation Society Working Party which brought eleven sports divers with a keen interest in natural history to the island for one week in early June 1983. We had four main tasks to undertake:

- a description of the seabed types and the associated communities of plants and animals in deep water off the north coast (to fill a major gap in our map of marine habitats around Lundy);
- an assessment of the status of the red band fish (*Cepola rubescens*) off the east coast of Lundy (to commence annual monitoring of the population fluctuations in this scientifically fascinating species);
- the location and description of sea-level caves on the west coast (to supplement the incomplete work previously reported and provide a basis for predicting the location of

seal pupping sites); and

- the initiation of photographic monitoring of species of key wildlife conservation interest at sites to be relocated and photographed each year (to provide data on the longevity, growth rates and changes in abundance of some of Lundy's rare or unusual species).

The first three projects were successfully completed and will be fully described in our report. The photographic work could not be undertaken because of the presence of a dense phytoplankton bloom which placed vast numbers of gelatinous plankton between camera and subject. The seabed survey was particularly interesting and we found slate bedrock a few hundred metres off shore of the north coast, confirming a prediction made by Nicholas Whitley in a paper dated 1869. The data from the seabed survey will be used to complete the map of habitats and communities which forms an important part of the marine nature reserve management plan. The four hydroplane tows made over the seabed in Three-quarter Wall Bay showed that the red band fish population had apparently declined substantially since the surveys carried out in the mid-1970's, most probably the result of natural fluctuations in

recruitment. Twenty caves were located on the west coast, some of which extended over 70m into the island with boulder beaches above high water mark.

An important job completed before the trip was the preparation of a display illustrating aspects of marine ecology around Lundy and now installed in the diving hut for the use of visiting divers or anyone who would like to obtain information on Lundy's marine life. The display will be used on and off Lundy and we hope that visitors will take the opportunity to see it.

In addition to these tasks, we undertook to search for and plot the positions of some of the more spectacular underwater canyons off the west coast which are a great attraction to visiting divers — if they could only find them! We collected crustose algae, a group poorly-recorded in past work. We also carried out several dives in the fascinating and beautiful tide-swept gullies running between the north and south of the Rat Island complex. Some divers succeeded in getting out to the wreck of the 'Robert' and some even waited for high tide to have a dive on the 'Kaaksberg'. On the last day, though cold, wet and very windy, everyone took the chance to dive on the spectacular Knoll Pins, a suitable climax to a successful week.



The Working Party was grant-aided by the World Wildlife Fund and received further financial assistance from the Lundy Field Society. The preparation of the display was funded by Devon County Council. Members of the Working Party were: Keith Hiscock, Lesley Ashmore, Derek Boustred, Doug Clark, Sue Davies, Sarah Fowler, Zoe Gardner, Tony Hawkes, Brian Stark, Jo Jamieson, John Taylor and Keith Viney.

The Loss of Inshaalla

by J. Puddy

On Monday morning, 6th June, we were woken at 7.00 am by a call from John Shaw the owner of Inshaallah, to say that she had broken from her mooring and had been washed up on the Landing beach. There was a strong easterly blowing which had blown up quite suddenly during the night. John had, in fact, been down to look at the boat at 4.30 am and found that at that

and 7 am the mooring must have parted.

When the rescue party (consisting of the visiting divers, Stirling Melhuish, John Shaw and myself) arrived down on the beach the Inshaallah appeared to have suffered no damage and hopes were raised that it would be possible to get her out to sea again as the tide came in. We couldn't launch the inflatable from the Landing beach so John and I carried it over the top of South Light to the Divers beach — a feat in itself for several times it felt as if we would be lifted off our feet and reach the beach rather sooner than intended. John went out in the inflatable and tied a line to a mooring and then allowed the inflatable to drift ashore to the main beach whilst he himself swam ashore. We then tied the line to the stern of Inshaallah and pulled it tight in the hope that it would hold the stern off as the tide came in. This however was not to be as the seas were so heavy that the boat continued to broach on the beach as the tide came in.

We then tried to pull the boat round so the bow was facing out to sea but still she washed further up the beach with the tide eventually knocking a hole in the side. At this point we had to admit defeat and abandon the attempt and stood back in our drenched clothes to watch the sea complete its devastation of the fine motor vessel.



time, all appeared well although the waves pounding in on the beach had prevented him from getting out in an inflatable to check. The Trinity House P.K., Mr Brian (Giz) Harris, on watch subsequently reported that all had been well with Inshaallah at 5 am when he had looked out. So, sometime between 5



Lundy Tapestries

Louise Melhuish has made some tapestry kits of the complete set of 1974 definitive puffin stamps. These include a hand screen-printed canvas with the design, a needle, and Anchor tapisserie wool of the appropriate colour.

2 puffin, chocolate brown, 4 puffin signal red, 4½ puffin cyan blue, 5 puffin orange, 5½ puffin pea

green, 10 puffin mauve, 20 puffin black. Size of canvas 18" x 21" — price £20.

Also available is a shield shaped tapestry of a rampant Polar Bear against a blue background — for mounting onto wood. Size 10" x 14" — price £10. The coat of arms of our supply vessel "Polar Bear" bears this emblem.

Please write to Louise Melhuish, Lundy Island.

Lundy Diving

Lundy hasn't changed — it is still a beautiful island catering for all types of divers — but the management of the diving centre has.

Lundy has, throughout history, been a danger to shipping either physically or as a haunt of pirates. The signs of various occupations can be seen around the Island, but fortunately the changes in the last 100 years have been few leaving Lundy as a tranquil, solid and unaffected island of great natural beauty and unique flora and fauna. It is now National Trust property.

From the divers' point of view, Lundy is strategically placed in the Bristol Channel to "catch" the shipping to and from the U.K. There are very many shipwrecks recorded as hitting Lundy from as early as 1796 and the latest in 1983. There are paddlesteamers, sailing vessels, fishing boats, cargo ships and even a battleship.

For the last fourteen years marine biologists have been actively researching and surveying the Lundy flora and fauna. With visibility up to 30m, Lundy is ideal for the underwater photographer.

Diving is usually possible around Lundy, even under weather conditions which would preclude diving from a mainland site. We just choose the best side of the Island for the conditions.

Transport to Lundy is either on the supply ship, the Polar Bear, or by helicopter. The latter means a restriction on baggage weight so aqualungs and weightbelts will be provided, although you may bring your own cylinders, which will be refilled only if they are in test and approved for diving.

There is only one landing beach on Lundy, on the sheltered East Coast, and the Diving Centre is based at the southernmost end of this beach. The centre has a compressor site, divers' changing and restroom and a small workshop. There is storage on the site for diving gear and a cooker plus pans, crockery etc. available for use in the rest room.

To ensure that you get to your dive site in reasonable comfort and style, the Centre has a 5m inflatable and a 10m hardboat equipped with echosounder and VHF radio.

For those of you who have dived Lundy before, we hope to see you again for more and better diving. For those of you who haven't dived Lundy — why not?

For more information, please contact Aquaserve Diving Ltd on 01-894-4023.

DIVING SERVICES

AQUASERVE

221 PERCY ROAD
WHITTON
MIDDLESEX
TW2 6JL

JOHN S SHAW Tel 01-894 4023

Fleeced Again

by Louise Melhuish

Tuesday 7th June, the island's sheep were gathered in for routine docking. The air was heavy with the drone of the shearing engine and ewes and lambs separated in the pens called ceaselessly to each other. Sparrows which had made their home in the granite stable walls opposite the sheep pens, chirped, indignant at this noisy intrusion.

John Ogilvie, farm bailiff, was attempting to shear an awkward struggling ewe when the cutters slipped and the razor edge ripped across his hand. With the island nurse, Mrs Gwenda Morrow ashore, John O' received first aid from Mrs Mary Squire and Dave Lewis. RAF Chivenor were contacted and asked to airlift the casualty to North Devon Infirmary as stitches would be necessary. John O', knowing that time was at a premium once the sheep were gathered in, was anxious that the task should be completed whilst he was away and arranged for Stirling Melhuish to carry on where he had left off. In fact with the help of Peter de Groot, all the sheep were docked within two days.

The helicopter landed in Tent Field and within 12 minutes John was in Barnstaple hospital where he received 13 stitches, and was able to go and stay in Ilfracombe at the Morrow's bungalow, returning to Lundy on Thursday's Polar Bear.

After a short reprieve when the flock returned to graze across the island, another sheep drive was organised to bring them in for shearing. All available hands are called in for this event and islanders' numbers were boosted by energetic holiday makers who enjoy being a part of island activities. Their assistance is always appreciated.

That night, midsummers night, the ewes and lambs, held in Tent Field to await the arrival of the shearers, somehow demolished a portion of the dry stone wall near the vegetable garden and escaped into Pigs Paradise. A riotous early morning call woke everyone, including Wendy Puddy at 3.30 that morning as sheep investigated underneath of Staff Quarters Building. She raced out (at 5) to despatch them whence they came but not before they had ransacked the Tea Garden furniture, overturning chairs and tables and even breaking legs off some of them — what a Midsummers night party!

Thursday's Polar Bear brought the shearing party of seven young farmers from the Ilfracombe area, arriving at 8.30 in the morning. About 400 ewes were shorn in the few short hours of their stay. It was a pleasure to watch these professionals at work. Amongst their number was Patrick Kift who is holder of the Golden Shears at the Bath and West Show, and Clive Richards who has made the annual shearing trip to Lundy for the past 10 years. As quickly as the shearers delivered the fleeces, volunteers rolled them up and piled them into trailers. Eager assistance was given by our two new comers David Tansey and Cynthia

More and holiday maker Miss Diana Gray. Penny Ogilvie and Mary Squire were also there to help when needed. Together they all worked as a team and the job was done quickly and well.

By half past three Capt. Denver Scoins was getting anxious about leaving Lundy on time as he had already overstayed his trip by nearly three hours and he needed to be away soon to catch the tide at Ilfracombe Harbour. The Polar Bear's horn let out a long loud blast to warn of its departure and shortly afterwards the shearers arrived on the beach.

The flock must have been relieved at their departure after the tension and excitement of the morning. They looked quite humiliated in their bare state stripped of their glorious coats. In the hay barn under tarpaulins lay the evidence of the mornings activities. The wool would be put into sacks and sent ashore for sale at a later date.

Always something happening in the farming calendar — next to look forward to is the hay-making!



Stamps

by Barry Chinchin

Lundy is well known as having been the first British off-shore island to issue its own postage stamps. The purpose can not have been to defray the cost of the postal service, which even in 1929 must have been greatly in excess of the income from the charges made. Neither can it have been to exploit philatelists, as the total face-value of the two stamps making up the first issue — one and a half pence — was scarcely sufficient to make the effort of distribution worthwhile. One suspects that the idea of having island stamp issues, which at the time was novel and original, was connected with Mr. Harman's claim of Lundy's independence, although as Mr. Gade maintained, the stamps were to help with the cost of transporting mails.



Today the stamps probably have not the slightest part to play in helping with the enormous transport costs. Neither are they a worthwhile source of philatelic income, but thanks to the ingenuity of John Smith, Chairman of the Landmark Trust, they constitute an efficient method of providing postal facilities on Lundy without the necessity of holding extensive and expensive stocks of British stamps. By incorporating the British postal charge into the Lundy one and using a franking machine, Lundy stamps have really ceased to merit the description 'local stamps' by which they had been disparagingly known for many years.

A Tribute to E.I.C. (What they did on their holidays)

by Louise Melhuish

Since July 11th, last year, the island's population has doubled with the arrival of the S.P.G. force amongst us. 'S.P.G.' stands for 'special project group' and consists of some 30 men who work for Ernest Ireland Construction Ltd. from Bath. These men had several tasks. Firstly to build a new granite bungalow at the head of Millcombe Valley which would be the quarters of the agent. Secondly, to convert Marisco Cottage into a Tavern with an extension through arches into the old Marisco Tavern. This Tavern was to have a balcony at one end and a large open fireplace. The far end of the Old Tavern and the old Bakery would be converted into the shop with store rooms behind. At the same time work was being carried out on the Old Manor Farm Hotel, demolishing part of the South Wing, leaving 'Square Cottage' and 'Old House North and South' as letting accommodation. All three cottages are in a delightful setting with a courtyard to the rear and wonderful sea views from the front, particularly from Square Cottage as it has a living room upstairs. Apart from this group of buildings, the 'boys' had to convert the Old Light Keepers Quarters into two self catering flats.

Jebb House was completed and its first guest was Barty Smith on one of his administrative visits to the Island. Square Cottage has already been let several times this season. The Grand Opening of the Tavern will be in August, which promises to be a time to remember. The Old Light flats are let from 2nd July with Jan Symons and her party of children from South Molton School.

All in all the work has been a great accomplishment for all those involved from John Smith's conception of the idea to Philip Jebb's translation into architectural drawings and the contractors blood sweat and tears which made it all a reality for us. They have certainly made a 'Landmark' on Lundy which will be admired for hundreds of years to come. The effort made by the Ireland's boys was a marvel in itself. They would be at work by 7.30 am until 7 in the evening with only two short tea breaks and half an hour for lunch ... everyday ... with a half day off on Sundays.

They have joined in Island life and become part of the family of Lundy ... it will be a sad day when they leave. Perhaps they will be back one day to spend a holiday in the cottages they can be so proud of!

Life on Lundy has been fairly difficult from the 'Boys' point of view. Apart from living away from their families for four weeks at a time, leaving wives to cope on their own, accommodation has had to move several times. Initially, they were in Marisco Cottage, the furniture store of the black shed and the



outbuildings of Millcombe Hotel. Then when work was commenced on Marisco Cottage the men moved into the Barn and Signals Cottages North and South for the winter. When the Barn was let this season they had to move into spare rooms in Staff Quarters, where they shall remain until they wind up operations this September.

The boys worked in shifts, up to six men from the group going home for a week at a time by helicopter to Hartland and then mini bus to Bath. On one occasion, fog on top of Lundy was threatening to cancel the helicopter until it was discovered that the helipad at South Lighthouse was free of fog ... so they were lifted off from there. This involved carrying luggage up some 200 steps along a cliff path — amazing what you will do when you're keen to get home. Poor Derek Wyatt managed to get his luggage up there only to have it blown off the cliff top helipad by the helicopter. Undaunted, Stirling Melhuish (ground hostess) rushed down the steps to the landing beach where he launched the cobble raced around Rat Island and collected his luggage (fortunately wrapped in a plastic bag) from the rocks and returned it to the heights before the return of the helicopter which was the last flight of the day. It must be a record in under 15 minutes.

The contractors have had little time off to enjoy Lundy but made good use of what was left to them. We will long remember Jack Battle's piano performances in the Tavern on special occasions and the fun we had with the 'sing alongs' and John Hunter's stories. The night of the fancy dress party was certainly an eye opener ... Roger Doel, looked quite fetching in his paisley print smock top ... and such lovely legs too! The expectant mother Alan Kenna, was well looked after by island nurse Gwenda Morrow who was giving him panting exercises to do. Tony Miles as cave man in his sack was braving the elements and another 'flooie' Colin Hale had a lot of trouble with his high heels I imagine as he kept falling over!

Fred Quinn was known to some as the 'bird man of Alcatraz'. He adopted exhausted racing pigeons, blown off course and fed them all with grain brought back specially for them. At one time his brood reached about 20 in number. Then all but 4 had left, perhaps they joined up with a passing flock. In all events they would be grateful to Fred for without him they

could have starved as they lose the ability to forage for themselves like other birds.

An example to us all were the Irelands jogging team, captained by Micky Godwin (but I'm not sure how much more he did than plan out the route!). Certainly I've seen Roger Doel and Geoff Brookland race past Barton Cottages in the evenings!

Visits on Sundays by the Paddle Steamer Waverley were eagerly awaited by the boys, giving them a chance to look over the last ocean going steamer in the world. They all seemed to become steamer enthusiasts after their first visit aboard and got quite steamed up on such occasions!

It goes without saying that they will never forget their time on Lundy as they have spent so much time and put so much of themselves into the creating of the buildings ... and we will remember them also and wish them all the very best:

Roll of Honour (in no particular order)

Name	Occupation
Kim Marsh	Mason
Arnold Merton	Mason
Mark Evans	Mason
Jack Battle	Foreman
Herbert McCartney	Mason
David Lewis	Carpenter/Foreman
Derek Wyatt	Foreman
Roger Doel	Mason
John Hunter	Mason
Fred Quinn	Mason
John Butler	Mason
John Cox	Mason
Colin Hale	Labourer
John Alford	Painter
Nigel Baker	Painter
Alan Kenna	Plumber
Stanley Hill	Painter/Foreman
Alan Thursfield	Painter
Tony Miles	Painter
Geoffrey Brookland	Painter
Martin Francis	Carpenter
Norman Swallow	Carpenter
Mike Knight	Carpenter
Mike Godwin	Carpenter
Steve Windless	Carpenter
Norman Webber	Carpenter
Russel Ford	Carpenter
Andrew Russell	Mason
Dave Wotton	Labourer
Walter Cushing	Mason
Dave Saunders	Plumber
Gerry Dark	Plumber
Burt Clothier	Labourer
Kevin Curtis	Labourer
Steve Whetton	Mason
Roland Ebdon	Mason
Neil Van Koutrik	Electrician
Graham Crook	Electrician
Robert Burford	Plasterer
Ralph Baker	Labourer
Dave Rosser	Drainage Specialist