

It seems January has passed us by in a flash here on Lundy. January to islanders means one thing “shutdown”, a period of 3 weeks when the island is closed to visitors and there are no helicopter flights or sailings, and is marked by the arrival of a merry bunch of contractors who come to assist with essential works. This year’s shutdown works focused mostly on Square cottage and Government House. The lower bedroom of Square cottage was stripped back to the bare walls and floors to be completely rebuilt from scratch creating a new luxurious, cosy and homely room (pictured) which is sure to be a winner with staying visitors. Government House had a make-over and now looks fantastic with crisp paintwork and gleaming wood floors. Many other essential works were carried out but it wasn’t all hard work as the annual Calendar competition was held one Friday evening. The Lundy Calendar is now in its seventh year with 2015 marking the eighth edition (see picture for a sneaky peak of one month’s main image). All of the winning images have been chosen and sent to the printers, leaving us to await their arrival and make a start on taking images for the 2016 competition. All visitors and staff are able to participate in the competition and for further details please contact Beccy on [warden@lundyisland.co.uk](mailto:warden@lundyisland.co.uk) or alternatively wait a few months until the arrival of the new Lundy website which will have full details. The 2015 Calendar will be available soon.

Lundy’s present website will shortly be replaced by a sparkly new one with a similar feel to that of The Landmark Trust (the charity which runs Lundy). A group of Lundy staff have been busy creating the pages over shutdown to produce a website that allows you to discover more about the island, the facilities and activities available, and much, much more. I’ll keep you up to date with its progress.

MS Oldenburg made one cargo sailing, bringing precious materials needed for the works and also to keep the bar well stocked. Oldenburg also left with a precious passenger, Reg Tuffin. Many of you will have met Reg over the 18 years that he has been on the island, however he decided to retire from his long standing positions as Postmaster General and Shop Assistant and return to the mainland. Reg is sorely missed and his contributions to the island will be remembered long into the future. We wish him ‘All the Very Best’ in this next chapter of his adventures.

The weather has been interesting with wind speeds frequently reaching over 45mph making walking more of a strenuous exercise than normal. A few breaks in the weather have allowed me to get out and survey our seal population, who, unlike me, had the sense to stay inside the caves and shelter. However they began to emerge once the sun came out and young seals could be seen playing mischievously along the east coast alongside the sleepy adults basking in the sunshine.

Bye for now

Beccy MacDonald, Lundy Warden

March was a birdtastic month on Lundy with the arrival of not one, but two male Hoopoes. These flamboyant looking birds originate from northern Africa and have flown off course for a short holiday on Lundy and as I write this month's Letter from Lundy one Hoopoe is feasting on worms in front of the Tavern. Our first Puffin has taken residence in a burrow at Jenny's Cove on the west coast and we are looking forward to the arrival of

more of the seabirds throughout April. As the seabirds on Lundy are protected under our Site of Special Scientific Interest (particularly the puffins, guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes) our climbing restrictions have come into place in order to reduce the possibility of these wonderful birds being disturbed during the breeding season. This means that many areas of the island are not open for climbing and scrambling, however many impressive climbs including the Devil's Slide remain open.



Whilst on the seabird theme, I was invited down to St. Agnes in the Isles of Scilly during March to take part in a rat incursion workshop ran by the group who successfully eradicated the rats from Lundy over 10 years ago. The Isles of Scilly Seabird Recovery Project have successfully eradicated rats from St. Agnes and Gugh, and like us, are now taking preventative measures to ensure that no incursions occur and we look forward to seeing how their seabird populations recover in the future. We hope that they see the same level of success as we saw last year with our Manx Shearwater and Puffin numbers showing dramatic increases.

The Conservation Team was joined by two enthusiastic groups of National Trust volunteers who came to the island to support myself and Steve, the island Ranger, in a variety of tasks including burning of the Rhododendron stacks, searches for Rhododendron seedlings and tree planting. The fight against the Rhododendron continued with the support of a specialist team from Ropeworks who tackled a tricky area of seedling and stump re-growth on the east coast sideland cliffs. Another working party of volunteers have just arrived from the Lundy Field Society on our last helicopter flights eager to get involved with the island's conservation works. MS Oldenburg begins sailing once again on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April for the summer season.

The lambing season has begun on the island for both our Soay and domestic sheep flocks. The first Soay lamb was born around the 18<sup>th</sup> March with the domestic lambs appearing last week. Lambs are a sign that spring has come to the island and as we move into British Summer Time MS Oldenburg's sailing schedule returns with the first passenger boat on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April from Bideford.

Enjoy the sunshine and we hope to see you on the island soon!

Beccy MacDonald, Lundy Warden

April on Lundy has been very busy, most notably for Farmer Kev who has been lambing the domestic stock throughout the month. Visitors to the island have been enjoying watching the lambs bounce around the fields and relaxing with mum in the sunshine. The Soay lambs have also attracted attention as these little brown balls of fluff run around and play together at the northern end of the island.

Puffin's, along with other seabirds such as Manx Shearwater, have steadily returned to the island with the addition of three extra puffins who were released off MS Oldenburg by an RSPCA veterinary nurse, Barbara, and myself. These lucky puffins were found in various places across the southwest over the winter and were rehabilitated at RSPCA West Hatch. More on this story can be found on the Gazette's webpage.

Sadly we said "Goodbye" to a Lundy legend in Ernie Dowding who passed away at the age of 70 following a short illness. Ernie had been visiting and working on the island for over 40 years and helped with the major restoration of the island after The Landmark Trust took it over in 1969.

Easter brought with it many visitors and some wonderful weather. The island's Easter Egg hunt engaged children of all ages and chocolate eggs were enjoyed by adults and kids alike. Special plans are being made for next year's Easter Egg Hunt and I'll let you know more soon.

On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May we are celebrating Lundy as a new parish with a special service by the Bishop of Crediton along with the launch of the St.Helen's fundraising appeal to repair the church roof.

I hope to see you all on the island enjoying the sunshine soon!

Beccy MacDonald, Lundy Warden

May's marvellous weather brought over many visitors to the island including a couple of cruise ships who stopped off for a cuppa and to send some post cards using the island's postal service. Lundy has the world's oldest private postal service and has its own stamps. This month a new collection of stamps were released to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Trinity House, who have been the General Lighthouse Authority for England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar since they were granted a Royal Charter to oversee the safety of shipping by Henry VIII in 1514.



Lundy is home to three lighthouses and has an interesting history with Trinity House. Old Light was built in 1819 and at 567 feet (173 metres) above sea level, it was once the highest lighthouse in Britain. However this was its downfall as the light was frequently hidden by fog and mist. The Battery is famed for the spectacular sunsets that can be seen from the lower platform.

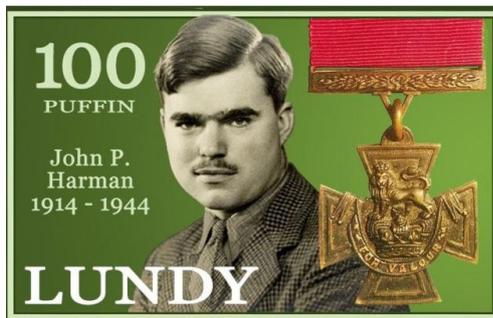
However this fog-signal station was originally built to supplement the Old Light in 1862. In 1897 the Old Light was replaced by North Light and South Light, both constructed closer to sea level, resolving the low visibility issue. All of the Trinity House lighthouses and other features can be found on the new stamp collection which is available from the Lundy Postmaster General Ceri and can be ordered through 01237 431831 ext.226.

All the very best

Beccy MacDonald, Lundy Warden

July has been an exceptionally busy month here on Lundy with visitors, seabirds, marine life and stamp releases. The wonderfully glorious weather has enticing both regular and new visitors across the channel to enjoy our spectacular island. Many visitors have been engaging with the Warden events, especially the guided walks to Jenny's Cove to see the famous Lundy Puffins and the ever popular Snorkel Safaris. Visitors have also been keeping the shop and Tavern staff busy whilst enjoying Lundy Lamb burgers, pints of Old Light and keepsakes including fluffy puffins!

As the largest seabird colony in the Southwest, we monitor the productivity (breeding) of our Puffins, Guillemots and Kittiwakes to ensure that these populations are thriving. You may be aware that our seabird numbers crashed due to the presence of rats on the island and since their eradication populations have steadily recovered. This year the largest count of Puffins was 240 individuals which is a fantastic increase of 60 individuals from our largest count last year. Most of seabirds have now left Lundy until next year however some climbing restrictions are still in place (please see the Lundy Conservation Team Facebook page for further details).



Throughout the month, the Farmer and friends have been busy shearing the domestic Lundy sheep, the Rangers have continued with the extensive upkeep of the island grounds and Postmaster Ceri has been busy with the release of a commemorative stamp to remember Lundy hero John Pennington Harman who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his brave actions in 1944 during the battle of Kohima which sadly cost him

his life. Stamp issues can be ordered through the Lundy postal service on 01237 431831 ext.226 or [lundypostalservice@lundyisland.co.uk](mailto:lundypostalservice@lundyisland.co.uk)

Bye for now

Beccy MacDonald, Lundy Warden



Lundy was visited by a number of special visitors throughout August. At the beginning, a crew from ITV arrived to film for two programmes, *Countrywise* and a *Wild Places* special. The first piece concentrated on our Manx Shearwaters and the presenter Liz Bonnin was joined by an especially fluffy Manx Shearwater chick (now called Sandra – it's a long story!) and Tony Taylor of the Lundy Field Society. For the *Wild Places* shoot, Liz experienced the spectacular marine life around Lundy

with myself and Keith Hiscock, also of the Lundy Field Society. Liz and the crew definitely enjoyed themselves, acknowledged by Liz's tweet "Lundy, you've captured my heart." *Countrywise* Series 6 is due to air in October and the *Wild Places* special will be on next summer.

The Lundy photography enthusiasts were out as soon as the *Kathleen and May* arrived in the bay on a glorious sunny morning. Shortly after she departed for Bideford and the weather went a little askew but redeemed itself at the end of month just in time for the arrival of the *Waverley* who brought with her over 500 enthusiastic visitors to sample the Lundy experience.

People often ask whether we miss life on the mainland and occasionally there are little luxuries which we quite fancy so Jonny, our friendly Landrover driver, undertook a mission: to bring Pizza Hut to Lundy (other pizza providers are available). Fourteen pizzas were collected and brought over on MS Oldenburg and as you can see they were thoroughly enjoyed!



Hope to see you on Lundy soon!

Beccy MacDonald, Lundy Warden



Kevin Welsh, Lundy's Farmer, had a wonderful surprise at the beginning of September with the arrival of Lundy Logan, the first Lundy Pony to be born on Lundy since Harry was born in 2009 to proud Mum, Starlight. We hope that Dad, Bill, will soon be the father of more foals next year.

As the nights draw in, many people migrate indoors, however here on Lundy, we have a good reason to stay up as late as possible, our dark skies. These wonderful nightscapes were acknowledged through the Dark Skies Discovery Initiative as the airstrip became the Dark Sky Discovery Site for the island. With little light pollution (and none after midnight), you do not need to go far in order to see the Milky Way stretching across the island surrounded by a plethora of stars.

Staying visitors to Lundy will notice our newest sustainability initiative, introduced by Head Housekeeper Lucy. As you will be aware, we actively promote conservation of the environment therefore it was felt, and correctly so, that we should be using environmentally friendly cleaning products. Lucy and her team tested a number of products and we now use green products throughout all the properties ensuring that our environmental impact is greatly reduced.

Volunteer groups from the Lundy Field Society and the National Trust have been enthusiastically supporting the Rangers, Steve and Nick, with Rhododendron burning, seedling searches and stone walling. As always we are very grateful to these groups for the hard work that they put in to support the island's conservation work and a huge thank you goes out to all those involved. Volunteers could also be seen working on St. Helens Church walls throughout the month, under the expert guidance of National Trust stone mason Charlie Smith. They have done an excellent job pointing the west, south and north walls and will be returning next year to complete the east walls.



It's been an unseasonably warm October here on the island seemingly delaying the autumn bird migration. However, towards the end of the month some usual birds were spotted including a beautiful Waxwing in Millcombe valley.

Despite the warmth, British Summer Time came to an end and with it our sailing season. Access to the island is now via Helicopter (which is excellent fun!) and MS Oldenburg is heading off to dry-dock at Sharpness in Gloucestershire for her annual check-up.

The biannual Lundy Marine Protected Area Advisory Group meeting was held at Ilfracombe Dive Club early in the month. Hot topics included the Iona II Dive Trail, the Seal Code of Conduct and Crawfish surveys. The Code and surveys are being reviewed, thanks to stakeholder comments, ready for next season. Thank you to everyone who attended and if you are a stakeholder who would like to get involved please get in touch.

We must also thank all the enthusiastic volunteers who have supported island Ranger Steve with the Rhododendron stack clearance throughout the month. You'll see quite a difference to the east coast sidelands in the summer!

In other news, a number of Lundy stamp presentation packs have been reissued including the 1996 Flora issue, and we are running a competition for all local Primary School children to enter until the 14<sup>th</sup> November. For details on the stamps and competition please visit [www.lundyisland.co.uk](http://www.lundyisland.co.uk)

All the very best, Beccy MacDonald

November was a surprisingly mild month here on Lundy, causing some confusion for the wildlife including the Bell Heather which is still in flower on the east coast. The calm weather also created excellent conditions for dark sky enthusiasts who could immerse themselves in their celestial surroundings.

For the first time in over 30 years, Lundy beef returned to the Tavern menu and has been enjoyed by many visitors. Christmas stayers will have the option of Lundy beef, alongside Lundy-reared turkey and locally caught Lobster (veggie options are available) as part of their Christmas lunch. If you would like to get away from it all and join us here for Christmas, we still have some properties available. There are only a couple of properties left for the New Years Ball; the theme for this year is Alice in Wonderland.



A huge thank you goes out to all the students who sent in their entries for the Lundy badge competition (and to the teachers too!). It was very difficult to decide on a winner as there were so many amazing designs, but eventually one was chosen; so congratulations to Jessica Street of Fremington Primary! A badge with her winning design will be given to all students visiting the island in 2015. Well done Jessica!

As we move into December, preparations for Christmas are underway as *MS Oldenburg* has returned from dry-dock, and we are awaiting the most important delivery of the year, our Christmas tree (and of course beer!).

Have a very merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

Happy New Year to you all! We hope that your Christmas and New Year's celebrations were as wonderful as ours here on Lundy. Visitors were served a delicious five course meal prepared by our three chefs, John, Dave and Kate. Traditionally all staff come into the Tavern to help prepare and serve Christmas Lunch, a change to many people's usual roles. Our annual New Year's ball, themed 'Alice in Wonderland', saw some of the most ingenious costumes ever seen including Alice stuck in the house, the hole and a toadstool . The festivities were enjoyed by all and if you're interested in joining us in 2015 take a look at [www.lundyisland.co.uk](http://www.lundyisland.co.uk) for property availability and booking.



At the start of December, we were joined by Community First Responder trainers Rich and Justin, and Derrick and Neil of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency for our annual training. Many of you will be aware that we provide cover for the emergency services and we respond to incidents throughout the year, sometimes with the support of RAF Chivenor and the Devon Air Ambulance. Training involved water rescue techniques and, as you can see from the photo, this did involve a number of in-water exercises which the team completed excellently in chilly temperatures.

In other news, on the 31<sup>st</sup> December Felicity, our Gloucester Old Spot sow, gave birth to 11 very adorable piglets.

We look forward to seeing you in 2015

Beccy