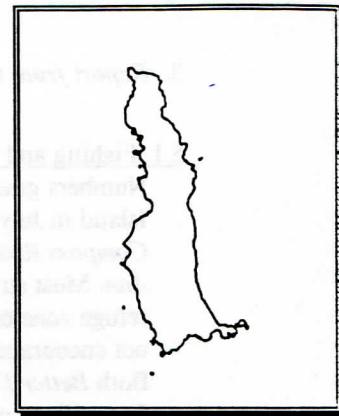


LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE ADVISORY GROUP



*Aims of the Group: 1) to provide a nucleus of expertise on the marine habitats and waters surrounding Lundy;
2) to provide a forum for exchanging views on present and proposed activities around Lundy;
3) to safeguard the interests of all those who use the waters around Lundy and its natural resources
and 4) to advise the Management Group for the Reserve.* Established: 1985

Please reply to the Hon. Secretary:

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Notes of the 7th meeting of the Advisory Group

(formerly known as the Lundy Marine Consultation Group, of which this was the 25th meeting)

held on **Thursday, 16th October 1997** in the meeting room,
Torridge District Council Offices, Riverbank House, Bideford at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Ian Knight	(IK)	Torridge District Council,	Chair
Keith Bower	(KB)	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee	
Roger Covey	(RC)	English Nature (SW marine liaison officer)	
Liza Cole	(LC)	Warden, Lundy	
Clive Pearson	(CP)	Clovelly charters (charter boat 'Jessica Hettie')	
Peter Burgess	(PB)	Hallsanery FC (c/o Max Montgomery)	
Max Montgomery	(MM)	Ranger, Hartland Heritage Coast Service	
Mark Winsborrow	(MW)	Bideford Trawlermen	
Laurie Winsborrow	(LW)	Bideford Trawlermen	
Rev. Bill Blakey	(BB)	Lundy Church	
Tim Dyer	(TD)	Ilfracombe Commercial Fishermen's Association	
John Heath	(JH)	Historic wreck sites & seals	
Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society	Secretary

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received from: Paul Roberts (Landmark Trust); Reg Lovel (Lundy Administrator); Roger Hoad (Captain, MV *Oldenburg*); Dr Tim Hill (English Nature); Sarah Jones (WWF-UK); Chris Mandry (British Sub-Aqua Club, SW); Richard White (Devon Wildlife Trust); Stephen Mulberry (National Trust); Pippa Morrison (N. Devon Heritage Coast Service, VMCA); Colin Munro (Marine Biological Surveys).

2. **Notes on the last meeting, held on 15th April 1997:** These were accepted as being an accurate account of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

3. **Matters arising:** There were no matters arising.

4. **Matters arising from the Lundy MNR Management Group:** The Management Group had not met since the last LMNR Advisory Group meeting, so this item was not covered. The next meeting of the Management Group is due to take place at the end of October/early November 1997.

5. Report from the Reserve (April 1997 - October 1997) - Liza Cole:

5.1. Fishing and potting activity: The first pots were seen around the Island at the beginning of April.

Numbers gradually increased throughout the season with 32 strings of pots being counted around the Island in July. This had reduced to 16 by the end of September. Boats seen working the area are: M78, *Compass Rose II*; CF43, *Better Days*; PW129, *Kalon Breiz*; PW364, *Orcades II*; and PW100, *Belle Ann*. Most strings were shot all along the west side. However, a number of strings have been shot in the refuge zone off the east side in the area between Gannet's Rock and the Landing Bay where potting is not encouraged. It is difficult to find out who is shooting these pots as several boats use similar dans. Both *Better Days* and *Compass Rose II* shot pots in this area in June and were spoken to by DSFC. *Better Days* was still shooting pots in this area in September and was spoken to by both DSFC and the Warden. This is a very difficult area to police: it is very much a grey area as potting is only "not encouraged" within 200m of high water mark. At the time of writing discussions are still going on and the Warden has arranged for the relevant skippers to be invited to this meeting to take part in discussing the revision of the Zoning Scheme.

[A discussion on this matter then followed, a summary of which is included here]

TD explained that the only times he put pots down along the east coast was when the weather precluded him from setting them at his other more frequently used sites. On average this was about once a month. It was not viable for him to set them there more often. It was only the Devon boats which would be setting pots close in. Devon potters tend to use floating line between pots on their strings (which meant that there was less chance of them snagging on rocks when being hauled), whereas the Cornish boats tended to use sinking line ('leaded rope') which meant they usually worked offshore areas. RC asked if the DSFC could license boats which worked close in, thereby having some control over the numbers allowed to do so. KB pointed out this would amount to discriminating against some boats, which the DSFC were not able to do. TD also added that if such a system were to be introduced, excluded boats would assume there was something of interest in those licensed areas and proceed to fish there regardless of any restrictions. RI pointed out that the work undertaken by the MCS Working Parties over the past few years had confirmed the presence of large numbers of 'delicate' species (such as sponges, Ross coral and sea fans), particularly in the area between the Quarries and Gull Rock, within the depth range 15-12 m (below chart datum). It was the possibility of damage to these species by the setting and lifting of pots which was of concern to him. TD responded by pointing out that his pots were set very close in to the coast, probably no deeper than 8 m bcd. If RI was able to provide further information about where the greatest concentrations of these organisms were to be found (which he agreed to do), then TD undertook to avoid setting pots in these areas.

Towards the end of July a dive boat had its prop fouled by a piece of rope around the South End of the Island. Having untangled their prop they then tried to remove the piece of rope from the water only to discover that it was one end of a string of 24 pots that had no dan at either end. They recovered all the pots and landed them on the Island to prevent a recurrence of the problem and the Warden organised their return to the owners as soon as possible.

5.2. Diving Activity: Prolonged periods of easterly winds have disrupted diving this season with June being almost totally blown out. However, things picked up later in the season only to be disrupted again in September. The total estimated number of diving days this year is at least 2265.

The system of filling bottles on a first-come-first-served basis, with a maximum of 12 divers, has worked pretty well this season. This, in combination with the fact that the Assistant Warden and other Islanders helped with filling and transport, meant that less time was spent by the Warden on this task. In total the Warden spent 76½ hours (and the Assistant Warden 23½ hours) filling bottles this season with an average of 12½ hours per week being spent when groups stayed for a week.

5.3. Diver Questionnaires: Information packs containing questionnaires were circulated to all the local clubs and charter skippers and all visiting dive groups were encouraged to fill them in. The Assistant Warden added in a few questions concerning divers' awareness of the marine environment and conservation issues and will be analysing the results as part of her M.Sc. thesis. However, the return rate has been somewhat disappointing with only about 60 being returned to date.

- 5.4. RIB: After successfully completing trials down in Cornwall, the RIB arrived on the Island in April. The boat is a superb piece of equipment and extremely seaworthy. Unfortunately, time and weather constraints have meant that the Warden has not been able to take the boat out as much as she would have liked, but the few times it has been out it has proved it's worth. On one occasion a fishing boat was spotted acting suspiciously in the Refuge Zone to the north of the Landing Bay and it was approached by the Warden in the RIB. She had a chat with the skipper and made him aware of the restrictions in this zone. It has also been used for seal monitoring and by the Marine Conservation Society group that came over in August.
- 5.5. Grey Seals: Divers have had underwater encounters with seals at sites all around the Island and swimmers and snorkellers have been greatly entertained by a young seal that likes to play in the Landing Bay. In July a film crew from BBC Wild West spent a day on the Island filming an interview with the Warden about the grey seal population on Lundy, and the Warden and the presenter were filmed snorkelling with a seal in Gannet's Bay. This will be going on the air some time in the new year. At the time of writing there have been several sightings of seal pups and John Heath will be coming over towards the end of October to monitor the breeding caves with the Warden.
- 5.6. Cetaceans: There have been 4 sightings of pods of cetaceans this season (2 pods of Common Dolphins, one pod of possibly Bottle-nosed Dolphins and a pod of Risso's Dolphins) and one sighting of a single porpoise. One of the pods of Common Dolphins put in a spectacular display at Jenny's Cove during a Seabird Walk. They swam right into the bay and then were watched for at least 5 minutes swimming off to the north and breaching.
- 5.7. Basking Sharks: There have been 107 sightings of basking sharks this season (14 in June, 48 in July, 40 in August and 5 in September). Thus many visitors managed to see these creatures and several were seen by hundreds of people in the Landing Bay on boat days prompting much discussion with the Warden on the beach. Details of all sightings have been sent to the Marine Conservation Society.
- 5.8. Seabirds: The annual count of seven west-side study plots was completed this season and numbers seem to be about the same as last year. The results have been sent to the JNCC seabirds team. The Assistant Warden undertook a puffin survey and produced a report for the Lundy Field Society Annual Report. The maximum number of individuals counted was 30 (9.6.97) and the minimum was 13 (14.7.97).
- 5.9. Unusual Marine Sightings: Two Portuguese Men O'War were seen off the Miller's Cake in May. In August a sunfish (about 30lb) was spotted off the South End and there were two separate sightings of a turtle (probably the same individual) but unfortunately not good enough views to allow identification. One tide in early September brought in hundreds of By-the-wind-Sailors onto the Landing Beach.
- 5.10. Marine Litter: Easterly winds over the season have brought up large amounts of litter into the Landing Bay. This was predominately plastic litter but also contained a lot of fishing net and line.
- 5.11. Jolly H Wreck: On 26th June one of the local dive charter boats, the *Jolly H*, broke all three of her anchor lines in a north-easterly gale and was washed up onto the Landing Beach. All the fuel, engine and gearbox oil was pumped out of her to prevent a pollution incident and the wreck was secured to the beach road to await a decision from the insurers about her fate. On 20th July she broke free of her securing ropes and started breaking up badly on the high tide. All that was practicable was recovered from the water and the remains of the wreck was broken up and removed from the beach. The Island now has a well-stocked wood shed for the winter!
- 5.12. Snorkelling Sessions: These have been extremely popular, so much so that the Warden and her Assistant had to run as many sessions as time between boats would allow, when the weather was suitable. In total, 18 sessions took place this quarter with a total of 99 people attending (i.e. the maximum of 6 on almost every session). Many people also come to the Island with their own wet suits, masks fins and snorkels enquiring about the snorkel trail which no longer exists as such for safety reasons. The Warden discussed this with David O'Connor, English Nature's Health and Safety Officer, who seemed to think that there is no reason why the snorkel trail cannot be reinstated for people with their own kit as long as they realise that it is at their own risk.

5.13. Interpretation: New interpretative panels about the MNR have been erected on Ilfracombe and Bideford Quays and on the *Oldenburg*, and one was on temporary display in the Council Offices at Ilfracombe as part of a Marine Week exhibition. In addition to this the Assistant Warden produced an eye-catching display for the Church expanding on the MNR and explaining the reasons for the various zones around the Island.

5.14. Assistant Warden: Liz Davey, who was doing an M.Sc. in Coastal Zone Management, arrived at the end of May to spend 3 months on the Island as a voluntary Assistant Warden. During her time here she proved to be a popular and invaluable addition to the staff and community and greatly increased both the quality and quantity of conservation work done on the Island over the busy season. She regularly worked long hours, a total of 671½ hours over the 3 months, which averages out at 45 hours per week. This was in addition to the average 60 hour week that the Warden was working during this time. The Landmark Trust paid Liz a lump sum of £1000 at the end of the season as a sign of appreciation for all her hard work. She also received a College/EN Links Scheme grant of £300 to cover costs incurred in production of her MSc thesis. Soon after leaving the Island Liz took up the post of Wash Estuary Management Plan Project Officer.

5.15. Study of the effects of visitor pressure on Devil's Kitchen: David Tanner, who is taking an MSc in Conservation at University College London, spent several weeks on the Island investigating the effects of visitor pressure on Devil's Kitchen. He received grant aiding via the College/EN Links Scheme and will be submitting a report to English Nature this autumn.

5.16. Beach Road: The beach road to the Divers' Beach has continued to be eroded away by high tides and easterly winds and has been repaired whenever necessary.

5.17. Grant Applications: All the funding applied for by the Landmark Trust has been secured, with one or two of the projects being only agreed to in principle. All that needs to be done now is to furnish more details on these projects. It is hoped that work should start on the beach road at the end of next season.

6. Activities within the MNR this summer:

RC explained that bad weather around the middle of September meant that the planned diving work on re-establishing the sublittoral monitoring sites off the east coast have had to be postponed (probably until April/May next year). A contract to carry out the work had been let, and the diving team would involve EN and JNCC representatives.

RI took another group of 12 volunteer divers (all members of the Marine Conservation Society) over to the island from 10-15 August aboard the *Datchet*. The following tasks were undertaken:

1. Setting new data loggers (to measure temperature and depth variations every 6 hours) on the wreck of the MV *Robert* and on a mooring chain in the Landing Bay.
2. Re-photographing the 'cave' community at the Knoll Pins
3. Checking for boring by phoronid worms around the bases of cup corals at the Knoll Pins canyon and at Gannets' Rock pinnacle.
4. Attempting to relocate the (new) yellow cup coral site off the west coast between Battery Point and Dead Cow Point – unsuccessfully.
5. Describing the sea bed topography and benthic communities in a 'rise' to the north of Gannets' Rock pinnacle.
6. Assessing populations of 'delicate' benthic species (such as erect sponges, Ross coral and sea fans) on near-shore boulders close to the muddy-gravel interface, between Quarry Bay and Gull Rock.
7. Checking the condition of randomly-selected sea fans, and for the presence of the nudibranch *Tritonia nilsodhneri*.
8. Noting the maximum depth of *Laminaria hyperborea* at all sites.

A full report of these studies is being prepared for English Nature.

7. Review of the MNR Zoning Scheme

RC explained to the Group that the discussion relating to a review of the Zoning Scheme by English Nature (EN) was to be deferred until the next meeting of the Advisory Group in April 1998. This was because EN wished to complete its review of the Management Plan for the MNR (and its assessment of the SAC's

conservation objectives) before any alterations to the Zoning Scheme were considered. RC was able to confirm that the boundary to the proposed SAC was exactly the same as the outer boundary of the MNR.

8. Any other business:

- The discussion which arose concerning potting widened to include other related conservation issues. A brief summary of these is included here.

TD and his fellow North Devon fishermen were keen to see further conservation measures introduced by the DSFC which would limit the fishing effort on lobsters. They would like to see the DSFC split into two agencies – one for north Devon and one for south Devon. KB pointed out that MAFF are likely to be bringing in new conservation measures re. catch levels in the near future, and that local decisions would have to wait until after the new measures were known. TD said various schemes should be considered including V-notching individuals or introducing close seasons amongst other possibilities. There was particular concern about the lack of large female lobsters which were being caught.

- LW mentioned that a diver had brought up a sea fan from within the MNR this summer. The individual concerned was known and had been reprimanded.
- JH pointed out that the Gull Rock protected wreck site had been vandalised. Damage had been done to one of the canons and one of the stone cannonballs *may* be missing (he is uncertain about this because of the poor visibility during his recce dive). It was asked if the items of archaeological interest could be lifted from the site and put on display, perhaps in the proposed island museum? JH would have no objection to this if it were feasible.
- MM asked if there was a spare display board on the MNR which could be used by the Heritage Coast Service? RC and LC would check to see what was available.
- RC explained that Tim Hill (of English Nature's Maritime Team, Peterborough) had now taken over responsibility for the Lundy MNR & SAC from Paul Gilliland. Amongst other tasks, Tim would be working on the Zoning Scheme.
- RI informed the Group that the LFS had now published their book entitled '*Island Studies - 50 years of the Lundy Field Society*'. It includes a paper by RI and Paul Gilliland on the history of the MNR; another by Keith Hiscock on marine biology; and another by JH and Philip Robertson on marine archaeology. Copies were priced at £10 for members & £15 for non-members (+ £2.50 p&p), available from The Lazarus Press, Cranord House, 6 Grenville Street, Bideford EX39 2EA – or all good bookshops (within Bideford!).
- Keith Denby had informed RI that there had been 1028 visits by 'browsers' to the Lundy page on the Internet during September alone. The present address is

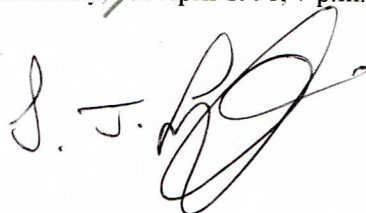
<http://www.castlelink.co.uk/gratton/ilfsac/lundy>

though this could be changing in the near future. KD is still seeking financial assistance to help maintain the site. The address for the sailing times of the *Oläenburg* is

<http://www.devon-cc.gov.uk/tourism/pages/lundy>

10. Date of the next meeting: Thursday, ^{2nd} 7th April 1998, 7 p.m., at Riverbank House, Bideford

Robert Irving
24 October 1997



2.4.98.

2 sets of byelaws
for agencies //