

“LUNDY’S HARD WORK”

Branding, Biodiversity and a “Unique Island Experience”

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Abstract

Over the last 15 years, the island of Lundy has become increasingly associated with important conservation projects, particularly in regards to its biodiversity. At the same time, the island’s appeal continues to be channeled through a well-worn discourse of ‘untouched’, ‘unspoiled’ islandness – or a generic charm that is popularly attributed to small islands (Grydehoj, 2008). This article shows that this perception is highly misplaced, and fails to take stock of the considerable effort that goes into managing Lundy. If anything, Lundy’s growing profile constitutes effective place branding (Anholt, 2008), whereby various stakeholders strive towards a cohesive and coherent strategy. This article considers the history of Lundy as well as decisions made by seminal individuals and organisations, particularly the Landmark Trust, and shows that Lundy’s management carefully acknowledges tourism opportunities and environmentalist objectives. The Lundy brand is thus an ideal example of small-island branding in the 21st Century as its marketing both acknowledges and incorporates principles of sustainable development.

Keywords

Lundy, branding, biodiversity, North Devon

Introduction

In May 2009, Lundy welcomed its first royal visitors in over thirty years, the Earl and Countess of Wessex – Prince Edward and his wife Sophie. The event was marked with the low-key unveiling of a small plaque in Lundy’s only pub, the Marisco Tavern. Their visit commemorated the island’s 40th anniversary with the Landmark Trust, the charity that has overseen Lundy’s management since 1969. Having not been to Lundy since being taken there as a child by Queen Elizabeth II, a slightly embarrassed Earl confessed that his memories of the island were vague. On his second visit, though, Prince Edward was more appreciative of at least one of Lundy’s unique attractions. As he told the tiny gathering, “to see the Lundy Cabbage in flower, which I understand only happens for two weeks of the year is an honour in itself” (quoted in Helyer, 2009: 22). Prince Edward’s comments were far from glib: over the last ten years, Lundy’s scientific value has been widely recognised and endorsed. The Lundy Cabbage (*Coincya wrightii*)

(Figure 1) is one of Britain's few endemic plants, and is the only plant that supports several endemic insects, including the Lundy Cabbage Weevil (*Ceutorhynchus contractus*) and the Lundy Cabbage Flea Beetle (*Psylliodes luridipennis*). The bright yellow flower has been isolated on Lundy since the Ice Age but an invading alien, the rhododendron, threatens to wipe out both the Cabbage and its insects. Introduced to Lundy as an ornamental plant in the 19th Century, the pink rhododendron now covers much of the cliff tops where the Cabbage formally thrived. Although protected since 1981, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the Lundy Cabbage is now listed for action on the UK Government's Biodiversity Action Plan. Since 2002, scientists from the University of Leeds have aimed for the complete eradication of rhododendron from Lundy by 2012; if successful, the project will mark Europe's first eradication of an alien plant on such a scale.

Efforts to save the Lundy Cabbage point to a prominent issue facing the global community. The United Nations named 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity, with the motto: "Biodiversity is life: Biodiversity is our life". Until September 2008, the UN's seventh Millennium Development Goal – to ensure environmental sustainability – had not made any reference to biodiversity or tied the need to protect endangered species with human development. That the UN should then foreground the issue just over a year later reflects its growing salience in environmentalist discourses. This parallels the growing interest in climate change, since scientists have linked global warming to the loss of plant and animal species at a rate as high as 1000 times the natural progression (Haider, 2009: np).



Figure 1 - The Lundy Cabbage (photograph by June Austin)

Lundy once figured in the British imagination as little more than a quirky outpost of eccentric characters. This perception has not disappeared entirely but it has evolved. In the last decade or so, Lundy's caretakers have forged for the island a successful and compelling brand. Their efforts show that, although small islands are often framed in terms of 'unspoiled beauty', to maintain some semblance of this requires considerable amounts of intervention. Lundy, for instance, is managed through a tightly controlled web of protocols, legislation and labour. The Lundy brand, "Britain's Galapagos" (Moss, 2009: np) – a seemingly hyperbolic descriptor that will be unpacked in this article – is not an effortless extension of completely organic phenomena. Rather, this strategy commits stakeholders to what are often very difficult goals. In terms of tourism, and press coverage, the image of Lundy as "one of England's least changed treasures" (Churchill, 2009: 26) still benefits from a perceived disconnection from mainland stresses. Although this assumption is often (and often affectionately) made about small islands (Gössling and Wall, 2007: 429), it is misleading. Life on Lundy, human or otherwise, requires a cautious and precarious manipulation of time and resources: brand Lundy is hard work and entails a comprehensive reworking of the island's proposition to tourists. Lundy's marketing imagery was once overwhelmingly tilted towards the puffin, a comical-looking bird that was once common on Lundy; however, changing circumstances and opportunities since the mid 1990s have seen the Lundy brand rely less on this association. While the declining number of puffins on Lundy is part of this shift (a point that will be re-visited later in this article), it is far from the dominant explanation. Instead, the growing significance of Lundy's biodiversity for conservation groups has broadened popular perceptions of Lundy, and the Lundy brand has changed accordingly.

Small Island Charisma: "It hasn't changed in 50 years!"

The island of Lundy is a granite slab that formed around 60 million years ago, and lies approximately eleven miles from the coast of North Devon, where the Bristol Channel meets the Atlantic Ocean (51° 10' North 4° 40' West) (see Figure 2, below); it is three miles long and half a mile wide, and sits 400 feet above sea level (Figure 2). Over time a natural fortress has taken shape; England and Wales are within view, but the closest land is Hartland Point, eleven miles to the south, while the closest harbours are in Bideford and Ilfracombe, both around twenty-four miles away.

This article considers how growing global interest in biodiversity and environmental action has both raised Lundy's profile and tied its caretakers to various conservation objectives. At the same time, the notion that Lundy is also an idyllic getaway from 'everyday life' still exists, and still informs some of Lundy's marketing. According to Derek Green, for example, General Manager of Lundy, the island offers some relief from the pace and pressures of the 'mainland':

We've been quite fortunate in a way, because the mainland, the big island as we call it, has changed so significantly in the last 10 years, in the UK and I guess a lot of the Western world. The UK has got busier, the roads are more congested, there's more and more people with the immigration policy and Europe and everything else going on; there's all sorts of

nonsense with terrorism, drugs, kids on the street... the whole of society seems to be taking a slightly downward step, if you like. And we've ended up in recession, so we're at the bottom of a great big trough as far as I can see. The government is in a mess, health services are struggling, police have got no control over kids, and schools can't do anything. [But] when you come to Lundy, it hasn't changed in 50 years! (pc April, 2009)

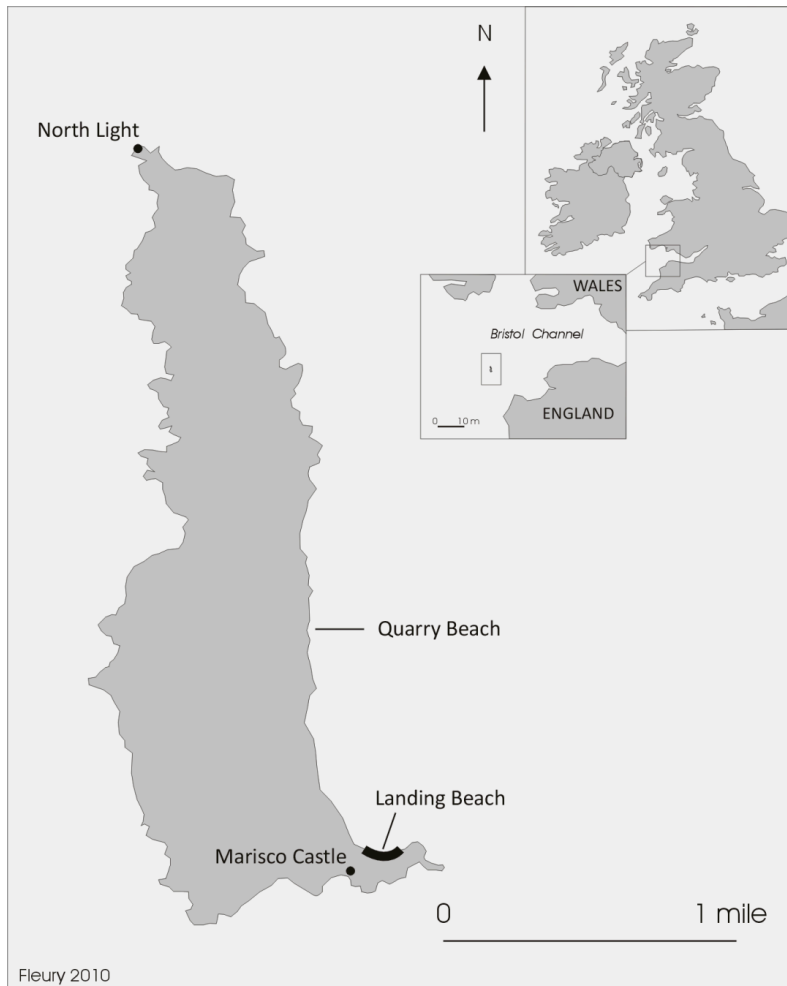


Figure 2 - The island of Lundy and location in United Kingdom (map by Christian Fleury)

With a population of just 27, the largest in recent years, Lundy seems, as Green suggests, a rustic throwback to simpler, quieter, less stressful times. There is just one pub (the Marisco Tavern), one church (St Helena's), three lighthouses (two in use), and one working farm. Nonetheless, the island now attracts 20,000 tourists each year, mostly visiting as day-trippers. In 2008 Lundy's 23 rental properties (with 95 bed spaces) had a record occupancy rate of 90%. This generated an annual turnover of £2

million, an increase of £200,000 from the previous year (Churchill, 2009: 65). It is easy to see this growth as emblematic of something bigger than Lundy itself, a general fatigue with modern life. As one bemused journalist wrote in 2009: “It is, surely, the simple fact that nothing has changed, which explains Lundy’s growing popularity in these dismal times” (Hardman, 2009: 31). However, Lundy’s management, the focus of this article, actually draws on an implicitly portfolio of goals. In turn, and contrary to popular perceptions, Lundy’s ‘old-fashioned’ charms belie a development strategy that is progressive, pioneering and, for its tiny population, extremely demanding.

As Lundy assumes a privileged place in Britain’s conservation enterprise, there is corresponding pressure on its caretakers to monitor the island’s precious wildlife. Lundy’s management thus requires a careful trade between tourism, the main way that Lundy’s upkeep is financed, and extensive conservation efforts. This cues a resonant approach: Lundy’s appeal – the “unique island experience” (the strap-line that accompanies Lundy’s promotional leaflets) – is spared the sameness of generic island branding by virtue of Lundy’s biodiversity. This makes marketing sense: Lundy’s variety of rare flora, fauna and marine life is a major tourism drawcard. That species protection is now a highly regarded component of environmental action is obviously in Lundy’s best interests. However, it also binds Lundy’s management to a complex quest for administrative equilibrium: tourism cannot exhaust resource use, or interfere with fragile habitats, but must be high enough to create income for conservation projects. Therein lays the conundrum that shadows every similarly fashioned place brand: if popularity is not carefully handled, Lundy’s environment suffers (Howard and Pinder, 2003). For this reason, brand Lundy is ‘hard work’, far from the *laissez faire* Eden of popular myth. Ironically, while both the British government and international bodies now bestow on Lundy special designations that protect its unique environment, until 1969 Lundy had an unstable status and faced an uncertain future. It pays then to take stock of the various phenomena that led to this turnaround, survey the decisions behind brand Lundy, and consider the implications for Lundy’s future.

Human (Wild)life: a history

Until the late 20th Century, mainland interest in Lundy was sporadic, and generally arose from the flagrant lawlessness that began on the island in the early 1100s and lasted centuries. There are, however, remnants of Late Bronze and Iron Age settlements (respectively, stone huts and pottery), and evidence of a Christian community from the Dark Ages (four inscribed stones) (Langham, 1994: 1-3). The name ‘Lundy’ – a combination of two Norse words, *lund* (puffin) and *ey* (island) (Landmark Trust, 2004: 5) – suggests that, from circa AD 800, Vikings made it to the island as well.¹ Still, Lundy’s early history is now mostly associated with the de Mariscos, a noble family from Normandy. With their arrival in 1150, Lundy became a private den for piracy and rebellion. The family’s refusal to give Lundy to King Henry II (who had promised it to the Order of the Knights Templar in 1155) plunged the island into decades of chaos. The clan often instigated raids on Devon, attacked vessels on the high seas, and sometimes aided the Scots and French against the Crown. While the Crown tried to secure Lundy’s loyalty through sheriffs in Devon, it remained a volatile outpost. For the next four hundred years Lundy was passed down from one often absent family to another, mostly to the Crown’s indifference. As far as it was concerned, the main issue was that Lundy’s surrounding seas continued to attract marauders and pirates (Langham, 1994: 36-37).

With the arrival of a new owner in 1834, William Hudson Heaven, Lundy finally entered a period of relative stability and order. He bought Lundy for £9,870 (ibid: 62), and it remained in his family for over 80 years. Two of his earliest works were the building of his grand twelve-bedroom villa, Millcombe, and the building of a continuous road from the beach to the top of the island. Heaven's grandiose style earned Lundy the nickname 'Kingdom of Heaven', even though, by the late 1850s, there were only around 20 people in this 'kingdom'. Having attracted little interest from prospective buyers when he put Lundy up for auction in 1840, Heaven tried commercial development instead. In 1863 the Lundy Granite Company was set up, and ran for five years. When Heaven died in 1883, Lundy passed to his son, Reverend Hudson Grosett Heaven. His main contribution to Lundy, and his life-long dream, was the construction of the church. Dedicated to St Helena, it was completed in 1897. With the Reverend's death in 1916, Lundy's ownership passed to his nephew, Walter Charles Hudson Heaven; two years later, he sold it to Augustus Langham Christie. In 1925 Christie sold Lundy for £25,250 to a city financier, Martin Coles Harman (ibid: 67).

Harman ruled Lundy with an air of rakish eccentricity and independence. In 1929, he introduced Lundy's own currency. Loosely based on the 'penny' and 'half-penny', Harman minted thousands of 'puffins' and 'half-puffins', with his profile placed where there would have ordinarily been that of the monarch's. For this Harman appeared before the Bideford justice bench, on account that he had violated the Coinage Act 1870, and was fined £5 – which he paid "under protest" (ibid: 203). He also established the Lundy Field Society in 1946, to further the study of Lundy's natural history and archaeology. With Harman's death, Lundy passed to his son Albion; with his death in 1968, the island was put up for auction by his widow and two sisters. By then there were just 10 inhabitants. The National Trust, the leading conservation charity for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, had shown some interest in Lundy. At the time of the auction, though, it could not commit the funds. In October 1969, Jack Hayward, an English property developer and philanthropist, stepped in and donated the £150,000 needed for the National Trust to buy Lundy (ibid: 70). The National Trust immediately leased the island to the Landmark Trust for sixty years.

Since 1969, the Landmark Trust has controlled every aspect of Lundy's economy, imagery and ethos. Set up by banker and philanthropist Sir John Smith in 1965, the Landmark Trust is one of the most successful registered charities in Britain's heritage industry. It 'rescues', restores and rents out historical buildings that, although not listed by the National Trust and unsuitable as permanent homes, still have some architectural or historical significance. For Lundy, it replaced the arbitrary and often ad hoc arrangements that had been in place for centuries with a focused mission: to turn the island into an attractive proposition for visitors and, more recently, conservationists. By letting out Lundy's buildings, the Trust gives them a contemporary relevance and generates an income stream that contributes to their maintenance. The charity's annual handbook catalogues all Landmark Trust sites. Its restoration of Lundy's 23 buildings took over twenty years, but made the island one of the charity's earliest successes. The challenge was formidable. In 1969, island infrastructure was simple and fragile; the population barely exceeded a few dozen people; and there were few modern attractions in the built environment. On top of that, accessibility was difficult: visitors had to negotiate extreme weather conditions as well as a decidedly inhospitable shoreline. Over the next forty years, though, the Landmark Trust addressed how these issues

affected tourism and devised a marketing model that amply met the criteria for effective place branding. Its strategy has been to coordinate the island's workforce, transportation, attractions and protection towards a cohesive (but malleable) narrative – a “unique island experience”. The complementary integration of these components, a hallmark of good branding practice, is discussed in the following section.

Workforce: no ‘starry-eyed romantics’

Before the Landmark Trust assumed control of Lundy, the population size fluctuated widely. According to the earliest records (from 1242), the number of inhabitants varied from just one family of 6 in 1833 to around 240 people in 1865, when the granite quarries were in full operation. By the time the Landmark Trust took over, there were 40 people on the island (ibid: 222). Its first order of business was to appoint a Resident Agent in 1970, I. G. Grainger. The Agent was responsible for the everyday running of Lundy, as well as the main carrier of official or ceremonial duties. In 1977, Colonel R. Gilliat replaced Grainger. As for outside interest, Lundy was still a cultural quirk, and these changes prompted little more than a small mention in mainland press. One exception to this, though, came courtesy of Gilliat's successor, John Puddy. A married man and father of two, Puddy was Lundy's Resident Agent from 1983. In March 1995 news broke of his affair with the island's barmaid, Cate Scanlon. Although international press were intrigued by the scandal on ‘Lusty Lundy’, it was hugely damaging for morale of its population of 20.

The Puddy scandal made the Landmark Trust more sensitive to how popular perceptions of Lundy – as wild, remote and secluded – were not always in its best interests. When the position for Puddy's replacement was advertised, director of the Landmark Trust Robin Evans warned would-be applicants: “We are not interested in starry-eyed romantics with notions of getting away from it all. Running an island is every bit as demanding as managing an estate of similar size on the mainland, with the added handicap that it is stuck 12 miles out to sea” (quoted in Hornsby, 1995: np). The 8-page job description, for example, listed no specific qualifications, but noted that ideal applicants knew something of farming, accountancy, catering, mechanical engineering, wildlife management, architectural conservation and operating a ferry service. The job eventually went to Tony Blacker, chosen in July 1995 from over 1000 applicants (Dawe, 1995a: np). Blacker had a background in accounting and business consultancy, and had managed a small nature reserve. Besides managerial skills, Blacker brought to Lundy an astute marketing plan. As he explained soon after his appointment: “It's a matter of keeping the island 50 years behind the mainland, but making it comfortable and friendly as well” – to which he added that he would:

also like to market the island as a ‘mini Galapagos’ because it attracts plant and fish life which can be found nowhere else in Britain as well as its renowned puffins and other seabirds (quoted in Dawe, 1995b: np).

Blacker's ‘vision’ thus worked mainstream, wistful longings for the generic island getaway into a more specialised experience.

This strategy lent Lundy a promotional angle that was succinct and accessible. Until the late 1980s, Lundy was still confined to the cultured end of the holiday market, or members of the Landmark Trust that had seen it listed in (what was then) the £5

Handbook (Pearman, 1988: np). The idea of the ‘mini Galapagos’ paralleled a growing appreciation in popular discourses about environmentalism – something that has become stronger and more nuanced in recent years, to Lundy’s obvious advantage. It also had more long-term relevance than previous attempts to increase awareness of Lundy. In April 1992, for example, in the lead-up to a British general election, Lundy’s marketing manager Linda Oakes declared the island an ‘election free zone’ and told international press that the election would not be mentioned by any of Lundy’s 18 residents. Two years later, and in a similar spirit, a nicotine patch company sponsored ten-day stays on Lundy for 30 heavy smokers, during the island’s off-peak holiday period; the logic was that only once they were ‘marooned’ would they allow the patches to take effect (Finlay, 1994: 1). Publicity stunts with such in-built obsolescence are clearly problematic. That same year, the Landmark Trust, which had invested £2.5 million in Lundy since it was first leased, decided that Lundy had to become self-financing. The permanent workforce was reduced to 14 and an aggressive marketing drive was launched (Jones, 1995: 12).

The decision to make Lundy more closely managed and financially accountable has had direct consequences for the population. Put simply, workers in the Lundy Company (a subsidiary of the Landmark Trust) must meet atypical requirements, so the Lundy Company hand-picks every permanent resident. There is no indigenous population – the population is the workforce, and the workforce is a community. As such, the Lundy Company submits applicants to assessment criteria that are highly in-depth. For those that are short-listed, the final ‘interview’ is in fact a working weekend, designed to see how well the applicants blend in with the rest of the ‘local people’ – the workforce/population/community. Such detailed screening has marketing benefits, since the Lundy Company can fashion the population in its desired image. Given the importance of ‘local people’ to brand-building exercises, to sustain a coherent and unifying message, the Lundy Company’s ability to oversee this community so comprehensively is both unusual and fortunate: place brands benefit from consistency (Freire, 2009: 436). Still, the popular notion, that work on the island is like a lifestyle upgrade, has been a constant problem for the Lundy Company. When a position was advertised in 2002 for a farmer to look after Lundy’s 600 sheep, manager Paul Roberts received over 400 emails from around the world, almost 100 phone calls and a sackful of letters from UK applicants. According to Roberts though, “Ninety nine percent of the people who contacted [him] wouldn’t know one end of a sheep from the other” (quoted in Insley, 2002: 8). Often, applicants do not fully appreciate the lifestyle implications of a tiny island community. The absence of a school, for instance, rules out applicants with dependent children, while the Puddy scandal made the Landmark Trust wary of unattached workers. Also, workers invariably assume several roles simultaneously. In October 2009 for example, Lundy required a new maintenance worker. The North Devon press framed the opportunity as a ‘dream job’ to ‘escape the rat race’ (Unattributed, 2009: 21). The position, which attracted over 500 applicants from across Europe, required someone that: could drive quad bikes and tractors; had skills in masonry, carpentry, electrical and plumbing; and would load and unload passengers, cargo and luggage. As charming as such posts seem then, with accommodation and overheads included in the package, Lundy workers are necessarily stretched across several diverse areas. Green, whose job sees him act as watch manager for the fire brigade, coast guard, policeman, and vicar, puts it like this:

What we're looking for is not only someone that has the skills for the job but someone that has the social skills to mix in with the other 26 of us, and that's vital. Like any extended family, we have our ups and downs, we laugh and cry together, and fall out and we make up and date, and all that sort of stuff. I get an awful lot of dreamers [applying for work on Lundy], a lot of people think, 'yeah, a lovely place to live and work, and nice to retire'. But Lundy's hard work, it's 24/7 and it doesn't take any prisoners. If you're right for the island, you'll stay, work hard and enjoy it, and if you're not you, won't last 2 minutes. (pc April 2009)

Transportation: "Bring your sense of adventure!"

Not only did the Landmark Trust have to ensure that Lundy's workforce/population projected the right image to tourists but also that the island's general tourism infrastructure was sufficient to support them. To this end, it worked with port authorities in Bideford and Ilfracombe, and arranged a regular and reliable service to move people between North Devon and Lundy. Until the mid 1980s, the only vessel available for this was the Polar Bear, which carried just twelve people at a time. In 1986 the Landmark Trust bought the MS Oldenburg, a 300-ton ship originally built to service the German railroads (Figure 3). The Oldenburg, now Lundy's main passenger and supply ship, carries 267 passengers and takes about two hours to travel from Bideford and Ilfracombe to Lundy. During the summer season, from April until the end of October, the Oldenburg makes four of these trips every week. Since it is the main way that visitors can see Lundy, the Landmark Trust promotes the Oldenburg as part of the 'Lundy experience'.



Figure 3 – MS Oldenburg (photograph by Susie Khamis)

In 1999 over £350,000 was spent on a major refit and revamp of the Oldenburg. Most of the money was raised by Heritage Lottery Funding and European grant aid; linked to the

investment was the building of a new £1.2 million jetty on Lundy (Figure 4). The Oldenburg crew are all ex merchant or royal navy personnel and the on-board shop and information desk revolve entirely around Lundy merchandise and guides. There is also a buffet bar which stocks hot and cold snacks. These efforts have been rewarded: the Good Britain Guide recently voted the Oldenburg voyage to Lundy the 'Boat Trip of the Year'. For the last 6 years, there has also been a helicopter service for the winter months, from November until late March, which leaves for Lundy from Hartland Point twice a week, takes seven passengers at a time, and lasts seven minutes.

As much as these measures try to ensure visitors reach Lundy in an orderly and agreeable way, though, travellers are still advised to be flexible. The voyage ticket explains: "Lundy is an offshore Island. Many things, especially the weather, can influence your stay. Remember to bring your sense of adventure!" For Green though, this unpredictability serves Lundy's 'old-world' charm well:

There's something quite romantic about that. Even to this day, sometimes I have to stand in the Tavern and say, 'sorry folks, there's no boat today, you're going to be here for 2 or 3 days'. That doesn't happen [elsewhere] nowadays (pc, April 2009).



Figure 4 – The Jetty (photograph by Susie Khamis)

Attractions

All the buildings on Lundy are Landmark Trust properties: the church, general store, the tavern and – importantly for those that want to stay on the island – 23 other properties. There is also space for camping, with forty available pitches. The 23 properties are just for 'stayers', visitors that commit to a minimum 7-night stay on the island. All the

buildings have hot and cold running water, a small library, electric shaver points and most have heated towel racks (except Tibbetts, which has no electricity and is powered by gas only). There are no televisions, radios or telephones (which are Landmark Trust policies); the only pay phone is in the Tavern. Two of the buildings accommodate just one person each (Old Light Cottage and the Radio Room); most comfortably fit two to five guests, while Millcombe, once home to Heaven and generally considered Lundy's most elegant building, accommodates twelve. The water supply is rainwater, and a generator that is switched off between midnight and 6am powers the island. The Marisco Tavern (Figures 5 and 6) is Lundy's social hub; it is where workers meet for daily morning meetings; and for both day-trippers and 'stayers', it is the only place to sample local Lundy produce. Artefacts from the island's numerous shipwrecks (137 are recorded) decorate the walls; and a small library stocks the considerable literature that has been written about Lundy, including the works of the Lundy Field Society. A whiteboard is used for general announcements (especially weather disruptions to sailing), details for guided tours, as well as sightings of rare flora and fauna, which visitors are encouraged to log. As the first logical stop after visitors' uphill walk from the jetty, the Tavern functions as a *de facto* town hall, entertainment centre and information booth. The general store is just metres away (Figure 7). It provides for the basic needs of day-trippers and 'stayers', but not so much that the Tavern is rivalled for hot meals. It is also where visitors can purchase the famous Lundy stamps² from the island's longest-serving resident, postmaster Reg Tiffen. The 78-year-old has lived on Lundy for seventeen years, and sells about 15,000 stamps every year. A limited number of the puffin coins Harman issued, now quite rare, are also sold at the store.



Figure 5 - Marisco Tavern, exterior (photograph by Susie Khamis)



Figure 6 - Marisco Tavern, interior (photograph by Susie Khamis)



Figure 7 - Lundy's general store (interior) (photograph by Susie Khamis)

St Helena's church, which has 10 bells, has become highly popular with bell-ringers and campanologists from the mainland (Figure 8) as well as for weddings, which are only approved by the Lundy Company if the couple has some prior connection with the island (as former 'stayers', for instance).

The Old Lighthouse on Beacon Hill is also on the tourist trail; it provides one of the most commanding views of the surrounding seas, and its rickety staircase has become an attraction in itself. A small chalkboard sign at the foot reads:

Built in 1819 at a cost then of £36, 000. The Light was first used on the 21st Feb 1820. The Lighthouse is 96ft high with 147 steps to the top, some of which are very steep! Please take great care when climbing the light and use the handrail at all times. Anyone climbing the light does so at their own risk. Thank you.



Figure 8 - St Helena's church (photograph by Susie Khamis)

Lundy's natural environment is by far the most prominent aspect of the island's profile. The island's diverse land and marine habitats and frost-free climate make it acutely amenable to rare species of birds, animals, sea life and plants. The most common ways visitors experience this is by walking, diving, rock-climbing, and bird-watching and by accompanying the Lundy Warden on specialist tours. Besides the Lundy Cabbage, visitors also look for the golden hair lichen, which Lundy has more of than anywhere else in the United Kingdom; and the island's heather, which is unusually wavy due to exposure to strong Atlantic winds. The farm animals that Harman introduced in the 1920s are particularly popular with young children: the Japanese Sika deer, Soay sheep (the UK's second biggest population) and Lundy ponies; originally a cross between New Forest and Welsh Mountain, these ponies are now an officially recognised herd. Lundy's

offshore shelves support eight species of coral, including pink sea fans, red sea fingers and dead man's fingers; it is also the only location where all five British species of shallow water cup coral are found (Natural England, 2010b: online). Grey seals, dolphins, cuckoo wrasse and basking sharks (the second largest fish in the world) are also major marine attractions. Perhaps most famously, Lundy's extensive coastline supports the largest single seabird colony in southern England. There are around 140 different species recorded on Lundy each year, including razorbills, guillemots, kittiwakes, Manx shearwaters and puffins. For birdwatchers, Spring (March to June) and Autumn (August to November) are the most important times, as thousands of migrant birds pass through; while during the Spring breeding season, up to 35 species nest on Lundy.

Lundy's Protection: a suite of designations

Since 1987 much of Lundy has been protected by Natural England as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As the statutory adviser to the government on nature conservation, Natural England uses the SSSI designation to identify England's "very best wildlife and geographical sites" (Natural England, 2010a: np). There are over 4,000 SSSIs in England; while these cover only around 7% of the country's land area, they are internationally important for their wildlife. Such acknowledgements can galvanise public opinion: when crude oil from a ruptured tanker hit Lundy's shores in February 1996, for instance, conservationists and hundreds of volunteers worked around the clock to rescue thousands of seabirds at risk (Pilkington and Gibbs, 1996: 8). SSSIs are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This legislation gives Natural England special powers to protect and manage the conservation of SSSIs, which usually entails robust and regular consultation between Natural England and over 26,000 separate owners and land managers – including the Landmark Trust and the Lundy Company. For Natural England, then, central to this dialogue is making sure that all activities on Lundy do not damage already-fragile plant and animal habitats, especially visitor recreation, grazing, and use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers.

Many of the conservation efforts around Lundy focus on its shoreline and surrounding seas. Its waters are warmed by south-western currents and so support a unique spectrum of Mediterranean-Atlantic marine species (Hiscock, 1994: 184). As such, they are recognised internationally as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). SACs are areas which have been granted extra protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, part of the EU's commitment to biodiversity. The Habitats Directive requires EU Member States identify a network of protected wildlife, so Lundy's SAC status was made on the advice of Natural England. These seas were also the UK's first voluntary and then statutory Marine Nature Reserve (1973 and 1986 respectively), while in 2003 the most sensitive parts of the Reserve became the UK's first statutory No-Take Zone (NTZ), a Marine Protected Area (MPA). The NTZ bans all fishing and collection of sea life of any kind, to protect and improve stocks. In January 2010 Lundy was named England's first Marine Conservation Zone, a direct result of the Marine & Coastal Act 2009 that aims to protect England's most important habitats and species. This latest designation makes Lundy the cornerstone of a new network of Marine Protected Areas that the government aims to have around the coast by 2012; and highlights the

vulnerability of several marine species that are either under threat or in decline, including basking sharks, the pink sea fan, dolphins, whales and seals (Bachelor, 2009).

Designations like SSSI, SAC and NTZ and the growing premium on biodiversity draw worldwide attention to Lundy and its various species. In turn, conservation efforts obviously intensify around those species that are in danger or dwindling. For Lundy's caretakers, this applies to the breadth of plant, marine and animal life the island supports. It is the plight of Lundy's most iconic species though – the puffin – that spotlights such fragility most poignantly.

Over the last few decades, the numbers of puffins have dropped to such dangerously low levels that the name Lundy ('puffin isle') has become a sad misnomer. In 1939 there were 3,500 breeding pairs; by 1996 there were just 15 (Gray, 2000: np). Whilst the largest breeding populations are found in Iceland and Norway, the British Isles have around 10% of the world's puffins. According to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds though, changes in the distribution and numbers of small fish (a major food source), combined with pollution and ground predators (like rats, minks and cats), have put the puffin on the Amber list of UK Birds of Conservation Concern. Some puffins still mass together in the Farne Islands, off the Northumberland coast, and Skomer Island, off the Pembrokeshire coast (Crawshaw, 2000: 5). The Farne Islands, in particular, now host England's largest breeding colony of puffins, with 60,000 breeding pairs in 2008, a figure the Islands' chief warden David Steel believed would reach 150,000 (Smith, 2008: np). Only on the Farne Islands, though, are puffin numbers increasing, attributed to the absence there of predators like foxes and rats, and minimal disturbance from people. On the Isle of May, a nature reserve owned by Scottish Natural Heritage, there were around 41,000 pairs in 2008 – but even that is significantly less than the 63,000 pairs there were in 2003 (Carrell, 2008: np). Despite their general decline, the fact that they are rarely spotted on the island named in their honour is especially worrying. From a marketing perspective, there is a danger that visitors will leave Lundy frustrated that they did not see the comical-looking bird on which so much memorabilia and merchandise has been fashioned – toys, coins, stamps, stationary and so on (Figure 9).



Figure 9 - Puffin souvenirs (photograph by Susie Khamis)

Ideally, tourists' experiences are not too far removed from such salient imagery (Hankinson, 2004: 12). From an ecological perspective, the crisis underscores the importance of specific codes and binding conventions (like SSSI) and necessary vigilance of groups like Natural England. Scientists have yet to pinpoint why the puffin situation is so much worse on Lundy than elsewhere, although some link it to the long-term prevalence of black rats on Lundy, and the intensive fishing of sand-eels. Conservationists have seen puffin numbers rise slowly on Lundy over the last few years, mostly due to the eradication of rats; in 2009 there were, according to Green, around 20 pairs. Still, bird-watchers that travel to South West England especially for puffins are now referred to islands other than Lundy, like the Isles of Scilly, Portland, Mouls Island and Long Island (Nature South West, 2010: np).

A Unique Island Experience: 'Britain's Galapagos'

As worldwide interest in biodiversity grows, Lundy assumes an acute advantage in terms of raising its profile and asserting its significance. Both the Lundy Company and the Landmark Trust thus argue that the island's protection is of international importance and warrants ongoing support. Groups committed to preserving Lundy's unique attributes draw liberally on a discourse of evolution and frame the island's conservation in explicitly Darwinian terms. Leaflets promoting Lundy often refer to it as 'Britain's own Galapagos', and thereby claim some purchase on one of the world's most celebrated sites: the Galapagos Islands, what Louise B. Young called "a tiny microcosm where we can see the principles on which life constructs new forms and how these forms interact and change through space and time" (Young, 1999: 50). This popularised view renders the protection of Lundy something other than a niche project for 'weekend hobbyists'; it is a matter of responsibility – survival of the endemic Lundy Cabbage, for instance, is vital. Part of Darwin's theory of evolution is that most species originate by a few individuals becoming isolated, just like the Lundy Cabbage Flea Beetle and Lundy Cabbage Weevil. Lundy effectively constitutes a 'hotspot' of biodiversity: relative to its size, Lundy makes a large contribution to global biodiversity (Whittaker and Fernández-Palacios, 2007: 73). This gives groups like the Lundy Field Society a greater sense of urgency. Its research includes ornithological work, studies of fungi, lichens, the Lundy Cabbage and freshwater habitats, and surveys of inter-tidal life; it offers small grants to support independent researchers and organises working parties to help the Lundy Wardens with specific tasks; and it publishes an annual report and newsletter, the peer-reviewed *Journal of the Lundy Field Society*, books and leaflets. In other words, the tiny group of enthusiasts organised by Harman in 1946 is now responsible for some of Britain's most valued scientific work. Similarly, the Landmark Trust encourages visitors to join the Friends of Lundy group, with membership fees directed to the island's conservation targets, as well as items that will upgrade Lundy's infrastructure in ways consistent with Landmark Trust principles – namely, minimal disruption to both the built and natural environment.

Since the Landmark Trust is in a constant quest for external support of Lundy, the language of biodiversity makes for a convincing case. In 2007 for example, the deterioration of Lundy's beach road, Lundy's lifeline to both visitors and supplies, prompted a major emergency public appeal; the response was swift and overwhelming – indicative of the growing appreciation for Lundy. In 2009 then, to coincide with the 40th anniversary of Lundy's association with the Landmark Trust, the Lundy Company

launched a £238,000 fundraising drive for: the urgent replacement of Lundy's main water tank; an Island Ranger whose tasks would include rhododendron control; the replacement of 2 of the 3 electricity generators Lundy relies on; improvements to visitor information areas (presently there is just a modest kiosk attached to the Tavern); and the development of a 15-year plan to explore alternative energy sources for Lundy, such as wind, wave and solar power.

Besides Lundy's connection to ports in North Devon, the island's various initiatives fit well within the region's wider profile. In February 2010 the North Devon Biosphere Reserve was set up, the only one in England recognised by UNESCO. It is a partnership between various organisations and individuals committed to the sustainable use of natural resources for the benefit of local communities; it stretches from the edge of Exmoor to Dartmoor, and includes Lundy. UNESCO's endorsement is given only to those areas that maintain a balanced relationship between local populations and the environment, so North Devon's status salutes its efforts towards environmental research, education and sustainability. Lundy thus becomes a privileged part of a privileged region. Moreover, in the context of conservation and protection, its 'separateness' has obvious appeal, as it plays to popular perceptions that islands are highly manageable. In turn, and for promotional purposes, this 'separateness' has been brought to the fore. Green explains:

We used to market the place just as Lundy. But when it came to increasing people's awareness we re-marketed it as 'Lundy Island' rather than just 'Lundy' – thinking that people from, say, the Midlands might not realise exactly what it was. As soon as that happened, visitor numbers began to increase (quoted in Clunes, 2009: 18).

While this spike could be attributed to the latent exoticism of any small island, it is still the case that, increasingly for Lundy, this exoticism is now linked to something more specific than just its islandness – namely, a unique ecosystem.

It is obviously to Lundy's benefit that North Devon becomes more associated with similarly construed attractions. Museums and galleries in Bideford and Ilfracombe, for instance, often promote the region's connections to science, wildlife and conservation. In 2009, to commemorate both the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection*, Devon County Council held several 'Darwin in Devon' events; these celebrated Darwin's work, and drew attention to the various times he spent in Devon, often on his way to or from important expeditions. In turn, *Lundy Island* becomes a preeminent example of such phenomena: overtly demarcated by its 'islandness' and so ideally positioned to showcase the logic and language of both evolution and biodiversity. For visitors to North Devon then, to witness this richness first-hand requires no more than a two-hour boat trip, an experience they have been primed to consider. Ilfracombe Museum, for instance, has a dedicated 'Lundy Room' (Figure 10).

Lundy is then a valuable reference point for the region, hence the £100,000 the Devon County Council contributed to the repair of Lundy's main access road in February 2009. The council tied this to Lundy's growing appeal to 'green' tourists, and the need to safeguard its operability in tight economic times. Council leader Brian Greenslade also considered it a belated acknowledgement of Lundy's regional importance: "We cannot

find any record of investing in Lundy, which is of course very much part of Devon” (quoted in Smith, 2009: 21). Lundy was not officially part of Devon until 1974, but now it clearly occupies a lucrative and highly symbolic place in the region’s wider branding initiatives. Given the growing interest in eco-travel, such an integrated approach is ideal for influencing consumer perceptions. In a recent Rough Guide publication for example, *Clean Breaks* (2009), authors Richard Hammond and Jeremy Smith included Lundy in their list of 500 ‘environmentally friendly’ travel experiences (Hooper, 2009: 8). As the relationship between Lundy and North Devon is becoming increasingly symbiotic, brand management and branding exercises for both will benefit from shared interests in a seamless, cohesive message (Foley and Fahy, 2004: 210; Kerr, 2006).



Figure 10 - Lundy Room, Ilfracombe Museum (reproduced with permission of the Landmark Trust)

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Conclusion: An effective place brand

Over the last 15 years, the Lundy Company has, under the direction of the Landmark Trust, pursued affiliations and adopted policies that are both substantial and symbolic. In terms of protocols and conventions, there is a level of interest in Lundy that ostensibly precedes and surpasses any marketing initiatives. Yet, given the extent to which environmentalist discourses now inform most popular industries, including travel, it is difficult to delineate Lundy's scientific value from its scientific appeal with too much precision. The reasons for its suite of prestigious designations function as branding hooks as well: biodiversity is a fashionable concern, so Lundy's biodiversity is similarly appealing. As this phenomenon cues the protection and conservation of species and habitats, the binding nature of legislation combined with the constant vigilance of specialist bodies ensures that Lundy's claims to a 'green' agenda are not just superficial or cynical. As such, and in terms of selling the Lundy brand – a "unique island experience" – there is a strong and convincing case that is arguably less obvious in other, more generic island brands (Grydehoj, 2008: 189). Given the inevitable and ironic tension that surfaces whenever natural heritage becomes a tourism drawcard, whereby popularity spills into over-exploitation (Kelman, 2007: 110), Lundy's micromanagement forestalls this dangerous slide.

As the Landmark Trust and the Lundy Company work so closely, and fuse all facets of Lundy life to common goals and considerations, there are important implications for the Lundy brand. From a management perspective, it is more possible to align the development of Lundy (a strategy) with specific policies and plans (of substance) and effective communications (or symbolic actions) – in short, the basic components of successful place branding (Anholt, 2008: 3). The involvement and input (and therefore complicity and compliance) of various stakeholders, from Natural England and the UK Government to the Landmark Trust and the Lundy Company, shows that the Lundy image is far from naturally occurring. Rather, it encodes and articulates powerful and highly vested interests – or the politics of place, identity and branding (Mayes, 2008: 126). As circumstances and opportunities change, Lundy's caretakers must revise how the island is marketed. Insofar as species protection demands a delicate negotiation of tourism numbers and infrastructure improvement, the branding of 'Britain's Galapagos' cannot stray too far from a given brief: to align popular conceptions of (and engagement with) Lundy to the increasingly interventionist means by which Lundy's environment is privileged and protected. Lundy's profile benefits from the growing appeal of biodiversity as an aspect of 'green' tourism but both the Lundy Company and the Landmark Trust must balance this marketing opportunity with the island's long-term interests, as defined by those organisations that ultimately ensure Lundy's conservation.

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Endnotes

¹ It should be noted that there is some dispute over the linguistic origin of 'Lundy', mostly confined to online conjecture that contends that 'Lundy' is Norse for grove/wooded area. See for instance: <<http://www.lundypete.com/lundey.htm>> (accessed 15/4/2010). However, all the literature published by the Landmark Trust about Lundy, as well as everything published by the Lundy Field Society, refers to the 'puffin' meaning instead of the 'wooded' one.

² Due to the convoluted means by which mail moved between the mainland and Lundy, in 1887 the General Post Office (GPO) opened a store where the Marisco Tavern now stands. Between around 1911 and the late 1920s, the arrangement was dogged by financial and legal confusion. In 1929, then, and with the same defiance that saw him mint the 'puffin' coins, Harman issued Lundy 'puffin' stamps as well, "with outgoing mail to be surcharged by a Lundy stamp by the sender and incoming mail to have a Lundy stamp affixed before distribution, for which the recipient was charged" (Langham, 1994: 211). Unlike the Lundy coins, this action was not disallowed, and Lundy stamps are still issued today. As such, and because strict GPO regulations stipulate where Lundy stamps are to be fixed on a postcard (the top left-hand corner) or envelope (the bottom left-hand corner), the 'quirkiness' of their history has made them highly collectable and popular with tourists.

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