

The team assembled at Bideford. Mike and Helen had decided that a night in the flesh pots of the town would be suitable compensation for a well located B and B. It was not. Others had driven overnight to avoid the traffic and their first experience in the town was an 0530 culinary experience at McDonald's. One member had driven down the previous day and had experienced the full force of the traffic.

We boarded the family run MS Oldenburg (61 years old) and entered a bygone age. The departure was somewhat delayed whilst the female stevedores (in dancing pumps) supervised the loading of a motor launch.

We left the quay on a high tide, narrowly missing a number of moored yachts who waved us goodbye and, ominously, wished us luck. We raced down the river on the ebb going from one shore to the other. We were unsure whether this was skilful navigation or excess play in the steering.

Fortunately the sea was like a millpond as we tacked our way across the 23 miles to Lundy under the 'control' of the autopilot. Docking was exemplary and those with a climbing glint in their eyes grabbed their kit and were off.

Others proceeded at a more leisurely pace up the hill. The location of the campsite was ideal, albeit not quite level.

There was a well-stocked shop one minute away and, more importantly, a pub 'The Marisco Tavern' two minutes away which served a wide variety of food - all at reasonable prices given the location.

The showering and washing facilities at the site were excellent - at least a 10 on the LHG scale. The island's church was a mere 3 minutes way so all our needs could be accommodated.

Pete and Simon warmed up on Alouette (S). Mike, Tim and Richard tackled (appropriately) Saturday Night (S) and Tim and Richard continued with Sunday Morning (VS 4c).

Meanwhile Helen and Felicity felt in need of a guided island orientation trip. This was slightly marred by a particularly talkative lady with blond hair who also attended later what should have been a shortish talk about the island and its wildlife, had it not been for her off-topic questions. Richard T, Felicity and Richard had to endure her cross examination of the lecturer. In the afternoon Felicity had decided to join the quest for the 29 'letterboxes' dotted around the island, in anticipation of a major prize.

On Sunday Pete and Simon tackled Saturday Night, Sunday Morning, Where Am I and Alisa B (VS 4c).



The morning started with a mass (Richard T, Helen, Mike, Tim, Richard) descent of the Montagu Steps and a circuit of the Devil's Limekiln.

They were surprised why anyone would possibly have constructed the steps in this location until they discovered that the purpose was to dismantle the wreck of battleship HMS Montagu which had foundered there in 1906. The captain and navigator were severely reprimanded and lost 2 year's seniority (and the ship).

Following this Mike, Richard and Tim decided on the classic Devil's Slide (HS) and Richard and Tim completed the dainty tiptoe traverse at the top.



**Richard on
Devil's
Slide**

Helen decided to give the benefit of her singing at the Sunday morning Songs of Praise which was being held to welcome the fleet of small planes which had come for the weekend. However as she was the only attendee the vicar agreed that a cup of coffee and a chat was more appropriate.

On Monday Mike, Richard, Tim and Felicity visited Seal Slab but a decided that with an airy hanging belay and waves crashing below that a smaller party should complete it so Felicity resumed her letterboxing.



Seal Slab



Tim and Richard continued with Horseman's Route (HS).

Meanwhile Helen and Felicity were eagerly anticipating their snorkelling and had dressed appropriately in their bikinis.

Unfortunately it had to be cancelled as the sea had been churned up and would not provide adequate visibility. As a consolation activity they were joined by Mike for an intrepid ascent of Rat Island, location of one of the letterboxes on the list

Pete and Simon continued single mindedly with their climbing quest. Stuka (VS), Captain's Arete (VS), Hurricane (HS) and Force Eight (S) fell to their assault.

The evening was spent in the pub (as were the others) and our blond acquaintance tried to persuade us to join in with her bell ringers' group quiz. Helen was most keen but we managed to deter her and completed the quiz 'off-line' and as a result she was confident that we would have won easily.



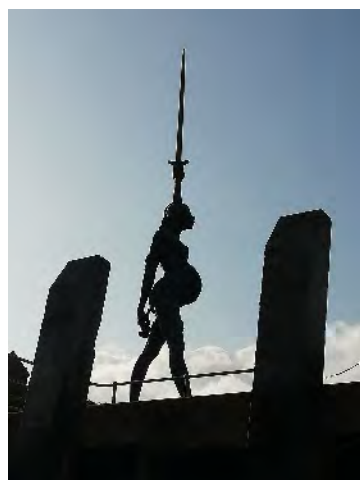
The wind had been rising steadily and Monday night tested our tent pitching skills. All passed with flying colours.

On Tuesday morning Pete and Simon decided to have a go at Seal Slabs and set off for a leisurely 11 am start. Richard T accompanied them and was able to position himself to take photos of their ascent.

Richard and Felicity completed 28 of the 29 letterboxes with the remaining one on board the ship. She cast off promptly at 1630 and as soon as she was out of the lee of the island commenced a steady roll en route to Ilfracombe. Felicity was able to find her last letterbox on the ship but was disappointed with her prize - which was to keep the folder she had been using for tracking them down.



Docking at Ilfracombe was without incident and we were greeted by 'Verity' a 20m statue of a 25 ton half dissected pregnant lady by Damien Hirst.



The general opinion seemed to be that he could keep it. A charabanc awaited us for a speedy transfer back to our cars at Bideford.

An excellent meet with plenty of variety for all tastes and a great opportunity to explore Lundy.

Our thanks to the meet leader (right)



Richard Taylor

Attendees

Peter Elliott (leader)
Simon Burn (G)
Tim Josephy
Felicity Roberts (G)

Helen Smith
Mike Smith
Richard Smith
Richard Taylor

Editors note - Lundy is strange island. It's status has been disputed several times. It was certainly a dominion under the British Empire but no conclusive evidence suggests it is in the United Kingdom. The last legal case before the courts saw the judiciary treating it as though it is though, but some doubt that validity. The island used to issue its own coins, it lies outside our territorial waters, and at the time of that court case no taxes, rates, or Customs and Excise duties had been charged. Nowadays it is treated as part of the County of Devon.

In 1969, British millionaire Jack Hayward bought Lundy and gave it to the National Trust. A conservation charity runs it deriving its income from visitors. Other than these it normally has a population of just over two dozen.

Geophysically it is different too. It is basically a plug of granite sticking up guarding the entrance to the Bristol Channel.

It is of about 1000 acres, fairly flat topped, three miles long and about half a mile wide.

Alternating between strong winds and swirling mist there are gaps of sunny weather when the walking can be exhilarating and the bird life astounding

