

THE STAMPS OF LUNDY ISLAND

— and the Strange Story of the Man who Thought
he was King of Puffinland



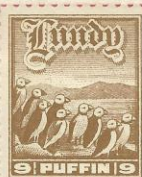
These stamps tell an extraordinary tale — about a man who set himself up as king of an island off the coast of England only a few years ago.

The story begins in 1925, when a wealthy Englishman, Martin Harman, purchased the tiny 3-mile-long island of Lundy off the coast of Devon. Presently Mr. Harman had an idea. "Since I am the owner of this island", he mused, "why shouldn't I also be king?" The idea seemed to make sense to Mr. Harman, and like an intelligent ruler, he proceeded to coin money and issue postage stamps for use by the island's inhabitants. The stamps and coins bore a picture of the puffin, a paunchy bird with a supercilious expression which inhabits the island in great numbers.

At first all went well with the Liliputian kingdom. But in 1931 the British government got wind of what was going on. By Jove! Chap coining money, don't you know. Bear looking into, and all that, eh what? The result was that "King" Harman was summoned to court, and charged with unlawfully coining money. A justice of the King's Bench fixed a stern eye on the monarch of Lundy.

"Who did you say is sovereign of Lundy?" asked the judge.

"I am!" stated Mr. Harman emphatically. "And as sovereign of Lundy I coined puffins and half-puffins as I have a right to do".



But the court took a dim view of His Majesty King Harman's regal pretensions. King Harman suddenly found that he was an ex-king, was fined 5 pounds, and was ordered to relinquish his royal prerogatives.

Today, Lundy is part of the British Empire, and former King Harman is an ordinary subject of King George. But the stamps remain, a fascinating item for collectors, unique in postal history. For they are the only British stamps ever issued — not by the British government, not by a British dominion, commonwealth, colony or possession — but by a now private citizen, His Exalted Ex-Royal Highness, King Harman I, Ex-Monarch of Puffinland!

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