

## LUNDY ISLAND

This exhibit will show selected LUNDY ISLAND mail from origins and to destinations other than the United Kingdom. Where appropriate historical and postal history information will be provided. The items are presented in chronological order.

Lundy lies off the south west coast of England, where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Bristol Channel. The island is a granite outcrop, three and a half miles long and half a mile wide. The indigenous bird is the PUFFIN.

The history of Lundy Island is long and storied. It goes back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the Knights Templar. Currently, the island belongs to the British National Trust and is leased to the Landmark Trust, which maintains properties on the island that are rented to tourists.

A regular ferry service, from Bideford or Ilfracombe depending on the state of the tides, carries mail to and from the island. There is also a winter helicopter service.

Originally, mail to and from LUNDY ISLAND was entrusted to regular or otherwise trustworthy boat owners and carried to or from Instow or other points on the mainland for distribution. Any mail for Lundy Island was collected and delivered when the next boat called at Lundy.

From 1887 to 1927, the British Post Office maintained a sub-post office. In 1925 Martin Harman bought the island and the contract to carry the mails. He hired Felix Gade to distribute incoming mail and dispatch outgoing mail.

Martin Harman carried mail to and from Instow at his own expense until he decided that he could no longer afford the free mail service. He then was inspired to issue his own stamps to help defray his expenses. The first two Lundy stamps were issued on 1st November 1929 in the local "currency" half Puffin pink and one Puffin blue, with 1 Puffin equaling one British penny. Stamps have been issued on Lundy regularly since then. In fact, Lundy has the oldest privately-operated postal service in the world that is still operating.

LUNDY stamps, in general, are placed on the back of all outgoing mail (per British postal regulations) and the front of all incoming mail. On more recent outgoing mail, British stamps or meters were used to pay the postage fees. These were postmarked at the port where the ship docked.

Through the years, various ports of transit were used for regular mail and airmail. These include Instow, Bristol & Barnstaple and Braunton (for airmail), Bideford, and Ilfracombe.

