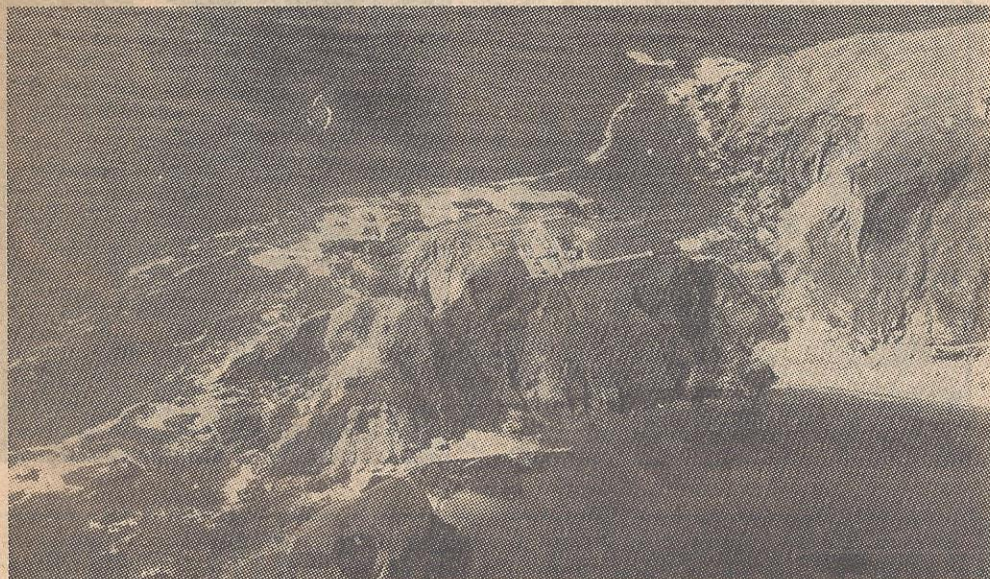


British travel



By Jack Goldfarb

Lundy's granite cliffs defy the sea

Lundy— simple isle of puffins and history

By Jack Goldfarb

Special to The Christian Science Monitor

Lundy Island, three miles long, half a mile wide, stands as a lone sentry in Atlantic waters, guarding the approaches to the heavily trafficked Bristol Channel.

Roving Viking mariners named the island Lund-ey, which means "Puffin Island." In much scantier numbers now, the comical, short-beaked diving birds still nest here, along with cormorants, herring gulls, buzzards, and razorbills. In fact, Lundy has a greater variety of seabirds than any other locale in Britain.

The island, 12 miles off the coast of Devon, has recently been acquired by the National Trust for Places of Historical Interest. And historical relics scattered around Lundy tell the story of its many eras: traces of Stone Age huts and strange, 8-foot skeletons of a Neolithic race; the twisted wreckage of Nazi bombers that crash-landed here in World War II; an abandoned 19th-century granite quarry; the dungeon of a 12th-century castle whose owner was a pirate. (Lundy was a favorite stronghold for pirates because of its short, defensible coastlines and rocky caves where the buccaneers could store their loot.)

The last private owner of Lundy, Martin Harman, insisted that the island was a self-governing dominion, outside Great Britain's territorial waters and not subject to its laws.

Mr. Harman issued his own currency and postage stamps (mostly depicting puffins), until a British high court ordered him to desist. Lundy stamps, however, are still used as "souvenir" postage and, along with British stamps, are affixed to outgoing mail.

Twenty-seven Lundyites inhabit the island today. They are engaged in farming, modernizing the facilities, preserving the natural beauty, and protecting wildlife. The National Trust is also trying to increase the number of visitors — now 30,000 a year.

Visitors sail over on scheduled boats from Ilfracombe and other North Devon towns on a two-hour journey that costs £2.20 (about \$5) for a one-day round trip. Those who stay longer to explore Lundy's ancient sites, rugged rock formations, and green plateaus, are accommodated at the 12-guest hotel, formerly a mansion, or in informal refurbished cottages, each with its own character and charm.

The tourists, who come mainly in the summer, are impressed by the tranquil

simplicity — no vehicles (except for one Land Rover and a few farm tractors), no telephones, no policemen. Gray seals dive from the rocks. Ponies, deer, and rabbits roam in the wild tracts of rhododendrons and seapinks, and among the granite boulders. Cattle and sheep graze in the valley fields.

A "must" stop for visitors is the Marisco Tavern and General Store where they meet the local residents and buy up souvenirs, Lundy stamps, and copies of the Illustrated Lundy News, a quaint periodical containing details of Lundy's past and present.

The visitors eye the inhabitants with curiosity — and envy. Up until now, Lundyites have never paid income tax or any other British tax. But this utopian feature of Lundy life is about to end. Word has come from London that starting this fiscal year income tax will be imposed.