

## FLEETING AND PARTIAL AUTONOMY

A historical account of quasi-micronational initiatives on Lundy Island and their contemporary reconfiguration on MicroWiki

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### Abstract

Micronations are small territories that have been identified as independent by individuals or communities without recognition of that status by either the nation states within whose borders they fall and/or relevant international bodies. The term is of comparatively recent coinage and has largely been used to refer to entities that have claimed autonomous status since the 1960s. As a result, discussions of the phenomenon (such as those included in the 2014 theme issue of *Shima* on islands and micronationality – v8n1) have tended to avoid engagement with the pre-history of the concept and have not examined how and why certain locations (and, especially in this context, types of islands) have lent themselves to quasi-micronational ventures at particular historical points. This article discusses the manner in which the history of the (now indisputably) English island of Lundy has seen a number of quasi-micronational incidents and outlines the shifting nature of their bases and manifestations. The article's analyses emphasise the significant role that geography and, particularly, (in)accessibility play in forging micronational endeavours. The final section expands this frame of reference to discuss the imaginative reconfiguration of quasi-micronational initiatives on Lundy through the virtual micronation of the 'New Kingdom of Lundy' constituted within the online MicroWiki arena.

### Keywords

Lundy, temporary autonomous zones, micronations, virtual micronations, MicroWiki

### Introduction

Lundy is three miles long and half a mile wide and is located at 51° 10' North and 4° 40' West, within sight of both the Welsh and English coasts (on clear days). Formerly privately owned, it has been administered by Britain's Landmark Trust since 1969 and is administratively part of the English county of Devon. In the last two decades the resident population has been in the 25-30 range (including a number of short-term volunteer workers) and does not appear to have exceeded 200 in any previous period.<sup>1</sup>

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Lundy's population has been highly transient and there have been no long established families resident on the island in any period covered by the historical record.



Figure 1 - Lundy and its location in The Bristol Channel  
(Map by Christian Fleury, 2011)

Historically, Lundy has proved eminently suited for quasi-micronational endeavours in various regards:

- a. It is relatively remote from its nearest mainland shore, being 11 miles north of Hartland Point in north Devon;
- b. It is located in the funnel-like entrance to the Bristol Channel (Figure 1), afflicted by strong, fast-flowing tides (with a tidal range of eight metres) and has a series of shifting shingle banks close to shore that make navigation of its coastal waters and landings on-shore somewhat problematic;

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- c. Weather conditions in the region are highly changeable and frequently foggy, further problematising navigation;
- d. It is readily defensible as it is a granite outcrop that stands 400 foot above sea level;
- e. It has no primary assets that have attracted significant attention (at least prior to its natural heritage becoming a major tourist attraction – see Khamis, 2011).

### I. Early Settlement/ Early Autonomy

There is evidence that human settlement on Lundy dates back at least as far as the Late Bronze and Iron ages and there are also remnants of material left by a Christian community some time after the Romans vacated the English mainland (around 410 AD). The island's name appears to derive from two Norse terms, *lund* (puffin) and *ey* (island) (Landmark Trust, 2004: 5).<sup>2</sup> The Norse connection also extends to Viking visits to the island around 800 AD, at the time that Viking raiding parties became active in the Bristol Channel. The island also became embroiled in conflicts between Welsh and Orkney-Norse adversaries in 1140.<sup>3</sup> Between the 12th to early 14th centuries, the de Mariscos, a family of Norman descent, owned the island despite various attempts to usurp them. Interruptions to their possession included a series of disputes with the Crown (see Ternstrom, 2010: 14-32). One notable incident occurred in 1235 when William de Marisco was implicated in the murder of a Crown emissary, Henry Clement, and moved between various locations in the Bristol Channel and Irish Sea to escape King Henry III's investigation and retribution, earning a living from plunder (Powicke, 1941: 285-310). In response to this, Crown forces landed on Lundy in 1242 and captured William de Marisco and a group of his supporters. Agents of the Crown administered the island until 1281, when the family regained it. During much of the de Marisco family's period of ownership the island and broader Bristol Channel area was subject to piracy that occurred through the Tudor period. This was linked to a broader regional network of anti-authoritarianism. As Harfield has identified:

*During the Tudor and Stuart periods, Ireland was an attractive place for pirates to base their activities. Governments faced virtually permanent rebellion and dissent there... The rugged coastline of southern Ireland offered many hiding places, as did the islands peppered along it... Nor were the islands off southern Ireland the only haunts... Lundy was thus part of a large network of isolated land-falls available to pirates... Lundy did not, and could not provide a market or a proper base for pirates. Its utility was as a temporary refuge. (1993: 61-62)*

While Harfield's characterisation may be accurate, the actions of pirates on Lundy during their visits resulted in the occasional constitution of what Hakim Bey has termed "temporary autonomous zones" (1985). As Bey has noted, these were fleeting crystallisations of

*an "information network" that spanned the globe... Scattered throughout the net were islands, remote hideouts where ships could be watered and provisioned, booty traded for luxuries and necessities. Some of these islands supported "intentional communities," whole mini-societies living*

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*consciously outside the law and determined to keep it up, even if only for a short but merry life.* (1985: 1)

One notable pirate who spent a short (and possibly merry) time on Lundy was Thomas Salkeld. Accounts of his exploits record that he landed on the island in March 1609 and proclaimed himself King of Lundy, a position he only held for short period since he was murdered by associates in 1610, with no other individual appearing to have claimed the newly vacant title (Harfield, 1993: 69).

Shortly after this colourful episode, Lundy became connected with one of the most (in)famous pirate states of the period, that based in the port of Salé on the Moroccan coast. In the early 1600s Salé operated as pirate haven where a group of international adventurers exploited the decline of Moorish power in the south west Mediterranean to create an anarchic 'city-state' on the Moroccan coast (Bey, 1995). Ships based in Salé ranged widely across the Mediterranean and North-East Atlantic seeking booty from merchant ships and were active in the Bristol Channel in the 1600s. Konstam has identified that one captain from Salé, the Dutch adventurer Jan Janszoon, led a party of corsairs to Lundy in 1625 and used it as an occasional base for a series of raids around the Bristol Channel in the late 1620s (2008: 90-91). While the pirate John Nutt also visited the island in the 1630s, following the corsairs' withdrawal from the region, the island's associations with piracy were soon on the wane, although there was extensive privateering activity in the region from the mid-16th to mid-17th centuries arising from England's various wars with the Dutch, French and Spanish (see Ternstrom, 2010: 71-73). Smuggling also developed as a significant regional activity and Ternstrom has identified that the "advantages of Lundy as isolated, neglected, and with the absence of any authority, attracted the most infamous of Lundy's smugglers", Thomas Benson, who obtained a lease on the island in 1744. One of his most brazen actions during his period of ownership was to obtain a contract to transport convicts to Virginia, which he subverted by quietly ferrying them to Lundy instead, where he used them as unpaid labour. His rationale for this merits note in the context of this article by dint of asserting Lundy's as external to England, "they were transported *from* England, no matter where it was so long as they were *out of the kingdom*" (quoted in Ternstrom, 2010: 74 – our emphases). This, and official responses to other misdeeds, prompted Benson to flee to Portugal in 1753 with the island falling into neglect for the next fifty years.

Extensive papers held in the Limerick Archives detail that an Irishman from Tipperary, Sir Vere Hunt, purchased the island at auction from one John Cleveland in 1802 for five pounds sterling, and transported a number of tenants from his Irish estate to populate and farm the island.<sup>4</sup> Soon realising the limited potential for successful agriculture, he attempted to sell the island to the British Crown as an intended depot for troops raised in Ireland. When this did not eventuate he launched into lengthy and unsuccessful attempts to gain compensation from the Crown at the same time as he tried to sell the island to another interested party, John Benison. Negotiations with Benison also proved extended and unfruitful, as Benison wanted a firm legal ruling that the island was legally exempt from UK taxes and tithes (rather than just not previously having had these collected from its population) before agreeing purchase. Ownership of the island subsequently passed to his son, Sir Aubrey de Vere Hunt. One of the few significant events of the latter's period was the construction of the island's first lighthouse and accompanying cottage by Trinity House (the corporation responsible for the wellbeing of British seafarers and operator of Britain's lighthouses) in 1819. De Vere sold the island to William Hudson Heaven in 1834.

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The period of William Hudson Heaven's ownership in 1834-51 exemplifies the latitude owners had in the face of a largely disinterested national government. Heaven interpreted the prior absence of tax and tithe collection on the island as evidence that there were ancient (but lost) charters that exempted islanders from having to make financial contributions to mainland authorities and he consequently refused permission for such collecting agents to land on Lundy. His perception of his unrestricted stewardship of the island led to it being known colloquially as 'the Kingdom of Heaven' during his ownership and no doubt informed the copy of an advertisement that was published in *The Times* newspaper around 1840, when Heaven was experiencing financial difficulties, offering the island for sale:

*The possessor of the Island becomes an instant Sovereign Lord of the Island, with an independence arising from the total absence of restraint or control... there are no taxes, tithes, nor poor rate... The mansion combines within it all the accommodation a patriotic little monarch can desire.* (quoted in Ternstrom, 2011: 114)

Despite the colourful claims in the writer's copy, the island did not find a buyer at this time and Heaven continued to own and administer it for a further decade, until his death in 1851, when it passed to his son. A granite quarry operation was established on the island in 1863 but despite considerable investment in the necessary infrastructure and planned accommodation for 200 workers, the quality of local granite was lower than anticipated and the quarry business closed in 1869, with the population dropping to less than five by the early 1870s (Rothwell and Ternstrom, 2008). No further commercial ventures animated the island's economy in the late 19th Century and the Heaven family's ownership persisted until 1917 with negligible economic benefit to all concerned. Augustus Langham Christie purchased the island in 1918 and made efforts to publicise the island as a tourist attraction before it was sold again in 1925.

### II. The Trappings of Statehood – Coinage, Flags and Philately

The acquisition of Lundy by a new owner, the city of London financier Martin Coles Harman in 1925 changed the island's complexion in a number of ways. If the Vikings, de Marisco family, Salé corsairs and Salkeld can be seen to have established fleeting 'temporary autonomous zones' of various kinds on the island; the new owner of Lundy had a manner and aspirations far more closely akin to the fanciful rich men who have attempted to create more contemporary micronations in locations such as Outer Bald Tusk Island and North Dumpling Island. The putative micronations established by Russell Arundel in 1948 and by Dean Kamen in 1986, respectively, blurred the definitions of micronations as being distinct from micro-states (Hayward, 20014: 1)<sup>5</sup> by displaying various trappings of statehood, including elevated official titles for the island's owners, constitutions and flags (see MacKinnon, 2014, and Butkus, 2014 for discussions of the respective islands - also see Hayward, 2014 for an overview of similar initiatives).

While Harman never claimed independence for the island he owned, nor any royal and/or presidential status, he nevertheless administered Lundy in a highly idiosyncratic manner and appeared to have limited interest in the application of British Law to his domain. This became apparent, and the subject of legal intervention, in 1929 when he introduced Lundy's own currency, the puffin (equivalent to a penny). Harman minted thousands of 'puffins' and 'half-puffins', with his profile on one side (as per standard

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British coinage, which features the monarch's profile). This action led to Harman appearing in court in Bideford (North Devon) where he was accused of having violated the Coinage Act 1870. He was found guilty and was fined £5. However, neither this judgement nor the (somewhat token) fine involved deterred him from further unorthodox activities, one of which was to have considerably greater longevity than his coinage.

Postal services on Lundy, which aggregated and dispersed mail for transport on ferry boats to the Devon coast, began in 1887 but were wound up in 1928 with the closure of the island's post office, leaving the island's small population without mail services. Harman initially covered the cost of a substitute service from his own funds but subsequently sought to cover costs and increase revenue to the island by introducing Lundy postage stamps (Figures 2, 3 and 5). Considered by the British GPO (General Post Office) as effectively private stamps, they were initially only permitted to be placed on the rear of envelopes (rather than on the side bearing the letter's delivery address).



Figure 2 – Lundy 22 'puffin' stamp (undated)

Despite the GPO's prescriptions on their use, the stamps nevertheless attracted considerable interest from philatelists with coverage in philatelic publications tending to be somewhat fanciful. As John Stanard identified in *Stamps Magazine* in 1938:

*Shortly after the Puffin stamps first appeared, almost every leading English philatelic journal published articles concerning the new stamps, and, in most cases this data was incorrect. Mr. Harman was charged with trying to make himself a "King."* (1938/2011: 4)

An example of such claims was an item published by the Littleton Stamp Company, (based in Littleton, New Hampshire [USA]) in the 1930s (Figure 3) that combined reproductions of early stamps with an account of the earlier court proceedings around coinage (including invented quotations and factual inaccuracies) within a satirical frame.



**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!








**LITTLETON STAMP CO., Littleton, N. H.**

Figure 3 – Littleton Stamp Company document (1930s)<sup>6</sup>



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Rebutting claims such as those made in the Littleton leaflet, Stanard argued that:

*Martin Coles Harman is a loyal British subject, with not the slightest desire to be a “King” but with a keen desire to have the right to do as he pleases with his private property. Visitors to Lundy are received as welcome guests and as it is an expensive matter to receive the thousands of visitors. F. W. Gade, postmaster at Lundy, extends to visiting philatelists every courtesy and he fills mail orders for collectors at the face value of the stamps, plus postage. (1938/2011: 4-5)*

Despite the controversy and the misrepresentations of Harman’s actions noted above, the stamps continued to be produced over the next three decades and their modest, unremarkable designs continued to attract philatelists and also provided tourists with a distinct island souvenir and an unusual mail item to send to friends and relatives.

As well as coinage and stamps, Harman also sought to give his island a distinctive image through flags. The plural reference in the latter refers to a succession of designs that were used. A survey of the flags and flagpoles of Lundy published in 1989 provides the following account

*Mr Harman had firm views on the status of Lundy in relation to the United Kingdom and about 1932 had a special Lundy flag made which consisted of a white background with a blue border and a large capital 'L' in red carried centrally. This flag was flown on special island occasions, such as visits by Martin Harman to his island, and on September 11th each year when the island, nearing the end of the holiday season was 'en fete'... On Royal Occasions the island flag would re flown together with the Union Flag. (Langham, 1989: 13)*

Langham’s account is significant for its assertion of Harman’s perception of Lundy having a special status (despite there being no recognition of this within the British constitution and/or laws pertaining to it) and with regard to its mention of the island flag being flown alongside the Union flag, implying some degree of equivalent status.

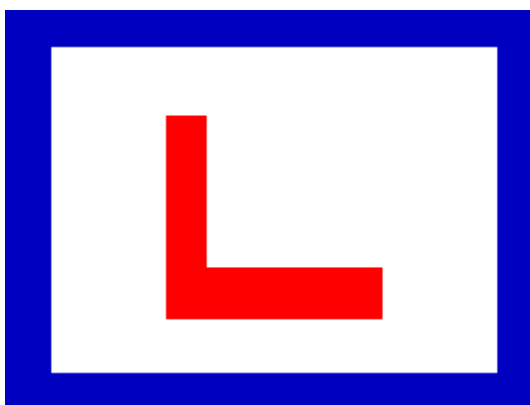


Figure 4 - Rendition of 1st Lundy Island flag design by André Coutanche (source: <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/gb-en-lu.html#lun1>)



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When the fabric of the aforementioned (single) flag deteriorated at some time in the mid-late 1930s, it was replaced by one of another design, featuring the iconic island puffin on a white ground with an outer blue and inner red border (ibid). When this (again, single) flag deteriorated it was, somewhat surprisingly, replaced by an Icelandic flag in possession of the Harman family. Langham has interpreted the use of a foreign flag “as a gesture of the island's independence” and noted that it was still “flown on occasion after the war ended in 1945” (ibid). The island's final official flag was first flown in 1954 and comprised a large white 'L' on a blue background and was flown on special occasions and when representatives of Trinity House visited. Langham has speculated that the flying of the 'L flag' during the latter visits may have been “to remind visitors that Trinity House had control merely over the lighthouses and their immediate surroundings, and that the rest of the island was quite different” (ibid). Following the island's acquisition by the Landmark Trust the flying of local flags diminished with the default option being the English St. George's Cross. Although the flags flown to represent the island may have varied, the use of these flags can be understood as symbolic assertions of Lundy's distinction - and/or a degree of imagined autonomy - from its parent nation.

While Harman's period of ownership saw little concerted development of the island, his seigneurship promoted the representation of Lundy as a distinct locale with distinct natural assets. Along with the stamps that supported this image externally he also supported the establishment and operation of a local research organisation, the Lundy Field Society, which began operating in 1946 with an office in the island's old lighthouse building. Initially convened to study the island's bird life, the Society subsequently expanded its scope to all aspects of Lundy's history.<sup>7</sup>

Upon Harman's death in 1954, an obituary published by the Lundy Field Society summarised his personality and influence on island life in the following terms:

*He seemed to have retained his youthful capacity for excitement and adventure, and it manifested itself in his jealous guardianship of, and pride in, his small kingdom under the shadow of the larger Britain... It was this which made Lundy so charming a place; for his benevolent autocracy brooked few of the restrictions which hem round our mainland lives.*  
(Harvey, 1954: 4-5)

The stamps Harman introduced remain his most visible legacy in terms of providing and publicising an impression of the island as significantly autonomous. The latter aspects were aided by developments subsequent to his death, as the GPO allowed Lundy stamps to be placed on the address side of postcards in 1974, with the proviso that they were not positioned directly adjacent to the relevant British stamp that ensured passage through the mainland GPO system. In 1992 this allowance was extended to all mail, giving the Lundy stamp equal prominence alongside the national one and giving it increased philatelic legitimacy. The promotional aspect of this is not inconsiderable given that around 40,000 mail items are currently dispatched from Lundy each year bearing the local stamps. (Landmark Trust, nd: online)

Since 1929 close to 350 distinct stamps have been designed and issued, with many of the earlier ones regarded as rare items that command considerable sums in philatelic circles. While the earliest stamps were modest in design, featuring the iconic puffin

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profile, designs for later stamps were more complex and striking, mirroring general developments in the international stamp trade (see Figure 5, for instance). While there has been some debate as to the Lundy stamps' legitimacy,<sup>8</sup> the considerable interest in their history has resulted in a number of publications addressing Lundy's philatelic and postal history,<sup>9</sup> and these, in turn, have reinforced Lundy's distinct island 'brand' (see Khamis, 2011).



Figure 5 – 35 puffin stamp (undated)

### III. Fantasy Island

Since the acquisition of the island by the Landmark Trust in 1969 Lundy has been administered as a successful environmental tourism destination that has been free from attempts to establish 'temporary autonomous zones' and/or micronations of the type discussed above. But despite this, the island's history of witnessing such endeavours has resulted in its entry into one of the latest manifestations of micronationality, the virtual/fictional creation of micronations by individuals with little or no connection with and/or tenable claims on the territories in question. These micronations are Internet entities that exist solely in the form of entries on sites such as MicroWiki and in this regard might usefully be distinguished from conventional micronational ventures that have some tangible association with and/or physical manifestation in a nominated physical place. These Internet entities are effectively 'virtual micronations'. MicroWiki identifies itself on its webpage as "the largest online encyclopaedia about micronations" (MicroWiki main webpage), defining the latter as "small and often rather eccentric nations that are unrecognized by the wider national community" (ibid). While accurate, to a degree, this description is somewhat disingenuous in that many of the virtual micronations it includes only exist *through* their listings on MicroWiki (and/or have only been written into being as a result of the encyclopaedia's existence as a repository of such fantasies). The founders' US patent application for the software designed for their "encyclopedia" appropriately refers to it as "a crowd sourced system for intangible assets" (Lee and Lee, 2013: online). The site might best be understood as a type of fantasy 'gaming' service where users can visit and attempt interaction with various virtual micronations. In some cases the 'gaming' extends to interactions between various claimants in forms of virtual diplomacy and/or conflict. In some regards, parallels can be drawn to what Bey characterised as the "information network that

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spanned the globe” in the 16th and 17th centuries (facilitating pirate enterprises and the establishment of “temporary autonomous zones” [1985: 1] on islands and other remote locations) - in that both networks providing strategic spaces for autonomist expressions.

MicroWiki includes an entry on an entity entitled the ‘New Kingdom of Lundy’ (henceforth referred to as ‘NKL’) that identifies it as a ‘restoration’ of Lundy undertaken by one Levi Newman in 2011. As a section of the page makes apparent, the island’s (actual) history of quasi-micronationalism provided the pretext for the new virtual entity. Indeed, Newman has identified that he undertook considerable research into Lundy’s history and “found that it had a good case for independence” (personal communication 28.1.15). A sidebar also identifies NKL as having retained Harman’s puffin coinage as its currency. Along with other fanciful discussions of topics such as the language of NKL (specified as English, Dutch and Lundian-English<sup>10</sup>), the site includes a short history of the virtual micronation and its interaction with other virtual micronational entities:

*In 2011 the nation of Lundy was restored, but under a personal union with Xonbia, a nation made by Levi Newman. Whilst under this personal union, Xonbia expanded its borders via claims to isolated islands, and adopted the national political idea of Socialism. Though most of the island claims would be lost after Xonbia's disillusion, the ideology of socialism was never truly lost. Xonbia was annexed to Lundy on March 26th 2012, and the supreme dominance of the Xonbian colonies by Lundy was proclaimed on the 28th. Socialism in Lundy went into decline due to a lack of interest. It was instead replaced with Liberalism. However Socialism did make a brief comeback, when Marc Spisenbergen started a coup, and appointed himself Prime minister. Due to his imperialistic tendencies he was overthrown, but never replaced. After falling into stagnation for a number of months, Miles Pressland, the leader of the Sorrenian Federation was elected into the office of Premier. He then petitioned for extended powers, called the "Enabling Act", which gave him powers similar to a petty dictator, under the watchful eye of the monarch, Levi Newman. Mr Pressland used these extended powers to launch a new program called "Bright Future", which aimed to save Lundy from stagnation, and extend it. This began by advertising the Facebook page, in order to extend the number of people who could see the news. In mid-2012 Lundy's King Levi Newman claimed the Belgian enclave in Barle Nassu. Lundy also claims a small station in Barnstaple. (Punctuation condensed from the original.)*

The other virtual micronations referred in the above passage also have separate entries and ‘histories’ on MicroWiki and the individuals referred to are ‘players’ in the online encyclopaedic space, which generates labyrinthine interactions and narrative threads. The reference to the Facebook page (which refers to the NKL as simply as ‘The Kingdom of Lundy’) represents the extension of the NKL’s operation outside of MicroWiki and features a wide number of posts from Newman including one that purports to be a recording of the NKL National Anthem (which is played by a brass ensemble over a graphic of the national flag - Figure 6), reproductions of NKL bank notes (in puffin denominations), a ‘situations vacant’ advertisement for the position of head of foreign affairs and a citizenship application form.

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The NKL's MicroWiki and Facebook presences share two key elements with the majority of other fanciful micronational entities constituted on MicroWiki and other online services. The first is that the NKL was not established as an online manifestation of any actual I micronational impulse in the location that provides the geographical referent for its identity. In the NKL's case there is some slight form of association as the NKL's online 'monarch' has personal association with the North Devon area as both he and his father grew up in the West Country (personal correspondence 23.1.15) but such personal connections to nominal geographical places are neither necessary nor commonplace on MicroWiki.) The second is that the NKL is perceived with bemused disinterest by the inhabitants of and/or authorities in the actual place that provides its physical referent. When contacted for an opinion on the NKL's online existence, Derek Green, the General Manager of the Lundy Company, identified that:

*We have seen this website and related material previously... and have tended to ignore it as the work of someone with a rather vivid imagination. As such it doesn't really hold any interest for us.* (personal correspondence 24.1.15)

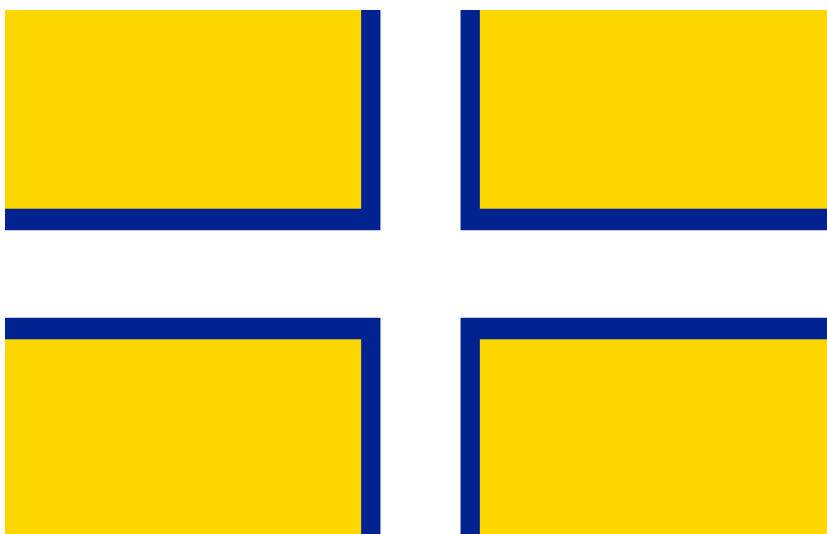


Figure 6 – Flag of the online 'Kingdom of Lundy' (source: Kingdom of Lundy Facebook page)

### Conclusion

As will be apparent from Sections I and II of this article, Lundy's particular geographical location, combined with the weakness of the English/British government's control over the nation's western fringes at various times, has facilitated the emergence of a number of quasi-micronationalist ventures on the island. Indeed, many aspects of Harmer's early 20th Century efforts to promulgate a distinct identity for Lundy also directly prefigure the more recent international imagination of micronations. Lundy's particular history has also provided the pretext for the generation of the virtual micronation of the NKL on the Internet. This entity is both distinctly different from the fleeting quasi-micronational regimes that have manifested themselves on the island and is

fundamentally akin to them by virtue of its claims for autonomy and its representation of this through symbols. While there may be no local roots to its virtual form, the NKL's MicroWiki site and Facebook page represent aspects of the island in a new, fictional context that has been substantially inspired by the factual and folkloric histories of the island.

Thanks to Derek Green, Will Heaven and Levi Newman for their assistance with research for this article.

#### Endnotes:

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<sup>1</sup> The highest population being 200+ during the short-lived quarry operation in the 1860s (Ternstrom, 2010: 125).

<sup>2</sup> See Thomas (1997) for an extended discussion of historical names for Lundy.

<sup>3</sup> The island is mentioned in the *Orkneyinga Saga* (section 118), where it is identified as a place of refuge for Swein Asleifson, an Orkneyman of Norwegian origin fleeing conflict in his home islands around the 11th Century. As Harfield (1997: 39) recounts:

*In the spring and summer of that year [1140], Hold - a chief from Wales-used the island as a base from which to plunder the Scandinavian settlements on the Isle of Man in retaliation for earlier raids on the Welsh coast. The Vikings of Man, under the leadership of Svein Asleifarson, besieged Hold on Lundy but to no avail, returning to the Isle of Man in the autumn. The following year Holdboldi, who had taken part in the raids on Wales with Svein, revolted against him and sought refuge on Lundy, being welcomed there by Hold.*

<sup>4</sup> The archivist's note to the De Vere Papers states that: "Sir Vere Hunt planted in the island a small, self-contained Irish colony with its own constitution and divorce laws, coinage and stamps" – a statement identical to that on Lundy's Wikipedia page (<en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lundy#18th\_and\_19th\_centuries>). We have not been able to find evidence that corroborates this claim. However, since postage stamps were not introduced to the UK (or anywhere else) until 1840 (with the introduction of the 'Penny Black'), it is possible that this note references later owners' actions and attitudes (as discussed in subsequent sections of this article).

<sup>5</sup> Thanks to Gary Wilson for elaborating this point (personal correspondence March 5th 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Source:

mw.micronation.org/w/images/8/8c/319766\_248663895240514\_331694956\_n.jpg - accessed January 22nd 2015

<sup>7</sup> See the Lundy Field Society website for a detailed history of their establishment and early operation: [www.lundy.org.uk/lfs/history.html](http://www.lundy.org.uk/lfs/history.html) - accessed January 22nd 2015.

<sup>8</sup> It is notable in this regard that the Lundy stamps are included as examples of “stamps from issuers not recognized as official, including local posts, breakaway republics, micronations, and places that exist nowhere except in the mind of the stamp creator” in the Zymoglyphic philatelic collection (along with stamps from disputed autonomous territories such as Biafra and Republik Maluku Selatan) – see: [www.zymoglyphic.org/stamps.html](http://www.zymoglyphic.org/stamps.html) - accessed January 22nd 2015.

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, Newman (1984).

<sup>10</sup> NB “Lundian-English” is an entirely fictional language; the limited continuity of settlement on Lundy has not facilitated the development of any local language.

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