

Essays for a Possible 1986

H.M.S. Montagu Commemorative Set - A New Find?

By André Dufresne

In the Summer 2006 edition of *The New Puffin Journal*, there was an interesting article by James Thomas titled "The 2006 Montagu Stamps Issue". James showed a set of essays prepared by John Dyke presumably in 1985, for a set of Lundy stamps to be issued in 1986 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the grounding of the famous ship. For the sake of convenience, these essays are reproduced as illustration 1. James goes on to say that there are three designs and that one of the designs is in three different colours (actually, they are all the same colour, blue, but printed on different coloured papers: white, yellow and blue). To complete the picture, they are perforated 11.5, are ungummed and the image size is 38 to 38.5 mm x 27 to 27.5 mm for the horizontal designs and 27 to 27.5 mm x 38 to 38.5 mm for the vertical designs. For the sake of this article, I will refer to the top row of stamps as numbers 1 and 2, and the three bottom stamps as 3, 4 and 5.

I have in my collection three of these stamps with a small puffin printed in metallic ink. They are all in the vertical design of the bottom row stamps. One is similar to stamp no. 5 but it has a small puffin overprinted in red metallic ink in the upper-left corner. The second one is similar to stamp number 4, and again it has a small puffin overprinted in red metallic ink in the upper-left corner. The last one is similar to number 5, and it has a small silver puffin overprinted in metallic ink in the upper-right corner (see illustration no. 2).

I do not remember having read anything else on these essays. They are briefly mentioned in Jon Aitchison's 6th edition of his "Stamps and Postal History of Lundy Island", page 156, where he states "Original sketches and designs by John Dyke exist, originally prepared for the 75th and 80th anniversaries", but these essays are not illustrated in the catalogue.

Now, from what little information we have, let's make a hypothesis: there are three designs all printed in blue, on three different coloured papers: white, yellow and blue. It makes a possible total of nine different stamps. If they all exist with the red puffin overprint and the silver puffin overprint, it would make a total of 27 different essays.

Can any reader report what he or she has? I have essays 1, 3 and 5 as illustrated in James' article, plus essay 4 with red overprint and essay 5 with red overprint and with silver overprint. If we add the two essays (nos. 2 & 4) that I don't have but are illustrated in James' article, so far we have eight different essays. Are there any others out there? Can we verify that there are indeed 27 different essays?



Illustration 1



Illustration 2