

‘THIS EXCELLENT MAN ...’: KRISTJÁN MAGNÚSSON, MARTIN COLES HARMAN AND PAINTINGS OF LUNDY

by

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ABSTRACT

Kristján Helgi Magnússon (1903-1937) was an Icelandic artist who studied in the U.S.A. and worked in Iceland, the U.S. and the U.K. In spring 1931 he lived and painted on Lundy. My paper in 2016 described what was then known of these events. Subsequent significant discoveries and collaborative work with Icelandic researchers now provide much more detail and a broader context for the artist's work on Lundy. The relationship between Kristján Magnússon and Martin Coles Harman is explored. More of the Lundy paintings have been located and are described here.

Keywords: *Kristján Magnússon, Lundy, Iceland, art history*

INTRODUCTION

My paper in the 2016 *Journal of the Lundy Field Society* described what could be discovered then about the paintings of Lundy done by Kristján Magnússon in 1931 at the behest of the then owner of Lundy, Martin Coles Harman (MCH). Two subsequent developments have transformed our knowledge of what happened in 1931 and made possible and necessary this updated account. One was the discovery of a file of papers relating to Kristján Magnússon (KHM) in the archives of Martin Coles Harman. The other was the publication of the 2016 paper on the website of the Lundy Field Society (LFS) which resulted in two contacts. One contact led to the location of a 'lost' painting and the other led to an extremely fruitful collaboration with an Icelandic researcher who had been commissioned to write a major book on the artist's life and work. Work has also continued to try to trace more of the Lundy paintings and the number of them now documented has gone from two in 2016 to nine now.

THE ARCHIVE FILE

When MCH died in 1954, his son, Albion Harman, continued to operate his own business interests from the same office at 65 Broad Street Avenue, London, E.C.2. When Albion died in 1968, the documents and files from that office were moved to the 'box room' of Diana Keast (MCH's younger daughter) and her husband's flat in Marlborough. When Diana moved to a residential home, all the material was put into storage. In 2020, it became necessary to vacate the storage facility and a group of LFS members volunteered to help sort the material and ensure its conservation in an appropriate place – the British Library for the philatelic material and the North Devon

Record Office for other historically important Lundy-related material. One of the files in the archive related to MCH's dealings with Kristján Magnússon. It contained carbon copies of Harman's letters to KHM and originals of KHM's letters to Harman. There were also letters to and from galleries which exhibited the artist's work and internal memoranda and lists of paintings. All this has enabled answers to questions raised in the 2016 paper which could only be speculated about then. It has also illuminated the relationship between Harman and the artist. They clearly became friends, while maintaining a business relationship in which both parties appreciated the value of money.

All the material in the file has been scanned at 400dpi and is available for future researchers on the LFS website at <https://www.lundy.org.uk/journal-9-resources>. Each document has been given a number; where a document has more than one page, the scans of the individual pages are suffixed with 'a', 'b' etc. References to these documents are shown in this paper in square brackets, e.g. [075a]. The original documents have been deposited at North Devon Record Office.

THE ICELANDIC CONNECTION

Rakel Olsen is the daughter-in-law of the sister of Kristján Magnússon's wife, Klara. She collects KHM's work and believes that he is seriously neglected and under-appreciated in Iceland. She commissioned Einar Falur Ingólfsson, a writer, photographer and artist, to research Kristján Magnússon's life and works. Rakel Olsen had found my 2016 paper on the LFS website and Einar Ingólfsson e-mailed me to ask whether any more of the Lundy paintings had been discovered since then.

We have been co-operating since May 2023. I have supplied him with all the information from the Harman archive file, which includes almost all of the known surviving letters from Kristján Magnússon, and he has discovered a newspaper reference to an unknown painting of Lundy being shown in 1932 in Reykjavík and found a 'new' Lundy painting owned by a member of the artist's family in Canada. His broader researches into KHM's life and career also provide valuable background information and context for the Lundy visit.

A major book about the life and work of Kristján Magnússon by Einar Ingólfsson (editions in both Icelandic and English) was published in May 2025, coinciding with an exhibition about the artist's work ('Kristján H. Magnússon Revisited') held at the Icelandic National Gallery in Reykjavík.

ICELANDIC PERSONAL NAMES AGAIN

I noted in my 2016 paper that to call Kristján Magnússon 'Magnússon' or 'Mr Magnússon' made no sense in an Icelandic context (though he was used to being addressed in that way in the U.S. or U.K.). Icelanders are properly addressed simply by their given names.

As a matter of courtesy, therefore, I shall refer in this paper to the artist as 'Kristján' or by his initials, KHM, and I shall refer to my fellow researcher Einar Ingólfsson as 'Einar'.

MARTIN COLES HARMAN AND KRISTJÁN MAGNÚSSON

As described in the 2016 paper, MCH and Kristján met when Harman visited an exhibition of paintings of Iceland put on by KHM at the Alpine Club Gallery in London in September 1930. We have no documents to explain why and how KHM came to London and arranged this exhibition, but Einar Ingólfsson's research into the artist has shown that he was enterprising and ready to take initiatives to get his work seen – and sold. For example, when an exhibition was held in Stockholm in autumn 1932 of works by Icelandic artists, the Icelandic art 'establishment' which selected the paintings excluded anything by Kristján. Undaunted, he travelled to Stockholm and found and rented premises to show his paintings independently of the official exhibition.

The contemporary newspaper articles following the Alpine Club exhibition in 1930 report that MCH invited KHM to dinner and the theatre, and the idea of painting on Lundy had obviously been raised in conversations between them because the first letter in the archive [001] is from the artist to Harman with a proposition to that effect.

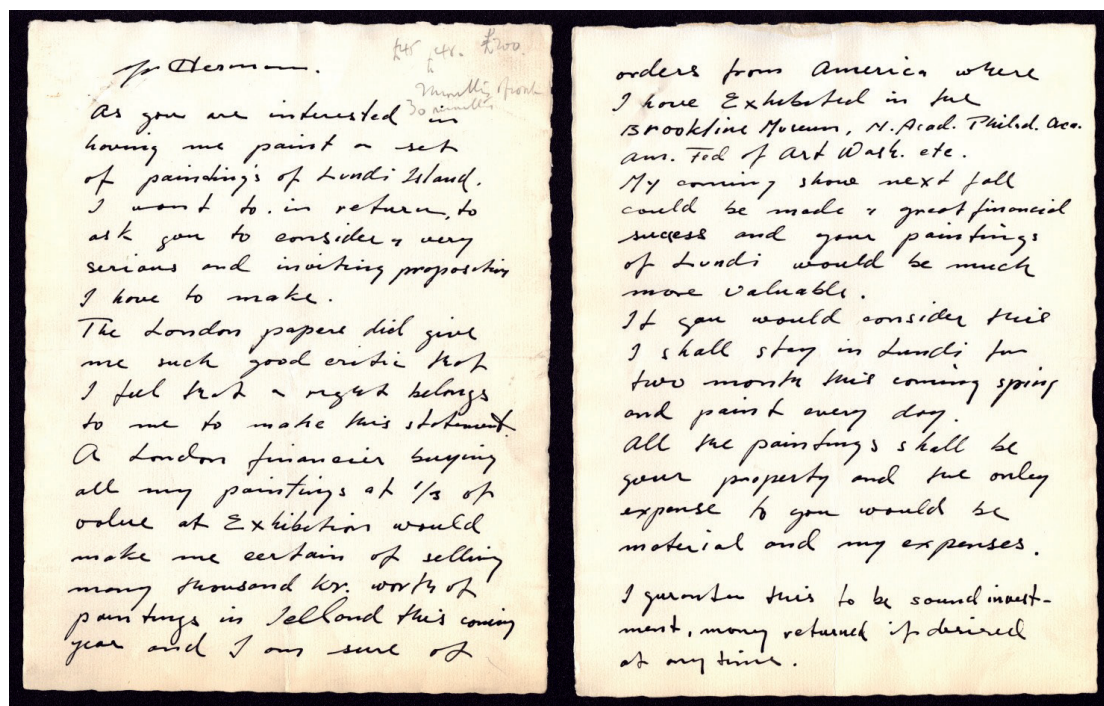


Plate 1: Letter from Kristján Magnússon to MCH proposing a deal [001]

The letter is undated and handwritten, and Kristján's English, while not quite perfect, is as excellent as would be expected from someone who had worked and studied in the U.S. It may be that a final page has been lost, because the letter isn't signed, though it might have been an informal note in response to a request from Harman for a proposal.

The next document in the archive [002] is formal. It is dated, typewritten and signed by Kristján Magnússon and is the contract between the artist and his patron. It also shows that the friendship between the two men was independent of their relationship as businessmen; MCH has 'beaten down' KHM's initial prices by £100.

In 2016 I speculated that the deal between them meant that the Lundy paintings automatically became Harman's property. This is now confirmed, and the contract also covers the paintings of Iceland from the Alpine Club exhibition, many of which were ultimately returned to KHM. Kristján is guaranteeing to deliver 30 paintings from Lundy; he actually delivered 32, illustrating the good self-employed businessman's maxim: don't undercharge – overdeliver. Note that he is committing to 30 paintings in two months (and offering to stay longer to meet the commitment if the weather is too bad to paint every day). This is consistent with what is known of his work in Iceland and North America; he was very prolific. However, Einar Ingólfsson's research has discovered that, while meeting his commitment in full, Kristján didn't deliver *all* his Lundy paintings to MCH. In a review in a short-lived Reykjavík newspaper, the reporter writes about an exhibition of 30 paintings Kristján Magnússon mounted in a Reykjavík restaurant in June 1932, the year after his Lundy adventure. The reviewer writes: 'Best þykir mér lítil mynd frá Lundy – eyju í Írlandshafi' – 'The best one is a small painting

from Lundy – an island in the Irish Sea’ (Einar’s translation). And another Lundy painting now belongs to a member of the extended family in Canada. These two – and we have no way of knowing if there were more – were perhaps brought from Lundy on rolled-up canvases and were retained by the artist either as personal mementos or as additional sales material.

Another exchange of letters in 1931/1932 illustrates the mix of business and genuine friendship which characterised the relationship between MCH and Kristján Magnússon. On 5 December 1931, Harman wrote to the artist [043] while he was back in Iceland. The primary subject is a planned exhibition of KHM’s paintings of Iceland in Hull, but MCH adds a personal request: he refers to a painting of Mount Hekla which Kristján had exhibited at the Fine Art Society and asks to acquire it as a ‘swap’ against some of the paintings of Iceland which MCH had already bought. Kristján replies on 20 December 1931 [046] saying that he probably has a buyer in Iceland for the painting of Mount Hekla and makes a counter-offer: if Harman pays him before the end of January the £140 which is still outstanding under their agreement, he will paint ‘a fine painting’ of Hekla which will cost Harman nothing. (Kristján had to press Harman several times to pay what he owed; the recession was starting to bite and MCH, like other businessmen, was short of cash). Harman replied on 4 January 1932 [047], thanking Kristján fulsomely for his generous offer and concluding:

‘I am going to ask you one emphatic question, and that is this: Are you thoroughly satisfied that you have been decently treated by me? I think you will say ‘yes’ but I should like to have it on record.

‘Had times not been so very difficult I should have liked to have done more than I have done. You on your part have been simply splendid and have done everything that you said that you would do.’

The £140 was not paid in January, and settlement was not reached until November 1932 [054]. However, MCH didn’t forget about a painting of Hekla; on 12 June 1933 [058] he wrote to Kristján to raise the subject again. On 1 August 1933 [059], KHM replied, saying that he would paint the picture for Harman ‘sometime during next winter’ – but asking for help in finding a loan of £500 to build a studio in Reykjavík. As one businessman to another, Kristján calls it an ‘Icelandic real estate investment’. There is no evidence that the painting of Hekla was ever done or a loan arranged.

In another file in the archive, relating to philatelic matters, there is a letter from MCH to Antoine Medawar, a stamp dealer who marketed Lundy stamps in the 1950s. Harman is referring to the forthcoming launch of a stamp issue in 1953. He writes:

‘My family have a number of paintings of Lundy by Kristjan Magnusson, the Icelandic artist who died in 1934. [*sic* - he died in 1937]

‘This excellent man had a studio in Reykjavik and another in Boston, Mass.

‘I wonder whether it would assist Mr. Gade if he had some of these pictures of Lundy with him?

‘I am trying to find out whether Magnusson’s pictures have any considerable value in Boston.’

(Felix Gade was MCH’s agent on Lundy and was clearly involved in the stamp launch). Sixteen years after Kristján’s death, Martin Coles Harman is simultaneously remembering him with admiration and trying to make money out of him.

KRISTJÁN MAGNÚSSON'S EXHIBITIONS IN THE U.K.

In the 2016 paper, two exhibitions were known: the September 1930 Alpine Club exhibition of paintings of Iceland, where Kristján and MCH met, and the Fine Art Society exhibition in November 1931 which showed many of the Lundy paintings and some more of Iceland. As a result of letters in MCH's archive, contacting the art galleries and further newspaper archive research, five exhibitions can now be identified:

September 1930: Alpine Club, London (paintings of Iceland)

December 1930: Alpine Club, London (Iceland)

November 1931: Fine Art Society, London (Lundy and Iceland)

January-March 1932: Ferens Art Gallery, Hull (Iceland)

October 1936: Cooling Galleries, London (Iceland).

The Cooling Galleries no longer exist, but the other three galleries have been very helpful in searching their archives for exhibition catalogues. The Alpine Club could not find a catalogue for the original exhibition in September 1930 but had one for a subsequent exhibition the following December, where six of Kristján's paintings of Iceland were shown as part of a mixed exhibition by various artists. Fortunately, the catalogue for the Fine Art Society exhibition exists. Twenty of the 32 paintings of Lundy which Kristján delivered to Harman were shown, along with 39 paintings of Iceland.

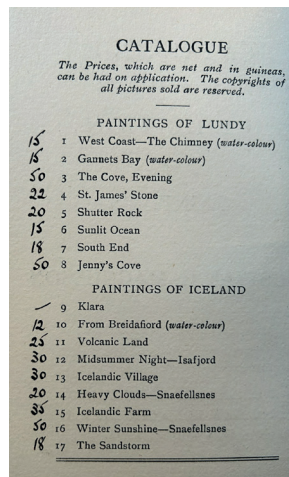
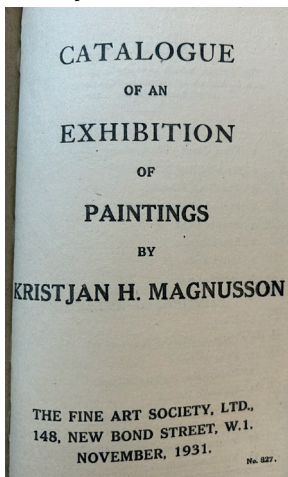
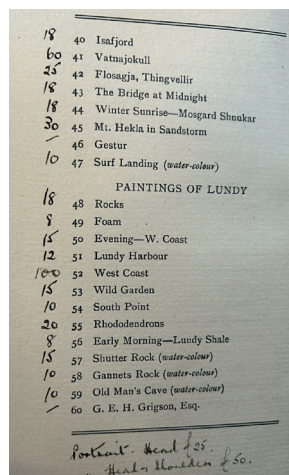
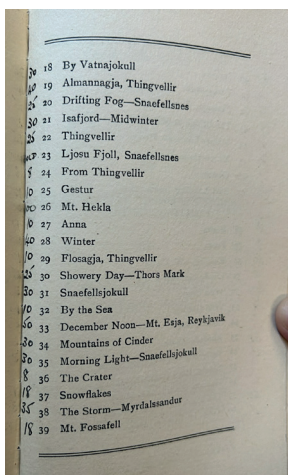


Plate 3: The catalogue for the exhibition at the Fine Art Society Gallery in November 1931



The Gallery cannot explain the entry for painting no. 60, a portrait of the poet, author and critic, Geoffrey Grigson, nor the handwritten annotation for portrait painting. The figures added in ink to the left of each painting are the asking prices in guineas. The Gallery have confirmed that there was scope for negotiation in these prices, but if they have records for actual pieces sold and prices achieved, such information would still be regarded as commercially confidential and not released. One painting stands out as having a significantly higher price than the others, no. 52, 'West Coast', at 100 guineas. Other documents in the archive refer to a 'larger' or 'very big' painting with this title being sold for £70. This may reflect a negotiated reduction in the price or it may be simply the result of the Gallery's commission: 100 guineas less one-third is £70.

THE PAINTINGS: WHAT WE KNOW NOW

In 2016 I had essentially one primary source of information for the Lundy paintings: a notebook maintained by Martin Coles Harman with a page for each painting showing the serial number given to it by MCH, its title, and its whereabouts. There was also a typewritten sheet cross-referencing the exhibition catalogue number with Harman's numbering system. The documents in the archive file add considerably to this information. There are several lists of paintings, both of Lundy and of Iceland, produced by Harman's staff. Unfortunately, these are not dated and there are inconsistencies between different lists. There is also at least one downright error, where painting L63 is listed as being 8"×10" (20cm×25cm). Painting L63 is now known and documented and is 50.8cm×19.8cm. Nevertheless, it is possible to cross-check various documents in the file and arrive at a highly likely summary which describes all 32 paintings – see Table 1.

One source of information relates to the framing of the paintings. Kristján had brought the paintings of Iceland to London already framed – he carved and made his own frames and his wife, Klara, helped with this. However, there wasn't time for them to make frames for the Lundy paintings before the exhibition so Harman was obliged to pay the Gallery to provide suitable frames [025]. [036] is the invoice from the Gallery to MCH, listing all the Lundy paintings by their catalogue number, and [037] is a Statement from the Gallery which is heavily and usefully annotated with Harman's own reference number for each painting, its name and a note against the two paintings sold at the exhibition and what they fetched. MCH had to pay a total of £38 3s 6d for framing (mounting and framing for the watercolours).

This list tells us definitively which paintings were watercolours and which were oils, and it also gives a clue to the size of a painting. Two different types of frame are known for the oil paintings, one relatively simple in a vaguely art deco style (L54 and L68), and one more ornate in a traditional art gallery style (L76 and L79). We cannot be certain whether more styles were used, but the cost of frames seems to separate into just two categories, with the higher price band correlating with the known 'ornate' frames and the lower price with the 'simple' ones. If this is correct, then one can expect for each price band a larger painting to have cost more to frame than a smaller one.

The two paintings which were known in 2016 – then and still now hanging in Millcombe House on Lundy – were not then possible to identify by title, catalogue number or MCH's number. This has now changed, and they and the others which have subsequently been discovered can be positively identified – see Table 1.

Some identifications are immediate and unambiguous because Martin Coles Harman stuck a label to the back of each painting with his number, preceded by an 'L' (for 'Lundy'; the paintings of Iceland were preceded with an 'I'). One of the Millcombe paintings has such a label, so we now know that the painting of 'The Sentinels' with part of Rat Island in the background is called simply – and unhelpfully – 'Rocks'. The other painting in Millcombe also has a label, but it is torn and only the letter 'L' remains.



Plate 4: The label on the back of L54

If a painting has lost its label, then its subject can sometimes identify it. The other Millcombe painting is an oil of Shutter Rock, and the lists in the archive show two paintings of the Shutter; the oil is L76 and the watercolour is L75. The watercolour of Shutter Rock has also now been discovered, so both paintings can be allocated their correct numbers.

Other paintings can be identified depending on whether or not they have a frame, and were therefore in the Fine Art Gallery exhibition, and their size. As mentioned above, a (fallible) note of the sizes of some paintings exists in the archive and cost of framing in a particular style of frame indicates size. On that basis, the painting of Rat and Mouse Islands has been identified as L79, called simply 'South End' in the exhibition catalogue.

L80 ('Lundy Harbour') is an oddity because, despite having been in the exhibition, it now has no frame. However, it does still have its label, so there is no doubt. Of the five watercolours, two are now known but they both have had their frames replaced, so we cannot say what type of frame was used for watercolours by the Gallery in 1931.

As well as MCH's notebook listing the paintings of Lundy which was the sole source in 2016, the archive contains documents which have individual references to specific paintings. Table 1 is a greatly expanded version of the Table in the 2016 paper and summarises all the currently known information about the Lundy paintings.

CURRENTLY RECORDED PAINTINGS

Nine paintings of Lundy by Kristján Magnússon are now documented, one of them not listed in Harman's notebook or archive since, as mentioned above, it was not delivered to MCH and remained in the artist's family. As suggested in 2016, some of the newly documented paintings are owned by members of the Harman family, but not all.

In this context, it should be noted that Martin Coles Harman could be very generous about his enthusiasms, sometimes whether the recipients of that generosity wanted it or not. In 1947, MCH arranged for a reprint of 'Some Account of the Island of Lundy' by George Steinman Steinman, an early (1836) account of Lundy which by then had become difficult to access. (See also 'Some Account of George Steinman Steinman' by Alan Rowland in *Journal of the Lundy Field Society*, 2, 2010). In his enthusiasm, MCH had 1000 copies printed. In the years that followed, MCH sent copies of the his reprint *gratis* to anyone who contacted him about Lundy. Similarly for the paintings, the notebook and archive documents show them being given to people who were friends,

acquaintances or business contacts. Where they are now will be very difficult to trace. Even when Harman gave paintings to members of his extended family – his unmarried sister, Beryl Harman, or the sister of his daughter-in-law – any memory of where they are now has been lost.

One painting which ‘escaped’ from the family has been found in circumstances which offer some hope for future discoveries. MCH’s second son, Albion Pennington Harman, trained as a mining engineer and was living with his wife in digs near Barnsley. After war was declared in September 1939, Albion and Kay Harman left their digs – and left behind the painting. When the owner of the digs died, the painting came into the possession of his daughter-in-law and it followed her through decades of house moves, getting a little battered in the process. In November 2019 I received an e-mail from that daughter-in-law’s grandson whom she had asked to investigate the painting. Because my 2016 paper was available on the LFS website, he was able to see that his grandmother’s painting – which was signed ‘Magnusson, Lundy ’31’ – had the same type of frame as one of the paintings in Millcombe. It also had the label ‘L.68’ on the back. Cutting a long and entertaining story short, its owner agreed to sell the painting to me and my wife and we have had it cleaned and restored. One may hope that the internet may make possible future discoveries of ‘lost’ paintings.

Harman’s notebooks show one Lundy painting (‘Gannets Bay’) and one painting of Iceland (‘Hrutafell’) as ‘Given Mr Badley’. John Haden Badley was the founder and headmaster of Bedales School where three of MCH’s four children were educated. Diana Keast remembered the Iceland painting hanging in Mr Badley’s office when she was a pupil. We have no way of knowing whether Mr Badley regarded the paintings as a personal gift or a gift to the school, but the very helpful archivist at the school has confirmed that there are no paintings by Kristján there any more.

Einar Ingólfsson has written other books about Icelandic artists (or foreign artists who worked in Iceland) and one of his techniques is to visit the places painted and take modern photographs of the views in the paintings. In June 2024, he, Rakel Olsen and I, with our partners, visited Lundy, staying in Millcombe House where Kristján and Klara had stayed 93 years earlier. I had tried to take modern photos of the views in the known paintings on an earlier visit but it wasn’t straightforward. Many of the subjects painted are in the south-east corner of the island and the construction in 1999 of the jetty and its access road have changed the topography significantly. One painting (still to be discovered) is of Old Man’s Cave; the new road runs half-way up across its entrance.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Kristján generally painted accurately what was in front of him. The contours and the different colours and textures of the Sentinels in L54, or Mouse Island in L63 or Shutter Rock in L75 and L76, for example, are reproduced in the paintings. However – and Einar has confirmed that this happened in some of KHM’s paintings of Iceland – Kristján took advantage of artistic licence when he regarded it as necessary to improve a composition. It is impossible to reproduce exactly the oil painting of Shutter Rock (L76) in a modern photo as Kristján has moved Black Rock closer to the Shutter so that it appears in the same frame.

Photographs of all the known paintings are on the following pages, with a modern photo of the view where possible and some commentary about what is known of the painting’s history.



Plate 5: L54 'Rocks'
Oil; 59×41cm.
In Millcombe dining room.
One of five paintings sent by
MCH to Lundy in 1932 [055].
Bottom of stretcher has 'The
Property of Mrs Ruth
Pennington Harman Jones
1948' written in pencil



Plate 6: The view in L54
taken in March 2024

Plate 7: L63 'South End'
Oil; 50.8×19.8cm.
Owned by Rose Skeet



Plate 8: The view in L63
taken in March 2024



Plate 9: L68 'Wild Garden'

Oil; 58.5×48.5cm.

Owned by André & Marie Jo Coutanche.

One of five paintings sent by MCH to Lundy in 1932 [055]. Location identified by Diana Keast as below Upper East Side path east of Barton Cottages



Plate 10: The view in L68 taken in June 2024



Plate 11: L73 'West Coast - The Chimney'

Watercolour; 47.1×32.7cm.

Owned by Inez Lunan.

One of five paintings sent by MCH to Lundy in 1932 [055]



Plate 12: L75 'Shutter Rock'

Watercolour; 49.4×35.1 cm.

Owned by Reg Lo-Vel.

One of five paintings sent by MCH to Lundy in 1932 [055].

When the other paintings had returned to the mainland, this one seems to have stayed on Lundy, because it used to hang in Marisco Cottage, the home of Felix and Rene Gade (now part of the Tavern).

Diana Keast had this story about it:

'I only remember the watercolour of "The Shutter Rock" which was in my bedroom in Millcombe when I stayed there in Landmark time. The twin room was next to the bathroom, a back room. Mary Gade was housekeeping at the time. The picture hung above my bed and the cord broke and the picture fell like a guillotine one morning, behind the bed-head, thank goodness. It was taken up to the Office above the Tavern for repair - as glass broken it may have been sent away.'



Plate 13: The view in L75 taken in June 2024

Plate 14: L79 'South End'

Oil; 61×51 cm.

Owned by André & Marie Jo Coutanche.

'Lundy' in pencil on bottom of back of frame.

It is impossible to match this view exactly today. It is easy to position Mouse Island between Rat Island and Lundy but the elevation doesn't work. It may be that Kristján was standing on the bridge which was part of the old path from the Beach Road up to the South Light





Plate 15: L76 'Shutter Rock'. Oil; 61.5×51 cm.
In Millcombe lounge. One of five paintings
sent by MCH to Lundy in 1932 [055]



Plate 16: The view in L76 taken in
June 2024. Note that Black Rock,
shown in the painting, is actually well
off to the right



Plate 17: L80 'Lundy Harbour'. Oil; 51×25cm. Owned by Inez Lunan.
It is possible to frame this view today, but the jetty running out in front of Rat
Island from the Cove makes the comparison of little interest.
This painting used to be owned by Diana Keast. It looks slightly unfinished and
John Dyke offered to paint over it. Diana refused the offer

The next painting is not included in Table 1 because Kristján did not deliver it to Martin Coles Harman. It therefore has no 'L' number. It was traced through Rakel Olsen's connections with the wider family of Kristján and Klara and is in Canada.



Plate 18: The Canadian painting. Oil; 57.8×40cm. Owned by Ella Berry. A striking and attractive painting despite being dirty and in poor shape. It is signed bottom left 'Magnusson Lundy '31'



Plate 19: The view in the Canadian painting taken in June 2024. It isn't exact because Kristján seems to have 'compressed' more than one view point. This is from the northern end of the Earthquake, which is clear in the painting, but from this viewpoint there is less sea visible than in the painting

This final painting by Kristján is not of Lundy but it spent a lot of time on Lundy. It is one of the 'Iceland' paintings bought by MCH at the Alpine Club exhibition in September 1930. It is signed 'Magnusson '30'. It may be the one titled 'Young Fisherman', though the features look rather feminine. There is no label on the back so we cannot identify it unambiguously.

It is not known how this painting arrived on Lundy, but it used to hang in Marisco Cottage, the home of Felix and Rene Gade, in the 1960s (as did L75, the watercolour of Shutter Rock). Rene Gade liked it because the eyes reminded her of Diana Keast's.



Plate 20: 'Young Fisherman'(?]. Oil; 41×51 cm. Privately owned.

PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ABOUT THE NOW KNOWN PAINTINGS

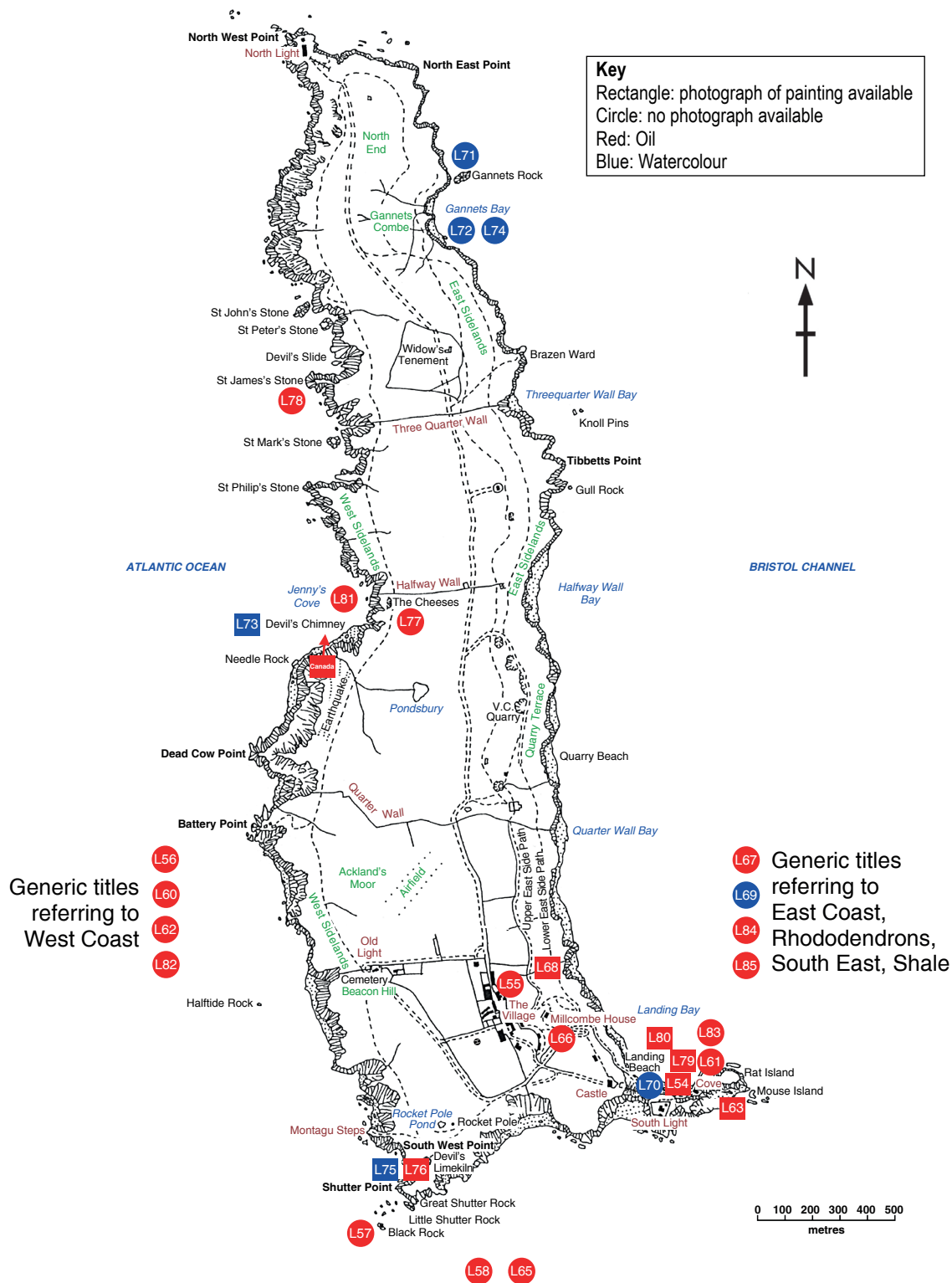
There is nothing in the letters to explain Kristján's choice of subjects – he seems to have had a free hand. He might have felt obliged to paint Millcombe House, his patron's residence, though it might have been an attractive subject anyway; that painting is still to be discovered so we cannot say. Generally speaking, throughout all his work in Iceland and North America, Kristján was drawn to landscapes rather than the built environment, especially the bold and hard landscapes of Iceland which find a softer reflection in Lundy's west coast. However, one might have thought that the Old Light or the (then ruinous) Castle might have attracted him. There is a painting titled 'Lundy Village' but we have no information about it and do not know what it looks like.

As we have seen with 'Young Fisherman', Kristján painted some superb portraits. However, there were no portraits from his and Klara's visit to Lundy, which is a loss. Perhaps he felt that MCH would want his island on his walls rather than his staff.

The map (overleaf) shows where Kristján went on Lundy to paint where that can be identified. Some of the titles are unidentifiable – 'Foam', 'Evening Lights' (though this last is also described in the archive as 'rock on W. coast'). Some titles are generic, but can be broadly placed. As might be expected, there is a cluster of paintings in the south-eastern corner of the island, but Kristján ranged as far north as Gannets Combe. At least one painting – L73, the Devil's Chimney – was painted from the sea. Not surprisingly, this and the Gannets Combe paintings are watercolours, but Kristján (with help from Klara?) carried heavy easels and canvases to Jenny's Cove and St James Stone. Apart from these practical considerations, we do not know why the artist might have chosen one medium or the other.

MAP OF THE ISLAND OF LUNDY

with locations painted by Kristján Magnússon where identifiable (L59 & L64 unidentifiable)



CONCLUSIONS

The story of Kristján and Klara's Lundy adventure is now known in much more detail than it was in 2016. The broader context of the artist's career is now accessible through the research of Einar Ingólfsson which has been made possible by the enthusiasm and support of Rakel Olsen. More of Kristján's paintings of Lundy remain to be discovered and documented, and some may exist outside the U.K. The archive files which underpin this paper are now freely available at the LFS website, where it is hoped they will attract the attention of future researchers. The 'forgotten Lundy artist' of my 2016 paper is now less so and more of his Lundy paintings will hopefully be found in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The late Diana Keast made an essential contribution to this research by keeping safe her father's archives for decades and allowing members of the Lundy Field Society to inspect them and to ensure that they will be properly preserved in future. She also provided me with information about some of the paintings and suggestions for where some of them might be.

Rakel Olsen made possible the research into Kristján Magnússon's life and works and Einar Ingólfsson has been tireless in carrying it out. Einar also took some of the photographs in this paper. Their co-operation and friendship have made this research project so much richer than it otherwise would have been.

I am very grateful to the owners of paintings who have supplied information and allowed photographs to be taken and published. The archivist at Bedales School was very helpful and interested in the research. The Alpine Club, the Fine Art Society and the Ferens Art Gallery have also been keen to help and have provided important primary sources.

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- Coutanche, A. 2016. 'Kristján H. Magnússon: A Forgotten Lundy Artist'. *Journal of the Lundy Field Society*, 5, 109-128.
- File of correspondence between Martin Coles Harman and Kristján Magnússon and other papers relating to the paintings. Deposited at the North Devon Record Office and available on the Lundy Field Society website at <https://www.lundy.org.uk/journal-9-resources>.
- Catalogues of exhibitions held at the Alpine Club, London (December 1930); the Fine Art Society Gallery, London (November 1931); the Ferens Art Gallery, Kingston-upon-Hull (January-March 1932).
- Ingólfsson, Einar Falur, 2025, *Kristján H. Magnússon: Listamaðurinn sem gleymdist*, Veröld, Reykjavík, ISBN 978 9935 30 407 0. In Icelandic.
- Ingólfsson, Einar Falur, 2025, *Kristján H. Magnússon: The Forgotten Artist*, Veröld, Reykjavík, ISBN 978 9935 30 408 7. In English.

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Diana Pennington Keast, who inspired the original research, maintained an encouraging interest in its progress while she lived, and who would have been delighted at how it has developed.

Table 1: Lundy Paintings by Kristján Magnússon delivered to Martin Coles Harman (part 1 of 2)

MCH No.*	Catalogue No. and Title	Apparent Price\$	Medium	Size#	Title of Painting in notebook	Notes in notebook
L54	48 Rocks	18	Oil	59x 41cm	Rock formations (Rocks)	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court, 3.12.1931 With Miss B. Harrison To Miss B Harrison Lundy
L55	[Not in Exhibition]		Oil		Lundy Village	STH? Angel Court
L56	[Not in Exhibition]		Oil		West Coast	[No notes]
L57	[Not in Exhibition]		Oil	9"x12"	Black Rock	S.T.H. March 1934 Given to Mrs Mandly by M.C.H. Nov. 1937
L58	[Not in Exhibition]		Oil	8"x10"	South End	S.T.H. March 1934 Returned + sent to Lundy (Blake) Sept. 1935
L59	49 Foam	8	Oil	10"x10"	Foam	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 S.T.H. March /34
L60	50 Evening–W. Coast	15	Oil		Evening, West Coast	(Burraland) Returned to 11 Angel Court Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 S.T.H. March /34
L61	3 The Cove, Evening	50	Oil		The Cove, Evening	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931
L62	6 Sunlit Ocean	15	Oil		West Coast, Evening	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 Given to W.F. Tipper 4.12.51
L63	[Not in Exhibition]		Oil	50.8x 19.8cm	South End	Exhibition Nov. 1931 [sic] Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 S.T.H. March /34
L64	[Not in Exhibition]		Oil	9"x12"	Evening Lights	Given to Mr Bratby
L65	54 South Point	10	Oil		Evening Lundy Heath South End South Point*	Angel Court
L66	[Not in Exhibition]		Oil		The Villa (Mill Combe)	Burraland Taken to Deans Place (S.T.H.) Returned 11 Angel Court S.T.H. March /34
L67	55 Rhododendrons	20	Oil		Rhododendrons	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Fine Art Society Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 Given to Miss B. Harman
L68	53 Wild Garden	15	Oil	58.5x 48.5cm	East Coast + Flowers	Burraland Returned to 11 Angel Court Exhibition Nov 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 With Miss B. Harman To Mrs Florence Harman Lundy
L69	[Not in Exhibition]		Water- colour	9"x12"	Bit of East Coast	S.T.H. March 1934 Given Miss K Joyce August 1937

*Numbers in notebook not preceded by 'L'; labels on paintings have 'L'; Numbers in **red** are on the actual paintings
 \$from hand annotations in Catalogue (guineas) #Measured canvas size for L54, L68, L76 and L79. Visible size in mount for L75. L73
 estimated from photo and e-mail from owner. Others from [072a]. In centimetres for measured sizes; in inches for reported sizes in archive.

Other information	Cost of frame from [037]	Type of frame	Current Owner/ Location
Sent to Lundy November 1932 [055] Bottom of stretcher has 'The Property of Mrs Ruth Pennington Harman Jones 1948' written in pencil	£1 7s 6d	Simple	Millcombe (dining room)
Given to Mr Birmingham [065]			
Very small (9"x12") on cardboard**			
Small (8"x10") S. Light in upper edge**			
Small (10"x10")** Between 2 large rocks+	17s 6d		
	£1 7s 6d		
Miss ?Binns [065]	£3 15s 0d		
	£1 7s 6d		
Small (8"x10") [sic] SE rocks in sunshine. Similar to a canvas of same rocks and a bit of Rat Island on left**		None	Rose Skeet
Rock on W. Coast with glow on sea 9"x12" canvas on cardboard**			
'?L63'+	19s 0d		
Unframed†			
Given by MCH to Dee, sister of Kay Harman (née Bloxham). Other paintings also with Dee†	£3 0s 0d		
Sent to Lundy November 1932 [055] Titled 'Wild Garden - East Coast'+	£1 7s 6d	Simple	André & Marie Jo Coutanche
Watercolour 9"x12"***			



*from typewritten sheet **from [072a] m & f for watercolours = mounted and framed

†Diana Keast *pers. comm.*

Table 1: Lundy Paintings by Kristján Magnússon delivered to Martin Coles Harman (part 2 of 2)

MCH No.*	Catalogue No. and Title	Apparent Price\$	Medium	Size#	Title of Painting in notebook	Notes in notebook
L70	59 Old Man's Cave	10	Water-colour		Old Man's Cave	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 S.T.H. March /34
L71	58 Gannets Rock	10	Water-colour		Gannet's Rock	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 S.T.H. March 1934
L72	2 Gannets Bay	15	Water-colour		Surf, West Coast	Given Mr Badley
L73	1 West Coast–The Chimney	15	Water-colour	47.1x 32.7cm	West Coast, The Chimney	Returned 11 Angel Court [E.C. ?] With Miss B. Harman To Mrs Lewin Lundy
L74	[Not in Exhibition]		Water-colour		Gannet's Bay	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 S.T.H. March 1934
L75	57 Shutter Rock	15	Water-colour	49.4x 35.1cm	Shutter Rock	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 With Miss B. Harman To Mr Lewis Harman Lundy
L76	5 Shutter Rock	20	Oil	61.5x 51cm	Shutter Rock	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 With Miss B. Harman To Mr Lewis Harman Lundy
L77	[Not in Exhibition]		Oil		The Cheeses	S.T.H. March /34 Given to Ruth from 11 Angel Court 24/4/37 X
L78	4 St. James' Stone	22	Oil		St James' Stone	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Sold. at Exhibition Fine Art Society Nov. 31 £
L79	7 South End	18	Oil	61x 51cm	Early Morning South Coast South End South East Rat I.*	Burrland Returned to 11 Angel Ct Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 S.T.H. March /34
<u>L80</u>	51 Lundy Harbour	12	Oil	51x 25cm	Lundy Harbour (with Lerina)*	Burrland Returned to 11 Angel Ct Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned to 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 S.T.H. March 1934
L81	8 Jenny's Cove	50	Oil		Jenny's Cove	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned to 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 With Miss B. Harman To Mrs Cole [?]
L82	52 West Coast	100	Oil		West Coast	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Sold at Exhibition Fine Art Society Nov. 31 £
L83	[Not in Exhibition]		Oil		The Cove	[No notes]
L84	[Not in Exhibition]		Oil		Early Morning South East	Given Miss B. Harman
L85	56 Early Morning–Lundy Shale	8	Oil	12"x14"	Rock Formation Early Morning, Lundy Shale Rock formations	Exhibition Nov. 1931 Returned 11 Angel Court 3.12.1931 Given to Miss Mason

*Numbers in notebook not preceded by 'L'; labels on paintings have 'L'; Numbers in **red** are on the actual paintings

\$from hand annotations in Catalogue (guineas) #Measured canvas size for L54, L68, L76 and L79. Visible size in mount for L75. L73 estimated from photo and e-mail from owner. Others from [072a]. In centimetres for measured sizes; in inches for reported sizes in archive.

Other information	Cost of frame from [037]	Type of frame	Current Owner/ Location
glass ⁺	£1 1s 0d m & f		
glass ⁺	£1 1s 0d m & f		
'?L74'+ glass ⁺ Titled 'Gannets Bay'+	£1 7s 6d m & f		
Sent to Lundy November 1932 [055] No visible number†	£1 7s 6d m & f	Modern	Inez Lunan
Sent to Lundy November 1932 [055] Was in back bedroom in Millcombe in Landmark time (Mary Gade was housekeeper). Fell during the night and glass broke. Sent away?†	£1 7s 6d m & f	Modern	Reg Lo-Vel
Sent to Lundy November 1932 [055]	£3 0s 0d	Ornate	Millcombe (Lounge)
Sold at exhibition for £20 [036]	£3 0s 0d		
'Lundy' in pencil on bottom of back of frame Given to Diana Keast c.2000 by Joy Harman†	£3 0s 0d	Ornate	André & Marie Jo Coutanche
Was owned by Diana Keast. John Dyke offered to paint over it†	£1 0s 0d	None	Inez Lunan
'Larger' [Western Morning News 19311109] at Miss B Harman [065]	£3 15s 0d		
Sold at exhibition for £70 [036] Very big picture sold for £70 [031] 'Larger' [Western Morning News 19311109]	£3 5s 0d		
Board Room [065]			
Miss B Harman [065]			
Should be ca. 12"x14" painted on brown cardboard (near landing place)** Miss Mason [065]	17s 6d		



⁺from typewritten sheet ^{**}from [072a] m & f for watercolours = mounted and framed

†Diana Keast *pers. comm.*

APPENDIX 1: Updates and corrections to the 2016 paper

Following feedback and further research, some details in the first paper in the 2016 *Journal of the Lundy Field Society* can be updated, as follows:

- p. 110, para. 1. Klara's letter to MCH [061] says that Kristján died from a stomach operation.
- p. 110, Plate 1. Kristján is in the highlands of Iceland, in the area called Kjölur; he is painting Lake Hvítárvatn and the Langjökull Glacier rather than Mount Hekla.
- p. 117, para. 1. Myrtle Ternstrom, one of the editors of Felix Gade's *My Life on Lundy* confirmed to me that she and her fellow editor, Tony Walker, included in the published book everything which Felix Gade had written. Kristján and Klara's visit either slipped Mr Gade's mind or he regarded it as peripheral to his narrative.
- p. 117, para. 3. We now know that Kristján and Klara were on Lundy for two months, arriving on or just before 12 April 1931. We also now know that Kristján painted more than the 32 pictures he delivered to Martin Coles Harman.
- p. 117, para. 5. The review in the *Hull Daily Mail* refers not to the Alpine Club exhibition in 1931 but to a later exhibition of paintings of Iceland at the Ferens Gallery in Hull in January 1932.
- p. 118, para. 6. We now have the catalogue for the 1931 exhibition at the Fine Art Society Gallery. There were 20 paintings from Lundy and 39 paintings from Iceland.
- p. 118, para. 7. We now know exactly which of the Lundy paintings were watercolours and which were oils – see Table 1.
- p. 119, para 1. The contractual arrangement between Kristján and MCH is now clear and is discussed in this paper.
- p. 119, para. 1. Major Noel Clarke was in a 'syndicate' with MCH to acquire the Iceland paintings and may have received one of the Lundy paintings as part of a settlement of their arrangement [031].
- p. 120, para. 2. The employee who was given a painting by MCH was W.F. Tipper, not Tinker. Diana Keast described him to me as 'an elderly office boy', but he seems from the correspondence to have been a trusted aide to MCH.
- p. 121, penultimate para. We now know that five paintings were sent to Lundy – see Table 1.
- p. 123, para. 6. The two paintings in Millcombe House are now positively identified – see Table 1.
- p. 128, no. 73 in Table. We now know that this was indeed Catalogue no. 1.
- p. 128, nos 75 & 76 in Table. We now know that no. 75 is the water colour of Shutter Rock and no. 76 is the oil.
- p. 128, no. 85 in Table. We know now that Miss Mason worked for the Secretarial agency which MCH used [022].