

The West Africa Study Circle

St. Helena & Ascension Supplement No. 23



WEST AFRICA STUDY CIRCLE

ST. HELENA & ASCENSION SUPPLEMENT NO 23

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WEST AFRICA STUDY CIRCLE

ST. HELENA & ASCENSION SUPPLEMENT NO 23

EDITORIAL

First of all I must apologise to one of our members, John Plant for an error that I made in typing up his article on Ascension Postcards in Supplement No 22. Rather than print a small correction I have decided to reproduce the whole article again with the correct wording.

Also included in this Supplement are the second parts of Roger Morgan's erudite work of the St. Helena Halfpenny Surcharge and Trevor Hearl's A 17th Century Surgeon at St. Helena. Trevor has also sent me information on the Invalidation of Postage Stamps of both St. Helena & Ascension together with a couple of other articles which I hope members will find of interest. Part Four of Christopher Riding's En Route To St. Helena and Auction results round off this issue.

I have enough material for about 20 pages of Supplement No. 24. but I am in need of more articles. It would be nice to hear from some of the members who do not regularly send me information; so don't be shy about putting pen to paper, your article does not have to be long to be of interest, just one or two pages, or information about new stamp issues of Ascension or St. Helena; or if you have a query about a particular date stamp, cover, instructional marking etc I will be interested to hear from you.

The proposed meeting for the Ascension & St. Helena collectors that should have taken place in the Autumn has had to be postponed, but it is hoped to have the meeting some time in the Spring, possibly to coincide with Spring Stampex.

Now all that remains is for me to wish you all a very happy and peaceful New Year.

BERNARD MABBETT

34 VERONICA GREEN,  
GORLESTON,  
WORFOLK. NR31 8LE.

TEL (0493)656147

MORE ABOUT ASCENSION POSTCARDS

by John Plant

Now that the c.1902 series of Ascension Pictorial Postcards has been brought up-to-date, with the final instalment of the "update" being published in the St. Helena and Ascension Supplement No 21, the attention of Ascension postcard enthusiasts, such as myself, could perhaps be directed to another series. This is a very short one, which was also mentioned by John Attwod in his book "Ascension - The Stamps and Postal History", at the beginning of Chapter 6.

While every serious collector of "Ascension" will be likely to have a copy of this book, I am sure that John will not mind me quoting here, the paragraph which refers to this little series, which reads as follows:-

"Two other cards which do not seem to fit in with the two major series are a pictorial mailed on 29th March 1913 showing the view "PIER HEAD, ASCENSION" and another showing the view "GEORGETOWN, ASCENSION FROM MAILBOAT". The Picture on both the aforementioned postcards is in glossy sepia."

There is, in fact a third card which is definitely in the same series as the two cards mentioned above. This is one showing the view "ROLLERS, LONG BEACH, ASCENSION", making it a three card series. This little series must have run for quite a considerable time, as I have one of the cards postmarked 30th November 1906 and John Attwood refers to one mailed on 29th March 1913. So, it is not suprising that there were a number of different printings and that some of these printings showed recordable and, thus, collectable differences from each other. I cannot put them in date order but I have sufficient detail below of the three different "sets of three" which I have in my collection sufficient, I hope, to enable each different set to be identified.

TITLES ON THE 3 CARDS IN EACH SET

PIER HEAD, ASCENSION.  
GEORGETOWN, ASCENSION, FROM MAIL BOAT.  
ROLLERS, LONG BEACH, ASCENSION.

TYPE A. Picture colour - Very brown shade of Sepia.  
Lettering - On picture side and address side - BROWN  
Lettering on address side:-

POST CARD

Printed in Saxony

In dotted address square - AFFIX STAMP

above right hand side of back - ADDRESS ONLY

Dividing lines (forming divided back):-

Long vertical line = SINGLE

short horizontal line = SINGLE

**TYPE B.** Picture colour - Glossy Sepia.  
Lettering - On picture side and address side - BROWN  
Lettering on address side - POST CARD  
Dividing lines (forming divided back):-  
    Long vertical line = DOUBLE  
    Short horizontal line = SINGLE

**TYPE C.** Picture colour - Glossy Sepia.  
Lettering - On picture side and address side - RED.  
Lettering on address side - POST CARD  
Dividing lines (forming divided back):-  
    Long vertical line = DOUBLE  
    Short horizontal line = DOUBLE

I hope that the information given above will be of interest to Ascension Postcard collectors. If any other member of the West African Study Circle has a card of this series which does not fit in with the details given, I hope that he will write to me.

JOHN PLANT

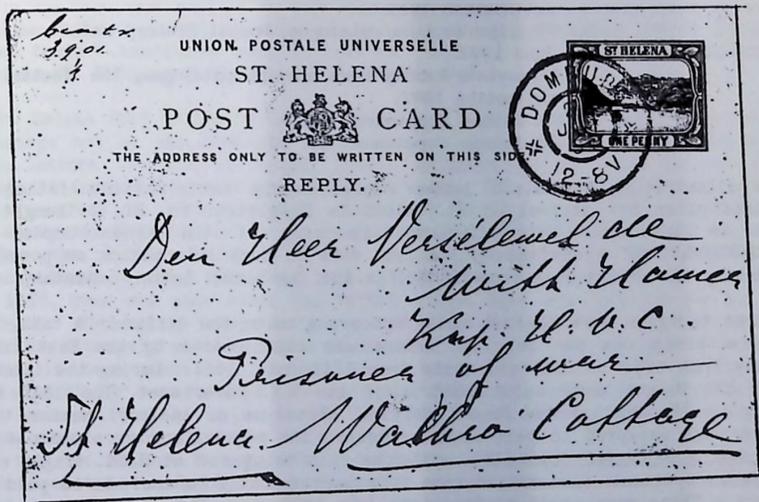
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#### DANISH & NORWEGIAN CONSULATE HANDSTAMP

In Supplement No 22, on page 30 I illustrated three handstamps that belonged to Major Moss when he was the Consul for these countries. Trevor Hearl has sent me the following information:- "Major Edward James Moss, CBE,MC was the last Consul for these countries. He succeeded the Hon H.W. Solomon in the post in the late 1950s, and held these appointments for some 20 years before ill-health caused his retirement in the late 1970s. Major Moss's son George, was Consul for the Netherlands about the same time. All these consulates were then closed at St. Helena - except for the French at Longwood. George Moss returned the Dutch handstamp to the Netherlands Foreign Office when he left the island.

ST. HELENA REPLY PAID CARD

Mr. Leon Jacobson of Kimberley, South Africa has sent me a very interesting photostat of a St. Helena Reply Paid Postal stationery card addressed to De Witt Hamer, Walbro Cottage, St. Helena. Captain De Witt Hamer was responsible for raising the Hollander Volunteer Corps at the start of the Anglo-Boer War and he was taken prisoner at the battle of Elandslaagte on 21st October 1899. The card was posted at Domburg June 1st 1901 with a Middleburg transit c.d.s. for the same date on the message side. The card is interesting in that it shows no St. Helena censor marks, although there is a manuscript notation in the top left corner which could be the date that De Witt Hamer received the card or, the date it was passed by the censor.



THE PACKET LETTER HANDSTAMP

by Bernard Mabbett.

REFERENCES

- (a) St. Helena B. Hibbert 1979
- (b) Encyclopædia of British Empire Postage Stamps. Vol. 11 Africa. Robson Lowe
- (c) For The Port & Carriage of Letters. A Practical Guide to the Inland & Foreign Postage Rates of the British Isles 1570 to 1840. David Robinson 1990.
- (d) Cape of Good Hope the Handstruck Letter Stamps and Postmarks. A.A. Jurgen
- (e) Stanley Gibbons auction catalogue, Lampart sale 1986.
- (f) Christie's Robson Lowe auction catalogue, Hibbert sale 1984.
- (g) Harmsers auction catalogue, The 'Jamestown' and 'Ayre' collections 1989.
- (h) Phillips auction catalogue, Postal History sale June 1989.
- (i) Christie's Robson Lowe auction catalogue, The 'Justine' collection 1992.
- (j) St. Helena Supplement No. 9.
- (k) St. Helena Supplement No. 21.

After illustrating the first letter George Dunlop wrote to his father in Scotland after his arrival at St. Helena in Supplement No. 21, I thought it might be interesting to illustrate as many of the known copies of the "PACKET/LETTER" handstamp as possible with as much information as possible concerning the Packet Rate from St. Helena and the Packet Letter handstamp.

My first thoughts were that it would not prove to be too difficult a task, but just how wrong can one be. St. Helena was administered by the East India Company from 1659 to 1815 and again from 1821 until 1834. During the interim period St. Helena came under control of the U.K. Government. The 1815 Act setting up the East Indies Packet Service, stated in an indirect manner that packets were expected to call at St. Helena. The regulations were defined by 55 George 3 c153 (11 Jul 1815), with the rate being set at 3/6d. single etc, repayment optional; plus inland rate from port (usually London), to be paid on delivery. These rates ceased after 12th July 1819; from this date letters from St. Helena were to pay half the packet rate as ordinary ship letters. (Ref (c) p. 123-133).

Sorting out the dates of use of the packet letter rate was the easy part, but the "PACKET/LETTER" handstamp itself is a bit more tricky, as there appears to be some conflicting information regarding its use. The unframed oval

handstamp illustrated in Fig. 1. below was of the same design as that issued for The Cape of Good Hope and Mauritius. According to (ref (b) p.p. 38,370 and 409) the Cape of Good Hope handstamp was in use 1816-19, the Mauritius handstamp 1817 and the St. Helena handstamp 1816-18. As this superb book by Robson Lowe was published in 1949 it is not surprising that the information contained therein is out of date.



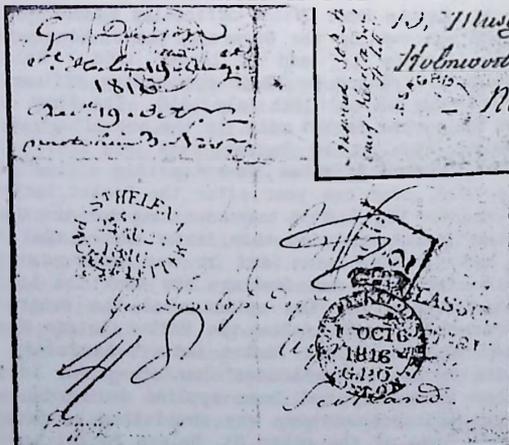
(Ref (d) p. 29.) states that the Cape of Good Hope Packet Letter handstamp was held in the U.K. and applied to the incoming and outgoing packet mail as was the India Packet Letter handstamp. This poses the question, was the St. Helena "Packet Letter" handstamp held in the U.K. (London) and applied to incoming mail from St. Helena, or was it sent out to St. Helena?

The St. Helena Post Office officially opened on 20th February 1815. The rates of postage set by the Governor were:- Single letters 3d., Double letters 6d., Treble letters 1/- and if larger 1/6d. Soldiers letters were not to pay postage if franked by their commanding officer. The rate of 3/6d. for Packet letters was set on 11th July 1815. The first letter recorded from St. Helena that shows the Packet rate, is the one illustrated in Supplement No. 21 page 23 showing the double Packet rate of 7/- . This letter from the Dunlop correspondence is dated 23rd May 1816. This letter arrived in London on 22nd July 1816, over one year after the Packet Letter Rate had been set by Act of Parliament. Why had it taken so long for the U.K. authorities to produce Packet Letter handstamps?; as this letter shows that it had still not come into use, or had it been made and it was on route to St. Helena for use by the Postmaster? My own feelings are that the handstamp was sent to the island. This is based on the evidence of the first three letters from the Dunlop correspondence that show the Packet Letter handstamp. These three letters show the "St. Helena Packet Letter" handstamp for 24th August 1816 and the "India Packet Letter/London" handstamp for 16th October 1816. If the Packet Letter handstamp had been applied in London at the same time as the India Packet Letter handstamp why would they be dated differently? For some unknown reason none of the other St. Helena Packet Letters show India Letter markings apart from the two letters from the Wheeler correspondence.

The first three letters all show the Packet Letter handstamp for 24th August, but all three are dated differently in manuscript.



The first E.L. from the Jamestown & Ayre sale (Ref (g)) is dated in manuscript 1st August 1816. It shows the St. Helena Packet Letter handstamp for 24th August 1816, Crowned India Packet Letter London handstamp for 16th October 1816 and Glasgow transit. The E.L. shows rate marks of 3/6d. (deleted) and 4/8d. plus ½d. Scottish Toll.



The second E.L. dated in manuscript 19th August 1816 (Ref (h)) shows all the same markings as the previous letter. You will note that the letter was received on 19th October, and answered on 3rd November by his father.



This letter illustrated in Hibbert (Ref (a) p. 19) is addressed to Edinburgh it also shows the same handstamps, but slightly different rate marks of 3/6d. (deleted) and 4/7d. The mileage charge from London to Edinburgh being 1/1d. as opposed to 1/2d. to Ayre.

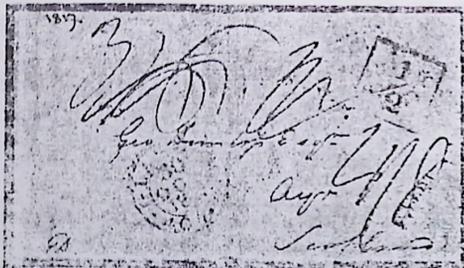


Number four from the Lampart sale (Ref (e)) is dated in manuscript 20th December 1816 and shows the St. Helena Packet Letter handstamp for 31st December 1816. Rate marks of 3/6d. and 4/8d. together with Scottish  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Toll.

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Entire Letters numbers five and six dated 29th March 1817 to Hants and 18th July 1817 from George Dunlop to Scotland are recorded in (Ref (a) p.20) but unfortunately I have no further information on these two items. If any member has any information regarding these two items I would be interested to hear from them.



This E.L. Ex Hibbert collection is dated in manuscript 25th June. According to Hibbert (Ref (a) p. 20) the Packet Letter handstamp is dated 17th August 1817, but in the catalogue of the sale of his collection the date is given as 16th August 1817 (Ref (f) P. 2.). The E.L. shows faint Packet Letter handstamp overstruck by Scottish  $\text{Md. Toll}$ , with rate marks of 3/6d. (deleted) and 4/8d.

ANOTHER "OAT/FS" COVER

Bernard Hughes

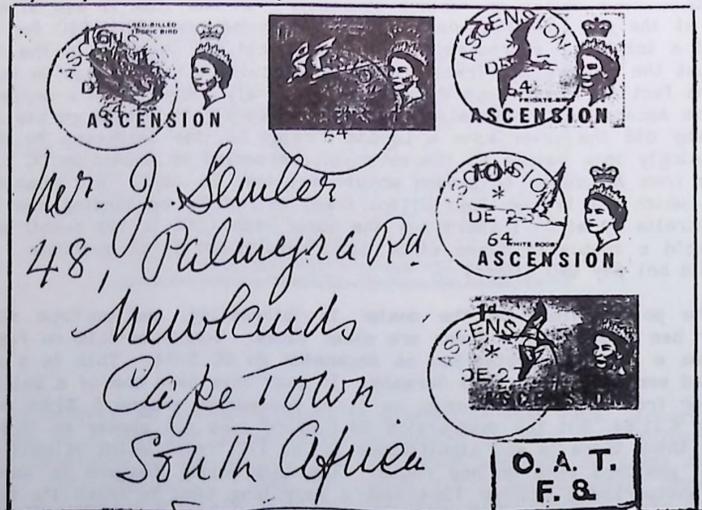
In Supplement No 16 on Page 3, John Attwood asks if any OAT handstamps from Ascension are known, other than the one he illustrates - a cover I now need to write up, as it was in a Lot I bought at the Attwood sale a year ago. I had seen this cover before on various occasions - at one time it was in a dealer's stock at the old Covent Garden Stamp Centre. He was asking £40 for it, which seemed a lot and I expressed surprise. He said the interest in the cover was not just the "Onward Air Transmission" mark (quite a rare usage in the 1960's) but the fact the cover came through London at all. Why should a surface letter go from Ascension to Australia via London - surely it should go via Capetown? Also why did the cover have a London Foreign Section backstamp 30 OC/64 - a surprisingly long voyage as the cover is postmarked on Ascension OC 5/64. The voyage from Ascension to London should not take 25 days! Had something gone wrong, which the British Post Office tried to rectify by sending the letter on to Australia by air? I didn't buy the cover then (£40 is too much!) but it has been sold a couple of times since, as I have noted it in auctions - I'm sure John did not pay £40 either!

But the point raised by the dealer is interesting, and perhaps some other member has a solution? There are other clues. John's article on Page 6 also features a postcard postmarked on Ascension on OC 5/64. This is a philatelic postcard sent by air to East Germany. It must have been one of a batch sent on together from Leipzig to Prague, as it is postmarked Prague 6 XI.64 as well as Leipzig 4.11.64, but the instruction to forward does not appear on this card. I do not think there is any significance in the 1/7 "rate" which is well above the airmail postcard rate on any route. The interesting feature is that another cover postmarked 5 October 1964 took a very long time to reach its destination - and the date of arrival in Leipzig is consistent with it being in London on 30 October. Once again, why did the journey to London take so long?

Another piece in the jigsaw is a second OAT/FS cover which is postmarked Ascension DE 23/64, this could have been the next or next but one sea mail. At the time, the mailships Edinburgh Castle and Pretoria Castle served Ascension and St. Helena on some voyages, plus some cargo ships in between, so providing a six-weeks service (W.H.Mitchell and L.A.Sawyer *The Cape Run* P114). This is a philatelic cover to South Africa. It is not marked Airmail, and would ordinarily have gone by sea to Capetown. But the OAT/FS marking shows it passed through Foreign Section, London. Why? The marking appearing on mails on two dates in late 1964 suggests it was not a mere error (e.g. a mailbag being overlooked at Capetown and mistakenly sent on to London) but it must have been something out of the ordinary that happened for the two covers on different but fairly close dates to be sent on by OAT. Does any member have any idea what?

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There were in 1964 three possible routes for 'airmail' - by Union-Castle ship to England and then by air, by Union-Castle ship to Capetown and then by air, or, when convenient, by US Air Force direct from Wideawake Airport to Florida, followed by BOAC transport to England, and on by air to any other destination. These routes are all mentioned in John's article. But none are particularly likely for SURFACE mail such as the card to Australia or the non-Airmail letter to South Africa, which one would expect to go straight from Ascension to Capetown by ship in the normal way.



The second OAT/FS Ascension cover

One possible solution to the problem is that the Union-Castle Line promised a service from Ascension to Capetown on 5 October and then on 23 December, and the Post Office on Ascension postmarked mails in this expectation (the correct date for the postmark is of course the date the mailbag is handed over to the ship) but at short notice, the stop at Ascension was cancelled. Around this time, the Union-Castle Line was reducing the number of its services, as the independence of many African nations together with cheaper air fares was much reducing demand for cabins and freight on their ships, hence the end of the 'Round Africa' service and reductions in the service offered could well have occurred. As a result, the only ship mail service would have been via England, but penalty clauses in their contract would have been invoked on Union-Castle, leaving the GPO with funds to send the delayed mail on by air. However other members may have alternative explanations?

SOME FURTHER THOUGHTS  
ON THE HALFPENNY SURCHARGE

by Roger Morgan

PART TWO

References as in Part 1.

The Spaced NY

13. Much has been written about this variety which appears on both Emerald and Green stamps with the broad surcharge (SG 34a and 35a) and also on the narrow surcharge which does not appear in the Gibbons Catalogue. The latter is not considered further in this article.

14. There is no dispute that the variety occurs on stamp 216 of the sheet and it does seem to be the general rule that the spacing is about 14mm on the emerald stamps and 1½mm on the green. (E.g. see ref (e) p.128). But it is also noted in this same reference and by Melville (ref (a)) that the spaced NY occurs in several other positions, although all are said to be in the last column. These writers refer not only to the existence of the variety 'Spaced NY' in several different positions but also to the variation in spacing. This is to be expected with loose type and it is my firm belief that the variety exists elsewhere in the sheet as well; and because the variations in spacing can be so small they may easily have escaped notice. I have two stamps in my collection which tend to bear this out; one is a double surcharge of which the lower 'NY' has a space of 1.2mm and yet the stamp is almost certainly NOT from the last column, and therefore cannot be stamp 216 - and the other has an 'NY' space of 1.2mm, but closer examination shows that it is the second 'N' that has shifted to the left - not the 'Y' to the right. This latter stamp is certainly not from the righthand column. I suspect quite a lot of type was loose - after all, De La Rue themselves admitted the forme was not in a fit state for use in 1893 (see the quote in para 8 in part 1.).

(R.V. Comments: "I really feel this variety should be removed from the catalogue on the grounds that it is not constant. The flaw is caused by loose type and I am sure you are absolutely right when you say it occurs in several positions. I believe the type was set using spacers between each letter (H space A space L space and so on). I recall a variation in distance between the last N and the Y and this could be a clue to different width of spaces or by loose type. A similar variety could also occur between any two letters and this might be worth checking out").

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15. As stated in para 1. there is much good evidence available about earlier double surcharges, particularly in ref (e), but very little concrete evidence about the humble halfpenny. No one seems to know for certain how the error came about, how many copies exist, nor which row (or rows) was doubly surcharged. Hibbert, for instance (ref (c) p.40) states categorically: "There is a unique variety of the ½d. emerald with the surcharge double, one being normal and the other with the 'NY' of halfpenny widely spaced. The first vertical row of stamps was missed and consequently the last vertical row of surcharges was printed in the right hand margin of the sheet. The error was corrected by surcharging the sheet again in the correct position. The widely spaced 'NY' variety occurs on stamp No. 216, the last stamp in Row 18, so that when the sheet was surcharged the second time this stamp received its normal wide 'NY' surcharge as well as the surcharge normal to stamp 215."

16. There does not seem to be any evidence to support the above theory. Roger West has commented on it at some length in Supplement No. 3, page 7 and Supplement No. 4, page 13 and has explained how it would be possible for the whole of one section (60 stamps) to be surcharged again but raised or lowered by one row - in which case the stamp above or below 216 would also have received a 'normal' + (spaced NY) surcharge.

17. The so called 'unique' stamp referred to above came up for auction and was sold by Harmers on May 3rd 1984, the stamp carrying with it a 1993 B.P.A. Certificate. I have a copy of the catalogue which carries a colour photo of the stamp on the front cover (though unfortunately reduced in size) and I have studied it carefully.

18. I should at this stage remark that I have also been trying to establish the bar lengths used in each position on the forme for overprinting with the broad surcharge. Such figures exist for the narrow surcharge but as yet I have not seen enough large blocks to achieve my aim. But, the evidence is very strong to make it well nigh certain that the unique bar length of 14½mm existed in position 3/12 of the forme for the broad surcharge and was subsequently retained for the narrow surcharge; and that therefore every stamp No. 216 carries a 14½mm bar (also stamps 3/12, 8/12 and 13/12).

19. Reverting to the 'unique' stamp sold by Harmers, I can only state now that I find it hard to believe that it is stamp No. 216, for the following reasons:-

(a) The bar lengths (adjusted to full stamp size) appear to be 14½ and 14¼mm.

(b) There appears to be distinct traces of green on several of the right hand perfs, indicating a 'next door' stamp.

(c) There does not appear to be a guide dot in the right hand margin. (This is quite inconclusive as it might not show in the photograph nor even on the stamp itself as the margin is very close).

In addition to these reasons, if stamp 216 was doubly surcharged it is reasonable to suppose stamp 212 would have suffered the same fate; and this stamp carries one of the clearest flaws on the Perkins Bacon plate - the 'spot on throat'. A double surcharge with such a flaw would be a really positive plating but I don't think any such stamp has ever been recorded (which is not to say that it doesn't exist in some collection locked away from human view).

20. Despite the B.P.A. Certificate, therefore, I am sceptical about this stamp (though I think it does have a spaced NY). To add to the confusion, Christies Robson Lowe when auctioning a double surcharge  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. have on more than one occasion stated: "In the case of the double overprint above, the last application of the forme was one row too high resulting in Row\_15 being doubly overprinted". And Roger West in a letter to me in 1991 said: "...my own example of the double surcharge was plated as coming from Row\_4. Unfortunately I am in no position now to check its position, nor can I recall what prompted me to plate it in this position".

21. So is it Row 4, Row 15, Row 18 - or the whole lot? I haven't been able to plate my own copy and until we get a positive identification the mystery must remain. I do believe that the number of copies coming up for auction tilts the balance of probability towards the whole or the greater part of the forme having been used in the double surcharge operation (i.e. up to 60 copies could have existed) - but further than that I would not go.

(R.V. Comments: "In speculating whether one row or one complete forme of 60 was doubled, it is just possible that two or more sheets suffered so there may be up to 120 examples. Clearly a couple of examples need to be accurately plated before making too many assumptions.")

Conclusion.

22. Much of the above is inconclusive and probably of limited interest to most readers but positive answers to some or even all the questions may be available somewhere; and I do urge anyone who can help with early covers or perhaps one or more plated copies of the double surcharge to let either the editor or me know - but in this way can our knowledge be advanced..

A 17th CENTURY SURGEON AT ST. HELENA:  
FRANCIS MOORE 1674-1682

by Trevor Hearl

PART TWO

References as in Part one.

St. Helena's reputation as a healthy settlement in no way made Moore's job a sinecure. Indeed one important reason for the Company holding the Island was "for refreshing of their servants and people in their returnes homewards, being often then weak and decayed in their health by reason of their long voyages under their hott clymes." (7) Thus seaman landed from returning Indiamen were a major source of patients; the *Johannah* left so many in 1679 that it was unable to sail until soldiers were drafted aboard as crew. But the Island itself provided no shortage of sickness and injury needing Moore's attention, while among his more sordid duties was obligatory attendance at all corporal punishments. He had patients hit by falling rocks, or injured by falling over cliffs; soldiers wounded or even killed while firing cannon; victims of fights and quarrels, usually fuelled by drink. Arrack had been imported since 1678 "for encouraging your men ... in case you should be attacked"! Sequels which required Moore's evidence before the Council or Coroner provide a record of some of these patients. For example, after "ifox attacked Powell" in February 1681, he found the latter "in a very desperate condition ... blood in clodds as bigg as nuttmeggs" on his back, head and arms, so that he was "in a very doubtful condition" for 12 days and housebound for three weeks. In November 1681, Moore was called urgently to tend Thomas Burnham finding him "rather a dying than a living man...beaten, bruised and hurt", one wrist dislocated, "voided much blood, for many days in greate payne so that he feared his kidneys might be bruised". His remedies are not recorded but both men recovered; indeed Burnham later helped Moore's family.

Patients were not always grateful for his remedies, however. When Thomas Davies had a leg broken by a rockfall, the surgeon amputated it "to save his life", leaving him "in a hopeful way of recovery". But having recovered, Davies not only refused to pay Moore "for his paynes, atendance and medicines" but alleged that he had "cutt off his legg to save his own future paynes, that he knows not but that it might have been saved". Although Council found in Moore's favour, it was no isolated case. Richard Param, "freeplanter", even refused to pay for medicine - "some small matter of physick" - until he was summoned.

But in 1682 the Council faced more serious concerns over medical matters. Members were perturbed at the many "officers and soldiers and inhabitants ... taken with some sickness and violent fluxes", as well as "sudden casualties".

Moore himself wrote on 6 February that "our Iland is very sickly...Capt. Beale is very sicke but I hope will do well againe". Anthony Beale, Deputy-Governor, did indeed "doe well" on this occasion, but was poisoned in 1687 by his "blackservant" Derrick. If dysentery (cholera?) had been brought by the India ships it was not acknowledged, possibly in the belief that they had been at sea long enough to kill or cure any infections. Nevertheless, sickness seems to have reached epidemic proportions and by the 10th April Surgeon Moore himself was so "sick and weak in body" that he made his will.

The sorry sequel can be gleaned from the Council's Consultations in July. "It having pleased Almighty God to take away by death about the 15th of April last past Mr. Francis Moore lately chirurgion..." Not only had the surgeon died; so too had Mrs. Moore, leaving five orphans and their property. Buried according to his wish beside his wife, the surgeon left his worldly goods at St. Helena to be shared equally between two sons, Thomas and John, and three daughters, Ephrath, Ellinor and Margret. His eldest son Francis was left five shillings "to buy him a ring to wear in remembrance of me", suggesting that he may have remained at school or apprenticed in London under his grandfather's care in 1680. The will, attested by three witnesses, Jno. Colson ('signed' with an x), John Boston and John Miles, appointed William Rutter and John Cannady as executors. [Appendix D]

How were such tragedies cattered for in those early years at St. Helena? The executors had their usual responsibilities, arranging Moore's funeral, settling his affairs, realising his property and ensuring the welfare of his children. As orphans their interests were safeguarded by Council members in an Orphan Court, to which the executors were answerable. To this they presented an estate inventory valued by respected freeplanters, Orlando Bagley and William Gates, when everything except the cattle was ordered to be sold "at an open and public outcry". The funds raised recompensed those who had taken the orphans into their homes: the eldest, Ephrath, at Captain Beale's, Thomas and Ellinor at Rutter's, Margaret at Cannady's and the youngest, John at Thomas Burnham's. The slaves were similarly allotted: Mullay to Cannady, and Sottoe to Burnham, allowing him one day a fortnight "to look after the stock of cattle left the said children".

It was easier to plan than to implement, however. Almost immediately Thomas Burnham wanted Sottoe removed as he was afraid of him. This was not unusual; fear of slaves had led to a ban on their importation only three years before, though this was to be lifted in 1683 as the 80 already there were insufficient for the Island's needs, and thereafter every Madagascar slave ship en route to Barbadoes had to leave one for the Company's labour force. As for Sottoe - slaves were not given classical/biblical names in Moore's time apparently - Cannady solved the matter by agreeing to take him if he could also have Moore's cow. Another of the executors' problems was the collection of debts.

John Hamon, freeplanter, admitted that Moore had cured his wife but claimed that he had "done several works" in payment. On the other hand Edmund Chubb, a soldier, claimed to have done work for which "he received noe satisfaction". Others again laid claims against the Company for providing medical services after Moore's death, including Naomi Box, for "a great cure on the arm of Hugh Sims, soldier" (paid to her husband, freeplanter Thomas Box!), and William Hunt, for taking "several persons in the Company's service under his care and cure".

Moore's house with its "four acres of cleared and enclosed ground" was taken on a 5-year lease before the end of the year by John Starling, freeplanter, but the cattle, the main source of the orphans' funds, posed a trickier problem. When the time came for their bullocks to be sold, it was found that they had been neglected by Sottoe for whose work John Cannady was now held responsible. "He had turned the cows and calves together and made no improvement or benefit of the said cows' milk...very ill husbanding to the orphans' disadvantage." The Court thereupon ordered Cannady to deliver the stock to Lt. Morris and Mr. Bagley of the Council, and send Margret Moore and Mullay to Thomas Burnham. If Sottoe thus confirmed his earlier reputation, it was his master who was punished. The cattle eventually went to Richard Stacey. Meanwhile the Court's supervision continued well into the following year, seeing the orphans properly housed, fed, clothed and schooled. Shoes were noted as a major item of expenditure, but no such detail appears about schooling though the Company chaplain had a legal duty to catechise all the children every Sunday. Clearly the Orphan Court had shown itself a necessary safeguard in the days before there were extended families on the Island to care for their dependants.

Moore's death faced the Council once again with the problem of finding a surgeon. In 1682 it was solved by promoting Christopher Girling, surgeon's mate of the ship Caesar, to the post, and when he resigned after sixteen months, by similarly promoting Joseph Stevens, surgeon's mate of the Surratt Merchant. His contract was only for six months, but his successor Thomas Spencer lasted little longer, resigning in December 1684. In stark contrast, Moore's period of service, from his appointment in 1673 until his death in 1682, shows outstanding loyalty to St. Helena. This would certainly have assisted his sons to follow him into the Company's service, if they had 'friends' at East India House.(8) But it also leaves a lingering doubt whether Surgeon Moore was really as reluctant an exile at St. Helena as his protestations implied.

ST. HELENA & ASCENSION SUPPLEMENT NO 23

NOTES

1. Sir William Foster: John Company (1926) p.71
2. The EIC's Surgeon-Generals were John Woodall (1612-43) and Henry Boone (1643-66). Thereafter leading London surgeons were engaged only when required, as examiners, consultants, etc.
3. Prince Rupert survived such a trephining operation in 1667, having a hole cut from his skull to relieve inflammation from an old war wound. See Graham Martin: Prince Rupert and the Surgeons (in) History Today Vol. 40, Dec.1990, 38-43.
4. T.H.Brooke: A History of the Island of St.Helena...to 1806 (1808) p.85.
5. Colin Ronan: Edmond Halley, Genius in Eclipse (1969) p.37. In Extracts from the St.Helena Records (H.R.Janisch 1908 p.5) Governor Field was recalled by the "earnest desire" of Mrs.Field. Note that Moore senior refers to his replacement in his letter of October 1678 (Appendix B).
6. The usual ration allowance was for nine months. Consultations, 30 August 1680 read ambiguously, but I take "Dr.Moore & family 6 persons" to mean a family of wife and five children, as shown by his will in 1682.
7. The Royal Charter of Charles II, 16 December 1673, quoted Brooke p.325.
8. E.g. 'Dr.Moor' at St.Helena in 1706 (Clough's Plain was called Dr.Moore's Plain in 1730); John Moore, Sumatra (1721); Thomas Moore, Bombay (1731).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Some Surgeons in the St.Helena Medical Service 1668-1684

[The following should precede those listed in Crawford p.618]

1669	?	First surgeon appointed to St.Helena; name not yet known.
?	WILLIAM HUNT	"for some good time a practitioner in physick and chirurgery in England & on this Island" ( <u>Cons.</u> 1676/79)
1673	FRANCIS MOORE	appointed Dec; arr.St.H. early 1674; "desires to come home" (Nov.74) but remained to May? 1679.
1679	WILLIAM HUNT	from 19/5/79 to 19/5/80
1680	MATTHEW PCUNNEY	from 25/6/80 to 30/7/80
1680	FRANCIS MOORE	re-appointed 24/3/80; arr. 31/7/80; died 15/4/82
[1682	WILLIAM HUNT	deputised 16 Apr-16 June 1682]
1682	CHRISTOPHER GIRLING	ex Ship Caesar 17/6/82; resigned 15/10/83
1683	JOSEPH STEVENS	ex Suratt Merchant 16/10/83. "for the space of six months"
1684	THOMAS SPENCER	arrival date not known; resigned 30/12/84

[No.1 on Crawford's Roll] of the St.Helena Medical Service]

APPENDIX B: Francis Moore, senior, to Francis Moore, St.Helena, 5 October 1678

Lovings Sonn, Having soe fitt an oportunity to send these lines to send by Captaine Goodlad of the Lioll Subject<sup>1</sup> to lett you know of your wife and four children, blessed bee god, are safely come to England and came ashore in the 6<sup>th</sup> of August of August last past, and all in good health, blessed bee almighty god, and shee hath taken a house upon Stepway Caussy lately built, the middle row, five houses together, the second house upon the right hand cominge from Shadwell, and doth intend to keepe itt till you come whom. Itt is a pritty house and a little garden to itt. Shee desires to bee kindly remembered to you, and your children doe remember there duties to you and wee all wish you a prosp eros voyage and pray god to send you safe to London for wee all long to see you

If you had come with them the Company would have employed you in there servis if you had liked there proposalls. I did well hope that shipp had come to Sentilina before She came away wherein the Company sent one to take your charge from you. For according as you writ to mee I petitioned the Company that you might come home and the[y] granted mee my petition and have sent a new governor in the room of Capt. ffeild.

ST. HELENA & ASCENSION SUPPLEMENT NO 23

Wee are att ware with all nations at present, god see keepe us. Our kinge hath sent a great Army into flanders or eills the ffrrench kinge had taken all flanders<sup>2</sup>. I have no newes to write to you, butt that a great plott<sup>3</sup> is discovered, blessed bee god, the[y] would have murthered our grasious souvrine and have burnt wesminster. There is seaven of them taken & were executed before the Kinge and Counsell but itt is kept very close. The Lord sends them all to bee found out that the[y] may receive there rewards.

I have noe more to send you but I must lett you know my great losse. The Lord hath taken away from [me] my deare wife.<sup>4</sup> Shee departed this life the 21 of March last past, a greater losse never befell mee, beinge now see ancient, god bee my help. I have noe more at present but my prayers to almighty god for your health and safety, hopeinge in the lord that wee may have a happy meetinge. Thus prayinge to god to bless you and keepe us all in health and send us a joyfull meetinge to gods glory and our comfort

I rest

Your lovinge father

October 5, 1678

ffrancis Moore

My lodging is within St. James at the in side of the great stone gate att one Mr. Coles next house to the Goulden Lock and Kay where I hope to see you.

My humble servis to Capt. ffeild and lett him know that I rec. his kind token a silver headed cane that my granddaughter Hera [?] conveyed to mee by the hand of Mr. Hally.<sup>5</sup>

- NOTES
- 1 LOYAL SUBJECT Indianan 500 tons (1667-72) on 6th & final voyage. Note phonetic spelling indicates pronunciation [e.g. "Santilira" line 13].
  - 2 FRANCO-DUTCH WAR As Princess Mary had married William of Orange in 1677, an English army was sent to support the Netherlands. At Peace of Nijmegen, August 1678, part of Flanders was ceded to Burgundy.
  - 3 THE POPISH PLOT On 12 August 1678 Titus Oates falsely accused Catholics of plotting against Charles II. Eighteen executed, 29 Dec. 1680.
  - 4 MY DEAR WIFE And presumably the surgeon's mother? Or was he an adopted son? The news seems relegated almost to an after-thought.
  - 5 EDMOND HALLEY (1656-1742) astronomer, had returned to London at the end of May 1678.

APPENDIX C: Francis Moore, St. Helena, to Thomas Lewes<sup>1</sup>, East India House, Leadenhall Street, London: per ship London<sup>2</sup>; 6 February 1682.

Mr. Lewes

S<sup>t</sup> I my hearty sorcarice to you: I hope these few lines will find you in good health. I hope you have received my letters and hope you wilbe pleased to lett me have two or three lines. ffor I beg y<sup>r</sup> advice for here my Condition is very low for I cannot dissemble or carry tayles. For here is see much pride and hypocrisie that I cannot live under it, but I will submit to y<sup>r</sup> advice. Noe king desires more obeydiance nor servitude. Y<sup>e</sup> lord deliver me from it, or that I am befor advanced that I need not care for it. For y<sup>e</sup> lady and their Boy Nevis [?] who hectors, swears and dams without Contrull and is now placed at y<sup>e</sup> Governours table.<sup>3</sup> Beyond all modesty I cannot see what y<sup>e</sup> Company sees in y<sup>e</sup> Great man, except they love to heare of their vast Charges and number of officers which half would serve turn: and there soldiers would turne free but are hindred. For then the Greatness will fall: for though they turn free they are still upon y<sup>e</sup> Iland (only these Boyes are permitted to goe off[?]) which in my opinion should have bine kept here beinge naturalized to y<sup>e</sup> Iland but I knew not there meninge. Capt. Beale<sup>4</sup> is very sicke but I hope will doe well againe: our Iland is very sickly and see are the soldiers: and y<sup>e</sup> Medicines were bad at y<sup>e</sup> first: but are now expended and mine also y<sup>e</sup> most upon the soldiers: but y<sup>e</sup> Governour takes noe notice of it. I am almost dishartned and wish myself upon Ascention where y<sup>e</sup> fowlyes would be more kind then y<sup>e</sup> people here.

ST. HELENA & ASCENSION SUPPLEMENT NO 23

Pray S<sup>t</sup> be not Angry with me for writing to you for I have now freind else to write to: if I were Chyrurgion of a ship I should live better. Pray S<sup>t</sup> if the Company doth permit me to come of[f] I desire that they may take my Cattle in to their stocke and pay me in England: for their stocke grows low for all there debpts are still gatherin in. Pray S<sup>t</sup> assist my father in what you can: if a ship comes and you think it convenient to sendd pray furnish him with money and I will repay it: or if he doth not come yett, furnish him with some money and I will repay it. Having noe more at present but to heare from you I wish you and y<sup>r</sup> family all y<sup>e</sup> prosperity in this world and everlasting happiness in y<sup>e</sup> world to come which is y<sup>e</sup> Continuall prayers of y<sup>r</sup>

very loving freind and servant to Command

ffra: Moore

S<sup>t</sup> Hellena ffeb y<sup>e</sup> 6 1681/2

NOTES 1 THOMAS LEWES: senior official at East India House; see FOSTER, Sir Wm.

John Company pp.102, 166. Perhaps from Pepys' Victualling Office?

2 LONDON Three ships of this name listed 1658-85

3 GOVERNOR 1678-90 Major John Blackmore; his 'Lady' died on St.Helena.

4 ANTHONY BEALE former Governor 1672; Deputy Governor in 1682

[For information on East Indiamen see SUTTON, Jean : Lords of the East - The East India Company and its Ships (1981)]

APPENDIX D: The Last Will & Testament of Francis Moore, Surgeon, 16 April 1682

In the name of God Amen I ffrancis Moore of the Island S<sup>t</sup>Hellena being sick and weak in body but of sound and perfect mind and memory all praise and glory be given to Almighty God for the same and knowing there is nothing more certaine than death and nothing more uncertaine than the time when the make this my last will and Testament in forme following first and principally I bequeath my Soul into the hands of Almighty God my Creator hoping and assuredly believing that through the merits of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that after this life ended I shall enjoy eternall bliss And my body I commit to the earth to be buried (by my wife) in decent and Christian like manner as my Executors hereafter mencured shall think fit And as for such worldly goods which it hath pleased Almighty god of his goodhess to send unto me I give and bequeath in manner and forme following:

Imprimis I give and bequeath unto my dear and loving Son Francis Moore five shillings to buy him a ring to wear in remembrance of me and to my sons Tho<sup>s</sup> Moore and John Moore and my daughters Ephraim Moore Ellinor Moore and Margret Moore I doe give and bequeath all and singular my Estate both in ready moneys bills bonds books debts plate &c to be divided in Equall and even proportions betweene them And I doe hereby make W<sup>m</sup> Rutter and John Connady Executors of my last will and testament and I doe revoke and make void all other wills by me made and doe acknowledge this to be my last Will and testament In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1682

Signed Sealed

and dd in y<sup>e</sup> presence

of y<sup>e</sup> marke

Jn<sup>o</sup> X Colson

John . Bostcn

John . Miles

Francis Moore

No. 124.

## Invalidation of Postage and Revenue Stamps

The postage or revenue stamps of St. Helena listed below, will cease to be valid with effect from 1st July 1994.

A period of six months from the 1st July 1994, to the 31st December 1994, will be allowed for holders of these stamps to exchange them for St. Helena postage or revenue stamps of equivalent value and in current use. Applications should be made to the Postmistress, Post Office, Jamestown, Island of St. Helena, South Atlantic Ocean.

1976	(14 Sept)	Definitive—Paintings Views of St. Helena.
1979	(19 Feb)	Bicentenary of Captain Cook's Voyage.
1979	(20 Aug)	Death Centenary of Sir Rowland Hill.
1979	(10 Dec)	150th Anniversary of Inclined Plane.
1980	(23 Feb)	Centenary of Visit of Empress Eugenie of France.
1980	(6 May)	"London 1980" International Stamp Exhibition.
1980	(18 Aug)	80th Birthday of The Queen Mother.
1980	(17 Nov)	175th Anniversary of Wellington's Visit.
1981	(5 Jan)	Endemic Plants.
1981	(22 May)	Early Maps.
1981	(22 July)	Royal Wedding, Prince Charles.
1981	(10 Sept)	Seashells.
1981	(5 Nov)	25th Anniversary of Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
1981	(4 Jan)	Insects.
1982	(19 Apr)	150th Anniversary of Charles Darwin's Voyage.
1982	(1 July)	21st Birthday of Princess of Wales.
1982	(25 Oct)	Commonwealth Games.
1982	(29 Nov)	75th Anniversary of Boy Scout Movement.
1982	(14 Jan)	Views of St Helena by Roland Svensson.
1983	(22 Apr)	Insects (2nd Series).
1983	(16 Jun)	Fungi.
1983	(12 Sept)	Birds.
1983	(17 Oct)	Christmas: Life of St Helena (1st Series).
1984	(3 Jan)	150th Anniversary of St Helena as a British Colony.
1984	(4 Apr)	Visit of Prince Andrew.
1984	(14 May)	250th Anniversary of Lloyd's List.
1984	(23 July)	New Coinage.
1984	(12 Oct)	Centenary of Salvation Army on St Helena.
1984	(9 Nov)	Christmas: Life of St Helena (2nd Series).
1985	(7 June)	Life and Times of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.
1985	(12 July)	Marine Life.
1985	(2 Sept)	Birth Bicentenary of John J. Audubon.
1985	(14 Oct)	Christmas: Life of St Helena (3rd Series).

Ethel Yon,  
Acting Chief Secretary.

The Castle, St. Helena,  
30th June, 1994.

No. 125.

## Invalidation of Postage and Revenue Stamps

The postage and revenue stamps of Ascension listed below, will cease to be valid with effect from 1st July 1994.

A period of six months from the 1st July 1994 to the 31st December 1994, will be allowed for holders of these stamps to exchange them for Ascension postage and revenue stamps of equivalent value and in current use. Applications for such exchanges should be made to the Administrator, Ascension Island, South Atlantic Ocean, or to the Postmistress, Post Office, Jamestown, Island of St. Helena, South Atlantic Ocean.

1976	(26 Apr)	Definitive—Birds.
1978	(4 Sept)	Ascension Island Volcanic Rock Formations.
1979	(19 Feb)	Bicentenary of Captain Cook's Voyage.
1979	(24 May)	Ascension Day.
1979	(15 Sept)	80th Anniversary Eastern Telegraph Company.
1979	(12 Dec)	Death Centenary of Sir Rowland Hill.
1980	(18 Feb)	Ferns and Grasses.
1980	(1 May)	"London 1980" International Stamp Exhibition.
1980	(11 Aug)	80th Birthday of The Queen Mother.
1980	(15 Sept)	Fish.
1980	(17 Nov)	150th Anniversary of Royal Geographical Society.
1981	(15 Feb)	Green Mountain Farm.
1981	(27 Apr)	"Space Shuttle" Mission and Opening of 2nd Earth Station.
1981	(11 May)	Flower Definitive.
1981	(22 May)	Early Maps of Ascension.
1981	(22 July)	Royal Wedding, Prince Charles.
1981	(14 Sept)	25th Anniversary of Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
1982	(22 Feb)	75th Anniversary of Boy Scout Movement.
1982	(19 Apr)	150th Anniversary of Charles Darwin's Voyage.
1982	(15 June)	40th Anniversary of Wideawake Airfield.
1982	(1 July)	21st Birthday of Princess of Wales.
1982	(29 Oct)	Commonwealth Games, Brisbane.
1982	(1 Dec)	50th Anniversary of B.B.C. External Broadcasting.
1983	(1 Mar)	Fungi.
1983	(12 May)	Island Views (1st Series).
1983	(1 Aug)	Bicentenary of Manned Flight. British Military Aircraft.
1983	(20 Sept)	Introduced Species.
1983	(28 Nov)	Seashells.
1984	(3 Jan)	150th Anniversary of St Helena as a British Colony.
1984	(10 Apr)	Visit of Prince Andrew.
1984	(28 May)	250th Anniversary of "Lloyd's List".
1984	(26 July)	New Coinage.
1984	(26 Oct)	Island Views (2nd Series).
1985	(8 Mar)	Trees.

POST HASTE VIA CARDIFF: A Tale of the St. Helena Mail

by Trevor Hearl

Readers who correspond regularly with St. Helena know all too well the frustration of waiting for their mail long after the RMS St. Helena has off-loaded it at Cardiff. She is usually well on her way back to the South Atlantic before it reaches our letter-boxes! Mail which has travelled some 4,500 miles in two weeks is consigned to some postbag limbo where it lingers for anything up to three weeks! This delay is conspicuous by its absence when the RMS docks elsewhere, Avonmouth or Falmouth - or with airmail via Brize Norton - when it takes only a few days. But via Cardiff, it is a different story.

The final straw for me came in January 1994 awaiting 'OHMS' mail from the Island before meeting Governor Hoole at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. The RMS docked on 30th December 1993, but the mail took 21 days to reach Cheltenham - long after my scheduled meeting. As advised, I took my complaint to the Royal Mails's 'Customer Care Unit' [CCU]. A summary of my experiences will explain why St. Helena mail is sometimes problem-prone.

- 26 Jan Complain to Gloucester [Glos] CCU that St. Helena mail (Voyage 17) arr. Cardiff 30 Dec 1993, delivered Cheltenham 20 Jan 1994 [21 days].
- 2 Feb Glos. CCU acknowledge and (3 Feb) pass to International CCU, London.
- 12 Feb International CCU acknowledge and (undated) pass to Defence Postal Services, Mill Hill (HM Forces' mail).
- 3 Mar Mill Hill tells London CCU there is no Forces' mail from St. Helena.
- 11 Mar RMS arr. Cardiff (Voyage 18); mail del. Cheltenham 16 Mar. (5 days).
- 12 Mar London CCU repeat "your enquiry is receiving attention".
- 17 Mar Glos CCU report complaint being dealt with by Forces' PO, Mill Hill; inform Glos CCU it is not.
- 29 Mar London CCU report "now carrying out detailed enquiries".
- 7 Apr Airmail arr Cheltenham (posted St. H. 26 Mar) stamped "Stockport MLO Cheshire 6 Apr 1994 3.30pm".
- 22 Apr Glos. CCU pass the "enquiry... to our Birmingham office. It is possible it will be some months before a reply can be made as some countries can take up to three months to respond to our enquiries."
- 6 May RMS arr. Cardiff (Voyage 19); mail del. Cheltenham 18 May [12 days]; inform Glos. CCU.
- 8 Jun Glos. CCU report "mail from Cardiff Docks is transferred to HM Customs, Southampton ... Forward the relative (sic) envelope to us...enquiries will be made". [Cover had been sent 26 Jan; St. Helena handstamp only]
- 22 Jun RMS arr. Cardiff (Voyage 20); mail del. Cheltenham 8 July [16 days].

The first four deliveries of 1994 had taken on average a fortnight to reach Cheltenham from Cardiff. But the next mail (Voyage 21), landed at Falmouth on

ST. HELENA & ASCENSION SUPPLEMENT NO 23

Bank Holiday Monday (29 August), came in two days. Success at last! I rang to congratulate my Customer Care Officer at Gloucester.

*But if Falmouth can do it, why not Cardiff? I asked.*

*She would ask London.*

*Don't ask London; ask Cardiff, I suggested.*

*No; there were procedures to be followed...*

She found London's International CCU on 'red alert'. Serious enquiries ere being made into the St. Helena mail, prompted by a Parliamentary complaint (instigated by St. Helena's Legislative Councillor John Newman in London, I discovered later), now given added urgency by the startling news that the Bank Holiday mail had been delivered first post, Wednesday 31st August!

At Falmouth Postman Pat had done his job in record time. Perhaps he thought, as the Bishop's Commission on Citizenship wants us to think, that St. Helena is "the lost county of England". Clearly he did not see it as "foreign" mail needing Customs inspection. At last Royal Mail began offering real explanations - even apologies. Whether at Falmouth or Cardiff (which has no mail Customs facilities), postbags from the RMS St. Helena - letter, packets, parcels, the lot - must first be sent to the "incoming foreign mail office" at Southampton for Customs clearance. But that should not take a fortnight.

"The delay of two or three weeks for delivery of mail after the ship has arrived certainly is unacceptable", admitted 'Glenis', Gloucester's Customer Services Officer, on 9th September. "We are currently making investigations into the reasons for these excessive delays and will endeavour to ensure that the next arrival of mails is distributed as speedily as possible." I await the arrival of the November mail with hope renewed.

So, if your St. Helena mail is delayed and you cannot wait nine months for action, tell the Royal Mail's Customer Service Centre, 6 St. Pancras Way, London NW1 1AA - not that your mail was late, but that it took only two days!

P.S. Ten years ago (1984) I had a courteous but frustrating correspondence with the Royal Mail about the nine days advance posting needed in the UK for St. Helena's outward surface mail. Now there's a challenge for a patient philanthropist!

September 1994

Trevor Hearl, The St. Helena link

SEQUEL:

RMS voyage 22: arrived Cardiff Friday 4 November. Mail delivered first post Monday, 7 November (3 days incl. weekend) Who do we have to thank for this? Guy Fawkes? Parliamentary intervention shall we say!

T.W.H.

MAILSHIPS OF THE 'CAPE RUN'

Book Preview by Trevor Hearl

A sumptuous volume extolling the story of "the Cape Run" has joined a growing list of titles relating with unashamed nostalgia those proud traditions which, as this book admits, still inspire the service provided by the RMS St. Helena. Written by a Cape master-mariner, the late Captain C.J. Harris, and a former Safmarine officer Brian D. Ingpen, Mailships of the Union-Castle Line has a South African perspective - even RMS St. Helena appears against the background of Table Mountain. The large format (30 a 28cms) and tabloid layout gives space for prolific illustration, some in colour including original paintings by Peter Bilas, and an informative, uncrowded text.

Among a dozen references to St. Helena is one of the abandonment of the fire-ravaged Good Hope Castle after leaving Ascension in 1973 (pp.139-141). It fails to answer serious questions raised by the incident, however, leaving fertile ground for research by postal historians, to discover why a Royal Mail Ship sailed unmonitored from one of the most sophisticated communication centres in the world, its 'Mayday' signals unavailing, and how St. Helena reacted to the non-arrival of its supply ship. And what happened to the mail, ordinary, registered and diplomatic? Did new safeguards result from the catastrophe? Such issues, taboo when the 'Cold War' submarines lurked in the South Atlantic, should now be discussed openly in the interests of safety at sea.

Other references to the Islands include the maiden voyage of RMS DANE in November 1857 (p.15); details of the mail contract in 1876 (p.19); and two less well-known events. In 1888 the mailship Norham Castle broke its propeller after leaving Cape Town and drifted in a current taking it, not to, but past, St. Helena. When it failed to arrive, Jamestown authorities quizzed every vessel that put in until they had enough evidence to send a whaler to the rescue, an initiative in stark contrast to that of ships which actually veered away on sighting its distress signals! The other reference quotes missionary John Moffatt aboard RMS Norman in April 1858 meeting "a French Chevalier...with his wife and daughter...bound to St. Helena.

*But as we did not call there, they had not only the tedious voyage to the Cape, but also the return voyage to their destination... when we had accomplished about two-thirds of our voyage, our engines broke down..."(p.16)* The Chevalier, Major Gauthier de Rougemont, "on his way to take possession of the domain" (i.e. Longwood House and the Tomb, La Domaine Francaise de Ste. Helenel, eventually arrived at the Cape on 18 May, re-embarked on 10 June and arrived at St. Helena on 30th, "accompanied by his wife, lady's maid and batman", according to M.Gilbert Martineau [Napoleon's Last Journey (1976) p.164].

Had the authors used St. Helena evidence they could have quoted the improved service to the Island by 1875:

*"Twenty years ago St. Helena was...outside of civilization; five months at a time elapsed without...hearing a word of home news or seeing a newspaper but now the great strides of oceanic steam navigation have brought it nearer to England and by mail packet from Southampton it may be reached in from 17 to 21 days.*

*The first week of the voyage is occupied in reaching Madeira, by which time seasick voyagers, about whose sufferings so many accounts have been written, have sufficiently recovered to enjoy the enchanting break afforded by a few hours ashore in that lovely island. The next few days are occupied in steaming down amongst the beautiful islands of the Canarian Archipelago with generally a fair view of the renowned Peak of Teneriffe towering high above the clouds. A sight of Cape Verde on the coast of Africa and a day or two by way of a change of that intolerable damp steamy hot atmosphere so inseparably associated with equatorial regions; and then a week or ten days amongst the fresh South-East trade winds, the deep blue seas of the South Atlantic with bright sunny skies and St. Helena is reached; the voyager looking back with pleasure to what has been in reality nothing more than an agreeable yachting trip, instead of the much-dreaded long sea voyage." [J.C. Melliss: St. Helena (1875) p.36]*

The arrival of the English mail at St. Helena, "the greatest event of the month", according to Melliss, "announced with a great display of bunting and firing of guns", receives no mention here, however. Nor is a mailship pictured at the Islands which the authors perhaps view more as an impediment than an attraction on the mail run.

Postal Historians may find some details of significance, such as changes in Union-Castle ships' departure from Southampton - 4pm every Thursday from 1938 to 1967, then 1pm every Friday (p.134). The boast that one could set a watch by the sailings was certainly upheld by the last of them, the Southampton and Good Hope Castles, known as "2-hour ships" at St. Helena from their strict schedule. The book takes both from slipway to scrapyard, though captions do not explain whether they are shown with or without passenger accomodation. They might have used one of Claude Muncaster's fine oil paintings, commissioned by Sir Nicholas Cayzer, of the Southampton Castle either entering Durban on her maiden voyage or passing the Royal Yacht Club off Cowes.

At £35, Mailships of the Union-Castle Line (UK publisher Patrick Stephens Ltd., Yeovil) is rather for the enthusiast who wishes to relive "the memory of a time when travel was leisurely and enjoyable and a holiday in itself; when elaborate meals were freshly prepared and brought to the table in a flurry of silver and white napery; when service was polite and efficient, and days were spent lazing under warm sunny skies, making new friends and having fun." (p.9)

EN ROUTE TO ST. HELENA - PART FOUR

by Christopher R. Riding

And this time some covers for which, generally, I can find no rhyme or reason for the route that they have been sent on. The first, a personal letter to my wife, was written by a friend of ours in Malaysia and was correctly addressed but it received a 'MISSENT TO MANILA' mark. Illustration No. 1.

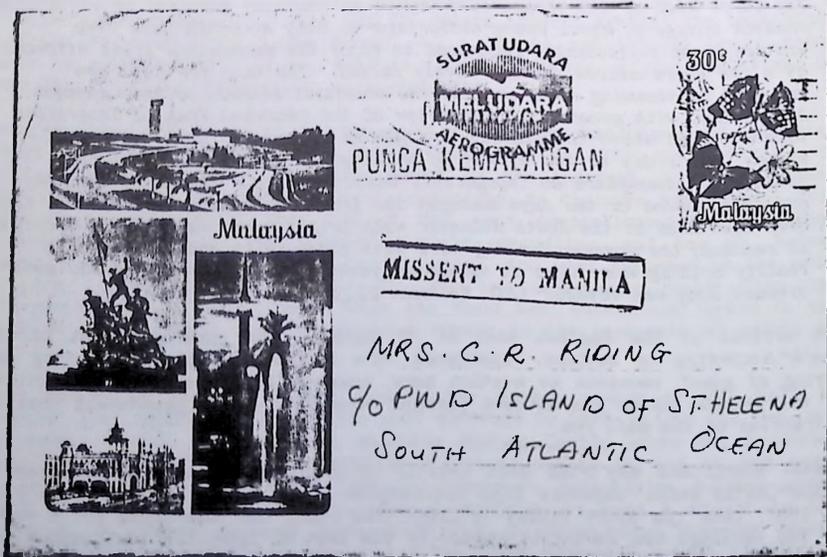


ILLUSTRATION NO 1.

There seemed to me no reason for the next one, a registered cover from Belgium, Illustration No. 2, to have been sent to 'REYKJAVIK' (Iceland) from where it was sent to Glasgow before being correctly forwarded to St. Helena. However some time ago I was displaying this collection to a local society when a member pointed out to me that the word 'ISLAND' which is in the address, means Iceland in Europe; in fact the latter is the word that appears on the stamps of Iceland so there is after all an excuse for this misdirection.



ILLUSTRATION NO 2.

A large envelope from Mauritius addressed to 'Family Riding' arrived without any marking on it but it did have a red manuscript notation 'Missent to Seychelles 17/4'. Illustration No. 3. That could have been written by anyone, including myself, to give the cover some added glamour. However when I showed this cover to the Secretary and Bulletin Editor of the Indian Ocean Study Circle, Mrs. S. Hopson, who knows Seychelles well, she immediately said to me 'I know that handwriting; it is that of Mr. Pillai, the Assistant Postmaster'.

There really does seem to be no reason why the next cover, from the States, should have collected a 'JERUSALEM' handstamp on the reverse of Illustration No. 4.

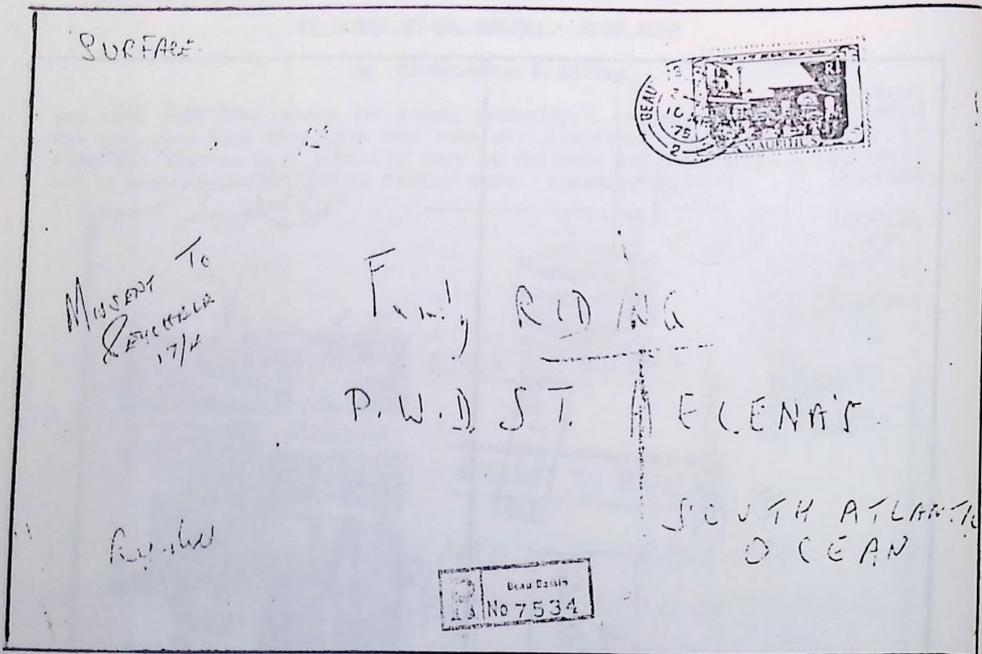
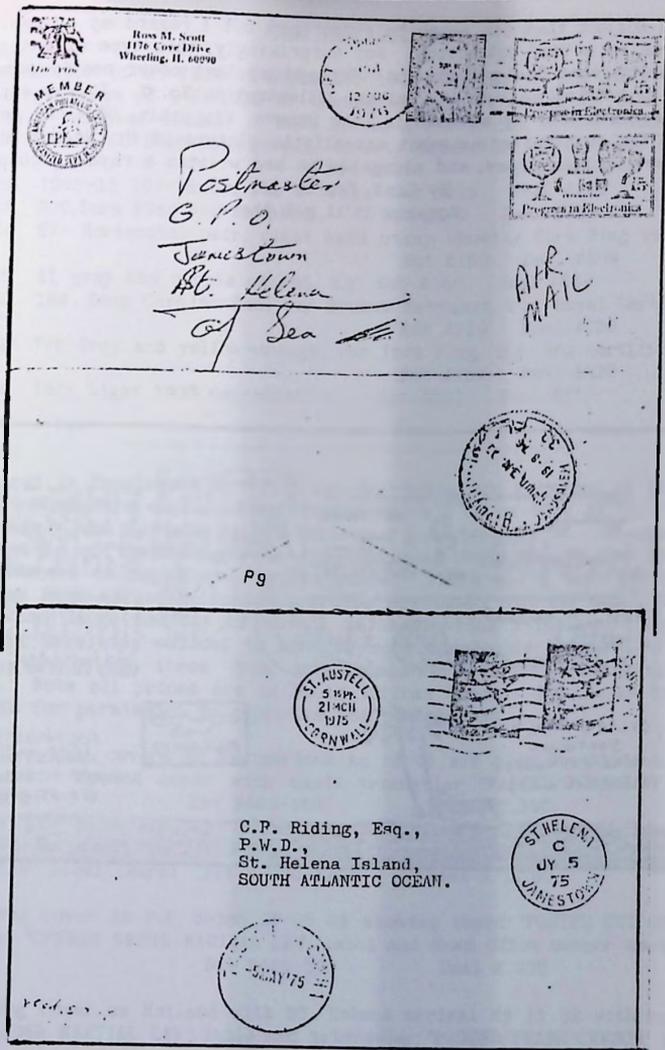


ILLUSTRATION NO 3.

All who know anything of St. Helena will be aware of its isolation in the middle of the South Atlantic. Perhaps there is only one territory that is more isolated in that part of the world, namely Tristan da Cunha. It does happen occasionally that letters destined for St. Helena are mis-sorted in Cape Town to Tristan and when that occurs one measures the delay in weeks or months rather than days. Illustration No. 5. is of a cover to myself from my Bank Manager in St. Austell, Cornwall, in answer to a query that I had sent him in February 1975. By April I was agitating for a reply and sent him a reminder, so he sent me a repeat copy of a letter that he claimed to have sent to me. In due course his original letter turned up, it having been posted in St. Austell on 21st March 1975; it had been mis-sorted to Tristan da Cunha at which Post Office it received a handstamp dated 5 May before being forwarded to St. Helena where it eventually arrived on 5 July - approximately 3½ months in transit.



ILLUSTRATIONS NOS 4 & 5.

ST. HELENA & ASCENSION SUPPLEMENT NO 23

This is a subject that can never be researched but I regard my accumulation of these items as a 'fun' collection. Not surprisingly, this type of material does not appear on most dealers' stands. Perhaps my last cover neatly sums up the problems of getting mail to St. Helena. Illustration No. 6. It was sent to the St. Helena Postmaster by someone in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, USA; the sender had drawn on the envelope a somewhat unrealistic picture of St. Helena, deep blue sea and waving palm trees, and alongside he had written a rhyming couplet:

By Land, Sea or Air -  
Somehow it'll get there.

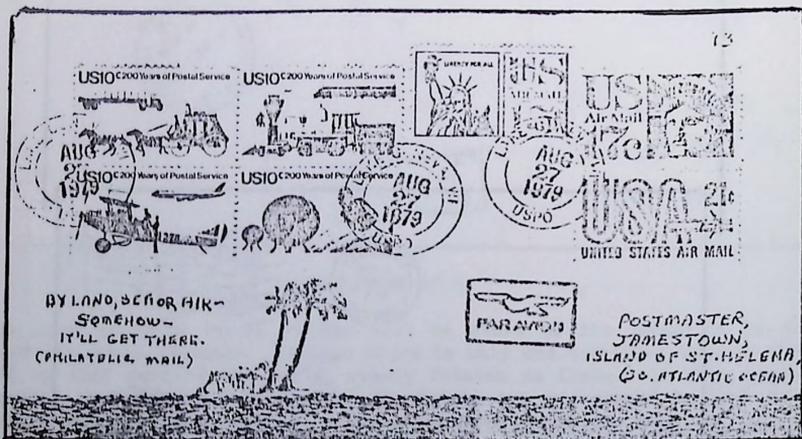


ILLUSTRATION NO 6.

ST. HELENA & ASCENSION SUPPLEMENT NO 23

FROM THE AUCTIONS

Harmers auction of 20/21st of September 1994 had one or two early Q.V. issues and a large range of G.V. 1922-27 issues with plate varieties. Out of the 24 lots only 4 remained unsold. I have listed a few of the better items:-

Lot 1726	Crown CC Deep Dull Purple, variety imperf BPA certificate (s.g. 11b)	Est £130	Real £121
Lot 1729	1908-11 10/- dated Dec 5 1911.	Est £390	Real £143
Lot 1733	2/6, Torn Flag var on piece.	Est £100	Real £253
Lot 1734	5/- Horizontal pair, right hand stamp showing Torn Flag variety.	Est £150	Real £209
Lot 1735	£1 grey and purple on red, o.g.	Est £180	Real £660
Lot 1740	1½d. Deep Carmine Red, var Broken Mainmast, o.g. Royal Certificate.	Est £120	Real £220
Lot 1742	7/6 Grey and yellow-orange, var Torn Flag, o.g. BPA certificate.	Est £180	Real £220
Lot 1744	15/- Light 1935 cancellation.	Est £600	Real £770

As promised in Supplement No 22, I can now bring you a review of the De Witt Hamer correspondence auctioned by Stephan Weltz & Co on 30th March 1994.

De Witt Hamer was Captain of the Hollander Volunteer Corps. He was captured at the battle of Elandslaagte on 21st October 1899, and he was one of the first prisoners to be shipped to St. Helena. There was a vast array of some 700 covers from his correspondence broken down into just 62 lots. Several of the lots had large numbers of covers in them, which I feel were too large, and should have been reduced to smaller more manageable lots. I have listed some of the better items from the sale with relevant photographs where possible. Note all prices are in South African Rands. My thanks to Stephan Weltz & Co for permission to reproduce the photographs.

Lot 144 Two 1901 covers ex Switzerland Au 18 01 arr plus Broadbottom circular censor mark. Second cover with small triangular "PASSED/CENSOR/ST. HELENA" censor mark. Est R600-800 Real R3,300

Lot 151 Three covers ex Netherland Indies, one cover with Green 'OPENED UNDER MARTIAL LAW' label (Rare) Est R 900-1200 Real R 1,760

Lot 156 Reg cover ex U.K. dated AP 25 02 showing boxed 'POSTED OUT OF COURSE' rare Green 'OPENED UNDER MARTIAL LAW' label and Head Office censor mark Est R400-500 Real R 935

Lot 157 Reg cover ex Holland with ST. Helena arrival My 11 02 with rare Green 'OPENED UNDER MARTIAL LAW' label and triangular 'PASSED/PRESS/CENSOR' mark. Est R800 1000 Real R 1,650

ST. HELENA & ASCENSION SUPPLEMENT NO 23

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Lot 159 P.P.C. to Paris dated Dec 4 1900 with 24mm dumb censor mark initialed E.W. paris receiving mark. Various attempts at delivery with two line St. Helena 'RETURNED LETTER' handstamp in purple.

Est R500-600 Real R418

Lot 160 Cover to Rustenburg dated 20 Dec 1900 with 24mm dumb censor mark initialed J.H.M.B. 'NO POSTAL COMMUNICATION' handstamp in purple and St. Helena two line 'RETURNED LETTER' handstamp also in purple.

Est R1000-1300 Real R1,760

Lot 161 Cover to Kroonstad dated 22 Jan 1901 with 24mm dumb censor mark initialed J.H.M.B. Several manuscript notations 'UNCLAIMED' handstamps etc and St. Helena two line 'RETURNED LETTER' handstamp in black.

Est R800-1000 Real R1,320

Lot 162 Similar cover but with initials C.D.N.S. dated 31 Jan 1901 and St. Helena two line 'RETURNED LETTER' handstamp in black.

Est R800-1000 Real R1,430

Lot 164 Cover to Johannesburg dated 27 Feb 1901 with 24mm dumb censor mark initialed E.W. Various 'UNCLAIMED' and 'ADVERTISED' handstamps and St. Helena two line 'RETURNED LETTER' handstamp in black.

Est R700-900 Real R935

Lot 165 Two covers to Cape Town dated Ap 27 1901 and Ap 28 1901 early cover with straight line 'DEADWOOD CAMP' cachet. Both covers forwarded to India and finally Ceylon with various censor marks etc. Both covers with St. Helena two line 'RETURNED LETTER' handstamp in black.

Est R2000-2500 Real R2,420

Lot 167 Two covers to Potchefstroom dated Au 16 1901 with 24mm dumb censor marks initialed E.W. and P.R. Both covers with St. Helena two line 'RETURNED LETTER' handstamp in black. Est R1200-1500 Real R1,760

Lot 168 Cover to Pretoria dated Au 16 1901 initialed E.W. Boxed 'ADVERTISED/AND/UNCLAIMED' handstamp and St. Helena two line 'RETURNED LETTER' handstamp together with 'POST OFFICE/crown/ST. HELENA' both in black.

Est R1200-1500 Real R1,320

Lot 169 P.P.C. to Johannesburg dated 24 Dec 1901 with triangular 'PASSED BY/CENSOR/DEADWOOD' censor mark initialed E.W. Oval 'POST OFFICE/crown/ST. HELENA' and 'RETURNED LETTER' handstamps both in purple.

Est R1200-1500 Real R1,320

Lot 170 Cover to Pretoria dated Nov 21 1901 initialed F.W.A. and two line 'RETURNED LETTER' handstamp applied in purple.

Est R700-900 Real R990

