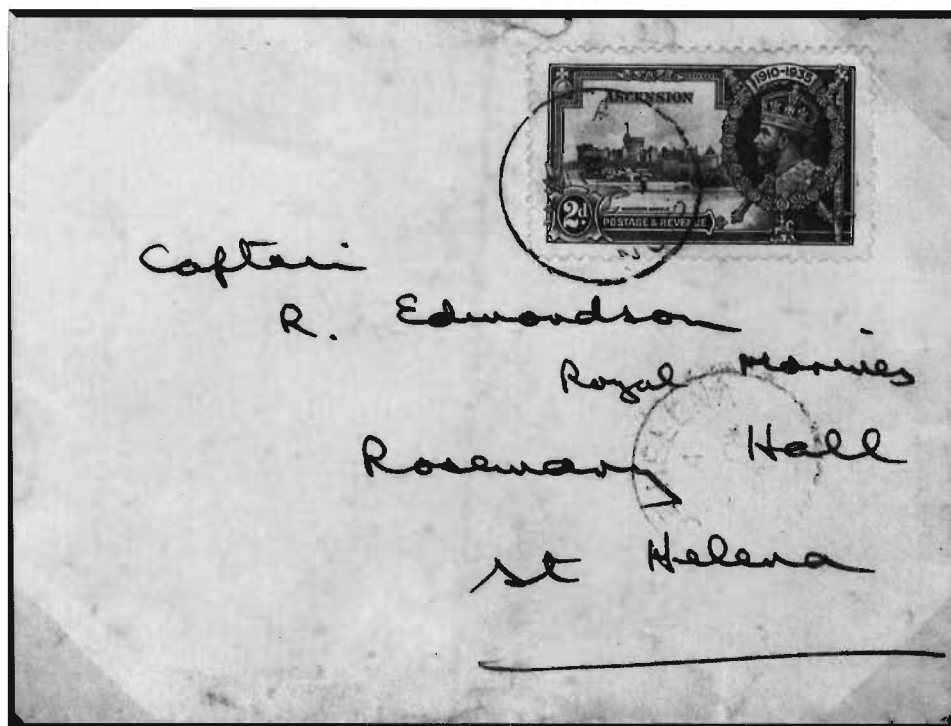


CAMEO



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Front Cover

Cover from Ascension to St Helena sent at
Empire letter rate, dated October 35.

See John Cooper's article page 211

Editorial

I have followed Rob May's lead, and this edition is again of 64 pages in order to include an influx of letters and a review (together with two follow-up articles) of a book covering the West Africa forces in Burma during World War II. I have also included a report of the Neville Jones Nigeria collection which came under the hammer at Grosvenor Auctions.

Turning to the South Atlantic content, the theme for this issue must be 'Archives'. There are articles on the Perkins, Bacon records for St Helena at the 'Royal'; some recently discovered stamp designs at the Jamestown Heritage Museum, and I have finally (after six years!) produced an illustrated listing of the Official stamp collection at the Castle Archives. Also, Robin Taylor has sent two follow-up articles from his researches at Kew. I hope the 'Mainland' collectors will find interest in the two articles by Bob Maddocks and John Cooper on pages 204 and 209 respectively.

A recent note from Ian Anderson highlights the importance of advertising revenue in offsetting the cost of publishing *Cameo*. I would like to thank our advertisers for supporting us over the years, and Peter Rolfe for all his efforts in encouraging them. I urge all our members to mention *Cameo* when responding to advertisements.

The next *Cameo* will be edited by Rob, and is due for publication in February next year. Please continue to send any South Atlantic articles for next October to me as hitherto. In the meantime, Christmas greetings and Happy Collecting in 2005.



Barry Burns



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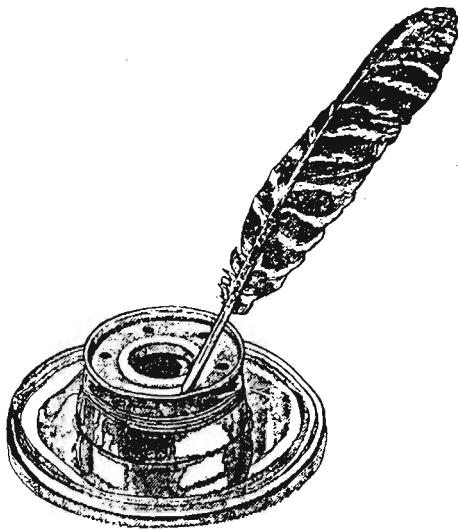
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Letters to the Editor

Should anyone wish to reply to any of these letters, please do so through the Cameo editor in the first instance to enable a consolidated follow-up to be published in conjunction with the study editors as appropriate.

Correspondence on any subject is always most appreciated. Any form of contact is welcome, whether by letter, telephone or email.

The joint editors' addresses are listed on the front page of all Cameo issues.

Barry Burns

War Bush Book and *Cameo* 62 Comments

In correspondence with Mr Hamilton about his book reviewed in this issue [p192], Rob May sent him a copy of *Cameo* 62, and received the following comments by letter:

Dear Mr May,

I am enclosing a copy of a memorandum which Mr J.L. Robinson, formerly of 81 (WA) Division Postal Unit, Royal Engineer sent me when I was writing my book, and which I made use of, together with a personal reminiscence, on p328. [*Ed – now quoted in part "Those in bush found they were getting mail from home more quickly than they had in West Africa. At a time when air travel and air cargo were in their infancy it was remarkable to read on a hilltop in Arakan a letter or a book which had left the UK or South Africa little more than a week earlier... Sending mail out, on the other hand, was only possible when a landing strip was available. When there was one, both light planes and Dakotas would fly mail out. (Airgraphs were used to the UK but were not available for letters to West Africa). Writing home was a problem for most of the African soldiers, who were not literate... They were also unhappy at not receiving many letters from home – their families had the same problem. Though District Officers and Commissioners did what they could, they had no funds to pay professional writers"*].

I am happy to say that Mr. Robinson is still with us and would be pleased for it to be used.

I may add that when I was overseas, including on active service in Burma, most of my letters home were 'microgrammed' – no doubt you know the procedure – which left no stamped or postmarked envelope. As I also note in my book, writing home was a problem for the Africans; many of our Gambians, being Muslim, were literate in Arabic but not in English. Their relatives at home had the same

problem.

Looking through *Cameo* I notice several points of history. It is correct that Freetown was settled originally by a society which wished to get African beggars off the streets of London, but another element was soon added; Africans who had been shipped to America, fought for us in the War of Independence and found themselves settled in Nova Scotia – not a congenial climate for them! Letters from the early settlers have been published; I had a copy but have not kept it... The Gambia item on p143 was also of interest. Besides the Liberators, Coastal Command Hudsons operated from Jeswang, much nearer Bathurst / Banjul, and Sunderlands from the River.

Page 164 – a small detail: the Nigerian Brigade, numbered 23, served in 11 African (NOT East African) Division, and the Gold Coast Brigade, numbered 24, in 12 Division. 21 and 22 were East African brigades, and 11 African Division also had a South African Brigade! The numbers 23 and 24 were never used for EA brigades – they continued from 25. The Divisional number 11 was later used for 11 (East African) Division, with a Black Rhino badge. I have set out above why letters from these WA brigades would be scarce; either official or from Europeans.

J.A.L. Hamilton
Leatherhead, Surrey

W.A. Forces Concession Rates

Dear Rob,

Just a note re Peter Richards' query on 'W.A. Forces airmail concession rates' in *Cameo* 61. I listed these in my article on the same topic in the January 1999 issue of *Cameo*. Basically, they applied in Nigeria as per the Nigeria P.O. Guide of the 1950s/1960s, but I am sure they applied equally to the other British West African colonies also.

Of additional interest is that all concession mail was

not to be posted in a public post box but had to be handed over to an official of the Post Office – presumably by a military postal orderly, who submitted a statement showing the number and category of correspondence being handed over. It seems that an individual serviceman claiming the concession could not personally mail his letters direct, though the Post Office Guide is not clear in this respect.

Bob Maddocks
Oswestry

WWII Italian PoWs

Dear Barry,

Bob Maddocks has written to me to point out that the card illustrated on p167 of *Cameo* 62 is not connected with East Africa and has been dealt with before in the pages of *Cameo*. As stated in the preamble on p164, the June 2004 article is an old one by Bill Colley that first appeared in Autumn 1993 before most of the *Cameo* references listed below, so the out of date text is no reflection on that author. I was not aware that the following references would be relevant when I scanned the *Cameo* index for any previous material on West African troops in East Africa during World War II.

Cameo Vol 2 No 8, p166, July 1983 first illustrates the cachet.

Cameo Vol 4 No 2, p29, July 1990 illustrates the same card, courtesy of Bill Colley.

Cameo Vol 4 No 6, p151, July 1992, where A.J. Brown illustrates and queries the same card again, with another example, and refers to camp numbers 1 and 6.

Cameo Vol 4 No 10, p280, July 1994. Bob Maddocks discusses these cards using information from the Gambian National Archives, Banjul. GOC West Africa on 22 May 1943 informed the War Office that the Italian PoWs had arrived at Lagos. The Bill Colley card is dated 20 May 1943.

Cameo Vol 5 No 3, p136, January 1996. Bob follows up his previous work with a copy of a letter from South Africa detailing the arrangements for the move of 500 Italian PoWs, preferably with specified trade skills from South Africa to West Africa.

Then Jeremy Martin has most recently revisited this subject, in *Cameo* Vol 7 No 3, p128, January 2002, locating the camps in Sierra Leone.

Finding this trail via the *Cameo* index is a bit of a challenge as most of the titles do not include the word 'Italian', hence this additional bibliography to attach to the June 2004 article.

Rob May
Princes Risborough

WASC Study Editors are also
available for queries and to help
edit articles

- Airmails – Barbara Priddy
- Ascension – Bernard Hughes
- Biafra – Dudley Prestedge
- Cameroons – Marty Bratzel
- Gambia – Oliver Andrew
- Ghana – Ian Anderson
- Gold Coast – Peter Newroth
- Lagos – John Sacher
- Maritime – John Knight
- Nigerias to 1914 – John Sacher
- Nigeria post 1914 – Tony Plumbe
- St. Helena – Bernard Mabbett
- Sierra Leone – Philip Beale & Peter Rolfe
- Togo – Jeremy Martin

W. African Stamp Export Permits WWII

Dear Barry,

Following my response (Letters *Cameo* 61) to Gerry Mobbs' letter to the editor concerning a 'Licence' endorsement on a Sierra Leone WWII cover (*Cameo* 59) I now find I have a French Cameroun cover to complement the then illustrated British Cameroons cover used to export mint postage stamps under permit.

This cover [Figure 1 - *reduced to 80%*] was mailed from Edea on 14 October 1944 to Djibouti, French Somaliland. On the reverse [Figure 2 - *80%*] it bears a green Douane label giving declared details of content (new postage stamps) and the value thereof. Underneath is a manuscript endorsement 'Droits de Douane 1768/ Edea le 14 Octobre 1944/ Le chef du Bureau des Douanes', and signed by an official over an indiscernible handstamp to approve the export.

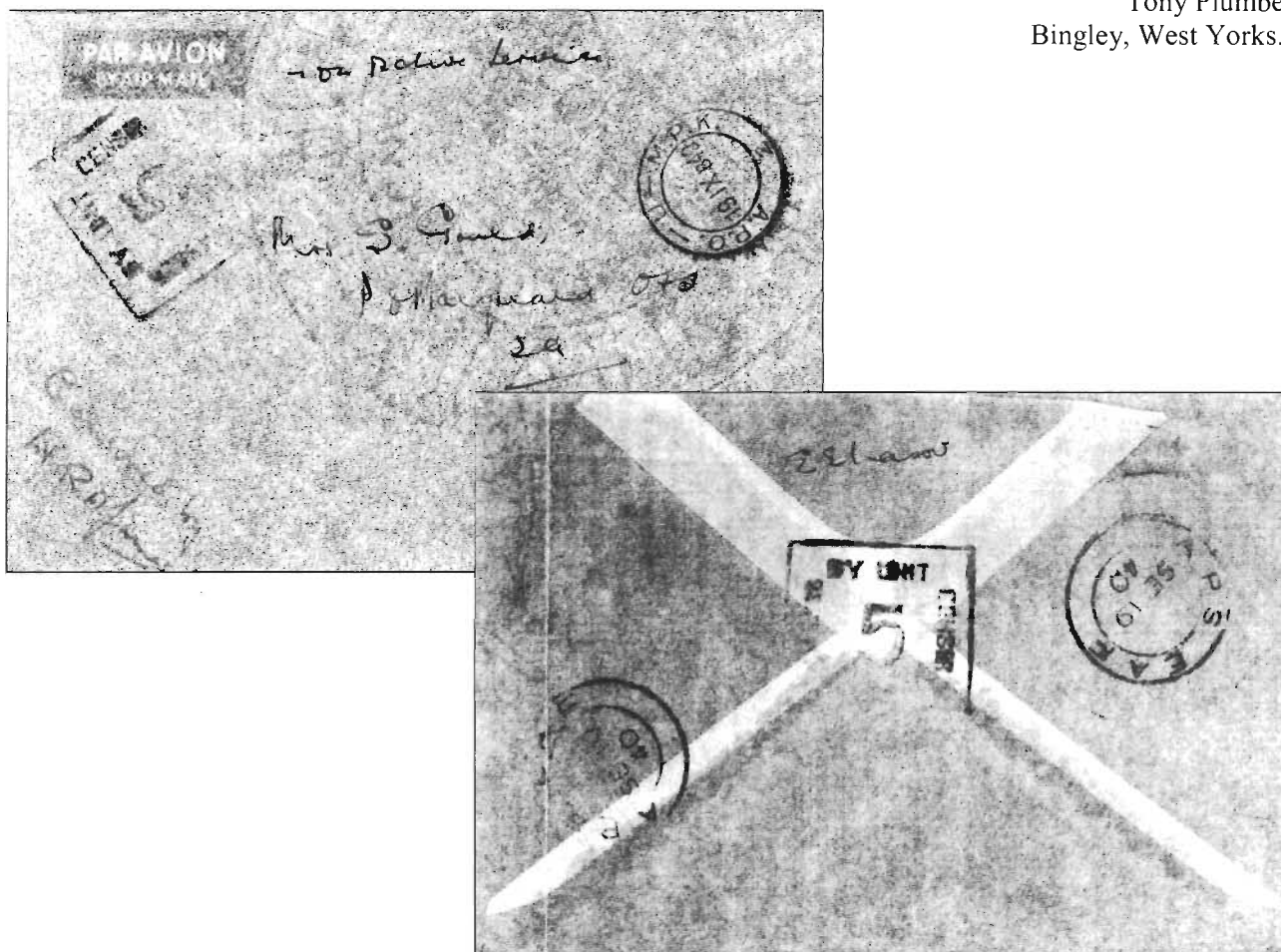
Bob Maddocks
Oswestry

☰ Passed By Unit Censor

Dear Rob,

The latest copy of *Cameo* is excellent - I think the colour plates are most attractive. I enclose a photocopy of the one Nigerian censor cover in my collection that emanated from East Africa and has a Military 'PASSED / BY UNIT / CENSOR' oblong cachet [reduced to 75%]. As you will see it is a number 5 and dated 19 September 1940. The photocopy reflects the rather weak cancellations on the original cover. Martin and Walton 2nd edition records only one date; 18 May 1940.

Tony Plumbe
Bingley, West Yorks.



🖨 British Protectorate Oil Rivers

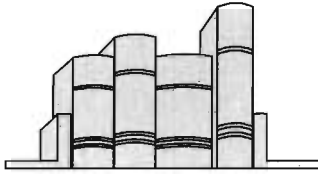
Dear Sir,

I have a postcard posted at Clifden, Co. Galway, Ireland to Dudley, Worcs. This has an orange ½d British stamp overprinted 'British Protectorate Oil Rivers' (forgive me, I do not have a SG catalogue to hand to give number), cancelled 11 March 1901. There is no arrival, surcharge or instructional marks. The sender was the well known W. Reginald Gray. My question is: Was this a legitimate usage - could such stamps be used in GB and Ireland in 1901? The information is required for an article in *Die Harfe* (The Harp), the journal of the FAI, the German Society for Irish Philately, and your assistance would be much appreciated.

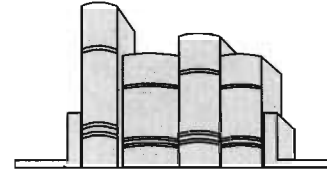
Tony Cassidy
Milton Keynes

An anonymous member replies:


In the Morocco Agencies section of the SG catalogue, it states that non-surcharged stamps 'were valid for postal purposes in Great Britain from the summer of 1950 onwards'. All the same, I would not be surprised if, at the turn of the century, non-surcharged stamps of Oil Rivers, Levant, Cyprus etc. were valid here, though SG do not mention this. You could try asking the GB Overprints Society who may be able to give a definitive [!] answer.



Bookshelf



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 *AR - Avis de Réception (Volume 1)?* by David Handelman, with sections by Peter A.S. Smith and Henrik Mouritsen. Postal History Society of Canada, 2002. 158 + vi pages, 6 x 9 in. wire-0 binding. \$25.69 Canadian, plus post and packing from the author at Mathematics Department, University of Ottawa, Ottawa ON K1N 6N5, Canada; e-mail: dehsg@uottawa.ca. Reviewed by Bill Mitchell

As will be seen, the question mark in the title of this introduction to an almost unstudied subject is important. Professor Handelman begins his study thus, in the opening paragraph of his Introduction:

AR refers to the official Universal Postal Union (UPU) term avis de réception. This is a service available for registered mail (and on non-registered mail in some jurisdictions) which provides that the receiver of the registered item sign a form or card (known as an AR form or AR card) which is returned to the sender. This is evidence that the registered letter has been duly delivered.

The introduction includes a brief history of the service, which may have been available in some form in the medieval Venetian postal system. More recently, in the 18th Century (and until well into the 20th), it was available in the Austrian Empire under the name 'retour récépissé'. Internal AR schemes were adopted by France in 1859 (registration was not required until 1878), Italy in 1861 and the United States in 1863; in 1851 Prussia negotiated several bilateral AR treaties. International services, however, did not really take off until the Paris UPU Convention of June 1878 came into force on 1 April 1879, and (because of lack of information on earlier arrangements) this is really the starting point of the book.

The UPU requirements were intended primarily for international mail and can be divided into three periods, each of which has its own chapter - 1879 to 1892 (designated 'Very Early AR'), the period of the UPU Treaty of Vienna (1892 to 1898) ('Early AR'), and 1 January 1899 onwards ('post-Vienna'); each had its own variation on a basically similar scheme where the item was accompanied (sometimes followed) by paperwork enabling the receiving office to certify delivery to the sending office (or sender). Normally the AR paperwork was the responsibility of the office of origin, but during the short-lived 'Early AR' period it was placed in the hands of the office of destination. This led to the requirement that covers intended for the AR service should be marked by means of an appropriate cachet (most frequently this has been a boxed AR), a practice which long out-lived the end of this period.


Other chapters deal with AR stamps and the paperwork - forms, cards and covering envelopes - and there are specialised chapters dealing with Canada and the United States as well as Egypt and Denmark (these last being the contributions from Messrs Smith and Mouritsen respectively). Finally come a chapter ('Weird AR') on unusual items, an afterword tying up loose ends and an Appendix on after-posting enquiries as to the delivery or other fate of the item.

The book covers the whole world insofar as practice is known to the author and his colleagues. As its modest size indicates, and as he is the first to acknowledge, it is far from complete for the simple reason that for many countries information is just not to hand; the afterword is called 'Final(?) Words' and includes a request for collectors' assistance in preparing a second volume on which he expects to start work this summer (2004).

In our own field, Professor Handelman begins with the bleak statement (page 48): *Conspicuous by its absence is Africa, due to a dearth of material* - even South Africa gets only one mention, and as a destination country at that. Actually, since postal practices in French Colonies normally went in parallel


with those in the mother country, French West and Equatorial Africa, Cameroun and Togo are reasonably well served, for France receives what seems to be the most detailed treatment (apart, of course, from the four countries given specialised attention); of the British Colonies, including the Islands, only Gambia receives a mention - one 'origin' cover, apparently philatelic, is illustrated (page 70). There is nothing at all on the German, Portugese and Spanish Colonies in West Africa, or (apart from a reference to its Registration adhesive stamps) Liberia. So there is plenty of scope for readers of *Cameo* to help with this project, and they are invited to send Professor Handelman photocopies of any relevant material (pre - or post - independence) in their possession; he will, I'm sure, be delighted to hear from you.

Despite its limitations, this is an important study which opens up a whole new field for research. It's attractive to the eye, although a more robust binding would be an advantage, as would a larger page size - many of the black and white illustrations, which are otherwise quite adequate, have been reduced. It is to be hoped that eventually a definitive study will be produced, when these shortcomings can be corrected.


 *Report on a Visit to St Helena by A. Emanuel, C.M.G. March - April 1959.* St Helena Monograph No 1 published 2003 by Robin Taylor; 42p, A4 comb bound, illustrated with photographs, postcards and postage stamps. Available from Robin at 40 Cranmore Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 4PT, UK. Price £6 plus post and packing. Reviewed by Barry Burns

Robin Taylor, a recent recruit to the WASC, is well known for his study and writings relating to Tristan da Cunha. During his research at the National Archives at Kew, he accumulated many photocopies of items relating to St Helena, and this is the first monograph in a planned series on St Helena which is expected to cover unpublished material from the 1960s and 1970s.

Aaron Emanuel's visit in 1959 was the first by a member of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to collect the opinion of the Islanders in order to understand and improve the problems of the time. As such, it gives a fascinating account of life on the Island, although a present day visitor will notice that many of the problems remain, despite the improved living conditions and availability of foodstuffs and goods. There is a brief mention of his call at Ascension Island. The report is reprinted in its entirety without further comment from Robin, and as such is an important addition to the published literature. A couple of oversights are the lack of a proper introduction and detailed source information, and quite a number of proofing errors. The illustrations, although not taken from or directly relating to the report, are well produced and break up the text, and some values of the attractive and contemporary 1953 definitive set are used to advantage.

 *Cameroun in the Great War - Volume 1 The Military Handstamps and the Early Handstamps* by Dudley Cobb. To be published later in 2004. Bilingual edition; 60 pages in English, 60 pages in French, with monochrome illustrations and 12 colour plates. Available from Albion Bookshop, Broadstairs (albionbooks@hotmail.com) and Roumet, Paris (roumet@roumet.fr) Price £26 or €39.

In a series of monographs, Dudley Cobb proposes to explore the postal and philatelic consequences, on the French side, of the Great War in Cameroun. This volume deals with the five handstamps used by the main French contingent of the Joint Expeditionary Force between October 1914 and March 1916. Their use, when and where, is significantly clarified. The early postage stamps are also described. One set of French overprints was not issued, and is virtually unknown. The Corps Expéditionnaire series is examined in detail, with a method for plating single stamps. Postcards, stampless covers and registered mail are all discussed, with some novel conclusions.

 *War Bush: 81 (West African) Division in Burma 1943-1945* by John A.L. Hamilton. 400 pages, 17 maps and 48 pages of glossy black & white photographs. Hardbound. Published by the author by arrangement with Michael Russell (Publishing) Ltd. ISBN 0-85955-267-5. Available from the author at 12 Fairfield Road, Leatherhead Surrey, KT22 7HP, price £25 plus £3.50 post and packing UK, or £7.50 post and packing overseas air mail. Reviewed by Rob May, with additional material by the author

John Hamilton is a former officer of the 1st Battalion, the Gambia Regiment, who served in Burma during this conflict. By contact with an amazing number of surviving colleagues who also served with the West

African forces in Burma he has produced a definitive and comprehensive eye-witness account, almost entirely from primary sources, but backed up by official documentation, war diaries lodged at the PRO, Kew and other sources of trustworthy information which are listed in a comprehensive bibliography. There is also a good index.

Whilst French West Africa was aligned with the Vichy French government there was concern that the British Colonies in West Africa could be under threat. At the time West African forces were serving in Italian East Africa until the end of 1941, so domestic recruitment was quickly accelerated after the fall of France by sending officers and NCOs from the UK including as many as possible who had experience on the Coast, but also men whose fathers were coasters, and 'volunteers' for the warmer climes of West Africa (elsewhere in the book dubbed throw-outs!). The first arrived in August 1940 to start recruiting indigenous soldiers in all the Colonies. Eventually 28 Battalions were formed. African troops did not prove hard to find at pay of one shilling a day, plus a separation allowance of six pence per day and an overseas allowance of three pence per day, doubled from 1 November 1944 – although at the time they did not know they would be going to Burma.

After the Allies landed in French North Africa in November 1942 the threat from the French West African territories abated and Sir George Giffard, GOC West Africa, suggested the West Africans could be redeployed in Burma, which was accepted and a warning order sent 1 January 1943.

Mr Hamilton makes a persuasive case that the contribution made by the 81st Division in Burma has been unjustifiably ignored by war historians, partly due to bias encountered at the time, and partly due to the nature of jungle warfare, without major set-piece battles. It was a characteristic of West African forces that they used little motorised transport, and used 'head porters' instead of mules in bush areas where there were no roads. This proved to be very suitable for the conditions in Burma when combined with air drops of supplies, but on the one occasion that General Slim, commanding at that time the whole XV Indian Corps (to which the West African forces were attached), saw a battalion and battery complete with carriers and loads he called them 'a horde of unarmed porters'. The Japanese had a great deal more respect, naming them the Allies' best jungle fighters, and particularly impressed that they almost always recovered their casualties. When, in another book we read opinions that 'the Africans themselves were to prove allergic to jungle warfare' and 'they had shown themselves to be the most unreliable of the multi-ethnic groups serving in the ranks of XV Indian Corps' the way the 82nd Division, in particular, was underused by those leaders is not surprising.

It is in the nature of the army for Privates to be largely anonymous; the more so if they are illiterate West African natives. History may be written by the winners, but also only written by those who can write! The contributions are largely from the European officers, but their respect and affection for their troops shines through the text of this book, and its surprisingly large collection of rare black and white photographs.

This book is not only a well-collated eye-witness history but also a good read. I have no hesitation in recommending it. All profits from the book go to the Royal Commonwealth Ex-services League now that sales have, the author tells me, covered the costs of publication, and are used to help West African veterans who, as wartime soldiers, get no pension.

Once he was aware of our philatelic speciality Mr Hamilton also provided a further article from his notes, with the consent of its author, who served with the 81st Division postal unit during the campaign, which is published on the following page. I thank them both for making this available to us.

For the benefit of postal historians I have extracted key dispositions and dates:

81 (West African) Division came into being on 1 March 1943.

All forces for 81 Division were assembled at and around Division HQ at Ibadan, Nigeria in March to June 1943. 6 (WA) Brigade arrived first by sea from Banjul and Freetown by the beginning of March, 5 (WA) Brigade by road from Gold Coast through Dahomey in May, and 3 (WA) Brigade were brought down from Northern Nigeria by rail during April. 6 Brigade were encamped to the north around Ede and Oshogbo, with 5 Brigade to the west around Abeokuta. These dates are extracted from General Woolner's reports and

are not provided in the book.

The force was too large to travel to Burma by a single convoy. In the event there were no enemy actions encountered to any of the convoys.

6 Brigade went first, embarking on 10 July 1943 at Apapa, arriving at Bombay on 14 August. It put in at Cape Town en route.

5 Brigade sailed 10 August and arrived 11 September.

3 Brigade, the Reconnaissance Regt., and 5 and 6 Light Batteries sailed 29 September, arriving 7 November. Both these convoys put in at Durban.

The final convoy with the Light AA/Anti-tank Regiment left mid-September and routed via the Mediterranean, instead of round the Cape. No arrival date is given.

After landing in Bombay the troops were moved by rail to camps around Deolali and Nasik for a short period of training.

The first train eastwards left 5 November and from then until 13 December trains for Calcutta left almost daily. They then went by sea to Chittagong and by narrow gauge railway to the railhead at Dohazari, then by lorry to Chiringa. The first to march into the Kaladan valley from there were 4 NR leaving Chiringa on 7 December.

1 SLR followed on 11 December, 1 GR on 13 December, 5 GCR on 22 December and 7 GCR on 28 December. 8 GCR were held at Chiringa as local defence.

3 (WA) Brigade was, from the start, allocated to Major General Wingate's special forces for Long Range Penetration – the Chindits, operating north of the Irrawaddy River in the Gangaw Hills.

81 (WA) Recce Regt. was detached from the Division because their Bren carriers and scout cars could not get into the Kaladan. They served on the coast around the Naf River (for which they were provided with small river steamers and other craft) and Maungdaw until rejoining 81 Division in April 1944.

82 Division was created in August 1943, but did not relieve 81 Division until 26 January 1945 at Myohaung, Burma. 81 Division reassembled at Chiringa by early February.

81 Division withdrew from Chiringa to camps 90-100 miles west of Madras, India in February 1945. There were plans to use the Division in the invasion of Malaya, and 1 SLR spent a period in training near Bombay, but it was decided they had been away from home too long already. That did not stop the delays as the fall of Japan in August following the atomic bombings led to the problem of repatriating everyone at once, with too little available shipping. PoWs and displaced persons were given priority.

Some of the officers and NCOs were individually repatriated to Europe more quickly than their troops because they had been overseas longer – right back to August 1940. The West African troops returned home with about half of their European establishment. 6 Brigade left first in December 1945, sailing from Cochin and via the Mediterranean, meaning that the Gambians were first home in January 1946. All had been demobilised and returned by March 1946.

81st (West African) Division Postal Unit, R.E. - by J.E. Robinson Ex Sgt. R.E.

The unit was formed in Lagos, Nigeria in May 1943 and embarked for India and SEAC in July 1943, with the main body of the Divisional troops. The unit consisted of 1 commissioned officer, 6 NCOs and 4 sappers, all Europeans with UK Post Office experience, and 18 African clerks, drivers and houseboys. Only two of the African clerks had previous experience in postal work in Accra, Gold Coast.

The first overseas station was Nasik in India where the troops were trained and equipped for operations against the Japanese. It soon became apparent that the method of delivering mail in the forward areas of operation would be unusual to say the least, as all supplies would be dropped by air. The division would be operating in the jungles of Burma and in some instances behind enemy lines. Therefore a method of delivering mail regularly had to be worked out which would be efficient and maintain standards of security.

The system finally decided upon was as follows:

- 1 All mail to be delivered to unit representatives at Rear HQ.
- 2 Mail for troops in the forward area to be returned to the Field Post Office RHQ in sandbags, suitably labelled. The bags would then be sealed by FPO staff with Post Office metal seals.
- 3 The sandbags would then be taken by FPO personnel to an Indian Army RAMO unit where they would be packed into baskets under supervision. The baskets would then be sealed with Post Office metal seals, parachutes fitted and conveyed to collecting points ready for loading into aircraft according to the dropping zone.
- 4 Registered items to be delivered to unit representatives at Rear HQ with ordinary mail, any for the forward troops being returned to the FPO where receipts would then be made out in triplicate. One copy to be retained at RHQ and the remaining two copies with the item to be despatched to the forward area. The person dealing with the mail in the forward area to retain one signed copy and the other signed receipt to be returned to the FPO at RHQ by any means available. This part of the scheme would break Post Office rules as regard the hand to hand check of registered items but in the end it worked very well and I cannot recall one claim for compensation for a missing registered item.

Apart from one or two teething problems at RHQ at the beginning of operations the scheme was a complete success and much appreciated by the troops in the forward area. As far as I am aware the 81st was the first division to receive mail on a regular basis by 'air drops' whilst in action in the forward area and behind enemy lines. The measure of its success is reflected in the fact that the co-author of the scheme Lt A.E. Tee R.E. was promoted and posted to the Chindits to oversee their mail services and the unit's one senior NCO was promoted and posted to oversee mail services for the troops due to make the sea-borne landings at Akyab, Burma.

It may be of interest to recall that although most of the West African troops were illiterate, they sent a large number of letters home. If they could not write for themselves, they engaged the services of a 'letter writer' who was an educated friend, relative or a member of the same tribe. [*Editor's query: I think there were Arabic-speaking censors in Gold Coast and Nigeria as there have been reports of rare censor numbers appearing on letters written in Arabic – and see the note in Mr Hamilton's letter about use of Arabic to Gambia [p187]. Would the above letters have been written in African languages and if so how would British censorship have handled them?*]

Soon after the Division's arrival in India the Indian Post Office ran out of British Postal Orders because the Africans sent home to their villages army pay accumulated on the voyage from West Africa. They also purchased a large number of watches from South Africa. The Indian Post Office refused to allow the 81st Divisional postal unit to requisition supplies direct from the UK. Only the personal intervention of General Auchinleck averted a crisis of morale. Supplies were flown direct from the UK to the Indian Post Office at Bombay, whereas normally they would have been despatched by sea, which would have taken weeks.

During the monsoon season in 1944 the bridge at Dohazari, on the Arakan road from Chittagong, was washed away and mail for the 81st Division was diverted by sea to Cox's Bazaar. African troops from the postal unit volunteered to a man and marched from Chiringa to Cox's Bazaar and back (a round trip of 50 miles, in the monsoon) with bags of mail wrapped in their waterproof capes, and carried on their heads, in order to maintain continuing supplies of mail for their colleagues. An action never officially acknowledged. I am proud to have been a member of the 81st (West African) Division Postal Unit and hope that our efforts to deliver mail by 'air drops' to forward troops contributed greatly to their morale, and in a small way helped in the defeat of the Japanese.



St Helena from the South East [*Barry Burns*]

Auction Report – Grosvenor 25 May 2004

The Neville Jones Nigerias

Rob May

Present in the room were members Barbara Priddy, Jeremy Martin, Michael Wright, Peter Duggan and Rob May. Estimates exclude the buyer's premium. Realisations include the buyer's premium with VAT thereon. All in £ Sterling.

LOT	DESCRIPTION	TOP EST.	REALISED
498	A letter of 1845 from Rev John Clarke at Fernando Poo, to Bristol, with octagonal framed 29 SP 1845/ LIVERPOOL/ SHIP, with transcript of contents	250	882
500	The collection of TPO and Mobile PO marks (113 items)	200	412
Southern Nigeria			
513	Specimen overprints ; 1901 set with additional 2/6, 5/-, 10/-, 1903-04 and 1912 sets	140	118
515	5/- die proof of frame in black on glazed card 'Before Hardening', dated 13 NOV 00	160	247
516	10/- ditto	160	271
522	Booklet 1912 2/-, missing five stamps from the first pane, some staining and interleaving adhesion, minor bend to front cover	400	259
524	The cancellations collection in one album (320 items)	400	1176
Nigeria KGV Keyplates – 1914-29			
525	½d die proof of value tablet and country name in black on glazed card	120	235
526	Specimen set with additional values from 3d to 10/- (17)	180	259
528	1d die proof of value tablet and country name in black on glazed card	120	223
529	4d ditto	120	235
530	10/- SG 11b fine mint cat £750	350	565
531	10/- SG 11c, 11d corner pairs with plate no 8 unmm mint	150	412
532	£1 SG 12, top margin single with plate no 23 hinged in margin only	100	235
533	£1 SG12, corner margin pair with plate no 1, fine mint	160	470
534	£1 SG 12b, top margin single with plate no 17 unmm mint	100	376
535	£1 SG12b, top margin block of four with plate no 17, hinged on one stamp and some faults	300	800
537	£1 SG12b, bottom margin single with plate no 16, fine mint	90	318
538	£1 SG12 bottom corner block of four with plate no 23 unmm mint	400	1176
539	£1 SG12 top margin single with plate no 23, unmm mint	100	247

LOT	DESCRIPTION	TOP EST.	REALISED
Nigeria KGV Keyplates – 1921-32			
540	Specimens overprinted or perforated ½d to £1 set and extra 1/- to 10/- (16 items)	120	106
542	½d and 1d in die I and die II vertical gutter pairs, hinged on top stamp	120	329
543	½d interpanneau block of four with left margin die I & II. Unm mint, one stamp with printing flaw below 'd'	180	376
544	1d watermark inv, mint single and 2 unmm mint pairs	120	271
545	1d interpanneau block of four die I & II, folded through margin and two stamps hinged	140	188
546	1½d die proof of value tablet and country name in black on glazed card 'After Striking'	150	200
547	Extensive study of mint values to 1/-, mostly in marginal multiples with plate or sheet numbers	300	2058
548	Die II 2/6 (23) and 5/-(24) from range of printings, mostly in marginal mint multiples with plate numbers	140	965
549	Die I 2/6, 5/- 10/- each in top left corner block of four with plate no 23, hinged on one 2/6 and one 5/- stamp only	400	1176
550	Die I 2/6 upper left corner pair, 5/- and 10/- lower margin singles all with plate no 23, fine mint	100	176
551	Die II 10/- mint (19 incl five pairs and block of four) with plate numbers, fine mint, mostly unmm	400	1470
Nigeria 1936			
553	1936 full set of photographic essays ex DLR archive	250	729
554	1936 set perforated specimen, mainly fine mint	90	76
555	1936 set in imprint blocks, some values duplicated. fine unmm mint	180	329
Nigeria Covers and Postmarks			
563	The aerogrammes and air letters in 2 albums and a folder (100s)	250	1082
564	Army telegraphs 1918 env to USA franked 1d with fine strike of 'SOUTHERN NIGERIA / S 25.X.18 AK/ TELEGRAPHS' and with transit cds of Ilesha and Oshogbo	150	282
567	The cancellations collection KGV to QE2 in 18 albums and very much a 'work in progress' with many new items tucked in	2000	3058
569	The airmail covers collection in two albums (120 items)	400	1470
570	The censorship covers collection in 2 albums (190 items)	300	2588
571	The military mail collection in one album (70 items)	150	588

The sale provides a satisfactory result for the family, especially in the extraordinary demand for the KGV plate blocks. Nevertheless, WASC members were able to secure the cancellations collection and several of the themed cover collections at prices which, despite the very low estimates for the covers, were still quite conservative bearing in mind the rarity of some of the material.

Lotting and describing of the later material was poor. Plate proofs of post Independence definitives lay undescribed in a 'general QEII collection' and the box lot of the residue of the estate included, undescribed, Neville's substantial collections of QEII booklets and NRC perfins. It will be interesting to see how much of this material will reappear on the market, properly described and at the dealer's mark-ups!

Dr White Cooper

John Cooper

Reading through *Cameo* 60, Bob Deakin illustrated some of the St Helena 1934 values on cover addressed to William R. White Cooper MB [1]. I am not a West Africa collector, but have an interest in the Postal History of the Omnibus designs of the 1935 Windsor Castle Silver Jubilee and the 1937 Coronation, across all the Colonies.

Dr White Cooper (no relation as far as I am aware) was creating high value covers from many Colonies at this time, using various addressees and addresses in Dartmouth. I have a registered parcel piece for Barbuda with four 1/- Jubilees to a Mrs Tracey (at Dr White Cooper's home address); a registered air parcel piece with eight 6d Gambia to a Dr W.H. Green at Dartmouth, and an underpaid cover from Turks Islands to South Africa, Witmoss Station, which was taxed and redirected to Dr White-Cooper at Dartmouth.

I have seen others including unlikely high value sendings from Cayman Islands. I would suggest that few if any of these actually paid a correct rate or performed the intended function, i.e. to send registered material for a valid purpose at the correct commercial rate. Most of the parcel pieces and covers are in fact fairly attractive and collectable.

Reference

- 1 Deakin Bob, "1934 High Values on Cover", *Cameo*, Volume 8 p32, WASC, October 2003



St Helena ½d 'Badge' with Inverted Watermark

Bill Thorpe

There has been much discussion and research about the St Helena KGV 1922 ½d value of the Badge set with inverted watermark SG 97w. Up to now it has been thought that only two sheets existed, both coming from the first printing in 1923. However, this may not be so.

I have been in correspondence with Ralph Stanton over a few matters, and amongst other things we 'pooled' our information about the stamp; the result being quite interesting. We found that we each had an upper left corner block of four, and a single copy each of Position 2. This means that there must be at least FOUR sheets in existence.

If anyone has any more information to take the matter further, then we would be very interested. Any advance on four sheets?! If so, please contact the editor.

From an observation of used copies, all those seen appear to have been used 28 February 1931, as this example - Ed.



Missent to St Helena

Barry Burns

According to Mabbett [1] this 'MISSENT TO ST. HELENA' Type 16 handstamp has not been recorded on cover, although known to exist at the Jamestown Post Office.



The blue air mail envelope from Bulgaria has 5g in manuscript and is franked with two adhesives; a 1991 Farm Animals 10 lev SG 3738 and a 1992 Admission to Council of Europe 7 lev SG 3876. They are cancelled with an unidentifiable (to me!) c.d.s. in Cyrillic dated 2 November 1994. The 7l stamp also has a machine cancellation of the same date.

It is addressed to Ascension Island with an adhesive label, just tied by the c.d.s. It must have passed, incorrectly, through the Jamestown Post Office as the cover is backstamped with a ST. HELENA / JAMESTOWN Mabbett Type 12 c.d.s. for 23 December 1994, where this handstamp was presumably applied.

An interesting cover - is this the first appearance of Bulgarian adhesives in *Cameo*?

Reference

- 1 Mabbett B., *St Helena; The Postal, Instructional and Censor Markings 1815-2000*, p82, WASC, Dronfield, 1st Edition 2002

Access to the internet? Then please try visiting the re-launched
West Africa Study Circle Web Site at :

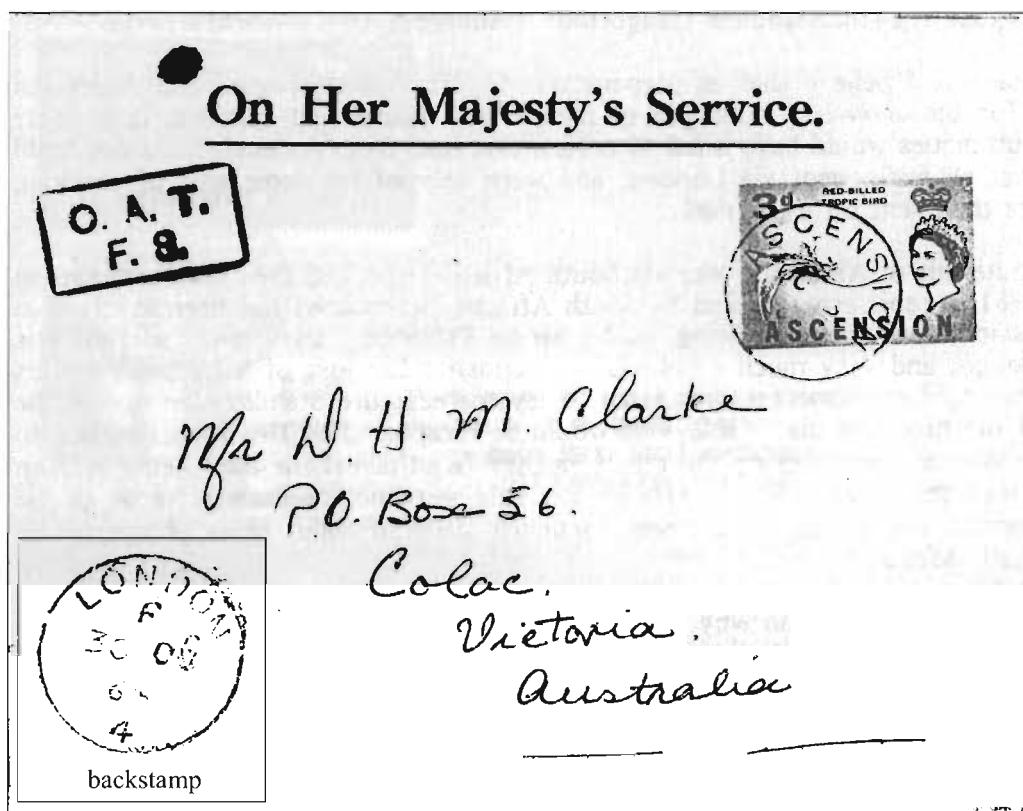
<http://www.wasc.org.uk>

Webmaster is Ray Harris; contact harris6@which.net

St Helena, Ascension Is. & the 'Congo' Incident of 1964

Robin Taylor

Having recently obtained a selection of back issues of the *St Helena and Ascension Supplement* I was interested to read an article by Bernard Hughes [1] concerning the O.A.T./F.S. handstamp used on a cover from Ascension Island. I might be able to shed a little more light on the subject after visiting the National Archive at Kew and requesting a batch of Ascension Island / St Helena files from that period.



Surface mail cover from Ascension to Australia
Postmarked Ascension 5 October 1964
Backstamp of LONDON / F / 30 OCT / 64 / 4
O.A.T. / F.S. [Onward Air Transmission / Foreign Section] cachet

[Editor's note: In the original article Bernard Hughes gave his thoughts to the following questions concerning this, and another cover sent from Ascension 23 December 1964 to South Africa, also sent via London with the same O.A.T. / F.S. cachet:

- 1 Why do these covers have this London cachet, usually found on WWII material?
- 2 Why did this cover take 25 days or so from Ascension to London F.S.?
- 3 Why were the covers to Australia and South Africa sent via London at all?]

The previous files that I had researched from this period included a batch of correspondence from the Governor of St Helena which included a reference to the 'problems' encountered by the recently arrived new Administrator of Ascension Island. On my return visit to Kew I specifically checked the index for the 1963-64 period relating to air traffic on Ascension and came across a batch of confidential files that related the story of the use of Wideawake Airfield by the Americans as a forwarding base for supplies for Moïse Tshombe, the Premier of the Congo. The file contains a letter from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office in London dated 30 September that reveals that the Americans had been using the airfield as a staging post en route to the Congo for six weeks already and still needed a minimum further six week period to complete the mission.

This came as a bit of a surprise in London as no request for such a use had been received from the Americans but it was agreed that no objection would be raised to these flights but that the mission and use of the airfield would be on a need to know basis as it was considered that the use of the British Island for such a use would anger other African Governments.

There is no better illustration that 'A week is a long time in politics' as by 9 October the situation in the Congo had deteriorated to such a degree that the Americans were pushing for a co-ordinated emergency evacuation of Westerners still residing in Stanleyville and Leopoldville in the Congo. The file follows the story with 'secret' telexes travelling back and forth between Washington, London, St Helena and Ascension Island, including in typical British fashion, a letter requesting information on whether the British Government should charter a local plane or send a RAF aircraft from Nairobi and then charge the British evacuees for the cost of supplying the aircraft!

Part of the file includes a batch of telegrams sent between the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London and Sir John Field, the Governor of St Helena, between 16 and 26 November 1964. The Governor was put in the picture concerning the increase of air traffic that would be visiting Ascension Island and that the cover story for the press would be that Belgian troops were engaged in manoeuvres with the U.S. Army and Air Forces. The Administrator on Ascension replied that he thought it advisable that a restriction of movement on the airbase on the Island might be advisable. The Governor was also reminded that the 'Americans have expressed anxiety that the arrival of the Belgian troops should not be made public' as the mission was dependant on an element of surprise.

By 20 November the Americans had requested that immediate censorship on all telegrams and telephones be put into place on Ascension Island. The Administrator confirmed that he was 'delaying outgoing messages' pending further instructions from either St Helena or London. The Colonial Office quickly replied by telex that 'No power at present exists to impose censorship as they (the Americans) had requested. It would indeed be difficult to continue such delays as a prolonged general stoppage might give rise to public speculation outside Ascension'.

Later that day the press did indeed pick up the fact about the operation and the use of Ascension Island, as a result of this the need for Censorship on Ascension was no longer required. The State Department in Washington on the other hand continued to be concerned about the need to know about the use of Wideawake Airfield and sent a telegram to London informing them that the news agency Reuters had been filing material 'datelined' ASCENSION ISLAND and went on to ask if some sort of 'technical breakdown of facilities' could be arranged!

The concern was that information had been broadcast and picked up by the rebels holding some of the Westerners at Stanleyville on the BBC World Service. 24 hours later a 'total blackout' from Ascension was arranged which included the press reports sent from the Island to the Reuters Agency. The blackout was extended to 24 November to enable the first stage of this Congo mission to be completed.

Would these events in late 1964 help to explain the delay in mail from Ascension Island and the need to route the mail via London for 'safe keeping' while the military operation was taking place? For anyone interested in reading a fuller account about the St Helena / Ascension Island connection with the above events, I plan to print up the Government file on the subject as part of my planned monograph series.

Reference

- 1 Hughes B., "The 1964 Ascension OAT / FS Covers - More Thoughts", *St Helena & Ascension Supplement*, No. 30 p7, WASC, July 1998
- Also Attwood J., "An Unusual Sea / Air Cover from Ascension", *St Helena & Ascension Supplement*, No. 16 p3, WASC, July 1991
Hughes B., "Another OAT / FS Cover", *St Helena & Ascension Supplement*, No. 23 p11, WASC, January 1995



New Sub Post Office Cancellers

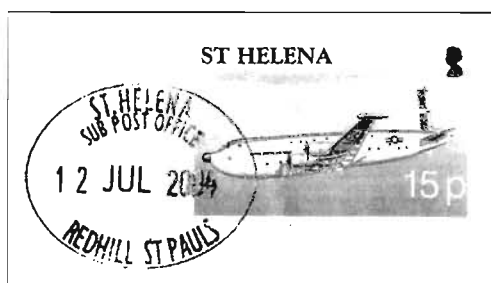
Robin Taylor, Bernard Mabbett and Barry Burns

The circular date stamps introduced for the 8 Sub Post Offices on St Helena on 4 January 1965 were becoming very worn by 2001, producing poor strikes with unclear lettering [1]. On our 2002 visit to the Island we discussed the problem with the Postmistress, Beverly Francis [2], and subsequently both Bernard Mabbett and Alan Scrine have approached the Crown Agents on replacements. This evidently had the desired effect, as Bernard recently showed me a cover with a new cancel, courtesy of Trevor Hearl.



Although not very clear from the illustration it has ST. HELENA / SUB POST OFFICE / REDHILL ST PAULS around a 33mm oval, with the date 01 OCT 2003 in the centre.

I subsequently received from Robin Taylor examples of all the cancellers from the 8 Sub Offices dated 12 JUL 2004 and show these below with their previous identities.



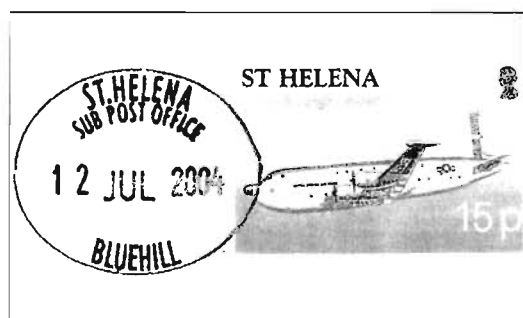
REDHILL ST PAULS
previously
ST. PAULS 2



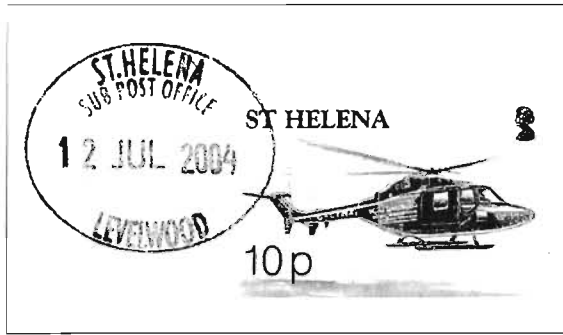
GUINEA GRASS ST PAULS
previously
ST. PAULS 1



NEW GROUND ST PAULS
previously
NEW GROUND



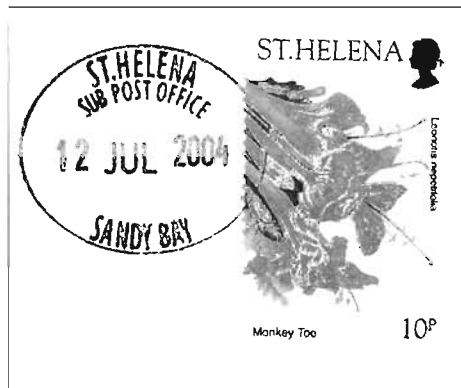
BLUEHILL
previously
BLUE HILL



LEVELWOOD
previously
 LEVELWOOD



LONGWOOD
previously
 LONGWOOD



SANDY BAY
previously
 SANDY BAY



HALF TREE HOLLOW
previously
 H.T. HOLLOW

Examples of the old cancellers on a postcard of Bob Maddocks is illustrated on page 219.

References

- 1 "From the South Atlantic", *St Helena & Ascension Supplement*, No. 36 p33, WASC, July 2001
- 2 Scrine A., "Discussion with the St Helena Postmistress", *St Helena & Ascension Supplement*, No. 38 p13, WASC, July 2002



Ascension Conservation Office Handstamp

Bernard Mabbett

I can illustrate this previously unrecorded handstamp from a cover with a Georgetown datestamp of 17 June 2004, courtesy of Trevor Hearl.

The outer oval measures 49 x 38 mm



Anti-slavery Patrols off West Africa

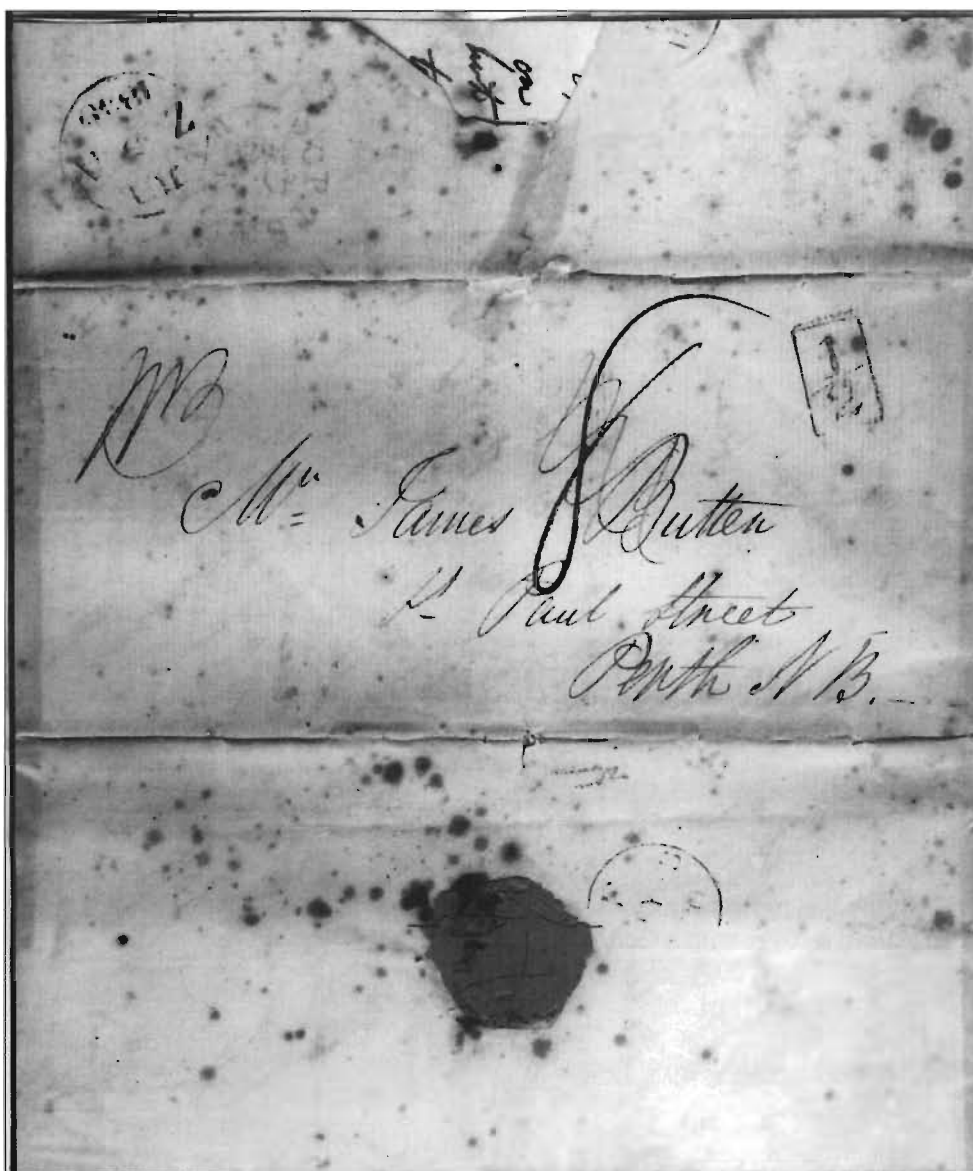
Bob Maddocks

The illustrated entire [*reduced to 80%*] from Thomas Batten whilst serving on HMS *Sybil* gives a detailed account of the diseases and dangers encountered on patrol off the West Coast of Africa whilst on anti-slavery duty.

The entire was posted on his return to Portsmouth, and is addressed to Perth, NB (*North Britain*). It is rated '8' in black, and has the additional $\frac{1}{2}(d)$ marking imposed on mail to Scotland carried on more than two wheels. There are 3 postmarks; all being 23mm single ring date stamps which do not reproduce well, as follows:

- 1 PORTSMOUTH / JY 2 / 1830 *in red at top*
- 2 F / JY 3 / 1830 *in red (oxidised) at bottom, right of wax seal, and*
- 3 JUL / Z s A / 1830 *in red (oxidised) at top, to the left of [1]*

The latter two have no place names and the code letters have not been identified by me.



Transcript of the letter from Thomas Butten, dated 1 July 1830 to his father (*spelling of place names and grammar are as written in the original*):

H.M.S. Sybille
July 1st 1830.

My dear Father,

You have no doubt been very anxious about me these some months past. I have from the last communication had reason to expect my arrival soon, but circumstances prevented it.

The Flora transport brought out Mr. Morris to relieve me but as he was ordered to proceed to Fernando Po from Ascension (of which island Col. Nicolls is Governor) I was apprehensive in consequence of the bad accounts from the Coast generally and from the latter Island particularly, that I should be detained. The Ships of War were sickly, the Eden (lost 200), Sybille (120) lost a great number of men, the Hecla so many as to oblige her to go to England. All the Marines with few exceptions died at Fernando Po - 6 out of 40 alive. The Colonel sickly, he came home in this vessel and has improved in health, he was very kind to me. Being anxious to get to England without interruption of any descriptions I remained at Ascension until an opportunity offered - but then Commodore Collier arrived and being without an Assistant I was ordered to join him. He had lost 24 men and officers previous to this and was in consequence obliged to leave the coast for St Helena to benefit the health of his crew. The fever ceased after crossing the line. On his return to the Coast he touched at Ascension on the 2nd November when I joined. We had pleasant weather on the way to the Coast but there was a great difference between the climate of Ascension and the Coast of Africa. The one being dry and hot but accompanied with a refreshing breeze, The African Climate is sultry and hazy with little wind generally and at times tremendous squalls or tornadoes with constant thunder and lightening with heavy rain. There are no places where people can go ashore with any comfort. The Coast generally low and thickly wooded and unhealthy to Europeans. This last season it resembled a pestilence sweeping away both the old settlers and new comers and the Vessels of War suffered also. The Eden (Capt. Owen) lost as many of his ships company; if he had not got an Assistant-Surgeon at St Helena he should have taken me. The Hecla lost nearly her complement and was obliged to go home. The other vessels tolerably healthy except this one [Sybille]. We visited Acra the healthiest place on this Coast, clear of wood with distant mountains but the fever did not even spare this spot. Went to Whidah next. These are the only places we anchored at on the Mainland. There is a great similarity of appearance with regard to the Coast, being generally low, but at Sierra Leone it is mountainous and at the Cameroons near Fernando the elevation is 14 or 15000 feet but the summit I could not observe, being covered with fog. I saw the Peak of Fernando Po 11,500 feet high and this prospect is very grand. The trees are of enormous size, 150 feet or more in height, indeed there is a great excess of vegetation on the Coast and the adjacent islands. They look beautiful particularly Princes Island [Principe] with numerous Peaks and ? Rivulets. The latter island is the only place where I landed and it is a very pleasant island, belongs to the Portuguese, but at the Town is very unhealthy. The Natives look very bad ?? and are ?? people than any I have seen. The fruits on this Coast are pine apples, bananas, plantains, oranges, limes and lemons, some of these in great profusions.

We cruised a considerable time without meeting any vessels but in December saw the Athol capture a Brig with 180 slaves but not in time to prevent us from sharing with her. The Squadron rendezvoused at Princes Island on the 3rd January and after wooding and watering proceeded to their several stations. We sailed on a long cruze and stood out ??? before 200 miles from the nearest land. Took a slaver, 387 slaves, and a few days afterwards the fever broke out, took another slaver after a 30 hour chase with 319 slaves. No vessel ever got off from us although considered fine ??? and this from a frigate, rather indifferent. We were proceeding in this successful way when the fever increased to such a degree as to oblige us to proceed to a more healthy climate. Accordingly we bid adieu to the Coast and steered for St Helena where we arrived in March but as we had fever ??? were refused permission to land. Anchored and got fresh provisions ??? The fever abated much but reappeared and proved fatal to several. Amongst them our Assistant Surgeon, Mr Whitfield died. We now directed our course to the southward went to Latitude 37-S. Weather cold and tempestuous. This had the effect of removing the disease and after 5 weeks cruise returned to St Helena but they would not allow us to land. So we remained a few days, sailed for Ascension, saw my old friends there and left it for England. After 33 days ??? arrived at Spithead, the day on which his Majesty [George IV] died. Our carpenter died same day.

We lost since I joined 37 men and officers. The Tender 1 Lieutenant and 30 men, exclusive of her former Captain.. I suppose my brother is on half pay. I am going to ask in July for six months leave which I hope to obtain and lose no time in coming home.

[Added and concluded later] I have been well since last letter and had a few lines

finished when I had to go away on duty. I think my Prize Money may amount at least to £100 payable in a year. I hope you are all well and my Mother, Sister and Brother. Please give my compliments to them and all friends. Expecting to see you soon. I am your affectionate son,

[signed] *Thomas Butten*

Please direct Mr. Tms Butten, H.M.S. Sybille, Portsmouth.

Notes

- 1 Thomas Butten - the only details I have so far been able to find are that he first appeared in the Navy List for 1824 on his appointment as Assistant Surgeon. He remained Listed up to and including 1830 [1]. From the address of his letter to his father, he was of Scottish origin, but note that Perth is given as being in North Britain, not Scotland.
- 2 HMS *Sybille* was originally a French naval vessel built in 1791 and captured by the British at Miconi in 1794. Commissioned in the British Navy in 1795 as a 5th Rater with 44 guns and 300 men. Served in the African Station 1826 - 1830 on anti-slavery duties under Captain F.A. Collier, Commander of the West African Squadron [2].
- 3 The Yellow Fever outbreak of 1829 was unusually virulent and the worst ever recorded. The three main ships in the Squadron, *Sybille*, *Eden* and *Hecla* suffered horrendous loss of life [3].
- 4 Colonel E. Nicholls - later became Governor of Fernando Po, An island off Bimbia on the Cameroons mainland opposite was named after him [3].
- 5 Captain W.F.W. Owen of the *Eden* was notable for his hydrographical surveys on the West and other African coasts immediately prior to his joining the fight against the African slave trade [3].
- 6 The tender mentioned in the penultimate paragraph may well have been a captured ex-slaver 'Black Jake'. Slave ships were sold by public auction and often bought privately by Commodores [4].

This memorial was erected in the Castle Gardens at Jamestown, St Helena, to the memory of shipmates who died during anti-slavery patrols off West Africa.

The inscription reads:

THIS COLUMN WAS ERECTED BY THE
COMMANDER, OFFICERS AND MEN OF
HER MAJESTY'S BRIG
WATERWITCH
TO THE MEMORY OF THEIR SHIPMATES
WHO DIED WHILE SERVING ON
THE COAST OF AFRICA
A.D. 1830-1843

THE GREATER NUMBER DIED
WHILE ABSENT IN CAPTURED SLAVE VESSELS.
THEIR REMAINS WERE
EITHER LEFT IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF AFRICA
OR GIVEN WITH THE SEA,
THEIR GRAVES ALIKE UNDISTINGUISHED.
THE ISLAND
IS SELECTED FOR THE RECORD
BECAUSE THREE LIE BURIED HERE
AND BECAUSE THE DECEASED AS WELL AS
THEIR SERVING COMRADES
EVER MET THE WARMEST WELCOME FROM
ITS INHABITANTS.



The *Waterwitch* was a 10 gun brig engaged in anti-slaver duties off the West African coast between 1844 and 1851, and responsible for capturing 40 slavers - a record!

References

- 1 Navy List - Annual. Public Records Office, Kew
- 2 Warship Histories. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich
- 3 Burrows E.H., *Capt. Owen and the African Survey 1774 - 1857*, Balkema, Rotterdam 1979
- 4 Ward W.E.F., *The Royal Navy and The Slavers*, (Publisher and date not recalled)



MV City Of New York Handstamp

Jeremy Martin

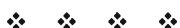
This cover appeared recently on e-bay; unfortunately a stamp appears to have been removed. It would seem that a passenger on the MV *City of New York* purchased stamps on Ascension and then posted the envelope at Trinidad. The handstamp reads M.V. CITY OF NEW YORK / SEA POST / AMERICAN SOUTH AFRICAN LINE, Inc.

The Trinidad mark is Hosking 2470 recorded between 1936 and 1981 [1].



Reference

- 1 Hosking R., *Paquebot Cancellations of the World*, p232, 3rd edition, Cavendish Philatelic Auctions Ltd, 2000



The 5d 'Badge' Printings of Ascension

Bill Thorpe

The second printing of the 5d value was on 25 March 1930, together with the third printing of the 2d value. Stanton [1] implies that this 5d printing was never issued. He is also at odds with Attwood [2] about the colour of the paper, and argues that the stamps are on ordinary paper, or on white paper - there are 'varying degrees of whiteness' - and that all the copies he has seen are from the first, 1927 printing.

He bases some of his argument on the altered Jubilee lines at the left hand side of the *Cleft Rock* variety at Position 49. The 1927 printing of the 5d is the last where the top-most of the 3 lines to the left of the stamp is 5mm long, as it is on the 5d value of St Helena, which was printed at the same time (Figure 1, page 219). The later Ascension printings in 1927 - the second of the ½d and 2d values - have the shortened top line, as do all subsequent printings. For the 1930 printing Stanton uses the *Cleft Rock* of the 2d to show that this top-most line is now only 3mm long.

However, on checking my collection I found that I had an Ascension 5d *Cleft Rock* in a pair that had the shortened top stroke (Figure 2, page 217). This must be from the 1930 printing, and although there appears to be a difference in the colour of the paper, I would not class it as 'cream'. The Plate Number at Position 50 on the first printing has the number and outer circle complete, but on the second printing the bottom has been shaved off by some 2mm, and the colour is a deeper purple. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the second printing is the colour, in that the green is a deep yellow-green as opposed to any shade of olive. I have recently acquired three single stamps with this shade of green, which may be the way of distinguishing the printing.

I have been in correspondence with Ralph Stanton, and he agrees that my *Cleft Rock* pair must be from the second printing. My conclusion must therefore be that at least one sheet survived, and was distributed to dealers. But was it ever used postally? Are there any more out there?

References

- 1 Stanton R., "The Five-Penny Badge Issue of Ascension", *St Helena & Ascension Supplement*, No. 38 p21, WASC, July 2002
- 2 Attwood J.H., *Ascension; The Stamps and Postal History*, p26, Robson Lowe Ltd., London 1981

Editor's note:

Illustrations of Bill's two items are printed in colour on page 217 to see if the shade variations mentioned can be differentiated.



Ascension Island from the South with, as usual, cloud over Green Mountain [Barry Burns]

1935 Silver Jubilee Issue

John Cooper

44 Colonies shared the uniform design, split between three printers, Waterlow, Bradbury Wilkinson and De La Rue. It was proposed that there would be four values and that the first value should pay the local letter rate, the second value the Empire letter rate, the third value the Foreign letter rate and the top value should be the maximum of 1/- or local equivalent.

Some Colonies managed this, but many didn't! It is interesting to note that registration varied from 2d for Bahamas, Cayman Islands and Jamaica through to 4d for Northern Rhodesia, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland with the remainder of Colonies at 3d.

If a Colony had no air mail facility in 1935 then the top value of one shilling could only be found used on a parcel piece, and almost invariably the 1/- on its own commercially used would be impossible.



Empire letter rate 2d from Ascension to Scotland dated 9th July 1935

ASCENSION (1½d, 2d, 5d, 1/-)

Empire letter rate 2d
Foreign letter rate 3d
Registered Empire letter rate 5d
No use for 1/- other than parcel

The 1½d stamp may have paid local letter rate but I would doubt if one existed. [*Believed correct - Ed.*] Two 1½d paid the foreign letter rate. The underpaid Empire rate taxed is probably as close as possible to 1½d single value use. The 5d used registered to Mauritius (page 211) was the only example correctly used I have seen in 15 years, until recently finding another registered to New Zealand.

GAMBIA (1½d, 3d, 6d, 1/-)

Local and Empire rate seems to have been 1½d
Foreign letter rate 3d
Registered foreign rate 6d (I have never seen a single correct rate usage)
The 1/- was used in air mail rates (I have a 1/- cover by air to Edinburgh cancelled KUNTAUR
5 AU 36 - was this correct rate for 1936?)

GOLD COAST (1d, 3d, 6d, 1/-)

Local letter and Empire rate 1d
Foreign letter rate 3d
Registered foreign rate 6d
1/- was used in conjunction with other stamps to make air mail rates

NIGERIA & CAMEROONS (1½d, 2d, 3d, 1/-)

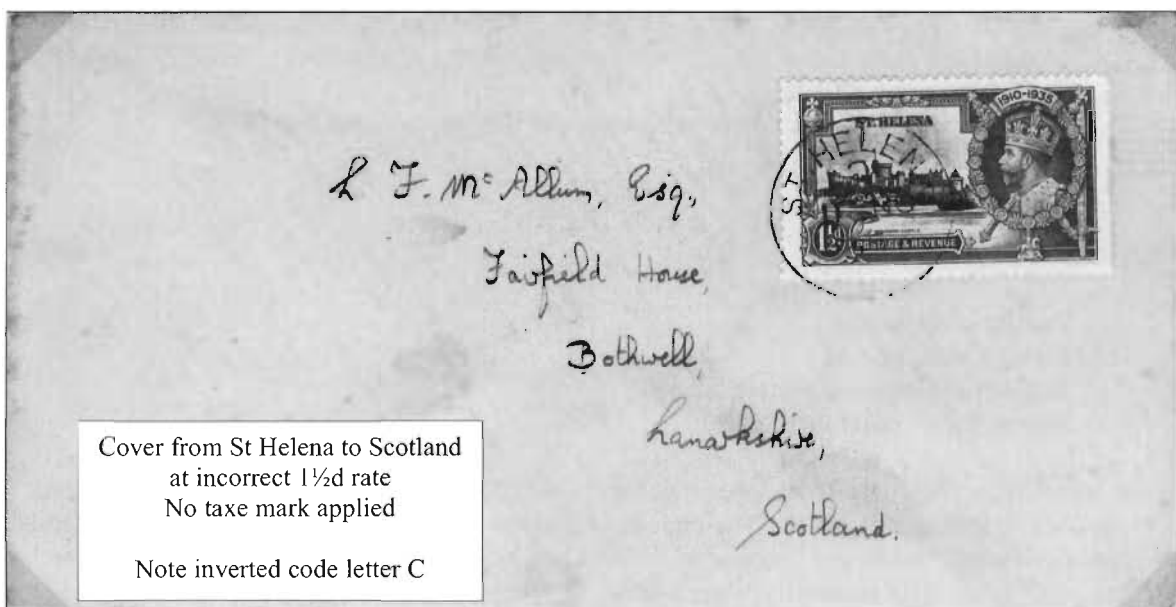
Local letter rate 1½d
Empire letter rate 2d
Foreign letter rate 3d
1/- was used in conjunction with other stamps to make air mail rates

ST HELENA (1½d, 2d, 6d, 1/-)

Printed paper rate 1d
Empire letter rate 2d
Foreign letter rate 3d
Registered foreign rate 6d
1/- could only be found commercially used on a parcel piece (I have never seen one)

SIERRA LEONE (1d, 3d, 5d, 1/-)

Printed paper rate 1d
Empire letter rate 2d
Foreign letter rate 3d
Registered Empire rate 5d
Registered foreign rate 6d
1/- was used in conjunction with other stamps to make air mail rates





Registered cover from Ascension to Mauritius
 2d Empire letter rate plus 3d registration making the 5d rate paid
 Ascension registration label, stamp cancelled OC 9 35
 Backstamped Capetown 19 OCT 35, Registered Mauritius 8 NO 35, Pamplemousse Mauritius s.r. 8 NO 35

SCARCITY TABLE OF SILVER JUBILEE WEST AFRICA COMMERCIAL COVERS

- 0 Could not exist
- 1 Could theoretically exist, but have never seen one & would be surprised if one did
- 2 One may hear of the existence of one eventually
- 3 One would be very fortunate to see more than one in a lifetime
- 4 Very hard to find
- 5 Needs a lot of luck to get one
- 6 Diligent searching will produce one eventually
- 7 Requires a bit of effort to find one
- 8 Should be possible to find one without too much problem
- 9 Not too hard, it should be possible to get one at a major fair
- 10 Common as they go, there should be a choice at a major fair

In the following table, the first number after a value is the stamp, on its own paying a correct commercial rate. The second figure is the stamp with any other valid stamp/s to make up a correct rate.

Many philatelic covers paid the correct rate, but did not actually perform a service, i.e. convey a letter, invoice or whatever. However, in some cases, these are the only examples that can be found of correct rates.

The table does not indicate the value of the cover. Other factors are postmark, route, destination, condition, and the value of the stamp(s).

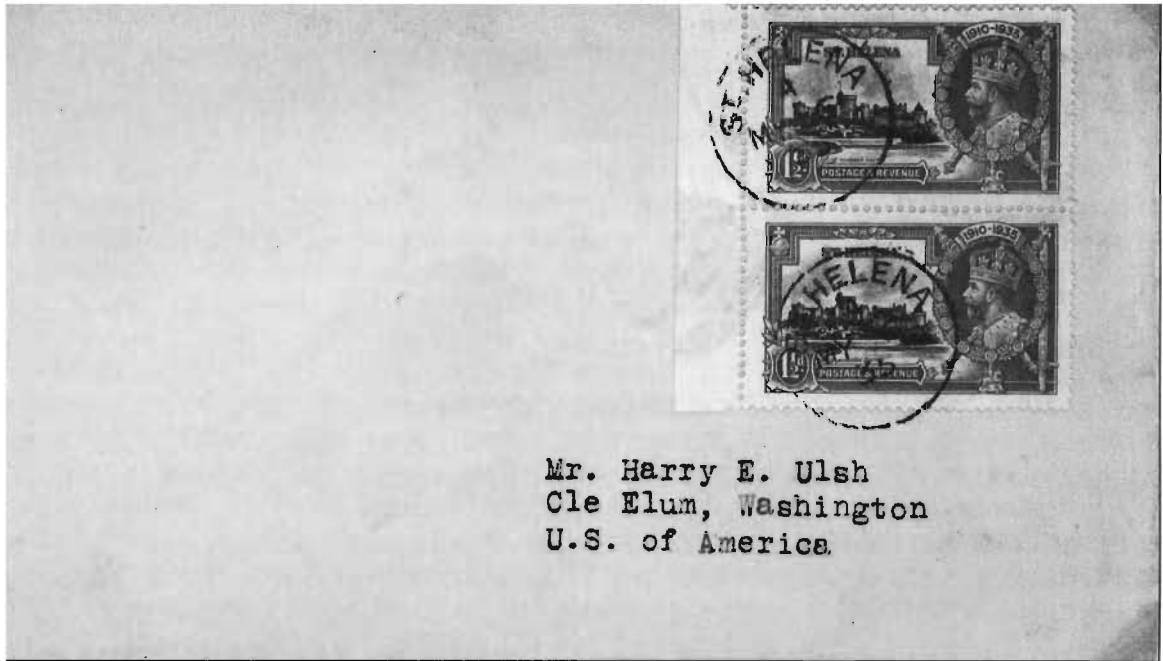
Ascension	1½d	1	3	2d	3	3	5d	3	3	1/-	1	1
Gambia	1½d	5	6	3d	5	6	6d	4	6	1/-	1	6
Gold Coast	1d	8	7	3d	7	6	6d	5	8	1/-	1	4
Nigeria	1½d	5	6	2d	8	8	3d	6	6	1/-	2	4
St Helena	1½d	4	5	2d	5	5	6d	2	2	1/-	1	2
Sierra Leone	1d	3	4	3d	3	4	5d	3	4	1/-	1	4

I have no ratings for Cameroons but clearly all items are more difficult than the same value for Nigeria. Likewise Togo vs. Gold Coast. The most difficulty Colony for covers from the above listing is Ascension, and any destination other than the U.K. is unusual.

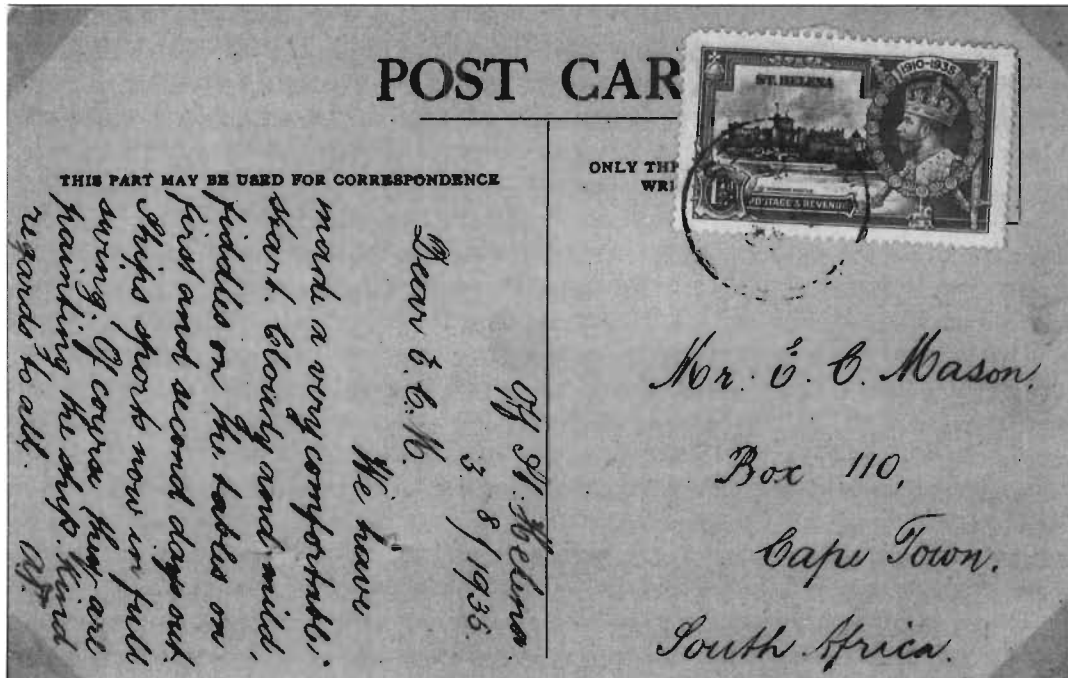
Where a Colony had no air mail facility in 1935, the possibility of finding the one shilling top value commercially used is virtually nil. Of all my Windsor Castle Silver Jubilee covers, I have only one example of a top value used on a piece of parcel paying a genuine commercial use. This is a Gilbert and Ellice Islands item, and was very expensive. Such items must be regarded as unique and a fluke that the item was saved.



St Helena printed paper rate (1d) to Switzerland
 1½d stamp cancelled 16 AU 35
 Backstamped Munster



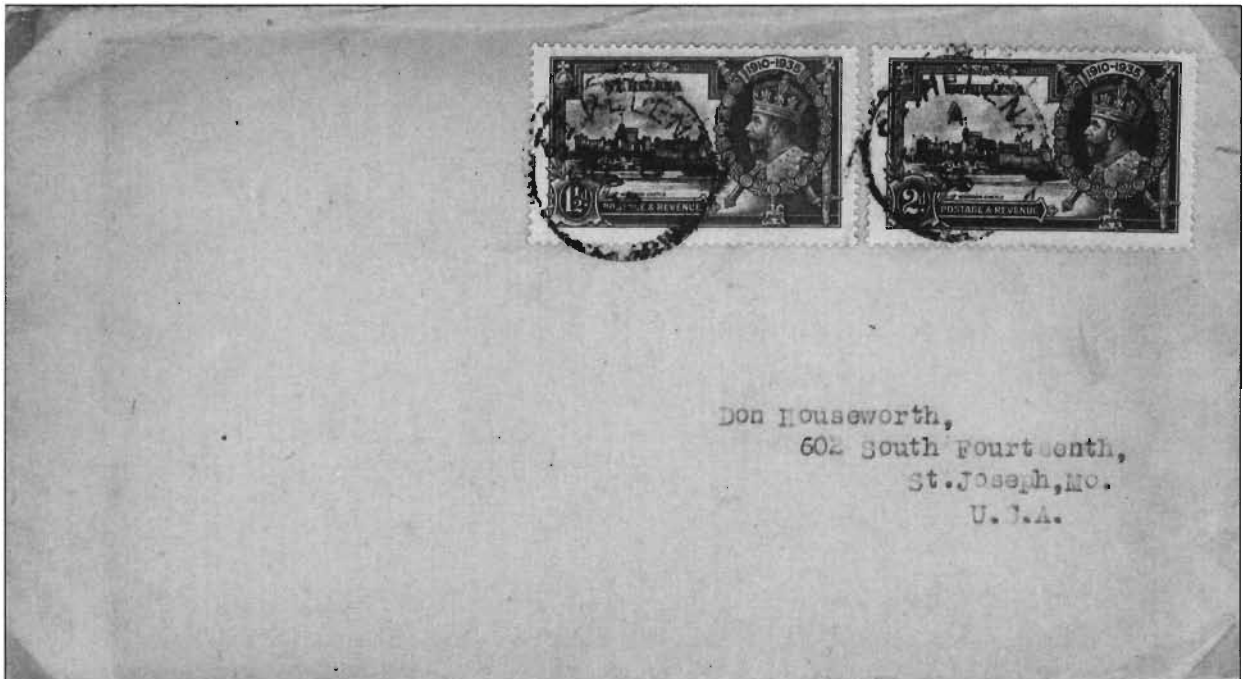
St Helena foreign letter rate cancelled MY 6 35
Two 1½d making correct 3d rate



Post Card endorsed 'Off St Helena 3 8 / 1935'
1½d stamp cancelled AU 18 35
Empire postcard rate 1d



Empire letter rate from St Helena 2d
 Correct use of 2d stamp on cover to Cheshire cancelled AU 4 35



Cover from St Helena to U.S.A. prepaid 3½d
 Correct rate 3d
 Stamps cancelled JU 8 35



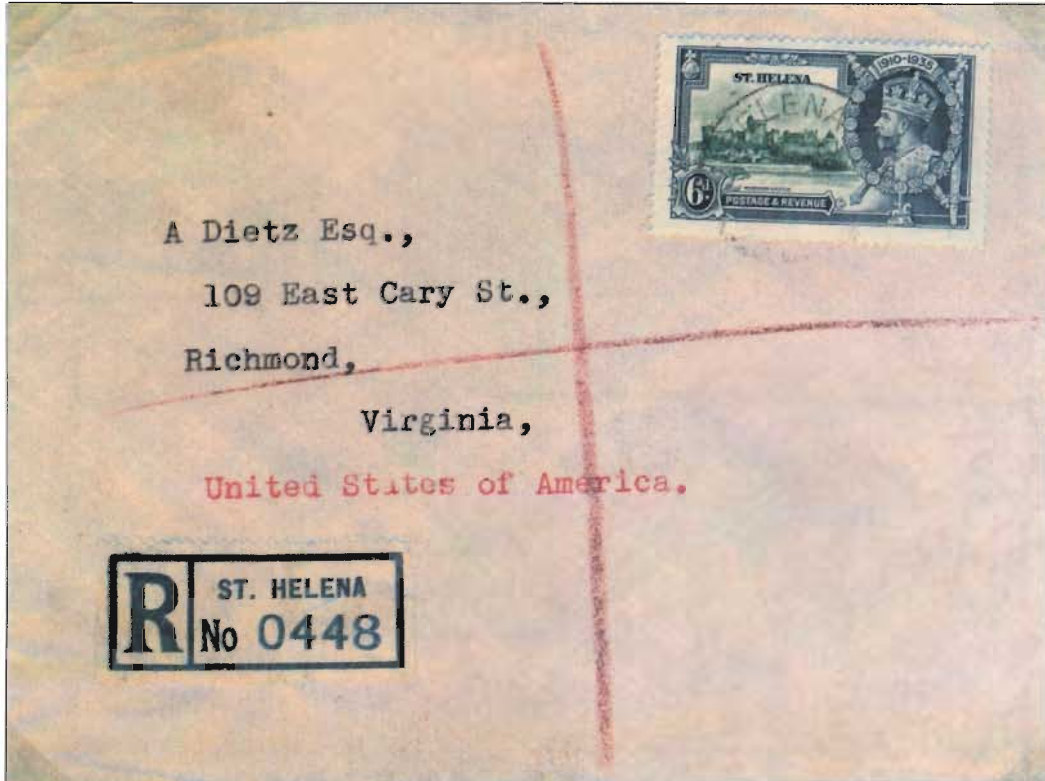
Empire letter rate from Ascension was 2d, thus this cover was charged 1d postage due 'T' and m/s 10 probably applied at Ascension
1d I.S. (Inland Section) applied in England plus 1d postage due



Registered cover from Ascension to England
Empire letter rate 2d, registration 3d
1½d deficient so 'T' mark and 30 applied
Initial 3d F.B. altered to 1½d F.B.



Cover from St Helena to England sent at 1½d, correct Empire rate was 2d
 Mabbett Type 6 tax mark with m/s 10
 1d F.B. tying stamp, cancelled JU 28 35
 1d postage due cancelled CAMBRIDGE 23 JY 35



Examples of the third value in the set, used on its own, are frequently difficult
 This 6d stamp paid 3d foreign letter rate plus 3d registration

Earliest Recorded Air Mail from St Helena

Stefan Heijtz

This is the earliest example of air mail from St Helena I have seen, sent 31 March 1937, nine months after the introduction of air mail via South Africa in June 1936. The correct rate of 11½d is made up of 2d postage to the UK, 3d registration and 6½d additional air mail fee to the UK. The 6d value has the *Broken Main Mast* variety. The cover is backstamped with an arrival of 19 April, possibly little faster than surface mail!



❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

The 5d 'Badge' Printings of Ascension

As mentioned in Bill Thorpe's article on page 208, I illustrate here the two 5d values, both from position 49 and showing the *Cleft Rock* variety. Note particularly the different lengths of the outer (vignette) top-most Jubilee line between the first printing (left) and the second (right). These details are explained by Bill.



Figure 1 (above)



Figure 2 (right)

St Helena used in Seychelles?

Bob Deakin

For some time now the stamps illustrated here (1893 Halfpenny, words 14½mm SG 36) have resided in my collection. They all appear to have been cancelled with a SEYCHELLES c.d.s. The dates are unclear.

Can any reader offer an explanation - could they have missed cancellation at St Helena and cancelled on arrival at Seychelles, or are they the result of some malpractice?

[I have lightened the images to show the postmarks more clearly - Ed.]



Postcards from 1988 St Helena Visit

Bob Maddocks



During my visit to St Helena in 1988 I purchased the two illustrated postcards. The first, rareish unused card was published by Alf. Cooke, Ltd. of Leeds in the late 1920s or very early 1930s. A half dozen or so turned up in the clutter of the old Pharmacy building in Jamestown and were sold off in the local museum at the time of my visit.



The second, more modern, coloured postcard by Bryn Campbell depicts Main Street (outside rush hour!) with the Post Office prominent at the left. On the reverse, I was able to get strikes of all the local Post Offices then operating on the Island, plus RMS ST HELENA, all with code letter 'C'.



Perkins, Bacon Records for St Helena at RPSL

Barry Burns

The March 2004 edition of *The London Philatelist* printed an article by Ron Negus, Hon. Archivist of the Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL) describing the records of Perkins, Bacon held at 41 Devonshire Place, London [1]. The article mentioned a number of loose papers and notes which required further sorting and classification, and a request was made for help in this task [2]. In early June 2004 I was privileged to undertake this for the St Helena section, and can publish here a listing of these papers by kind permission of Ron and the Royal Philatelic Society London.

Although Percy de Worms had undertaken a very detailed examination of these important records, much of which was published after his death by John Easton and Arnold Strange [3], there were a number of letters and notes of lesser importance concerning St Helena which are not mentioned in this book. The following list is a complete record of the papers I examined. They were sorted into date order and numbered sequentially in pencil at top right. Papers reported by de Worms are noted as: PB Records pxxx. I would like to add that, as would be expected from such a well respected philatelist known for his meticulous accuracy, Percy de Worms had reproduced these exactly - even using the same punctuation.

Dates are given if present on the document. Supposed dates are given in brackets. There are a number of typewritten notes from philatelic publications. These, together with the handwritten and other typewritten notes, are listed in separate categories in what I consider a logical sequence. PB = Perkins, Bacon.

Ref	Date	Details
1.	16 May 1855	Letter from E. Barnard to PB re non-fulfilment of contract (PB Records p454)
2.	29 June 1855	Similar letter, headed '2nd Application'
3.	4 November 1858	Letter from E Barnard (No. 114) requesting estimate before 8 inst. for supplying postage stamps. Also, copy of letter printed in PB Records p455
4.	24 November 1858	Letter from P.G. Julyan accepting tender of Two Shillings (PB Records p455)
5.	30 March 1859	Letter from Agents General requesting 2,000 6d stamps (PB Records p457)
6.	4 April 1859	Letter from E. Barnard requesting 6d postage stamps at cost 2 shillings to be delivered to 5 Cannon Row. Endorsed 'Received at this office Saturday' (PB Records p457)
7.	4 July 1860	Letter from P.G. Julyan requesting 2,000 sixpenny stamps (PB Records p457)
8.	3 December 1860	Photocopy of letter from PB to Agents General sending 6,000 6d postage stamps with invoice (PB Records p458)
9.	24 November 1863	Letter from W.C. Sargeant requesting perforation of 350 sheets of 6d postage stamps (PB Records p458)
10.	24 November 1863	Photocopy of letter from PB to W. C. Sargeant quoting price of 4d per 1,000 stamps for 350 sheets (PB Records p459)
11.	26 November 1863	Letter from P.G. Julyan requesting 350 sheets to be perforated, with 100 sheets returned by 1 December (PB Records p459)
12.	13 July 1866	Photocopy of letter from PB to Agents General noting 264 sheets of St Helena stamps still on hand (PB Records p460)
13.	9 December 1893	Letter from James H. Abbott of Manchester to PB requesting information for a paper re Stamps of St Helena
14.	(9 December 1893)	Questions enclosed with letter 13
15.	11 December 1893	Photocopy of reply to J.H. Abbott directing him to <i>The London Philatelist</i>
16.	26 January 1894	Letter from Hamil Ferrier Kerr of Duncraig Castle to PB requesting information on dates and numbers issued, for a periodical
17.	27 January 1894	Photocopy of reply to H.F. Kerr declining information
18.	10 October 1930	Letter from G. Percival Mills of Edgbaston to Percy de Worms regarding flaws on PB plate, particularly in the bottom left hand square
19.	8 December 1930	Similar letter to ref 18 on the same subject

The following 5 references are all typewritten notes:

- 20. From *The Philatelist* Dec 1867, Oct 1868, June 1869 re 4d, 6d and 1s values
- 21. From *Stamp Collectors Magazine* 1 Feb 1868, *The Philatelist* 1 July 1868 re 1d, 2d, 3d, 4d, 6d and 1s values
- 22. From *The Philatelist* Dec 1869: Criticism of *Moens' Catalogue* re 6d rouge error
- 23. From *Stanley Gibbons Catalogue* 1913, 1914-1915 re 6d lake, without surcharge
- 24. 6 photocopied pages from *The London Philatelist* Feb/March 1931 re PB Records

The following 9 references are all handwritten notes:

- 25. From *Stamp Collectors Magazine* Aug 1863, Dec 1863 re 6d value; 1d and 4d values
- 26. References of journals. On reverse, number of each flaw on PB plate
- 27. Dates of delivery
- 28. Comparison of Ceylon and St Helena plates; reference to the 228 impressions on plate
- 29. Extracts from Ordinance
- 30. January 1865 extract from Official letter re Communication with the Cape
- 31. Comparison of Ceylon and St Helena design and plate
- 32. Dates of Invoice and Issue
- 33. As ref 32

The following 4 references are all typewritten notes:

- 34. Invoice of 6d stamps by De La Rue
- 35. Surcharge 'Type Forms'
- 36. Request for details of stamps from 1862 to 1902
- 37. As ref 36

References

- 1 Negus R., "Perkins, Bacon Records", *London Philatelist*, Volume 113 p38, RPSL, March 2004
- 2 Ibid., p 47
- 3 de Worms P. *Perkins Bacon Records*, RPSL, London 1953 (two volumes)

Ref 28
(reduced to 55%)

28

Both P.B.

Order to reduce postage to 6² 1/2 oz; 15, 102 & 15 each oz over on May 1st 1854, (a order for 6² G.B. stamps in consequence) (refused) so ordered 6² from P.B. Co. Certain similarity of design, (Both invoiced within few weeks). Size nearly same, plate same, paper same, except ? bluing. Both invoiced perhaps within a month. Plates handed over to A.G. same day, large stock over, usual, G.H. 6² imperf. C. 10² imperf, both returned for preparation.

Both D.L.R.

Only stamps of this size & 240 plate printed on CC paper Ceylon had most 228 to steel Aug 64 - Aug 66, & P.B. had it only invoiced during this period viz May 30th 1865 a multiple of 228, & the day was that of a Ceylon invoice.



Nichols Brothers & Erridge - An Early Letter

Barry Burns

Nichols Brothers & Erridge were one of a number of Forwarding Agents at St Helena but, according to Mabbett [1] only two copies of their manuscript endorsement have so far been recorded. This entire (*reduced to 70%*), written from the Island on 8 July 1868 not only pre-dates these, but gives some useful information on the business operations of the Company of which very little is known [1].



The entire is addressed to Messieurs Pastré frères, Armateurs, Marseille and, although postage stamps had been introduced in 1856, none were applied. This was not unusual, as compulsory prepayment with stamps was not introduced until 1875 [2]. The single rate to France at this time was 8d, with the m/s 4 in red denoting the British share of the sea postage. There are no St Helena postal markings. A Lombard Street Paid datestamp of 3 September 1868 and PD in oval, both in red, were applied in London. The cover also has a Calais transit of 4 September and Marseille receiving datestamp of 5 September 1868, both in black.

The letter is written entirely in French, and I am indebted to my good friend Stephen Helm for the following translation:

By Packet

*To Messrs Pastré Brothers
Shipowners
at Marseille*

*James Town, Isle of St Helena
8th July 1868*

Sirs,

We hereby inform you we have the honour to bring to your attention that our London Business, Messrs F & C Nichols, have recently established a branch on this Island.

For some time there has been a great need to develop competition against the one company that up to now has not only had exclusive access to all internal and external business on the Island of St Helena,

but also a complete monopoly on the operation of all the maritime business generated from every Merchant Ship of all nations which call at the port of James Town.

It is evident - and we are not only repeating the words of a good many of the ships captains, but moreover of the ship owners and others in Europe and elsewhere - that a well established competitor in this port would be useful to all those vessels who have an interest in the sailings to the Indies etc., and of necessity complete their supplies at Saint Helena.

We are able to offer Ship Captains, who wish to put themselves in our hands, all possible facilities in this port. **The steam ships of the Royal Mail leave Plymouth on the 10th of every month, and the letters and newspapers destined for these vessels, and brought to our attention, will be of particular interest to us.** [my emphasis - Ed.]

With regard to supplies, we will offer these at a lower price than those offered by other companies, and we will also be able to provide fresh water delivered by our tankers to vessels by newly delivered pumps capable of delivering 16 tonnes [barrels?] of water each hour.

The large quantity of wide ranging supplies and necessities of all kinds that we provide allows us to despatch without delay, and it will therefore depend upon the ship owners we deal with - bearing in mind their interests as well as ours, who will decide if those who have monopolised trade on this island shall succeed or not.

It is for this reason, Sirs, that we seek your protection and ask that you send your ships, or some of them, to us and we assure you that we will do everything within our power to satisfy you by providing better quality supplies than elsewhere at more reasonable prices.

Please, Sir, accept our most distinguished assurances in this matter.

Your very obedient Servants,

pp Nicols Bros. & Erridge

[signed] Louis Gall

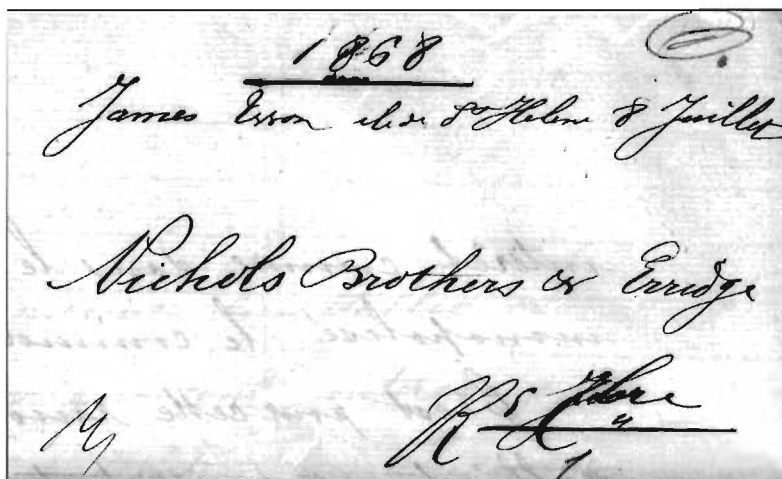
On the flap is the endorsement:

1868

James Town Island of St Helena 8 July

Nichols Brothers & Erridge

St Helena



1868
James Esmon
Nichols Brothers & Erridge
R. S. [Signature]

References

- 1 Mabbett B., *St Helena: The Postal, Instructional and Censor Markings 1815-2000*, p14, WASC, Dronfield, 1st Edition 2002
- 2 *Ibid.*, p162



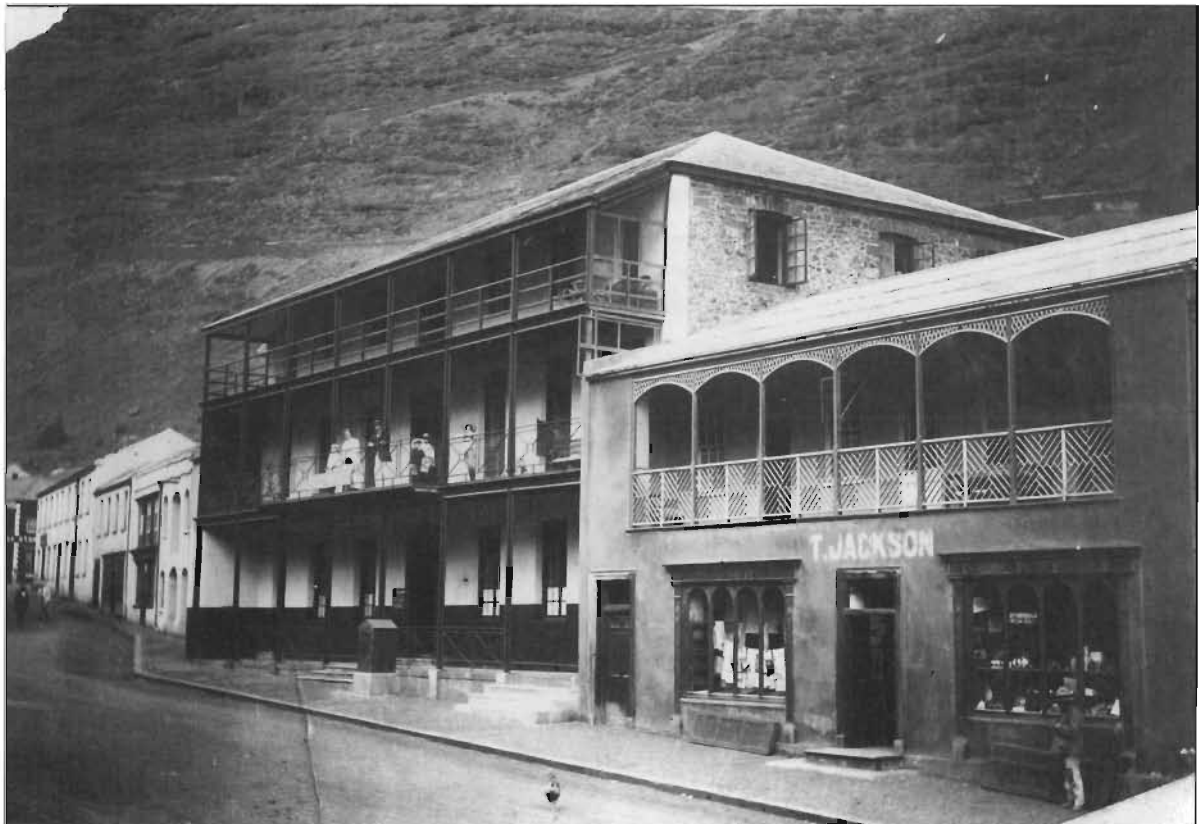
Newly Discovered Stamp Designs - by Thomas Bruce?

Barry Burns

Most collectors of Ascension and St Helena will know the name Thomas Robert Bruce as he was Postmaster at Jamestown and designed the very popular 1922 / 1924 'Badge' sets for the two Islands.

He was born on St Helena 4 December 1862 and married his first wife Ethel, daughter of the successful merchant William Alexander Thorpe, in February 1898. On 17 March he was appointed Postmaster, a position he held for the next 30 years [1]. Sadly, Ethel died very young aged just 26, but Thomas was to marry Edith Mary Lovelace four years later. He had four children to Ethel and six to Edith.

During our visit to St Helena in 2002 [2], we had the good fortune to meet another visitor, Nichola Bruce, the great granddaughter of Thomas and Ethel, and she introduced us to her Aunt Ethel. We enjoyed a very convivial tea (and alcoholic beverages!) on the veranda of Cambrian House in Jamestown whilst talking of Tom, his job and his family.



The Post Office in Main Street, Jamestown
Thomas Bruce and his second wife Edith with their family on the balcony of their home
T. Jackson was the producer of many postcards of the Island
Compare this photograph from the 1910s with that on page 221

Nichola Bruce recently made a return visit to the Island, and on visiting the excellent Heritage Museum was shown a very interesting discovery by the Curator, Lucy Caesar. This was a series of pencil drawings of possible postage stamp designs, mostly inscribed 'Peace 1919'.



The first of these shows three designs all with the Colony's badge as the central feature. The first design features the King's head; the other two a Crown. The very ornate borders illustrate various plants including the flax, which was used eventually in the issued stamp in 1922. All designs are of a 1d value and inscribed 'ST. HELENA', 'POSTAGE' and 'Peace 1919'. The document has various manuscript endorsements, including 'By Postmaster' and the initials TRB in oval, believed to be in the handwriting of Thomas Bruce.

These are the only designs to show the perforations drawn in, and bear a strong resemblance to those designs enclosed in the letter from the Colonial Office to the Crown Agents dated 23 November 1921 and illustrated in Hibbert [3]. These also bore the inscription 'PEACE 1919' and, although the Badge and Head were larger and the designs less ornate, the similarity is striking.

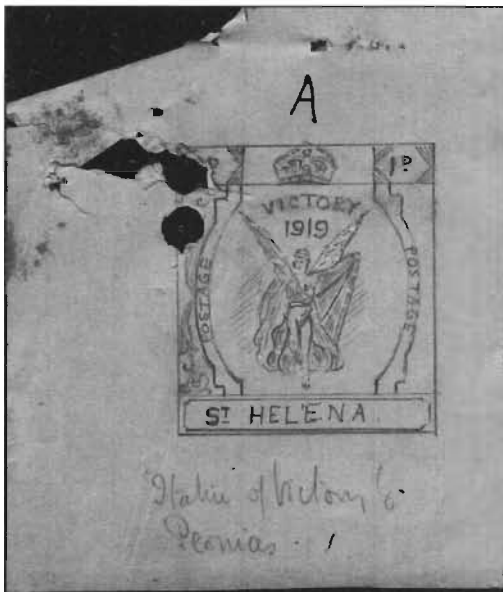
The second document has one design, which also depicts the Badge and Crown and has the same inscriptions, but is additionally inscribed 'VICTORY'. Although not signed, there is no reason to believe it was not the work of Thomas.

The punch holes are from a previous filing system, and the effect of using metal pins can be clearly seen.



The third document has two designs attached by pins. The first of these is similar to the previous design, but 'VICTORY' is absent, and the King's head added.

The second has an overlarge 'Dove of Peace' holding the badge which, as on all the designs, is rather insignificant. However, the addition of scrolling around the King's head is a foretaste of the future issue.



The next illustration marked 'A' appears to be endorsed in manuscript 'Statue of Victory & Peonias', and depicts a winged allegorical figure as the central motif below the inscription 'VICTORY 1919'. Note the omission of 'PEACE'.

I believe this was originally attached to the upper left corner of the document illustrated on the next page, as the positioning of the pin holes and punch marks appears to bear this out.

The final document contains four designs, the first three marked 'B', 'C' and 'D' respectively. The first depicts two doves holding an olive branch with 'PEACE' inscribed vertically between. The Badge of the Colony is below, but the design has taken on a more angular pattern with prominent diagonals which continues into the following two designs. 'C' has the words 'VICTORY' and 'PEACE' in the top corners and the design is endorsed in manuscript 'Head should be in middle'. 'D' carries this angular concept forward with a very clean design but with the omission of all references to Peace and date. The final design is in complete contrast, with the badge in an oval, the King's head in a circle, all within a large circle containing the words 'ST HELENA' and 'POSTAGE'. Although there is no reference to Victory, the design depicts (and endorsed in manuscript) 'Dove of Peace', 'Date' [1919] and 'Flax'.

There is a manuscript endorsement at the base of the document, possibly ??? Morgan. This could be the signature of the designer as these last five designs are sufficiently different to the earlier ones to suggest the possibility they were not the work of Thomas. However I believe the first six were indeed the work of Thomas Bruce.



Thomas was succeeded as Postmaster by George Moss in 1928 and he rejoined his wife who had gone to England for the benefit of their children's health and education. Although briefly returning to St Helena, he finally left the Island in 1930. They lived in South London at Thornton Heath where he was to die suddenly on 10 December 1956 aged 94 [4]. He is buried in the United Kingdom, possibly at Croydon.

I would like to thank Nichola Bruce, Julian Cairns-Wicks of Jamestown and Lucy Caesar of the St Helena Heritage Museum for permission to reproduce the photographs and designs, and for their help in compiling this article.

References

- 1 Bruce I., "Thomas Bruce; St Helena Postmaster and Stamp Designer", *South Atlantic Chronicle*, Volume XXIV p4, St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha Philatelic Society, July 2000
- 2 Burns B.M., "Notes from Two Small Islands", *St Helena & Ascension Supplement*, No. 39 p13, WASC, January 2003
- 3 Hibbert E., *St. Helena; Postal History and Stamps*, p76, Robson Lowe Ltd., London 1979
- 4 Bruce I., "Thomas Bruce; St Helena Postmaster and Stamp Designer", *South Atlantic Chronicle*, Volume XXIV p7, St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha Philatelic Society, July 2000

1961 Tristan Relief Fund Set

Robin Taylor

In reference to the article by Allan Leverton in *Cameo* [1] concerning the printing of the overprint on the Tristan da Cunha stamps for the 1961 Relief Fund, I was interested to see the comment about the proof set of four values and the fact that they came from St Helena some time **after** the arrival of the first stock of stamps.

During my research on this subject for a planned monograph, I visited the National Archive where I came across a letter from a London based stamp dealer written in 1966 to the Colonial Office asking if they had heard any rumours that the Crown Agents were planning to re-issue the 1961 set as this story had travelled among the trade, and there was some concern that this might devalue the current value of the stock sent over from St Helena previously.

As this 'proof' set has a different layout of the overprint in comparison to the issued set, is there a slim chance that some attempt could have been made at the Government printing office in Jamestown to reproduce the overprint? This is just a thought and I have no further evidence to support the idea unless someone can arrange to have a search made of the Archives on St Helena concerning the production of this 1961 issue. For example, is there a proof set still on record there, and if so what style of overprint is shown? If such an Island archive proof set had the overprint in similar style to that illustrated by Allan, then this might confirm the idea of a later printing being made.

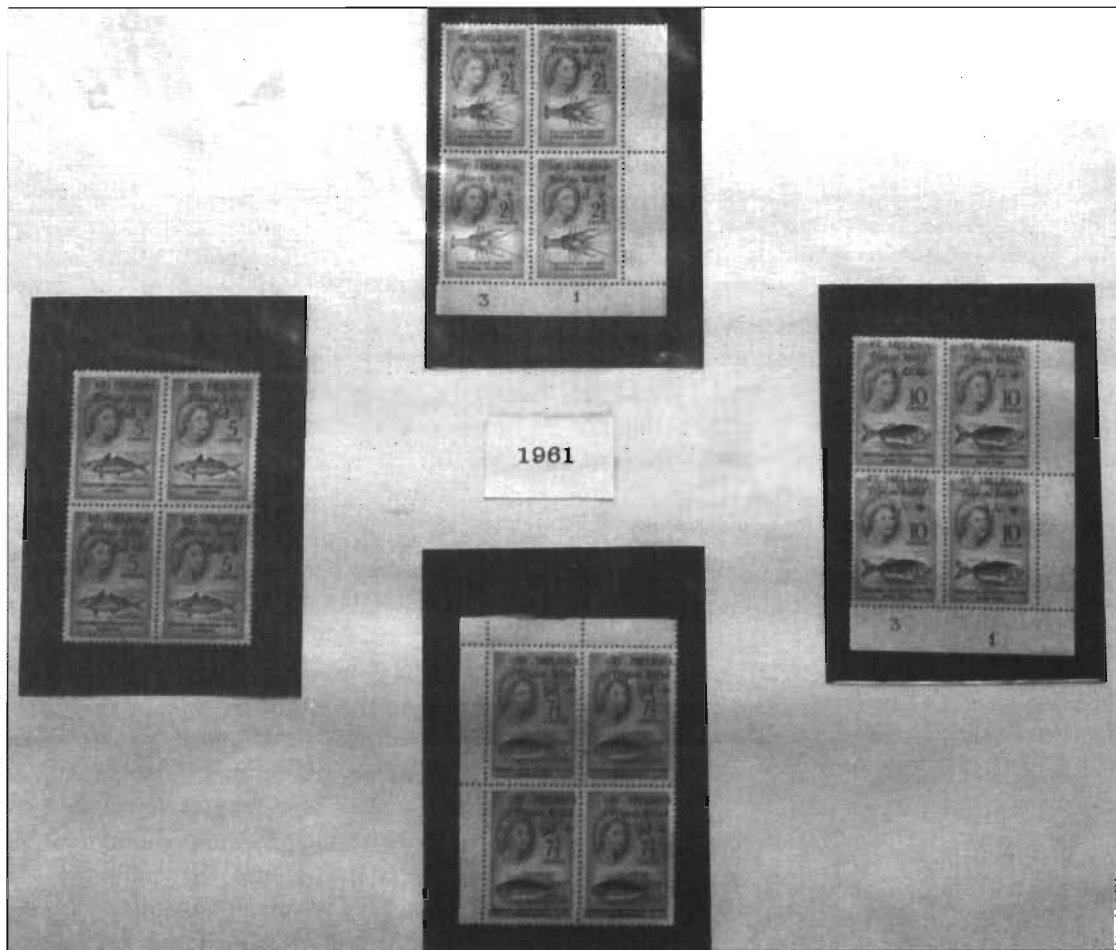
Regrettably the National Archive in London has confirmed that the St Helena 1961-62 file at the Colonial Office concerning this event was one of a batch destroyed during the sorting process as it was deemed of insufficient interest to justify archiving and was therefore not sent to the Archive at Kew.

Reference

- 1 Leverton A., "1961 Tristan Relief Fund", *Cameo*, Volume 8 p28, WASC, October 2003

Editor's note: We visited the Jamestown Archive in 2002, but our main interest was in the earlier periods - there is so much material and so little time! However, during our earlier visit in 1998 we were privileged to see the official stamp collection at The Castle (page 230) and I can illustrate, reduced to approx. 50%, the full set of four overprinted values which were represented by two blocks of four. Although the reproduced quality is poor (because of the poor lighting and high speed film used), they all show the 'i' of 'Tristan' to the left of the period of 'ST.', as in the issued stamps. So no confirmation of a second printing here.





Forged c.d.s. 30 October 1936

Robert Richardson

I purchased used ½d, 1d, 1½d, 2d, 3d, 5d and 6d values of the St Helena ‘Badge’ set from a dealer in North America in August 2003. Although not described as such, the c.d.s. cancels are obvious forgeries. The circle is 21 mm diameter, and the lettering is all in capitals. The letters and date numbers are tall and thin and of fine profile. There is no code letter, but unusually the day and month, which has a period after OCT, are on separate lines.



Editor's note:

I can illustrate (above right) a similar cancellation on the 1d value showing this same date, but with heavier inking.

Stamp Collection at The Castle Archives

Barry Burns

In 1998 a group of WASC members made a long awaited trip to St Helena [1]. Whilst there, we spent quite a lot of time at the Archives situated at The Castle in Jamestown where we were given valuable help and assistance from Maureen Stevens who at that time was the Curator (since retired). In addition to the many volumes of material relating to the history of the Island, which are carefully preserved and stocked in order on the shelving, they also possess a box containing a couple of red albums of postage stamps [2]. The stamps are mounted, in some cases possibly stuck down, on large horizontal off-white album pages which are covered in a clear plastic sheeting. I doubt that this complies with the British Library standard, and perhaps steps should be taken to ensure that the collection is remounted using appropriate archival materials. Some of the stamps, particularly those of the 1922 'Badge' and 1937 Coronation issues are badly affected by foxing or toning.



Entrance to The Castle in 1998 [Barry Burns]

We were given permission to photograph the album pages, but because of the poor lighting and lack of any copying stand or tripod, I am afraid my best efforts fall well short of acceptable. It was necessary to use a high speed film with consequent poor grain - remember this was before the digital revolution in photography! However, these photographs do serve as a valuable record of a collection which, as far as I am aware, has never been documented in the literature. Although the originals are colour transparencies I am publishing them in monochrome as the quality does not justify the cost of colour printing. (If any readers would like colour digital images for study purposes, please get in touch with me).

There are probably more sheets in the collection than described here, although these would be of modern material.

The original album sheets were not labelled with any obvious identification, apart from the dates as shown in the illustrations. For reference within the text, I have therefore designated each sheet with an identification letter. In order to reproduce the contents of each sheet as it is, without any division, I have reduced them to varying levels in order to fit these pages. Unless stated otherwise, all 'SPECIMEN' overprints are in violet / purple.

Sheet A (Page 231) *Q. Victoria*

Dated 1861. *This date is incorrect; although the first perforated six pence was issued in 1861, these stamps were issued as shown below:*

1893 2½d on Six Pence ultramarine. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

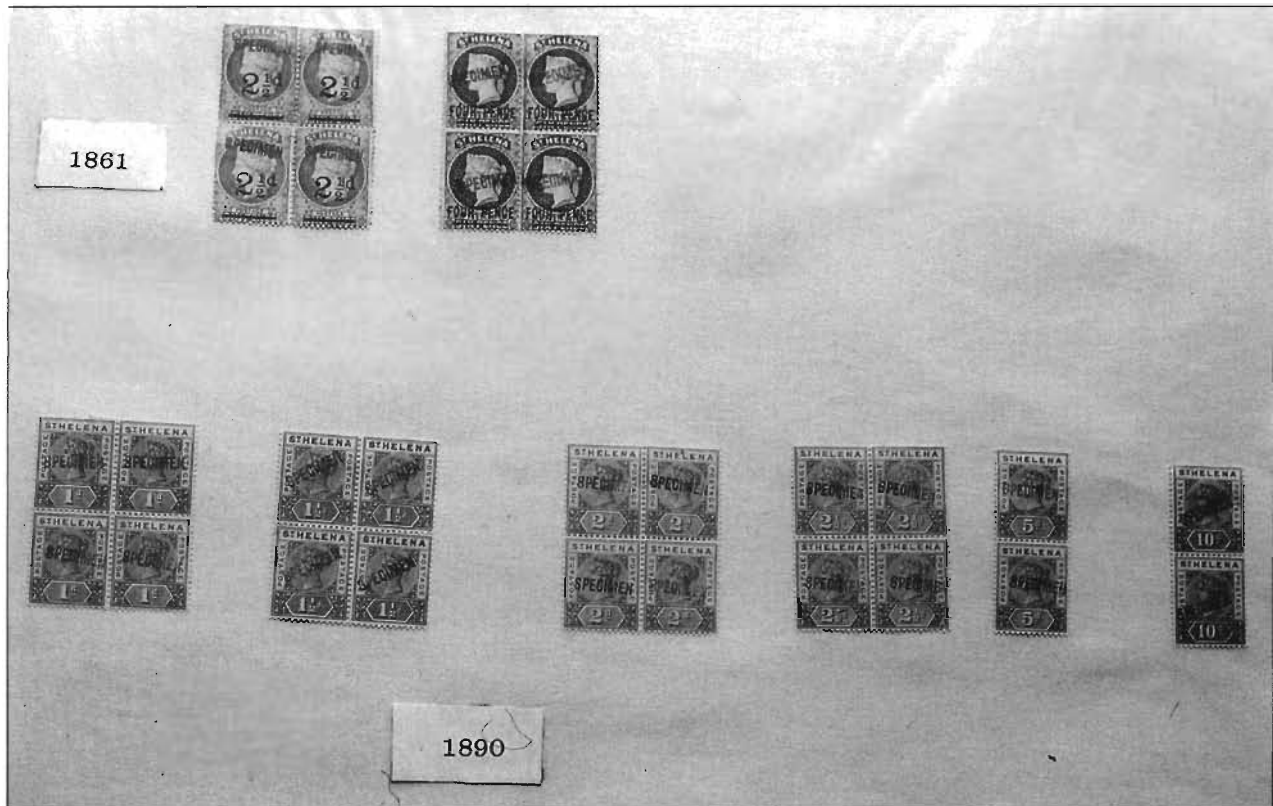
1890 (or 1894?) Four Pence on Six Pence pale brown (or sepia?). Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

Dated 1890

1896 1d carmine keyplate. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

1890 1½d red-brown and green keyplate. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
 1896 2d orange-yellow keyplate. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
 1896 2½d ultramarine keyplate. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
 1896 5d mauve keyplate. Vertical pair, both overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
 1896 10d brown keyplate. Vertical pair, both overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

Note the lack of ½d keyplate, only two of which have been recorded with SH2 handstamp



Sheet A

Sheet B (Page 232) *K. Edward VII*

Dated 1902

1902 ½d green keyplate. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
 1911 1d red pictorial (unissued). Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

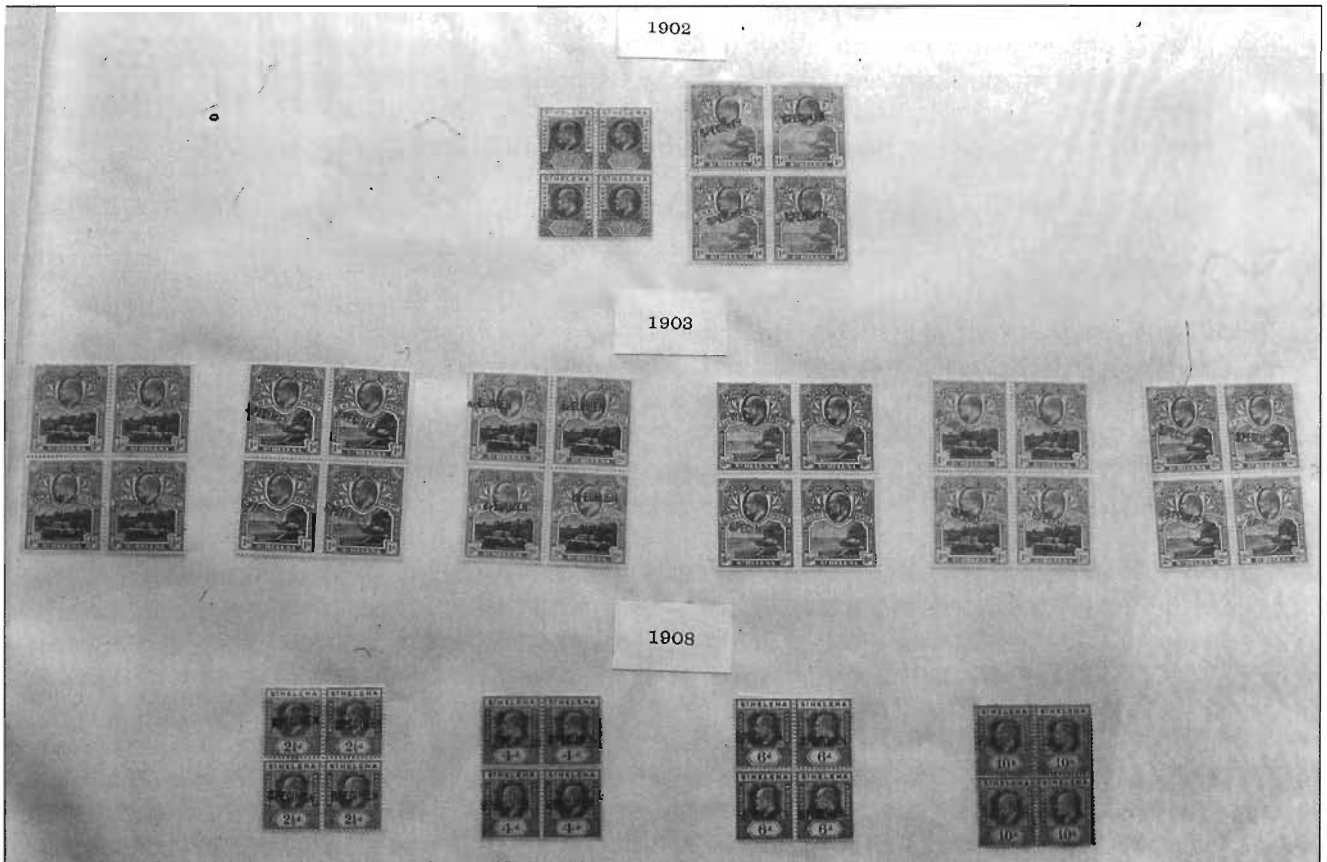
Dated 1903

1903 Pictorial set of 6 values ½d, 1d, 2d, 8d, 1s, 2s as issued. Blocks of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

Dated 1908

1908 2½d blue keyplate. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
 1908 4d black and red / yellow keyplate (appears to be chalky paper). Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
 1908 6d dull and deep purple keyplate (paper not identified). Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
 1908 10s green and red / green keyplate. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

Note lack of 1d carmine keyplate, but the inclusion of 1d 'all red' pictorial which was ordered in error and never issued. This block is probably unique with this overprint.



Sheet B

Sheet C (Page 233) K. George V

Dated 1912

1912-13 Pictorial set of 10 values ½d, 1d, 1½d, 2d, 2½d, 3d, 8d, 1s, 2s, 3s as issued. Blocks of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

Dated 1912

1912 4d black and red / yellow keyplate. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
 1912 6d dull and deep purple keyplate. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

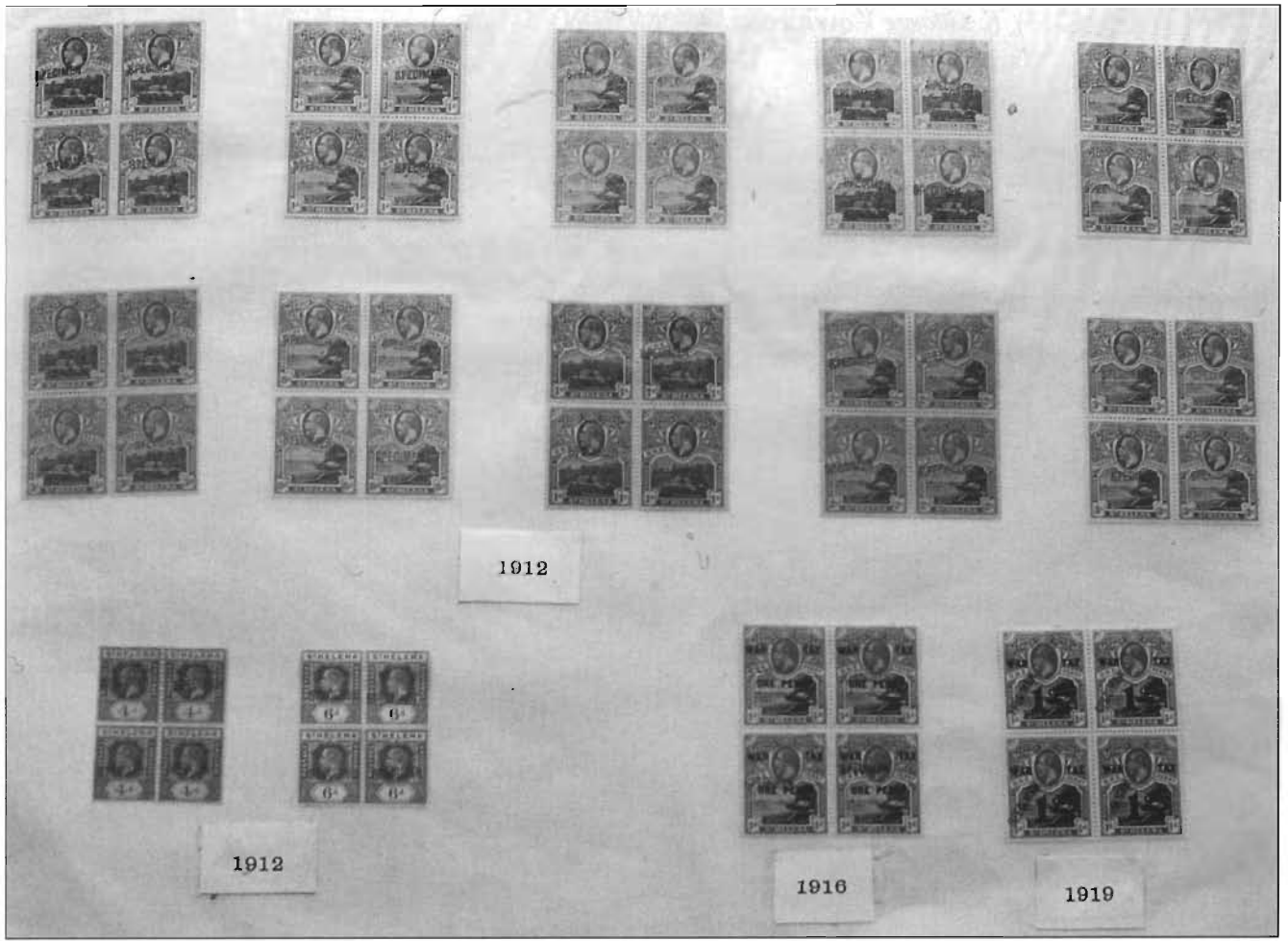
Dated 1916

1916 1d black and scarlet surcharged WAR TAX / ONE PENNY. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

Dated 1919

1919 1d black and carmine-red surcharged WAR TAX / 1d. Block of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

Note lack of 1913 Postage / Postage keyplate design. Also, no evidence of 1922 pictorial set printed in one colour.



Sheet C



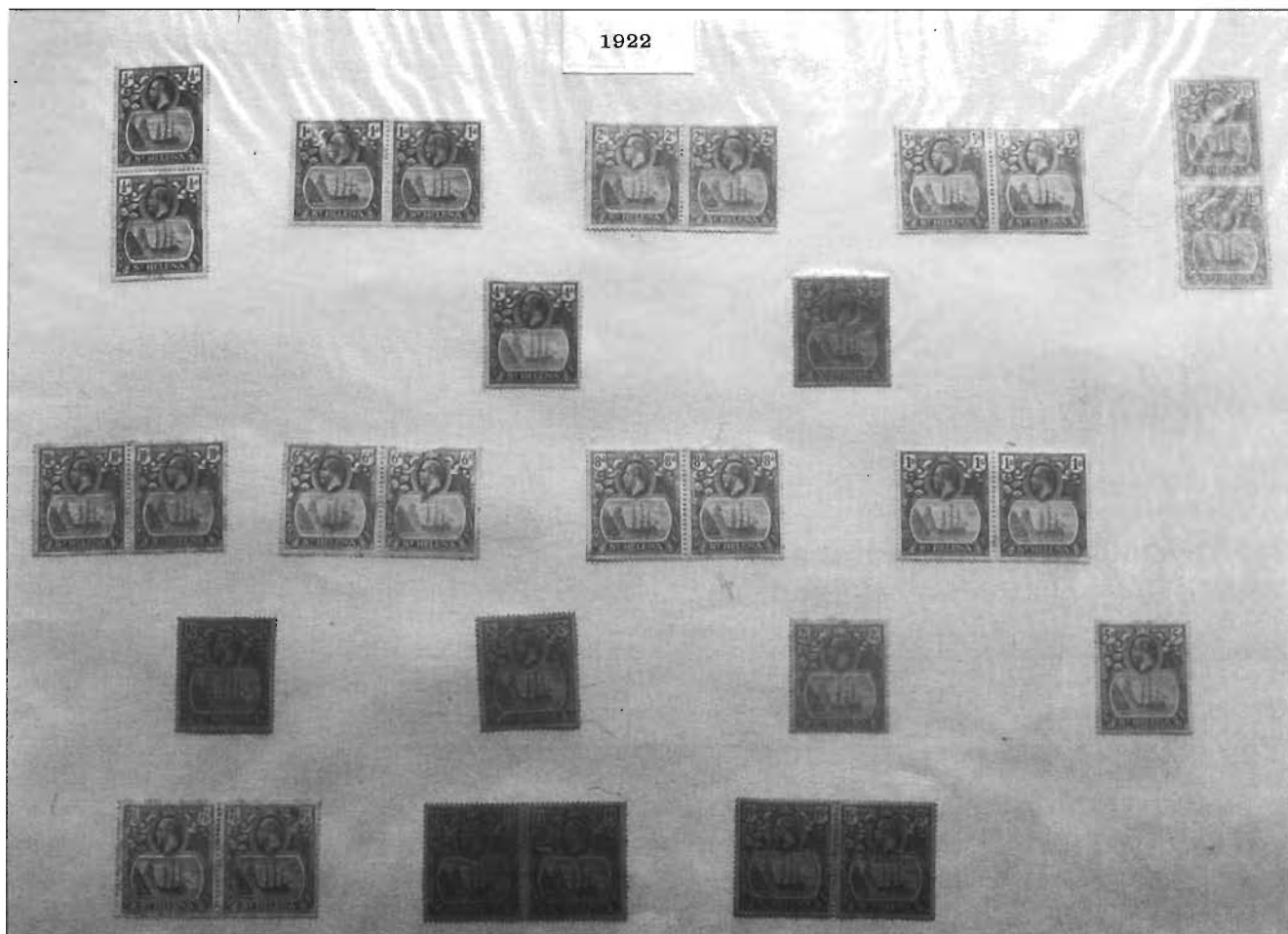
Sheet D

Sheet D (Page 233) *K. George V overprinted ASCENSION*

Dated 1922

1922 Pictorial set of 9 values ½d, 1d, 1½d, 2d, 3d, 8d, 1s, 2s, 3s all overprinted ASCENSION, as issued. Blocks of four, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN

Displayed in black-backed mounts. This sheet was the only Ascension issue we observed.



Sheet E

Sheet E (This page) *K. George V 'Badge' issue*

Dated 1922

- 1923 ½d grey and black. Vertical pair
- 1922 1d grey and green. Horizontal pair
- 1923 1½d rose-red (possibly 1937 deep carmine-red printing). Vertical pair
- 1923 2d grey and slate. Horizontal pair
- 1923 3d bright blue. Horizontal pair
- 1923 4d grey and black / yellow. Single, overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
- 1927 5d green and carmine / green. Single
- 1922 6d grey and bright purple. Horizontal pair
- 1923 8d grey and bright violet. Horizontal pair
- 1922 1s grey and brown. Horizontal pair
- 1922 1/6 grey and green / blue-green (possibly 1927 Script grey and green / green). Single
- 1927 2s purple and blue / blue. Single

1922 2/6 grey and red / yellow (possibly 1927 Script grey and red / yellow). Single
 1922 5s grey and green / yellow (possibly 1927 Script grey and green / yellow). Single
 1922 7/6 grey and yellow-orange. Horizontal pair
 1922 10s grey and olive-green. Horizontal pair
 1922 15s grey and purple / blue. Horizontal pair, overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN
 1922 £1 grey and purple / red. Horizontal pair

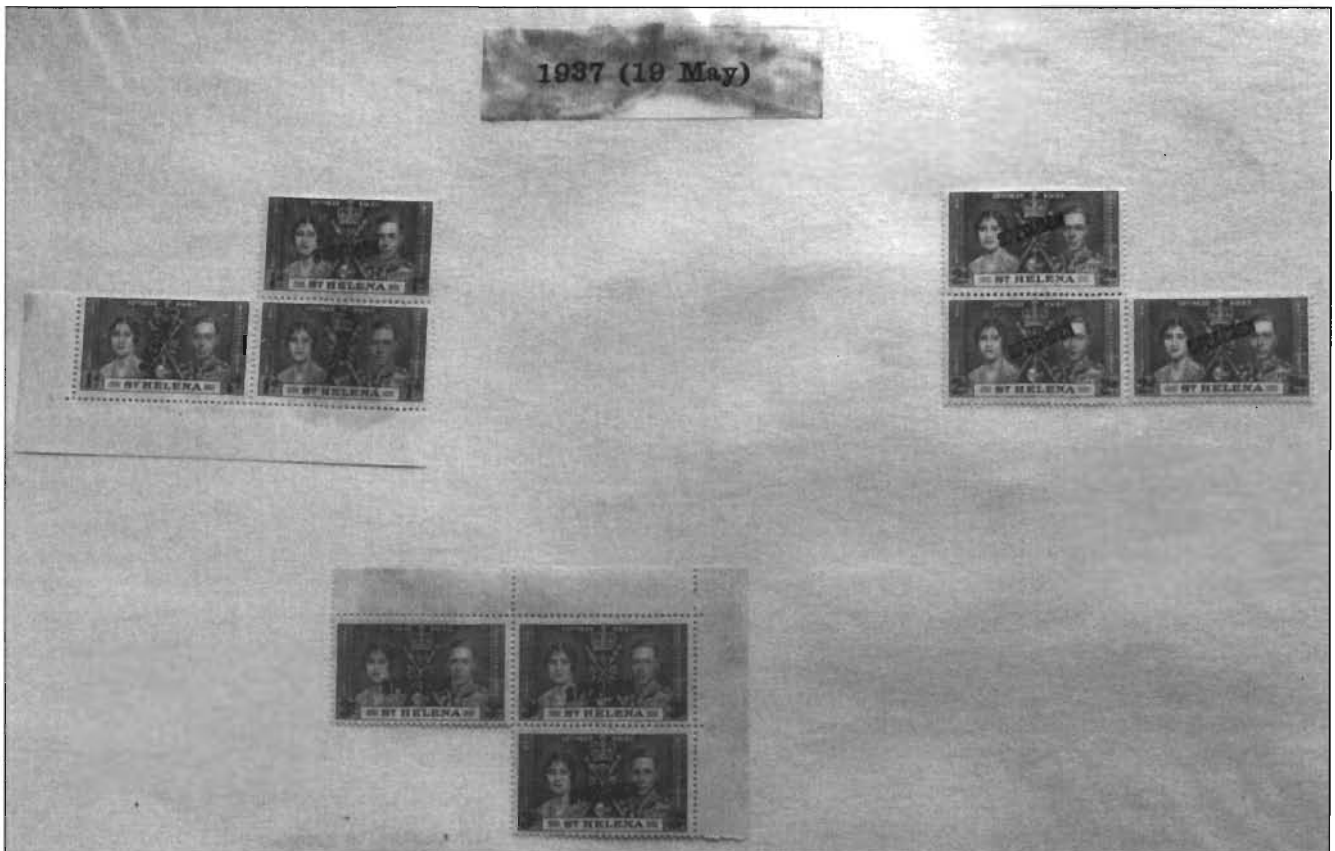
Note that only the 4d and 15/- values are overprinted SPECIMEN. Interestingly, these are the only two values that had been withdrawn from sale in 1927 and the unsold remainders destroyed [3]. Unfortunately, we failed to check for printing flaws, but it was noticed that many of the values on this sheet were badly affected by foxing / toning, and at least the 6d value was damaged.

Sheet F (This page) *K. George VI Coronation*

Dated 1937 (19 May)

1d green. 'Block' of three from lower left of sheet, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN in black
 2d orange. 'Block' of three, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN in black
 3d bright blue. 'Block' of three from upper right of sheet, all overprinted SH2 SPECIMEN in black

The date is correct for date of issue. Note overprint in black. Staining on 1d and 3d values.



Sheet F

Sheet G (Page 236) *K. George VI*

Dated 1938 (12 MAY) 1944

1938 ½d violet. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 2357
 1938 1½d scarlet. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 0638

1938 2d red-orange. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 359
 1940 3d grey. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 041
 1940 4d ultramarine. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 0401
 1938 6d light blue. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 12
 1940 8d sage-green (possibly 1944 olive-green). Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 0337
 1938 1/- sepia. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 115
 1938 2/6 maroon. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 397
 1938 5/- chocolate. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 17
 1938 10/- purple. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 01

Note lack of 1938 1d green, 1940 1d yellow-orange and 1938 3d ultramarine. 12 May 1938 is correct for date of issue. 1944 possibly suggests the second printing of 8d value. Slight staining on some values. Displayed in black-backed mounts



Sheet G

Sheet H (Page 237) K. George VI, and Q. Elizabeth Coronation

Dated 1949 (1 NOV)

1d black and green. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 181
 1½d black and carmine. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 021
 2d black and scarlet. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 062

Dated 1953 (2 JUN)

3d black and deep reddish violet Coronation issue. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 0351

Dates are correct for dates of issue. Displayed in black-backed mounts.



Sheet H

Sheet I (Page 238) *Q. Elizabeth II*

Dated 1955 (4 AUG)

½d black and bright green. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 011
 1d black and deep green. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 0869
 1½d black and reddish purple. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 076
 2d black and claret. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 043
 2½d black and red. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 0736
 3d black and brown. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 144
 4d black and deep blue. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 0738
 6d black and deep lilac. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 0878
 7d black and grey-black. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 1011
 1/- black and carmine. Block of four from lower left of sheet
 2/6 black and violet. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 257
 5/- black and deep brown. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 111
 10/- black and yellow-orange. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 114

Date of issue actually 1953 (4 August). Displayed in black-backed mounts.



Sheet I

Sheet J (Page 229) *Q. Elizabeth II Tristan Relief*

Dated 1961

2½c + 3d black and brown-red. Block of four from lower right of sheet, with Plate Nos 1 - 3
 5c + 6d black and blue. Block of four
 7½c + 9d black and rose-carmine. Block of four from upper left of sheet
 10c + 1/- black and light brown. Block of four from lower right of sheet, with Plate Nos 1 - 3

Displayed in black-backed mounts.

Sheet K (Page 228) *Q. Elizabeth II Tristan Relief*

Dated 1961

2½c + 3d black and brown-red. Block of four from upper right of sheet
 5c + 6d black and blue. Block of four from right of sheet (possibly rows 3 and 4)
 7½c + 9d black and rose-carmine. Block of four from lower left of sheet
 10c + 1/- black and light brown. Block of four from upper right of sheet, with sheet no 196

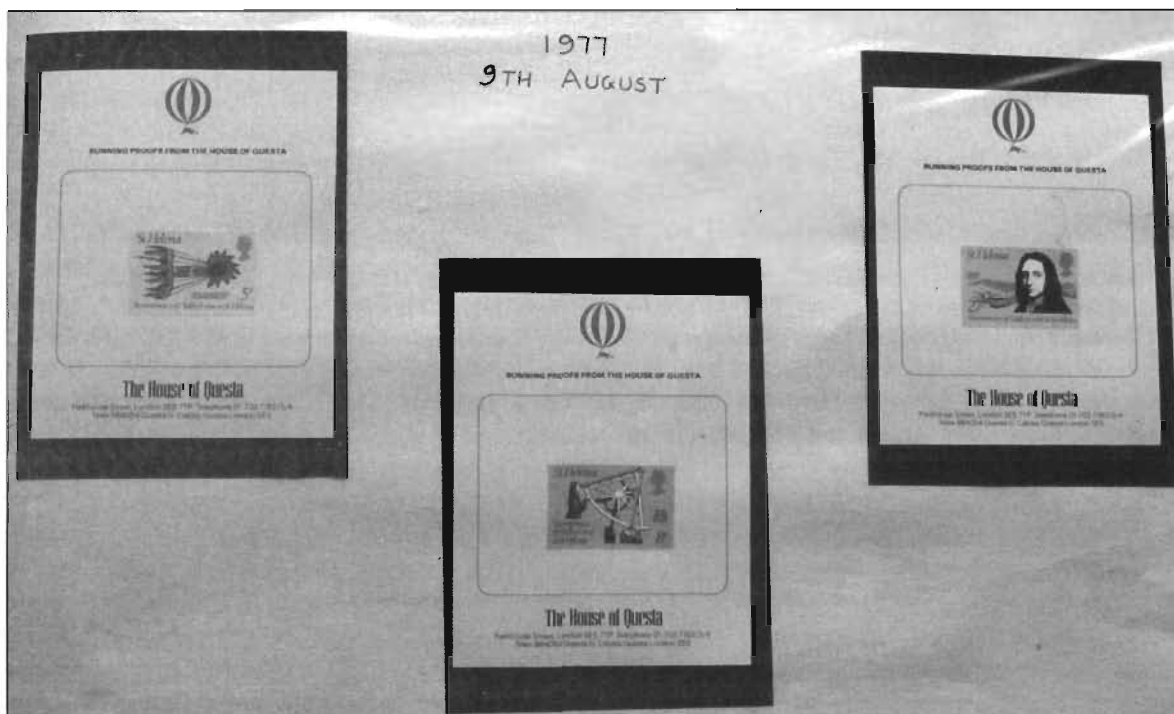
The sheet number has been trimmed from the 2½c + 3d. Displayed in black-backed mounts.

Sheet L (Page 239) *Q Elizabeth II Tercentenary of Halley's Visit*

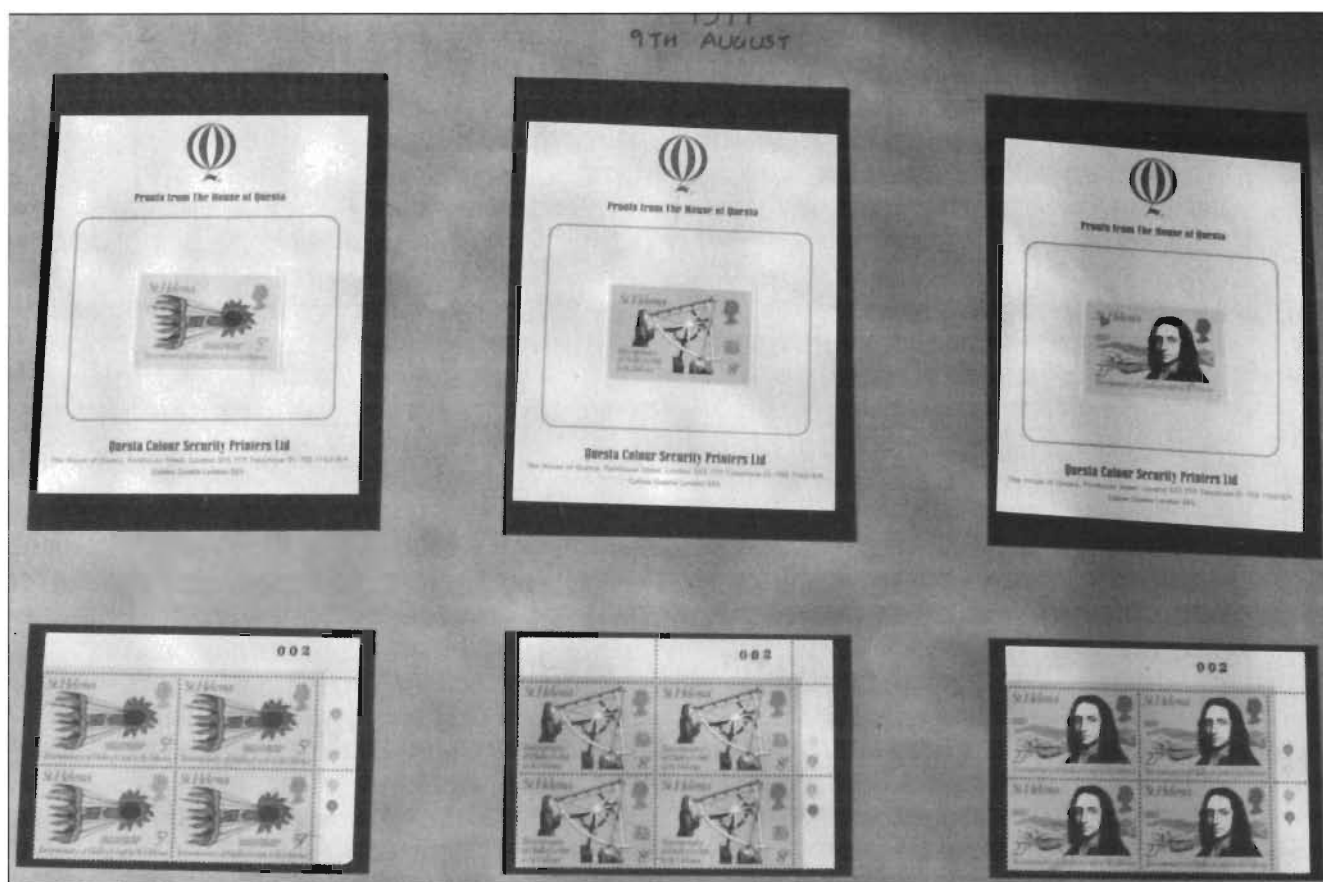
Dated 1977 9TH AUGUST (in manuscript)

Running Proofs from The House of Questa for the 5p, 8p, 27p values

Date of issue was 23 August 1977. Displayed in black-backed mounts



Sheet L



Sheet M

Sheet M (Page 239) Q Elizabeth II Tercentenary of Halley's Visit

Dated 1977 9TH AUGUST (in manuscript)

Proofs from The House of Questa for the 5p, 8p, 27p values

5p, 8p, 27p values. All in blocks of four from upper right of sheet, all sheet no 002

Date of issue was 23 August 1977. Displayed in black-backed mounts

References

- 1 Mabbett B., "A Trip to St Helena", *St Helena & Ascension Supplement*, No. 31 p3, WASC, January 1999
- 2 Mabbett B., "A Trip to St Helena; Pt Two", *St Helena & Ascension Supplement*, No. 32 p3, WASC, July 1999
- 3 Darton R.E., "St Helena: Shades of the Series 1922-27", *Stamp Collecting*, 3 June 1944

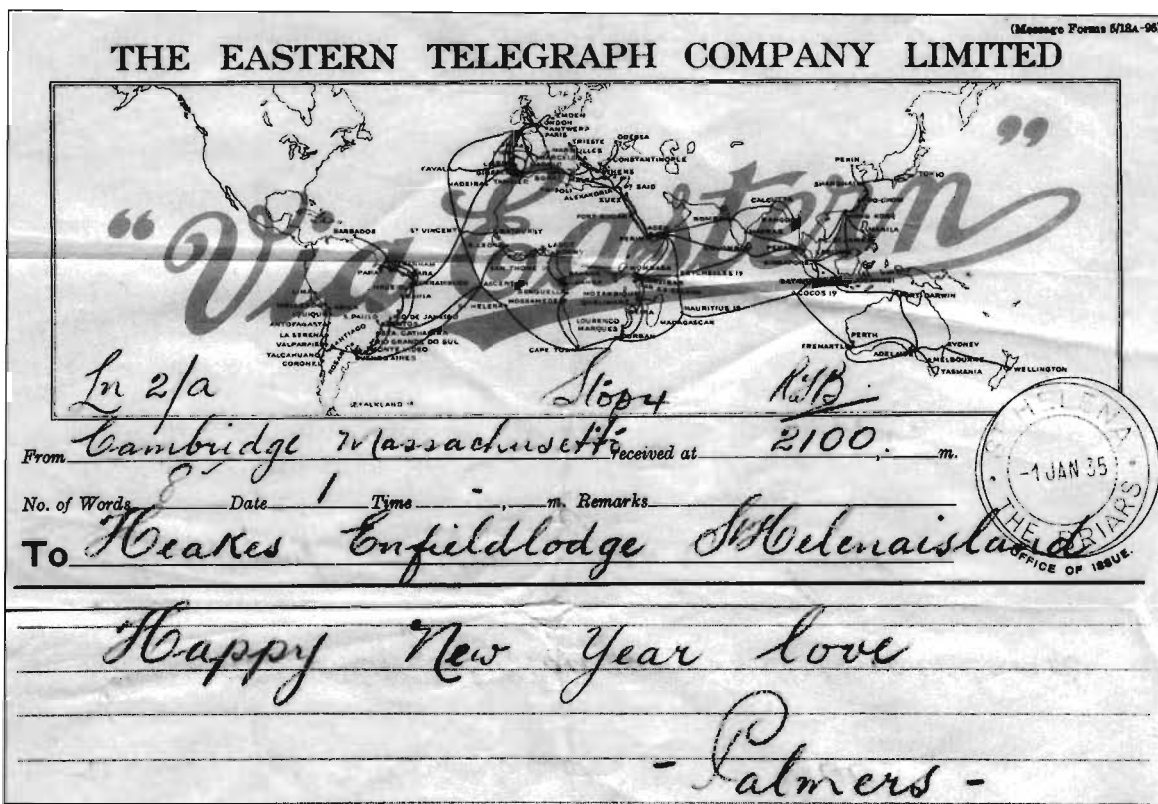
I would like to thank Maureen Stevens and the current Curator at the St Helena Castle Archives for permission to view, photograph and publish this information.



The Briars Handstamp

Barry Burns

A recent purchase is the illustrated (75%) Eastern Telegraph Company telegram, which has been cancelled with the double ring THE BRIARS c.d.s. of 1 JAN 35 [1].



Reference

- 1 Mabbett B., *St Helena: The Postal, Instructional and Censor Markings 1815-2000*, p34, WASC, Dronfield, 1st Edition 2002

St Helena 1894 2d *Raised Quad* Variety

Barry Burns

Roger West illustrated this variety, which he called the *Raised Space or Quad*, or *TWO PENCEI* on the 1894 Crown CA Watermark 2d value SG 39 way back in 1988 [1]. However, he was not able to plate it's position.

I have since come across the illustrated block, and can plate the variety (upper left stamp) as from position 104 (row 9 column 8) using Roger's own fingerprint method of plating [2].

Although this does not confirm the variety as constant, it does appear at least twice. Further reports will be welcome.



References

- 1 West R.B., "Surcharge Varieties on the Perkins Bacon 6d Plate", *St Helena Supplement*, No. 9 p13, WASC, January 1988
- 2 West R.B., "The Fingerprint Method of Plating", *St Helena Supplement*, No. 8 p3, WASC, July 1987



Articles of Interest Published in Other Journals

Members are invited to contact either editor by e-mail, post or telephone when they notice any article they feel might be of interest to other members.

Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society Volume 54 No 2, June 2004

The Post Offices of French West Africa, Part 3 - Mauretania by Bill Mitchell and Laurence Lambert

The One Centime Picture Postcard Rate by Derek Richardson

Visiting Cards - a Brief History of Rates, Regulations and Postal Stationery by Mick Bister

Unlisted Ivory Coast Stamps by Peter Upson

Red Cross Postcard from the Ivory Coast by John West

Also a *Subject Index to Four French Philatelic Magazines 1946-2000* has been compiled by Derek Richardson and published by F&CPS at £6 plus postage for non-members.

Their own list of Recently Published Articles refers to three items on WWII issues written in French in *Timbres Magazine* by Chauvin:

L'A.O.F. Coeur de l'Empire 1re partie: 1940-1942 in No 45, April 2004

2me partie: 1942-1945 in No 46, May 2004

1946: Quels timbres pour le Togo?, also in No 46, May 2004

History Today August 2002

St Helena's 500th Anniversary; an article mainly about the Heritage Museum

The Lady 7-13th October 2003

Island of the Saints by Beverley Byrne; a voyage to Ascension and St Helena on RMS *St Helena*

And Finally

At the NEPA (North of England Philatelic Association) Annual Convention on Teesside last year, we were privileged to view a superb collection of G.B. 'Twopenny Blues' given by Jane Mowbray, with help from Michael. I noticed that, while some of the stamps were mounted on a black paper backing, many were mounted on white paper which was then mounted on black. On enquiry, Michael Mowbray replied that the manufacturers of the black paper, Wiggins Teape, could not guarantee that it was acid free. As a precautionary measure, therefore, the said items were mounted first on white, acid-free paper. Perhaps those of us who favour coloured backing paper for our prized stamps and covers should re-think our ideas!

▼ ▼ ▼

Allan Leverton, who wrote an article in *Cameo* 60 on the 1961 Tristan Relief proof set, informs me of an interesting anecdote. His stamp company, Bridger and Kay, was burgled during 1963, and among the stolen items was a set of this issue, all in corner blocks of four. After five years the thief decided that it was time to turn his haul into cash. He advertised the blocks in a stamp magazine, but he was unaware that Allan had photographs of them. The insurance assessors went along with the £600 asking price, and the blocks identified from the photographs. The police were called, the stamps found in the thief's study, and he was successfully prosecuted and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.

▼ ▼ ▼

Acknowledgements for information and help for this edition go to:- N. Bruce, L. Caesar, J. Cairns-Wicks, J. Cooper, R. Deakin, J. Hamilton, T. Hearl, S. Heijtz, S. Helm, J. Ince, A. Leverton, B. Mabbett, R. Maddocks, J. Martin, R. May, W. Mitchell, R. Negus, R. Richardson, J. Robinson, P. Rolfe, M. Stevens, R. Taylor, P. Rolfe, J. Smith, W. Thorpe, R. West, Armstrong Press, Crown Agents Stamp Bureau, Jamestown Castle Archives, Royal Philatelic Society London, St Helena Heritage Museum, Stanley Gibbons Ltd., all the authors, correspondents and advertisers, and to anyone else I may have inadvertently forgotten.

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ASCENSION 1922. A set of nine values, SG 1-9, all overprinted SPECIMEN in red (black on 1 1/2d). Fine mint. £450

ASCENSION 1963. The 10s.6d booklet, (SG SB1) very fine, with seal intact. £50

ST. HELENA / GB 1887. A cover (less flap) from Bracknell to St. Helena the 6d franking made up with four different stamps. St. Helena arrival datestamp on front. £150

ST. HELENA 1901. A 1d p.s.p.c. (faults) from a Boer p.o.w. to South Africa, handstamped circular "CENSOR / PRISONERS OF WAR", initialled FWA by F.W. Alexander. £75

ST. HELENA / BOER WAR 1902. The reply half of a 1d p.s. reply p.c. to Jamestown, cancelled "St. Helena" cds, with fine triangular "Passed / by / Censor / St. Helena / Head Office" in violet, reverse is signed P.A. Cronje (General Cronje). £250

ST. HELENA c. 1930. A group of six unused picture postcards, (4 Jamestown, 1 Napoleon's Tomb, 1 with 3 vignettes). £35

ST. HELENA c. 1981. Endemic plants - 27p Black Cabbage original intermediate artwork incorporating colour suggestions, signed D. Padden. £150

GAMBIA 1922. Mult Crown CA 4d, 7 1/2d, 1s & 5s (SG 118-121) overprinted or handstamped (5s) SPECIMEN, fine and fresh with full gum. £95

NIGER COAST 1893-94. Q.V. 2 1/2d in orange-brown, an imperforate colour trial on wove paper. £250



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<p>ASCENSION. 1924 1½d Badge with <i>line through 'C'</i> (in pair with normal). Very fine mint. SG 12var (BK G12d). £90</p>	<p>NIGERIA. 1938 2/6 (P 13 x 1½) in corner Sheet No block of four. Unmounted mint. Rare. SG 58. £120</p>
<p>ASCENSION. 1934 8d with 'teardrops' flaw. Very fine mint. SG 27a. £120</p>	<p>NIGERIA. 1938 5/- (P13 x 1½) in corner Sheet No block of four. Unmounted mint. Rare. SG 59. £200</p>
<p>ASCENSION. 1938 1½d (Perf 13) marginal block of four <i>cut mast and railings</i>. Unmounted mint. SG 40ca (CW 17e). £65</p>	<p>ST HELENA. 1868 1d lake (Type B) <i>imperforate</i>. Very fine mint. Superb example of this rarity. SG 7b. £1300</p>
<p>GAMBIA. 1869 4d brown with large even margins. Very fine mint. Exceptional. SG 1. £250</p>	<p>ST HELENA. 1903 Unissued 1d red optd 'SPECIMEN'. Very fine mint. £225</p>
<p>GOLD COAST. 1935 1d Jubilee with <i>extra flagstaff</i>. Very fine used with ACCRA c.d.s. SG 113a. £55</p>	<p>SIERRA LEONE. 1893 (CC) ½d on 2½d lilac. Very fine mint. RPS Cert. SG 38. £325</p>
<p>LAGOS. 1904 2½d (Type A) with <i>watermark inverted</i>. Very fine mint. SG 47bw. £90</p>	<p>SIERRA LEONE. 1897 2½d on 3d (Type 12). Very fine mint. BPA Cert. SG 58. £200</p>
<p>NIGER COAST. 1899 ½d, 1d and 2½d (pair) tied to piece by full seriffed 'BURUTU' h/s '21 APR 1879'. SG Z56,57,59. £140</p>	<p>TOGO. 1914 5pf green (Type 3 : Narrow Setting) used with LOME c.d.s. '17.10.14'. Rare. BPA Cert. £450</p>

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