

REMOTE ISLANDS

(With a South Atlantic Flavour)

Preface

The events leading up to my displays of this material are described on the main introduction sheet. The principles of the show were conceived in 2003 and all but one of the covers in this version comprised my first show on the R.M.S. St Helena en route from Cape Town to Tristan da Cunha in 2006.

That show was attended by over 60 people including the Captain, the Governor of St Helena, one Knight, one Philatelic Journalist and passengers from four continents. Important information was obtained from members of the crew and it fascinated the Captain, a 'Saint' (Local name for a St Helena citizen) who had, in his youth, been clothed with goods his mother bought from the Oxendales catalogue!

Changes have since been made to incorporate information added on that trip and visits to some of the other countries featured, in 2012, 2014 and 2016. The complete version shown here, with one minor change, is the one shown again, less formally, on the same ship, R.M.S. St Helena, between St Helena & London in May-June 2016.

Some say stamp collecting is boring. Producing this little show was a life changer for my wife and I as without it we would never have visited many of the places, including six of the featured territories that we went to in the following years.

I hope you enjoy this and perhaps it will help convince some doubters that 'boring stamp collecting' can sometimes lead to great adventures!

REMOTE ISLANDS

Commercial Mail

In the early 1970's I worked for a mail order company which had a substantial export trade. As mail order was very attractive to those who lived in remote areas I was lucky enough to acquire a significant quantity of commercial mail from small islands. Previously it had all been sold for a song to a local stamp dealer, who removed the stamps & sold them to collectors. A rich source of study was lost for ever. I extracted the items from small or obscure places, intact & released the rest to the dealer, who wondered why the trade with interesting places had declined so badly!

A few items were added into my collection but the majority remained carefully stored away for 30 years. When asked to give a display at my local stamp club in late 2003 I wanted to do something different. A display of just modern G.B. featuring only the Queen's head, my specialist subject, would be interesting to some but downright boring to others, so, looking again at this mail & some Tristan covers bought in 1999 the idea of a Remote Islands display was born.

The results were fascinating. Postmarks which seemed the same had differences & there were several other variations which needed explanation. This had to be the first part of my display. This would keep everybody awake & avoid a mass exodus at the coffee interval!

As I did not know enough about the material I made enquiries through specialists who gave me a lot of help, particularly Barry Burns (St Helena) , who has been on the RMS to St Helena & Robin Taylor who will be familiar to members of the Tristan da Cunha Association. Out of thanks more than a long term desire I joined the societies who had helped me & attended their meetings.

That really was a master stroke. I thoroughly enjoyed both the West Africa Study Circle meetings, which I always attend & those of the Tristan da Cunha Association.. There is no possibility of ever resigning from either! Of course I never dreamt that as a result of this study I would find myself on the way to Tristan less than 3 years later. That beats everything else!

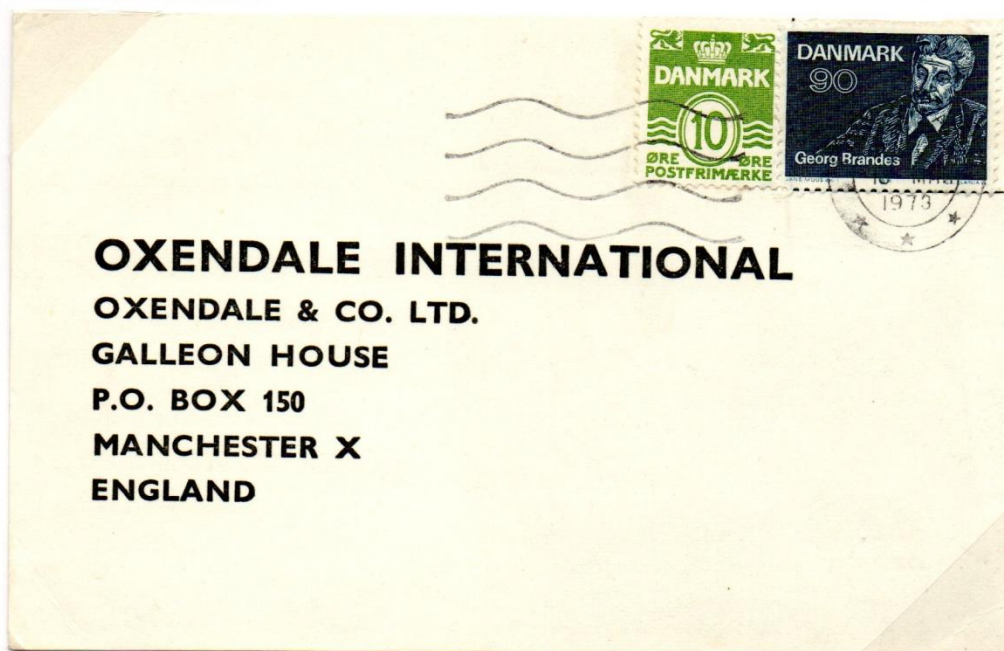
This presentation is an extract from that display, with a definite South Atlantic flavour. It shows how careful observation, a bit of knowledge & a bit of study can be very rewarding & informative in any field of collecting. It also shows that you do not necessarily have to spend a lot of money to finance it. The only snag to that is that once you have done something like this you are hooked & tend to spend money expanding your collection!

The above was written in early 2006 and the trip to Tristan inspired Irene & I to go rather further afield. Three pages have since been added and one amended based on relevant information acquired during our travels.

I hope you enjoy looking at this as much as I have enjoyed putting it together.

FAROE ISLANDS

The Faroe Islands are situated midway between Iceland, Scotland and Norway but are a self governing region of Denmark. No Faroe Islands stamps were issued until 1975, previously they used Danish ones. Earlier covers from the Faroe Islands can only be found by checking the postmarks on Danish stamps.



Torshavn, Faroe Is. 10th Mar 1973



Torshavn, Faroe Is. 7th Apr 1973

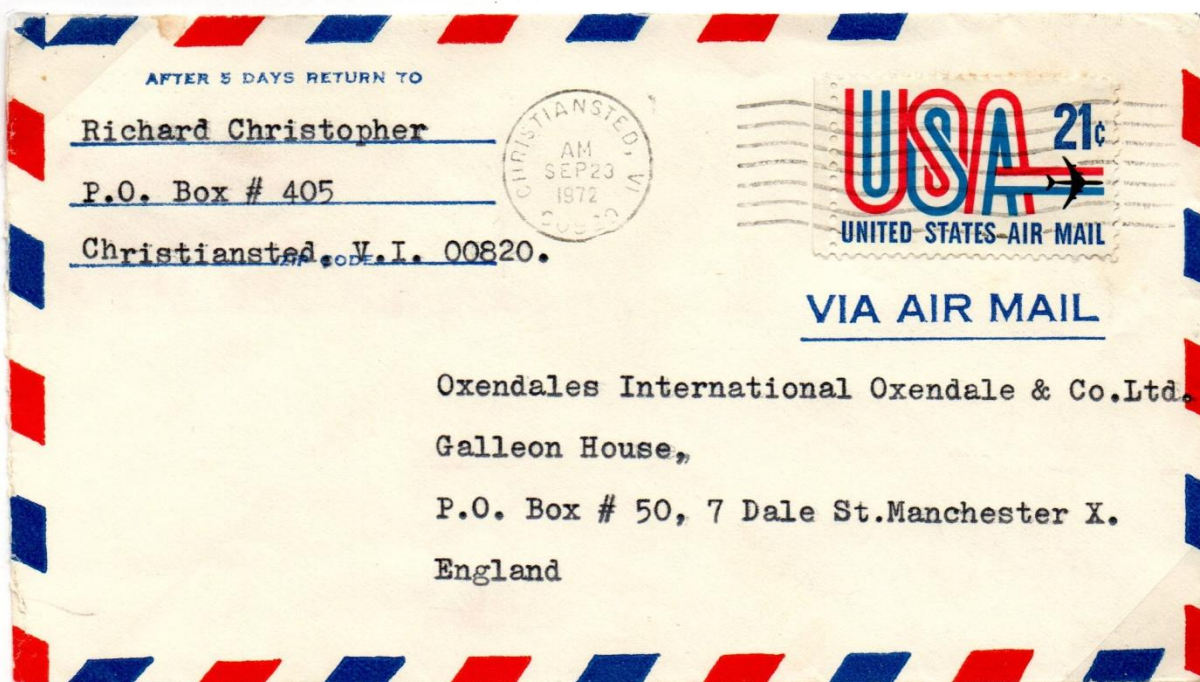
U.S.A - VIRGIN ISLANDS

The western Virgin Islands, in the West Indies, are owned by the U.S.A. Previously they were the Danish West Indies, bought by the U.S.A, from Denmark, in 1917. These covers are from the two main towns in the islands.

The islands are hardly remote but mail is only identified by carefully checking postmarks and addresses, as they do not have their own stamps but use stamps of the U.S.A.



Used at Charlotte Amalie, St Thomas
29th Mar 1973.



Used at Christiansted, St Croix
23rd Sept 1972.

NEW ZEALAND - CHATHAM ISLANDS

The Chatham Is. are an integral part of New Zealand,
about 400 miles east of Christchurch on South Island.

An unusual registered cover, posted at Waitangi. The correct
registered airmail rate was 23c Airmail + 18c Registration = 41c.



Accepted & cancelled on 17th Apr 1973. Incorrectly 22c was paid instead of 23c. The Registration fee
was added on 18th Apr 1973. The postmaster never noticed that the basic postage was 1c short paid.

Type 9 cancellations, canceller No.1 was used

NEW ZEALAND - STEWART ISLAND

Stewart Island is the third island of New Zealand. It is situated at the southern tip of New Zealand, separated from South Island by the Foveaux Strait. It is quite large but has only one village, Oban, which housed the only post office, Half Moon Bay.

In the early 70's there were at least three numbered cancellations, two were in use in 1972-73.



Cancellation No 1
9th Mar 1973

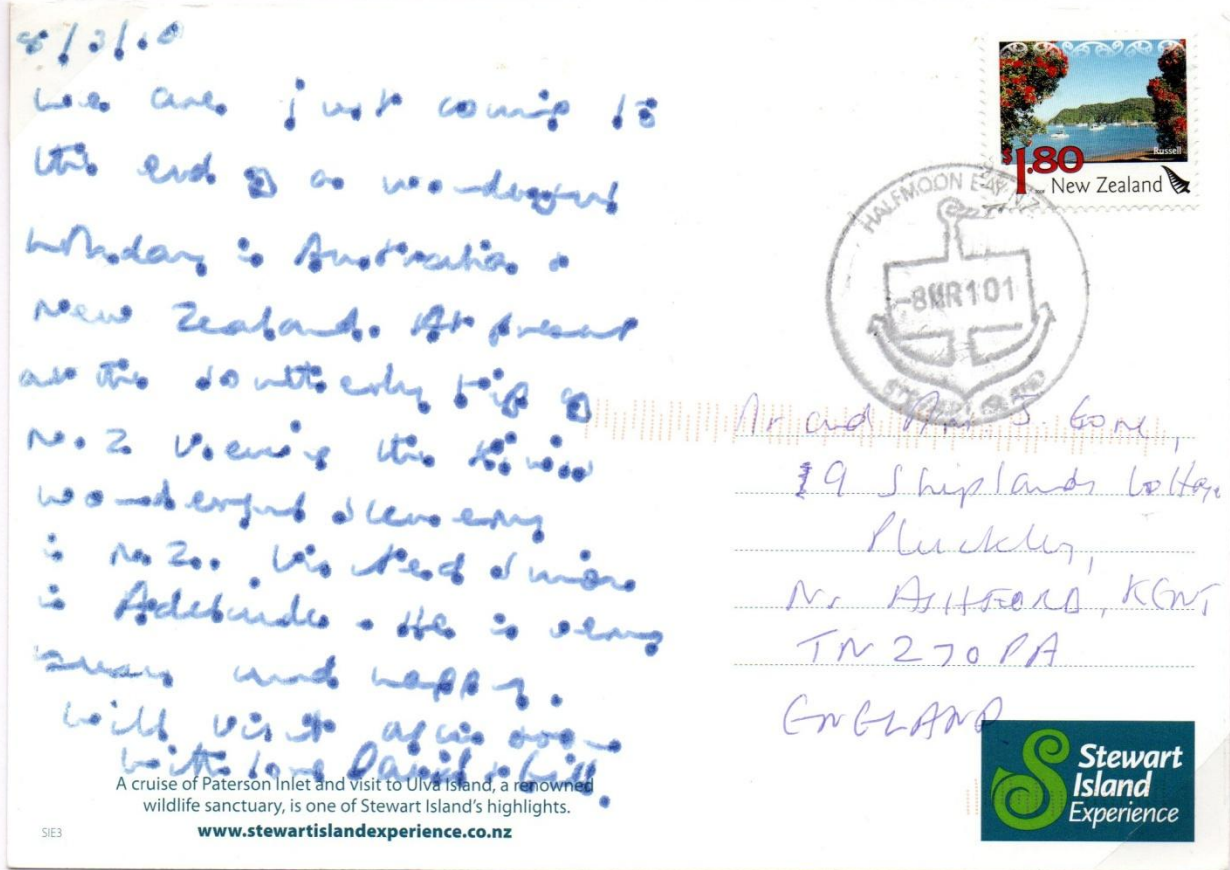


Cancellation No.2
15th Sept 1972

NEW ZEALAND - STEWART ISLAND

Early in 2016 we visited Stewart Island and of course I wanted to look at the Post Office and if possible send a card with a Stewart Island postmark.

As in the U.K. things have moved on, no Stewart Island cancel is allowed on the mail just a Christchurch Mail Centre cancel. They cancelled a souvenir card for me, using the old 1987 postmark, but it was not allowed to go through the post.



I managed to find this card, properly used, with a 2010 Half Moon Bay postmark

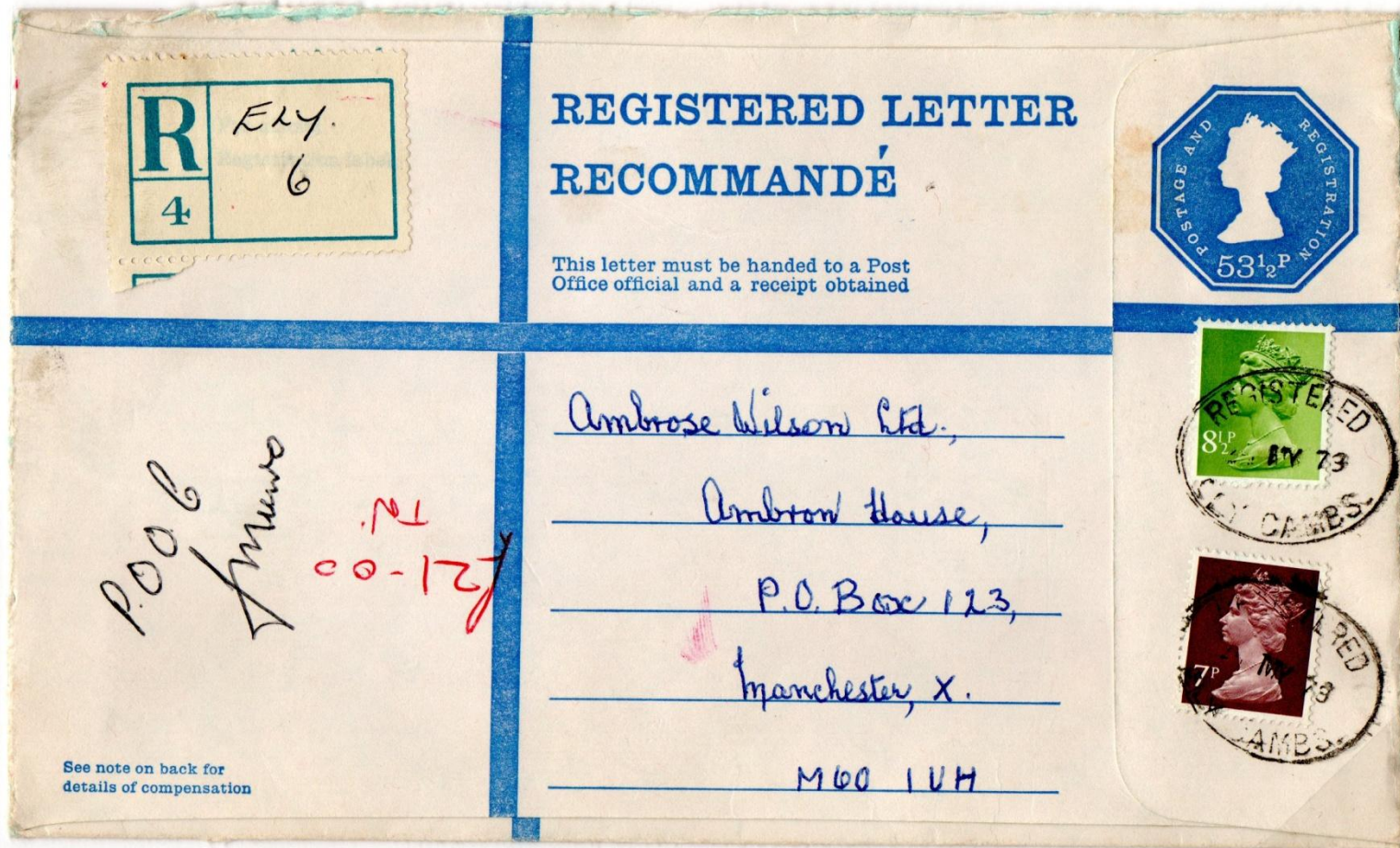


This is the view from inside the Post Office at Half Moon Bay (Oban).

GREAT BRITAIN - ISLE OF ELY

When showing this cover in England I have to admit to cheating a bit but not here! 1000 years ago Ely was an island in a boggy East Anglia. The area is now dry and about 30 miles from the sea.

This is an unusual postal use of the emergency Ely registration label.
It was posted in Soham but registered in Ely on 24th May 1978.



Emergency labels are normally used after major incidents, such as Post Office fires or robberies when equipment is lost. This was used in the Ely sorting office after this letter was found, posted unregistered in a pillar box. 'POOC' means 'Posted Out Of Course'. 25 years later, the postmaster of Soham said that the sender's address is an area with a large elderly population. Sorting would take place at night when the adjacent Post Office, holding the registration labels, was closed so an emergency label was used.

FALKLAND ISLANDS

Aerogramme from Port San Carlos, Falkland Sound

From Mrs E.M. Harrison, Port San Carlos, Falkland Islands
27th October 1968

To Oxendales,

Dear Sirs

Since writing to you concerning money in hand, I have discovered a further, £3-14-9 owed from a previous order October 25th 1967, which I had asked you to use with ^{my last} ~~the~~ order for hat + gloves. invoice no 4727.0. Ref:- letter (concerning pane) 2/10/ET please enclose this sum with the £22-14-8 altogether making a total of £26-9-5

Thank you.

Yours truly
E.M. Harrison (Mrs)

File
Cash Returned
18/11/68.



There is probably very little mail, pre Falklands war, which can be connected with Port San Carlos, where the British forces made their landing in 1982. So, this old aerogramme from a settlement of no more than 3 houses is now of real interest. Land communications here were non-existent. Our forces famously 'Yomped' across East Falkland from here to Port Stanley.

Mail was also very slow. This letter was written on 27th Oct 1968 but cancelled in Port Stanley on 15th Nov 1968, 19 days later.



FALKLAND ISLANDS

Mail from West Falkland cancelled at Port Stanley, West Falkland.

Pebble Is. is just west of the north-west point on East Falkland. In 1972 it had a population of less than 30 people.



Cancellation 'A', Port Stanley, 11th Dec 1972.



During the Falklands War, in 1982, Pebble Island was the location of a major S.A.S. raid. They destroyed all the Argentinean ground attack aircraft, prior to the army landing at nearby Port San Carlos.

Mrs Evans was the daughter in law of the sheep station manager, a post held by the Evans family from the 1860's to 2014. Raymond Evans and I believe his second wife were seen recently in the T.V. series 'Island Parish'. The last episode featured their move to Stanley in 2014, terminating the family association with the island.

FALKLAND ISLANDS

At lunch time on 31st Mar 1982 the last flight before the Argentine invasion left Port Stanley. Except for some local mail collected, cancelled & delivered on 1st Apr 1982, the only postal activity seems to have been registration and cancellation of three stamp orders, registered No's 110, 111 & 112, one to Essex, one to Canada and one to me! As at Jan 2006, only these three covers have been seen with a Falkland I. stamp, postmark AND an Argentine despatch mark.



The plane carrying this and other mail left for Argentina, a country with which we were at war, on 7th April. It was received in Holbeach on 19th April 1982.

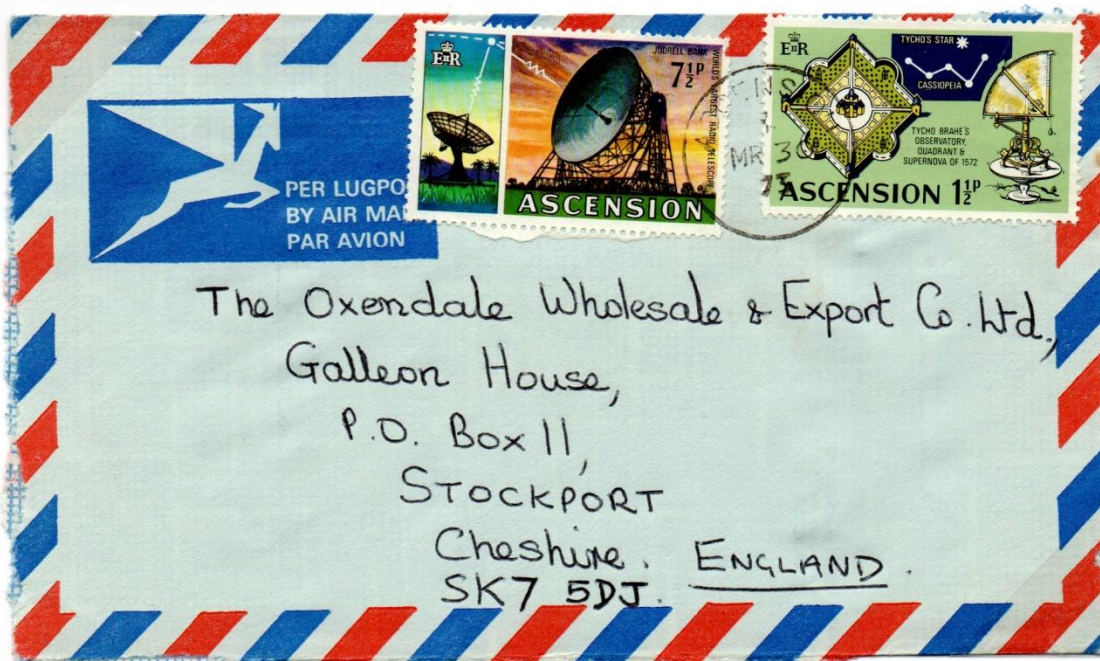
ASCENSION ISLAND

Two different sized cancellations were in use from 1971 to 1973

As most of the stamps of this period are dark in colour, variations in the cancellations are not easily seen.



Cancellation 'A', wide setting, 'A' & 'N' at base of the day line.
Registered airmail rate. 1st Dec 1972.



Cancellation 'B', narrow setting, 'A' & 'N' above the day line.
Standard airmail rate, 30th Mar 1973.

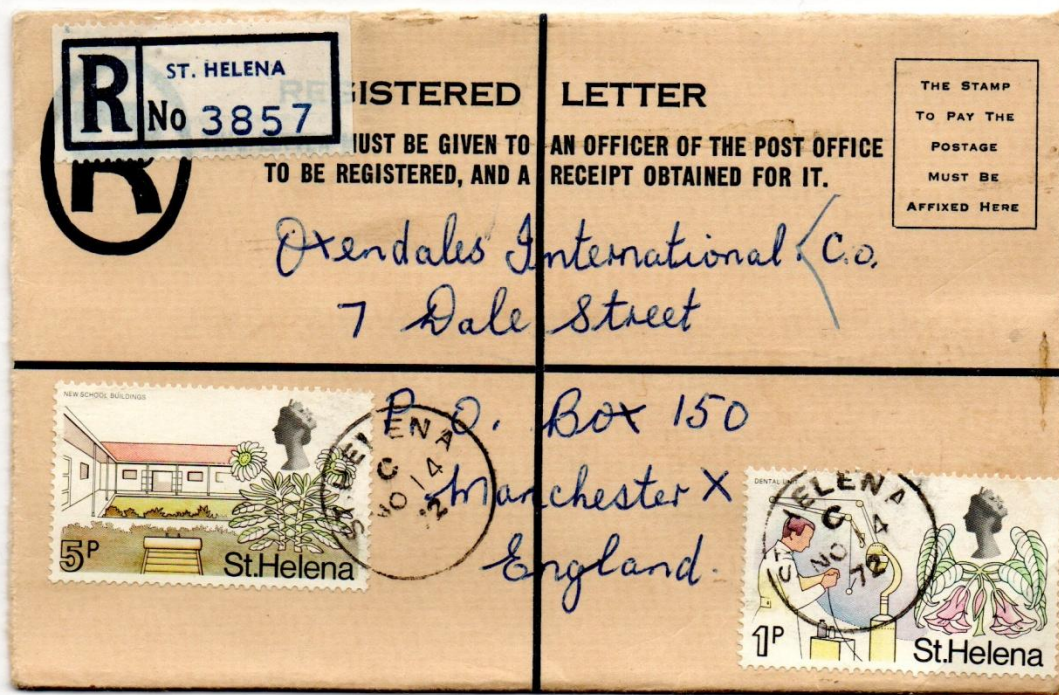
ST HELENA

An introduction to St Helena is not necessary for this show

There were two types of St Helena postmark in use on commercial registered mail from 1948 to 1973. Sometime between 8th Jan 1973 and 2nd Feb 1973 a new one, 'St Helena Jamestown' was introduced.



Type 8, narrow angle, first used in 1948
Surface mail registered rate, 29th Sept 1972.



Type 9, wide angle, first used 1964
Surface mail registered rate, 14th Nov 1972.

ST HELENA

Change of registered mail postmark to Jamestown, St Helena.
First recorded date after permanent change, unless you know better!



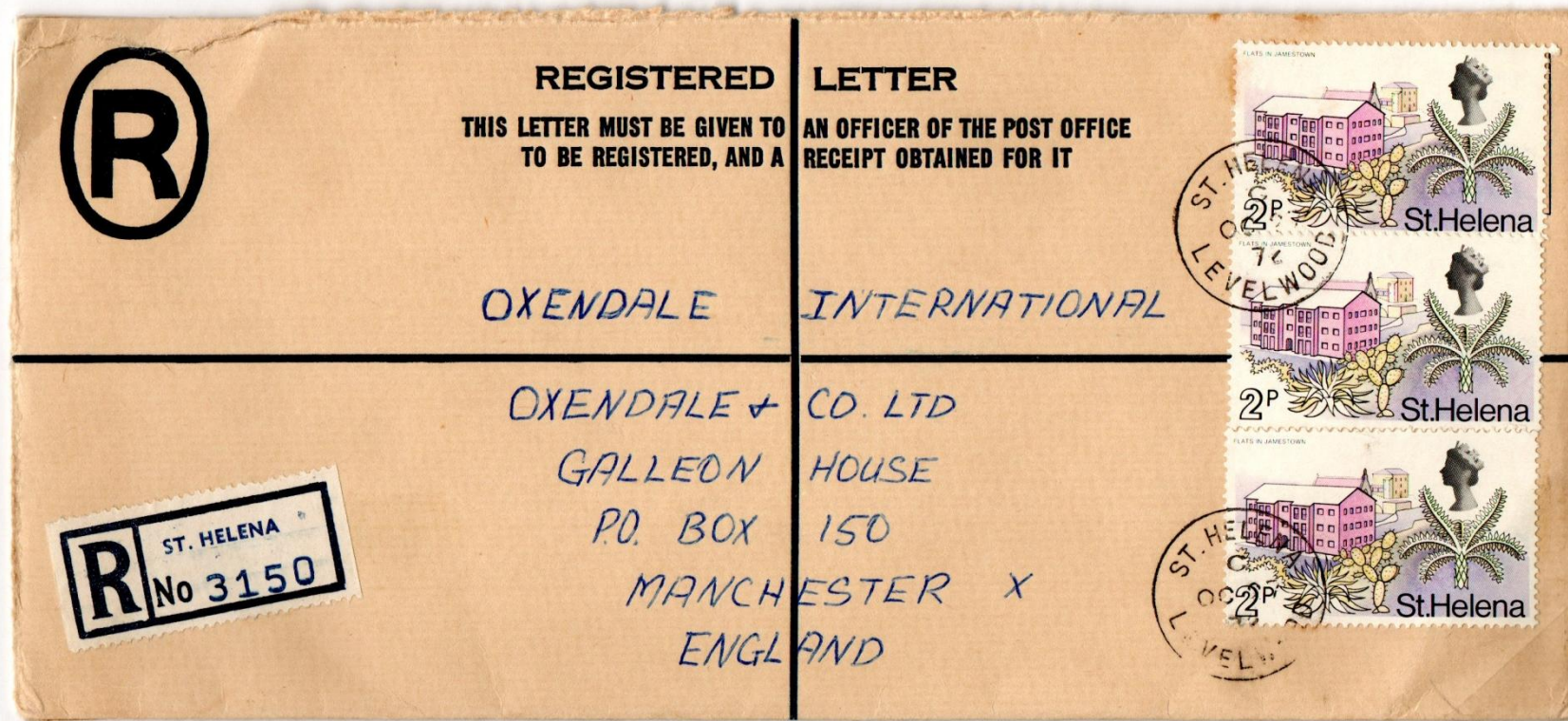
Type 11 postmark, 2nd Feb 1973
Registered surface mail rate, 6p

Type 12 not seen by me used between Feb and April 1973.

ST HELENA

An Unusual Sub-Office Registered Cover

The origin of this cover has recently puzzled specialists as there is no record of other registered covers with sub office cancellations. Registration facilities were not thought to exist except at Jamestown. An enquiry published in a specialist magazine in Oct 2003 yielded no answers. Perhaps someone on this ship can solve the problem.



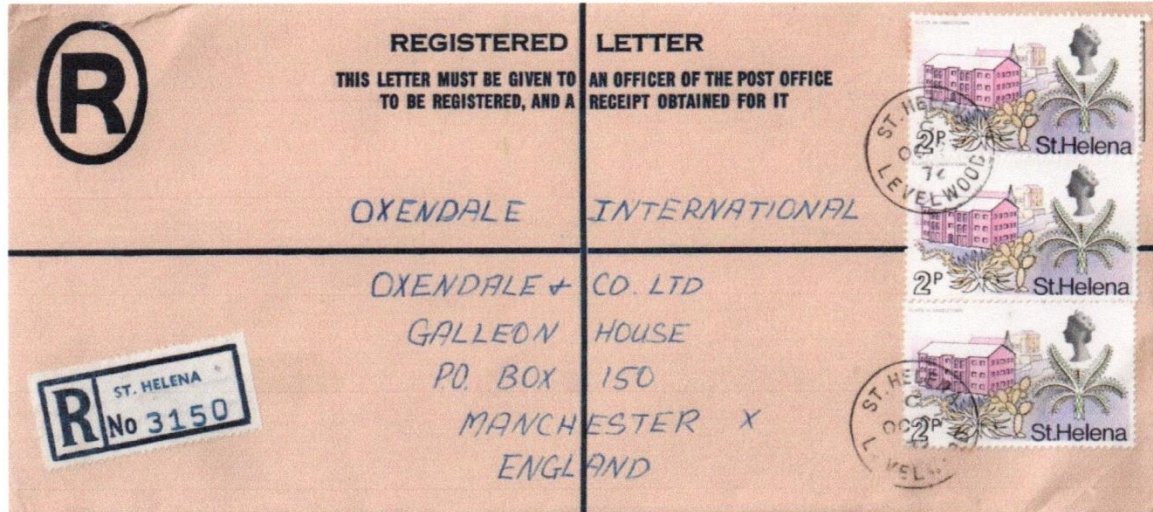
Registered surface mail, posted at Levelwood, 27th Oct 1972.

Normally all numbered registered items of that period are in strict date order but this one is higher than one used at Jamestown on 28th Oct 1972. It is likely that this label was added at the Head Office on Sat 28th Oct or Mon 30th Oct 1972.

ST HELENA

The Levelwood Mystery Solved

The stewardesses on the 'RMS' knew the answer to the problem. The 'Saints' filled in their orders for Oxendales shoes and registered them if they contained cash. Outside Jamestown the Post Offices were supposed to put them in a separate bag UNCANCELLED. All markings were to be put on at Jamestown but this one was clearly cancelled by accident.



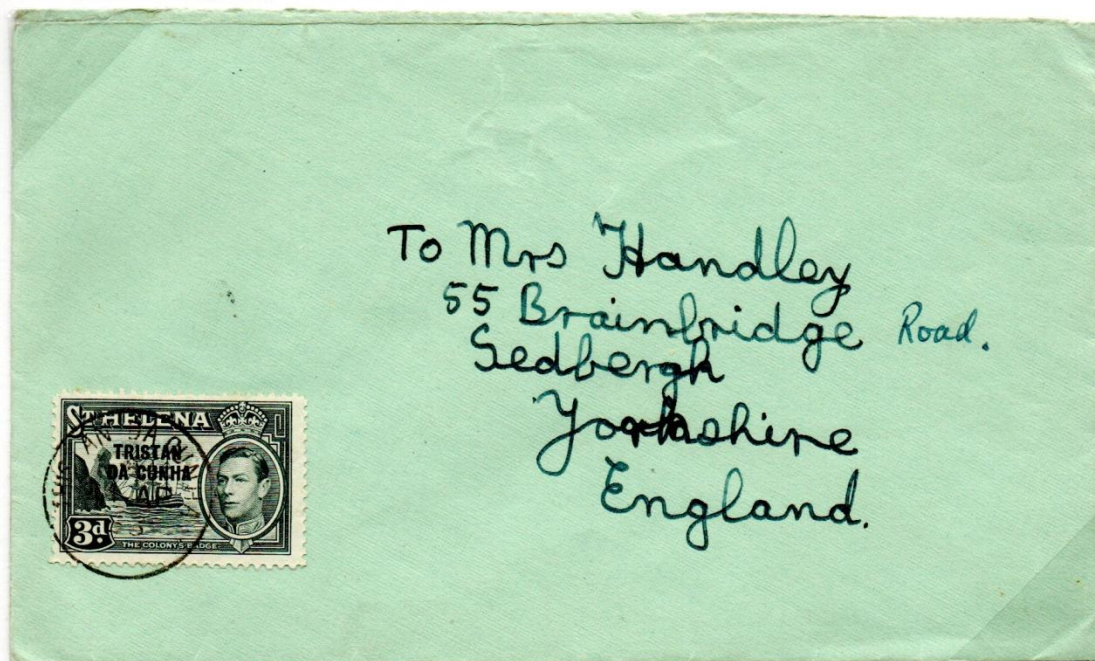
It will be interesting to see if other registered items with sub-office cancellations are found



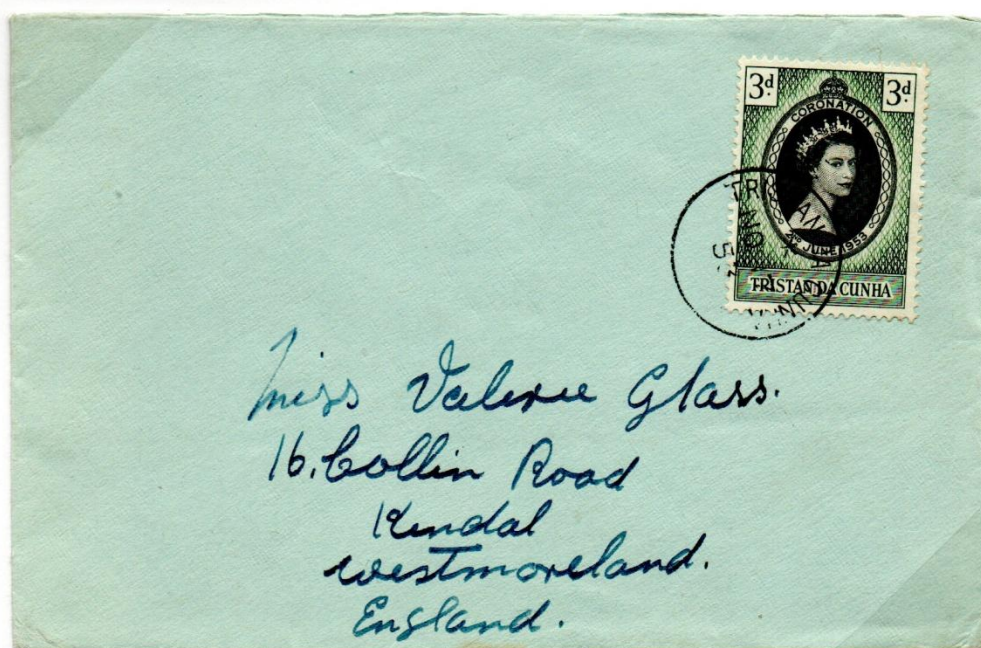
It took three attempts to take this photo, in 2011, 2014 when I could not find it and finally in 2016 when it was specifically targeted.

TRISTAN DA CUNHA

Valerie Glass, aged 6 came to England, to be educated in late 1952. She was looked after by Mrs Handley, the ex Tristan teacher & wife of the late minister who died on the island. It was hoped that Valerie would return as the qualified Tristan teacher. She never returned and is now retired in England. Mrs Handley died in 2005.



Correct rate cover to Mrs Handley
Postmark A (wide), Setting B (day before month), 24th Apr 1953.
Does anybody know who may have written this letter?



Correct rate cover from Mrs Alice Glass
Postmark B (narrow), Setting D (month before day), 17th Nov 1953..
The Coronation stamp was used whilst current.

TRISTAN DA CUNHA

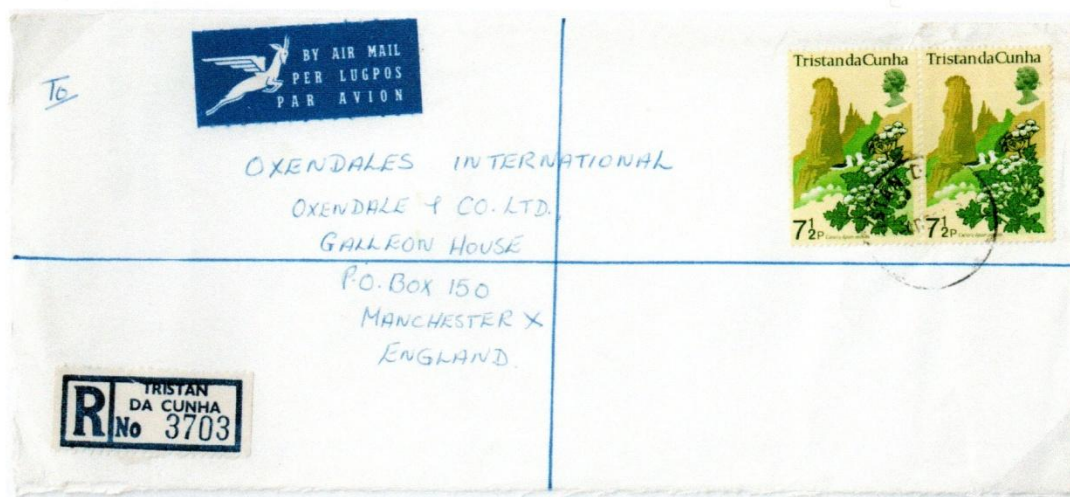
Occasionally there was unauthorised use of stamps



An unusual registered airmail cover. Re-use of previously cancelled to order stamps by the Post Office. The evidence is:-

- 1) Oxendales address change took place in autumn 72, not in August 72
- 2) Reg No. 3703, copied below, was dated 4th Dec 72.

It seems fair to say that this cover must have been posted in Dec 72 using unwanted C.T.O. stamps in the Post Office stock.

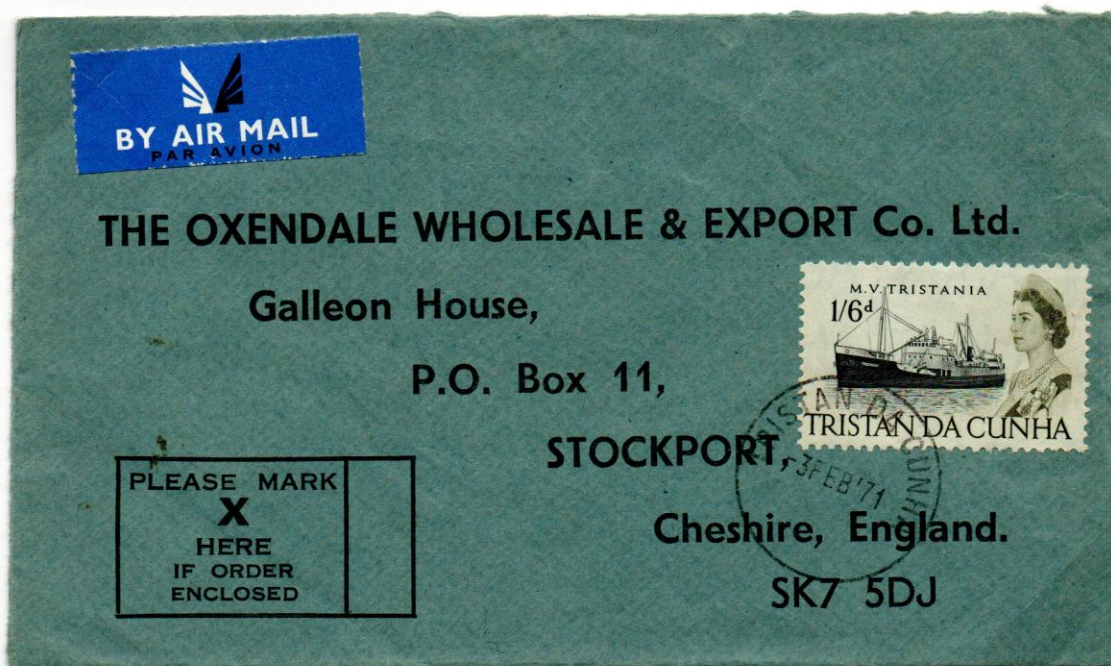


Photocopy, reduced, of Reg No. 3703. The date on the copy does not show up well but you can see the '4' and 'D' of 4th Dec can just about be seen.

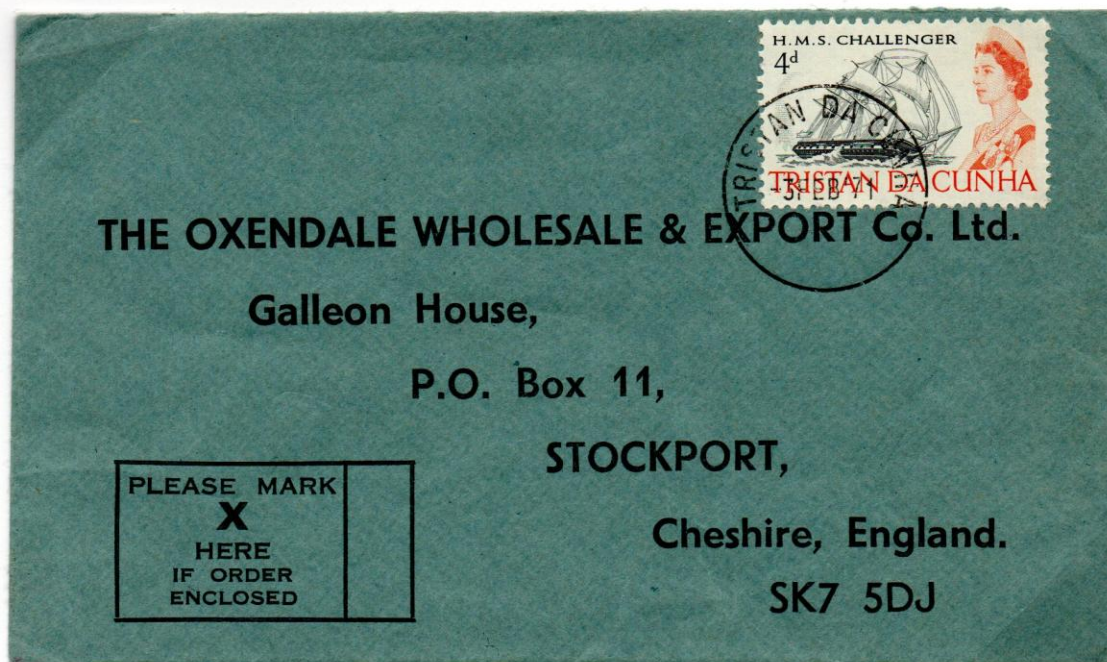
The Original Reg. Cover 3703 is on the back of this sheet.

TRISTAN DA CUNHA

The £ s d currency rates to the U.K. in 1971 were 1/6d airmail (from Cape Town) and 4d surface mail. Both covers are from the last despatch before decimalisation in Feb 1971.



Correct air mail rate, 3rd Feb 1971.



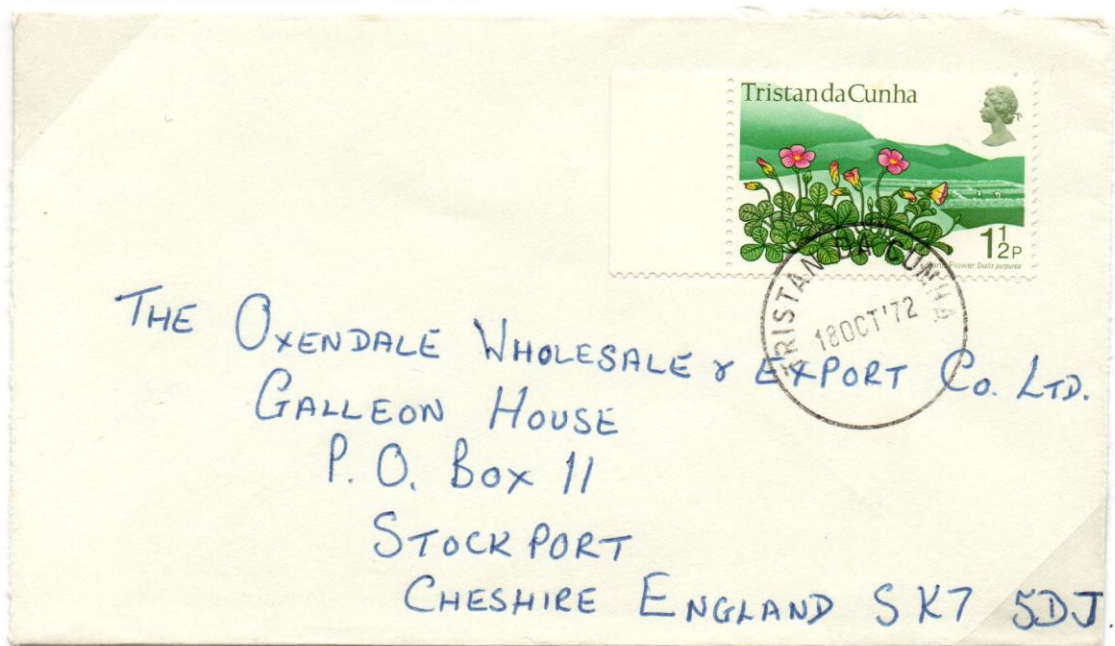
Surface mail cover from Mrs Sylvia Green, 3rd Feb 1971.

This mail was taken to Cape Town by M.F.V. Tristania which left on 4th Feb 1971.

TRISTAN DA CUNHA

A Chance Encounter

Mrs Sylvia Green was the aunt of the lady I stayed with on Tristan. My host and I paid her a surprise visit. She was amazed that I had treasured an envelope she had posted 35 years and 5 days previously. This photograph shows her holding the previous page in this display.



The cover above is also from Sylvia Green and had featured in my displays for some years.

Contact with Sylvia & Benny Green continued after the visit and some covers with important markings are in this collection. Irene & I visited them again on Christmas Day 2011.