

St. Helena Through the Eyes of Its Two Surveyors - Surveyor-General George Whalley Melliss and his His SON Surveyor John Charles Melliss

John Brock (Australia)

Key words: History; Keyword 1; Keyword 2; Keyword 3

SUMMARY

St. Helena Through the Eyes of Two of Its Surveyors:

Surveyor-General George Whalley & Son Surveyor John Charles Melliss!

By John F. Brock

Keywords: St. Helena Surveyors George Whalley and son John Charles Melliss, St. Helena

History, two books on St. Helena, George's book of photographs (1857); iconic

1875 work on Physical, Historical and Topographical Description of the island

by John, Napoleon's exile and death with an Australian link..

Abstract

It is not too often that the literary work of a land surveyor is commemorated as a major work on the postage stamps of any country. However, the comprehensive publication by its own Surveyor John Charles Melliss titled: "St. Helena: A Physical, Historical and Topographical Description of the Island" was so highly treasured by the inhabitants that it issued a commemorative set of stamps in 1975 for the centenary of this work. What makes this isolated island even more special to surveyors like me is that John's father, George Whalley Melliss was also Surveyor-General, publishing his own work in 1857 called: "Views of St. Helena: Illustrative of its Scenery and Historical Associations From Photographs by Surveyor-General of the Island" in which his

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depictions employ the very new technology of photography only in its infancy at this time of world history.

My paper will give readers a resume of the rich history of this strategically located but remote dot in the Atlantic Ocean as well as introducing you to two of its most renowned residents through their own publications chronicling and portraying the history of the island. Along the way you will also get associated with some of the notable characters who have called St. Helena home whether by force or choice as well as those who just paid a visit while passing through. The many colourful characters who have paid visits (or longer?) to St. Helena are James Cook, Halley (of Halley's Comet fame), William Bligh and his nemesis Fletcher Christian, Arthur Phillip -First Governor of NSW, and Napoleon Bonaparte, who died there in 18 after being exiled to the island in 1815. In more recent times renowned Australian Thomas Kenneally went to the island as reconnaissance for a book he was writing on Australian woman Betsy Balcombe, who became an associate of Napoleon while his neighbour there.

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