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No record has been found listing all the cards produced. Small variations seen in otherwise identical cards such as in the placing of the descriptive text or a number added adjacent to the descriptive text suggests that there was more than just one printing of some of the cards. And perhaps photography costs were kept low by using very similar scenes photographed from slightly different angles.

This exhibit shows Polytechnic cards illustrating various districts of St Helena. Occasional reference is made to Napoleon on the bicentenary of his death on the island 200 years ago in 1821.

Arrival at St Helena

"The ugliest and most dismal rock conceivable... rising like an enormous black wart from the face of the deep"
- Walter Henry, an army surgeon in the party sent to guard Napoleon



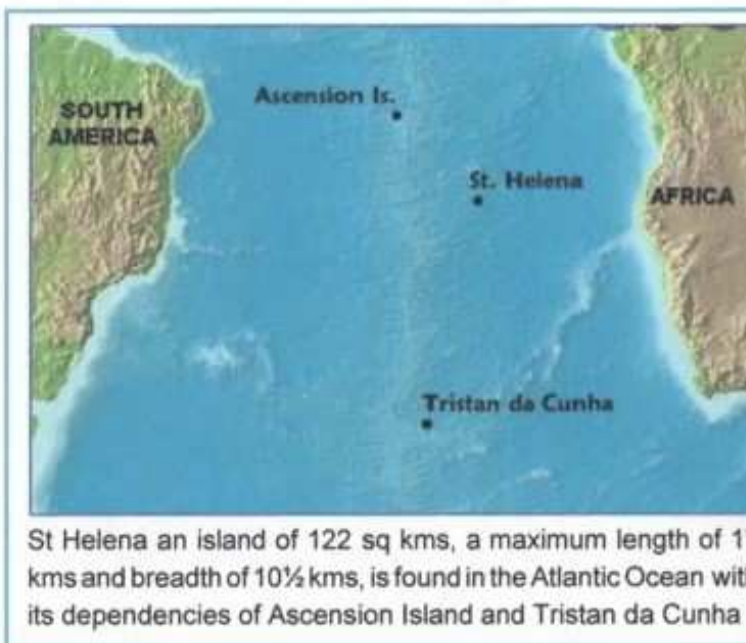
The Anchorage
As the ship slows to a stop the noise of the engine is silenced and in that silence, broken only by the clanging of the anchor as it's dropped into James Bay, the sight of Jamestown, nestled in its valley between two hills lies before the visitor.

Jamestown

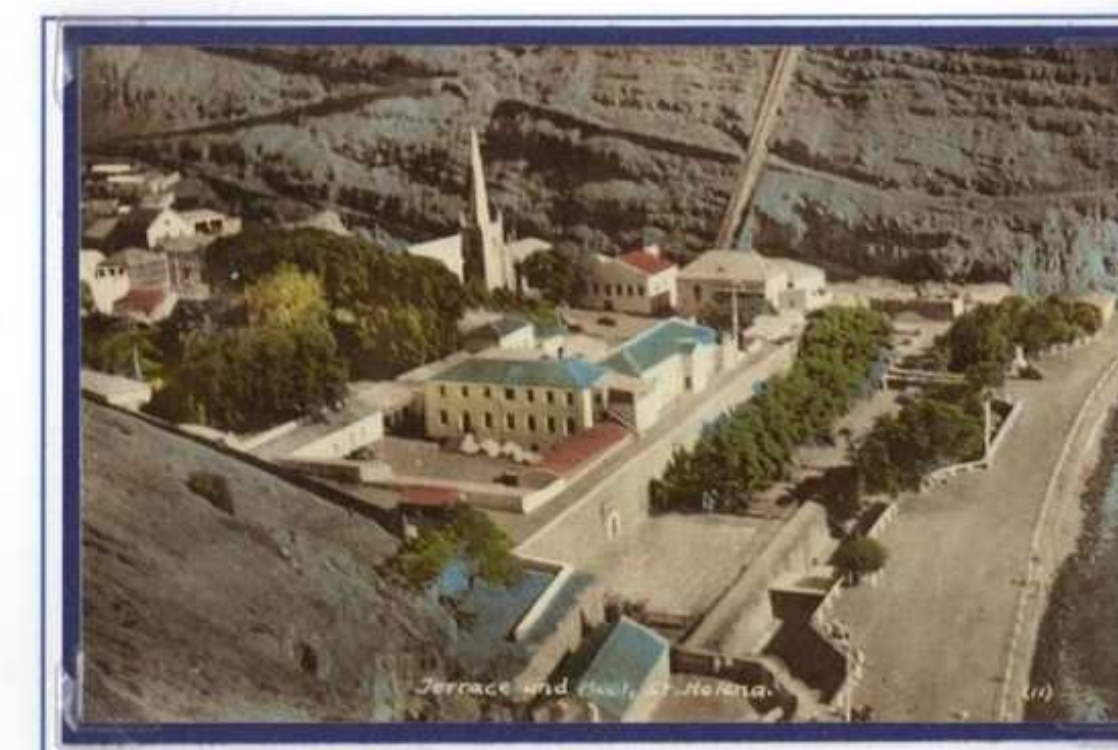


No 8^o - The Sea Front (Card No 5)
Jamestown has no natural harbour. Ships drop anchor in James Bay, shown on this card, and passengers are transferred by lighter to Customs Wharf at the far end of the built up area. There, a walk up a short flight of stairs and the traveller sets foot on St Helena. For anyone arriving by sea, landing on St Helena today in this way is unchanged since Napoleon arrived there on 15 October, 1815.

"In this accursed island... there is neither sun nor moon to be seen for the greatest part of the year. Constant rain and fog. It is worse than Capri."
- Napoleon, 1816



St Helena an island of 122 sq kms, a maximum length of 17 kms and breadth of 10½ kms, is found in the Atlantic Ocean with its dependencies of Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha



No 9^o - Terrace and Moat (Card No 11)
On boat arrival day the terrace on the sea front is crowded with great families. The historic connection to protection against unwanted arrivals in centuries past is evident - the sea front on one side and a moat and town walls on the other. Close to the war memorial (No 8^o) there's a side road that used to be a drawbridge separating the wharf from the town. It's now a road under The Arch and into Grand Parade



Thomas Jackson's Pharmacy, Main Street, Jamestown
The pharmacy of T Jackson is seen located right next to St Helena's Post Office on this real photo card with a divided back produced by an unnamed publisher

Quotes

Quotes reflecting on St Helena or relevant to Napoleon, the bicentenary of whose death was marked on the island on 5 May 2021, are shown in dotted boxes.



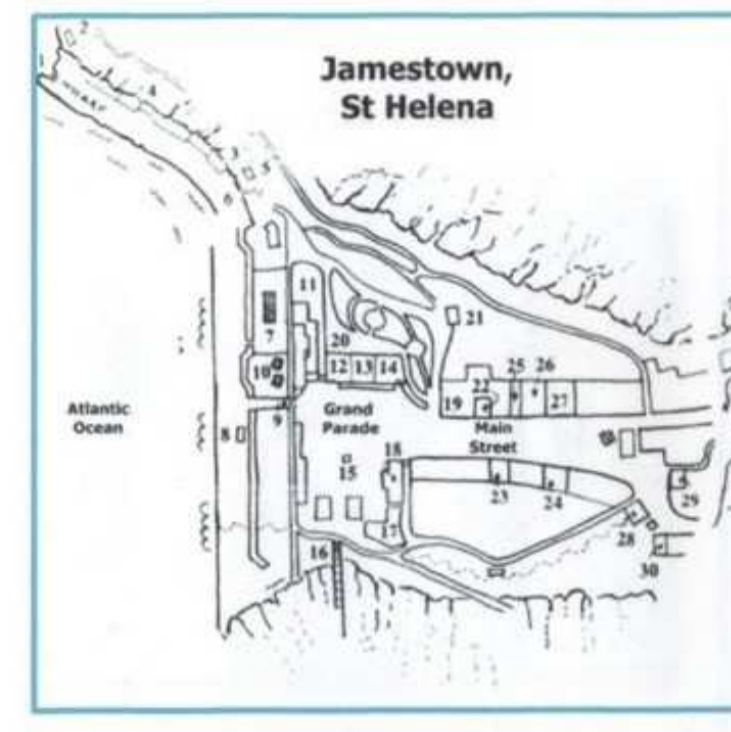
The Quay

St Helena has no dock. Ships weigh anchor in James Bay and passengers and goods are carried from ship to shore by lighter. At the quay, walking up the stairs onto the wharf arrivals follow the same path that passengers and goods have landed on the island for over 500 years since its discovery in 1502 - by sea. That is, until the airport opened in 2017. Until then St Helena was one of the few places on earth of which it could be said that everything in the country had arrived across the ocean.



No 15^o - Grand Parade

For years this area served as a parade ground for the military but today its main use during the day is as a car park. It is surrounded by The Castle, the Court House, the country's library, St James' Church and HM Prison.



Reference point on the town plan diagram above



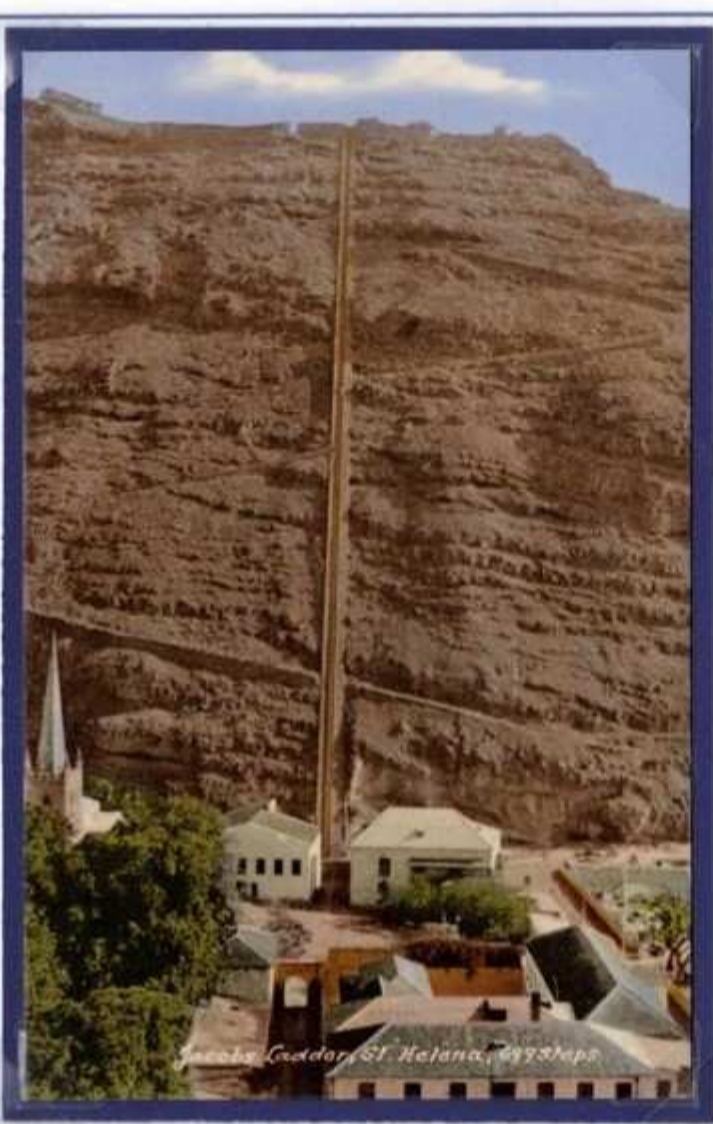
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The original castle, constructed in 1659, was replaced in 1708 and again in 1867 due to termite damage. Early Governors of St Helena both lived and worked within The Castle but today they live in the countryside 5½ kms away at Plantation House and The Castle is the seat of government for St Helena and its dependencies, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha.

References
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Discussions with Marlene, daughter of Mabel, and Colin Yon

Plan
1. Pages 2 to 5 - Jamestown
2. Page 6 - Sandy Bay
3. Page 7 - Longwood
4. Page 8 - St Paul's
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Jamestown



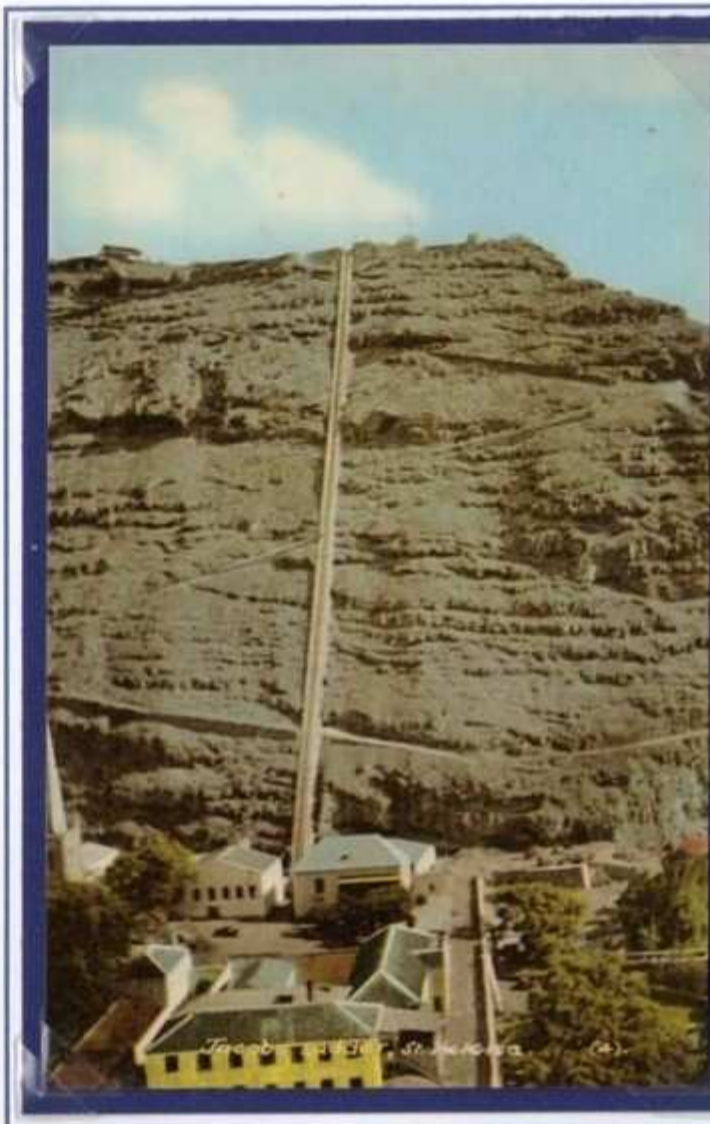
Jacob's Ladder was built in 1871, but until then...
"It is a saying with the seamen here, a man has his choice, whether he will break his heart going up, or his neck coming down."
- Sir Thomas Herbert, Some Years Travaille, 1634

Card Data

On this page both the Jacob's Ladder and Main Street cards show the same subject but with distinct differences both in the presentation of the subject and in the text

Jacob's Ladder

This ladder of 699 steps is the remains of a funicular system opened in 1821 to take produce from the gardens of Jamestown to the farmers at the top of the ladder and farm produce down to the town. Officially known as the "Inclined Plane" a capstan bar and ropes worked by mules at the top saw one car going up one side of the stair case whilst simultaneously a 2nd car was going down the other side. When the funicular was decommissioned in 1871 the staircase was constructed by building steps between the two sides. Today it remains the most direct way to travel between the town and Ladder Hill Fort



Numbered card (Card No 4)

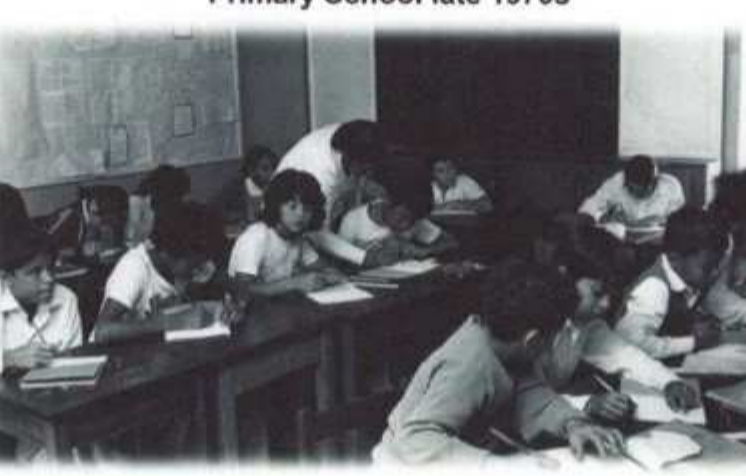


Jamestown looking north

Jamestown is built in a narrow enclave, James Valley, sandwiched between steep cliffs limiting habitation for its 900 residents to the long, thin and densely populated valley floor. The town has some magnificent examples of Georgian architecture, much of it looking as it did when built in that era

"Its appearance from the sea is very unpromising - inaccessible rocks and stupendous crags frowning from every side, but once you ascend Ladder Hill, everything changes, and all seems enchantment, fruitful valleys, cultivated hills and diversified scenery of every description."
- Eliza Fay, Letter, 1817 (during Napoleon's incarceration)

Primary School late 1970s



Pilling School and Moores Flats (Card No 20)
Pilling Primary School caters from Nursery to 11 years of age when children move on to the island's only secondary school, Prince Andrew School, on Francis Plain. Children get to school by bus from the outlying areas in the catchment. Those living in Jamestown walk. Moores Flats were the 1st multi storey living accommodation units built in the country



Main Street

A similar scene but from a slightly different angle

"Through the town gate, cars stand guard on the Grand Parade where once soldiers stood to attention. Then Topdown morphs into a film set, a wide street lined by beautifully preserved Georgian houses. You can almost picture the doors opening for 18th-century ladies in their finery."
- The Independent, 28 Sept 2015



Text 68 mins long

Text 66 mins long



Lower Jamestown (Card No 16)

This is the administrative and commercial centre of the country. Passing through the Arch and looking beyond Grand Parade the eye is drawn to the narrowness of Jamestown's Main Street, sloping gently upwards from the ocean, crowded in by brightly coloured Georgian buildings.

Education on St Helena

Education for all has been a part of St Helena history from the start, as this declaration by the East India Company from about 1678 suggests:

"Whereas it hath pleased the Honourable East India Company to have so much regard and respect unto the good and welfare of their island, and all the inhabitants thereof, That they have ordered and appointed a public School to be kept at their own Charge to teach the Children of the said Inhabitants to Read and to instruct them in the Principles and Fundamentals of the Christian Religion, As well the Blacks as the English."



Upper Jamestown

This is a mainly residential part of the town with roads leading to the hinterland and up Ladder Hill Road to Half Tree Hollow, Jamestown's suburb at the top of Ladder Hill. The country's hospital is also located here

Sandy Bay



"The devil shall this rock when he passed from one world to the next"
- Fanny Bertrand (wife of Count Bertrand, member of Napoleon's entourage)

Card Data

On either side the cards of Lot and Sandy Bay show examples of the same scene but with differences in both tint and text alignment



Located in the south east of the island Sandy Bay is one of St Helena's 8 districts.



Lot and Sandy Bay

They are named after the biblical story in which Lot's wife is turned to salt



Longwood Old House looking North (Card No 4)

Napoleon found Longwood a great disappointment. Sited 550 metres above sea level it's high on an arid plateau which is damp most of the year and often blanketed with mist.

"a few dark rooms with low ceilings,"
- the Emperor's Grand Marshal, Count Bertrand, describing Longwood House, finding it "a far cry from the palaces of the Elysee and Tuileries of Napoleon's glory days"

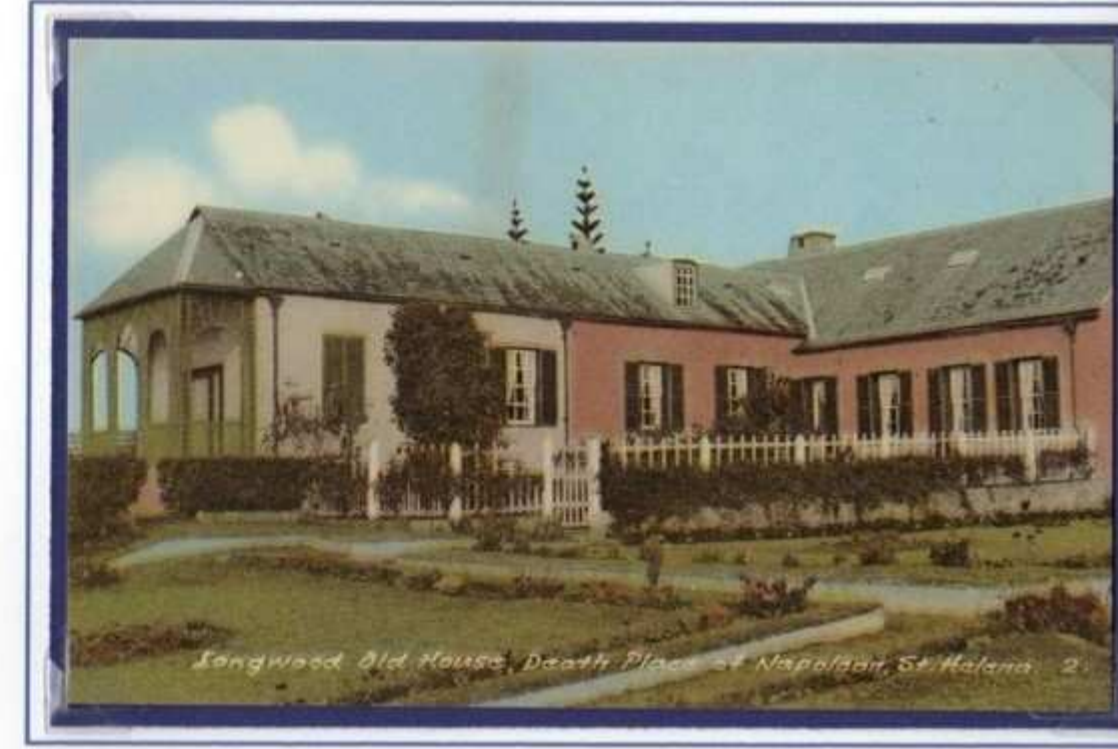
The French flag flies on St Helena

The flag of France flies over Longwood House as it does over 2 other locations in the country. Queen Victoria transferred Longwood Old House, its gardens and the land around Napoleon's tomb in 'Geranium Valley' to France in 1858 for £7,100. In 1959 Dame Mabel Brookes, an Australian, bought The Briars and deeded it to France

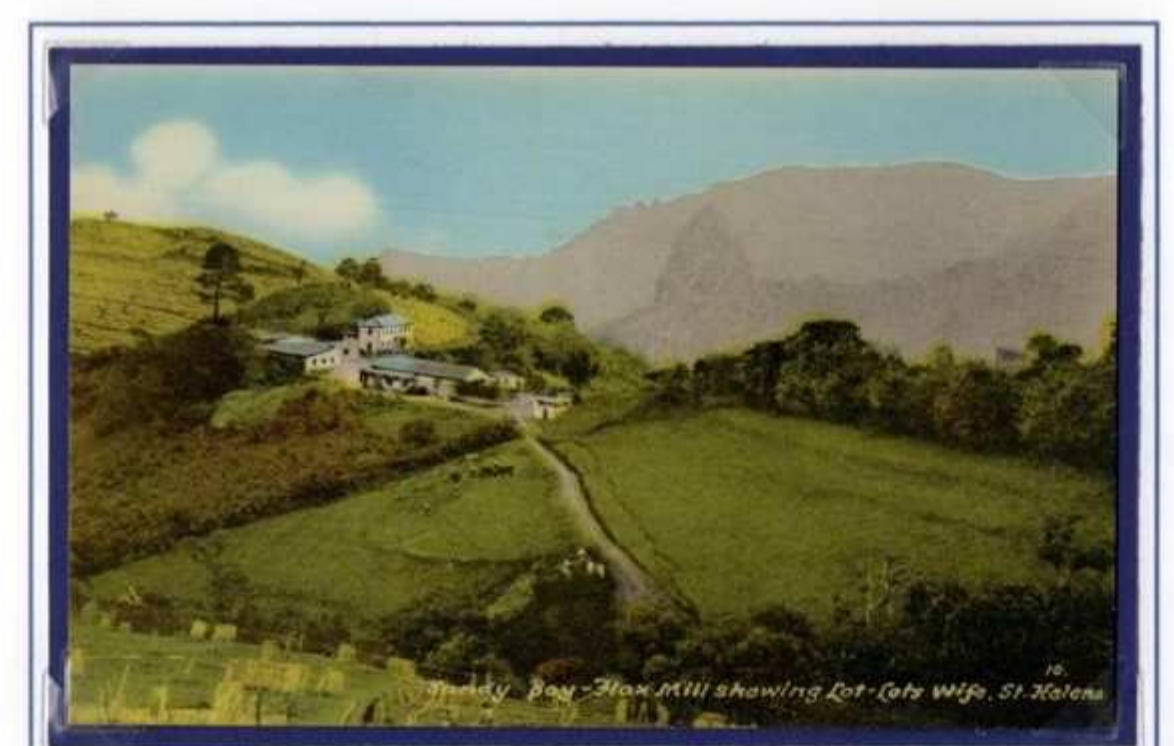
Napoleon's tomb today,



Geranium Valley, Longwood

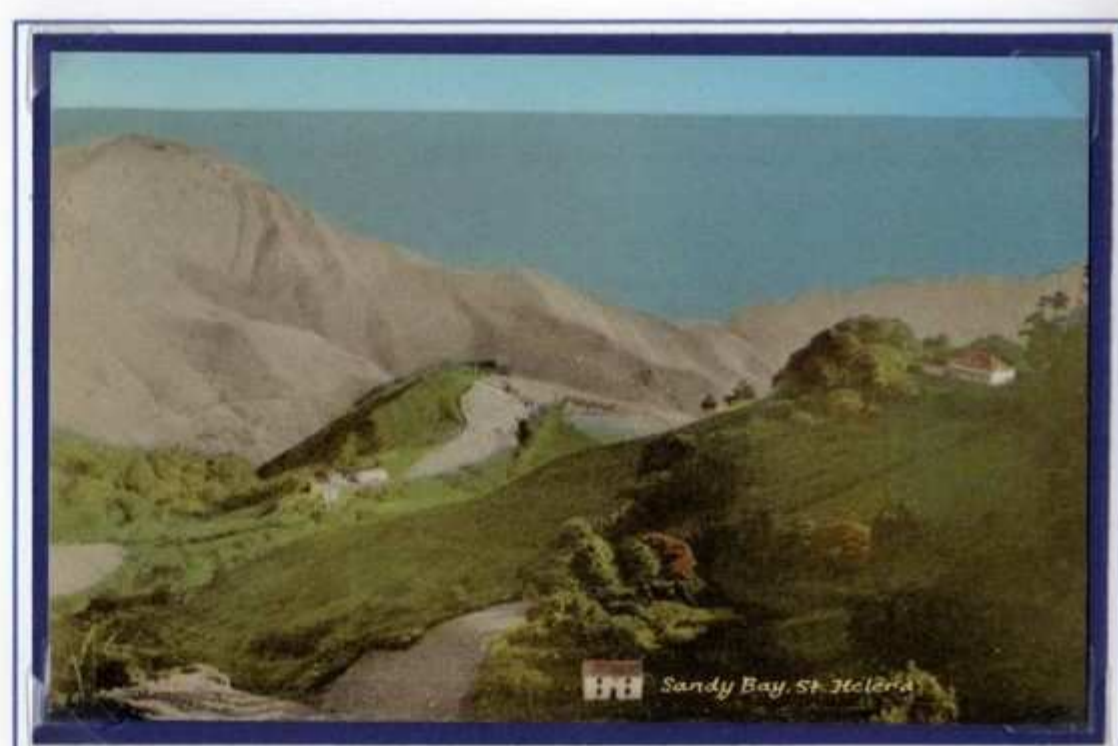


Longwood Old House Death Place of Napoleon (Card No 2)
Contemporary accounts describe Longwood House as a clammy and cheerless place crawling with mould and swathed with cobwebs that his servants camouflaged by hanging fabric on walls and ceilings. And there were the rats scurrying under the floorboards.



The Emperor's last outings

Napoleon visited Sandy Bay on 4 October 1820. There he and his party unpacked their picnic on the lawns of Mt Pleasant, drank champagne and invited the owner of the property, Sir William Doreton, and his family to share the meal they had brought with them. Napoleon struggled on the return journey on his horse and took the offer of a carriage at Huts Gate for the rest of the trip. In this way he returned to Longwood House, never again to leave it.



Sandy Bay

The upper reaches of Sandy Bay district are lush and farmed. Much of the island's coffee is grown here, as are bananas. The lower lying land is arid.



The Gardens, Longwood Old House

Napoleon was allowed to walk in the gardens around the house but if he wanted to go beyond the boundaries of the property he had to be accompanied by a British officer.

Geranium Valley, Longwood



French Consul's Residence, Longwood (Card No 5)
Today France has a consul on St Helena and he has his residence within the grounds of Longwood Old House

St Paul's



"Everything is judged by comparison in this world. The island of Elba, which a year ago was thought disappreciable, is a paradise compared to St Helena. As for this island, it may set all future regret at defiance."
- Napoleon, 1816

Plantation House and Country Church, 1795

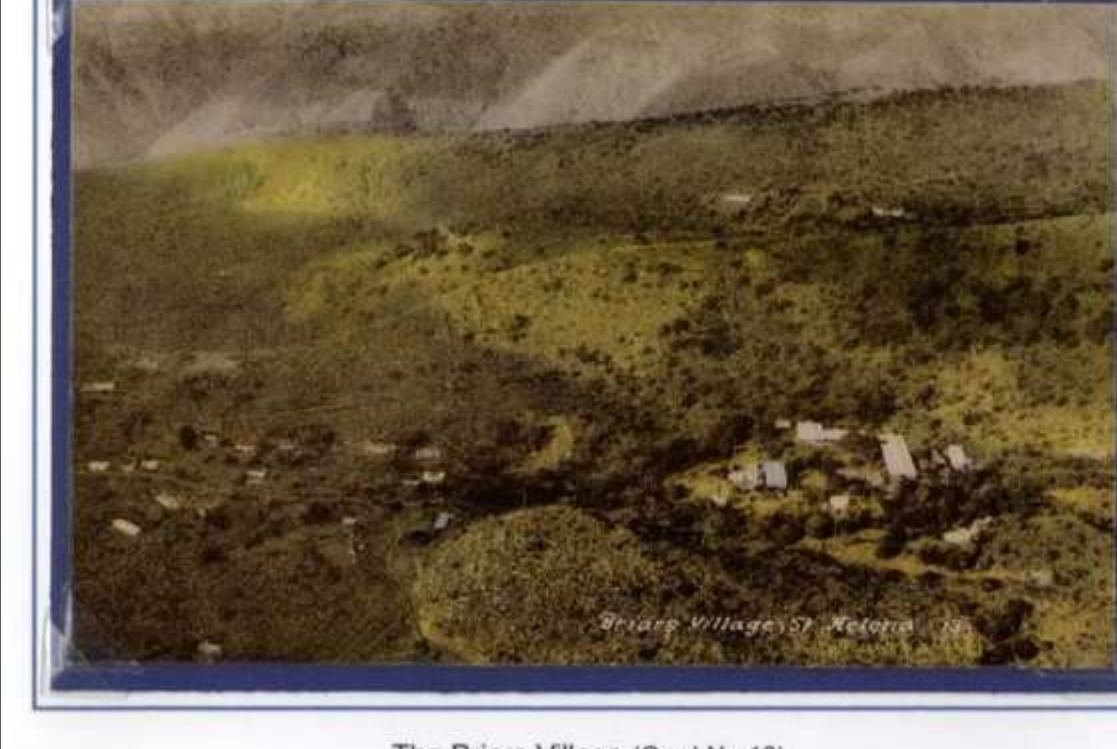


Plantation House with St Paul's on the hill above it



St Paul's Cathedral

The 1st recorded burial at the church was in May 1830, a month before the 1st recorded marriage. In its grounds is buried the last Boer Prisoner of War who died on the island in 1926 after spending 58 years in the country



The Briars Village (Card No 13)

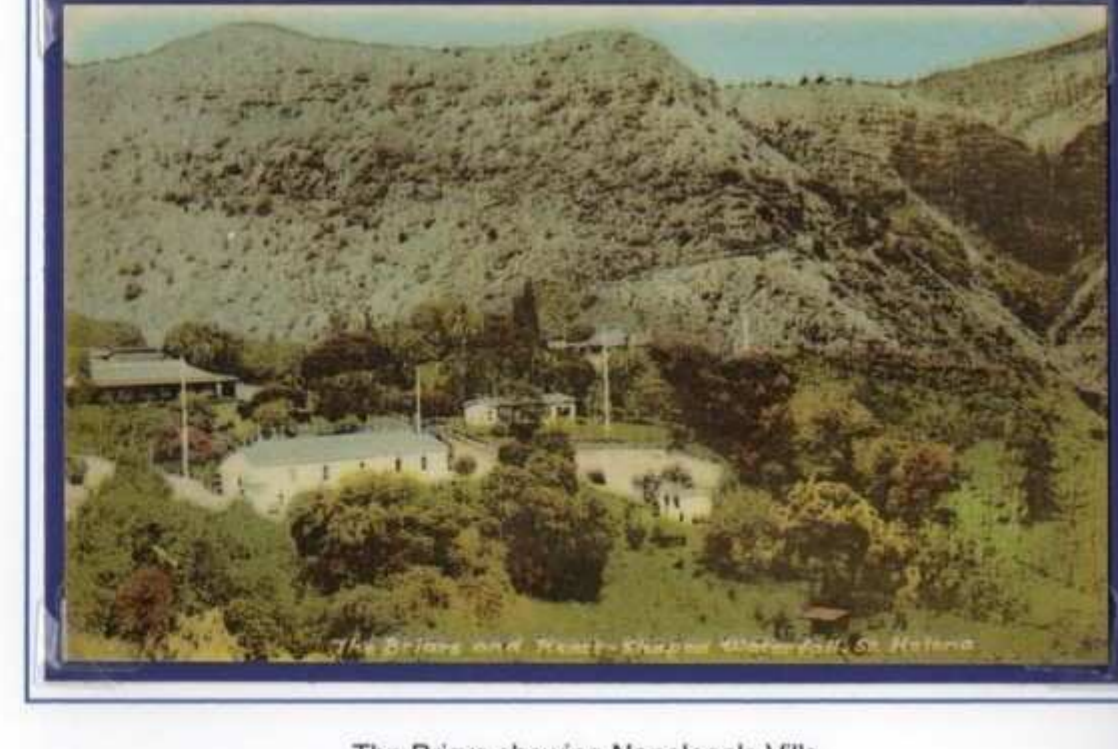
Landing at Jamestown Napoleon spent his 1st night at Porteous House on Main Street. He was unimpressed, astounded at the meagreness of the house. The next day he rode out to visit his future quarters at Longwood. He was unimpressed. He thought its few, dark, low ceilinged rooms unsuitable. On the return to Jamestown he passed through the Briars Village.

"I never left a place with so little regret as I did St Helena. The comforts it affords are few indeed."
- William Hickey, Memoirs, 1749 - 1809

Home for an Emperor, Briars Pavilion, St Helena



The Balcombe family of St Helena who owned The Briars Pavilion resettled in Australia in 1824. In 1846 Alexander Balcombe, a son of William Balcombe, the original owner of The Briars and host to Napoleon during his first days on St Helena, bought a property on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula and renamed it "The Briars" a name by which it is still known today. In 1959 Dame Mabel Brookes, a great granddaughter of William, bought The Briars on St Helena from its then owners and ceded the property to France making it the 3rd place on St Helena where the French flag flies.



The Briars showing Napoleon's Villa
Napoleon was attracted by The Briars and asked whether accommodation could be found for him there rather than at Longwood. The property was owned by the Balcombe family who offered Napoleon the use of the Pavilion. During the 2 months he spent at the Briars Napoleon struck up a friendship with Betsy Balcombe, the 13 year old daughter of the owners.



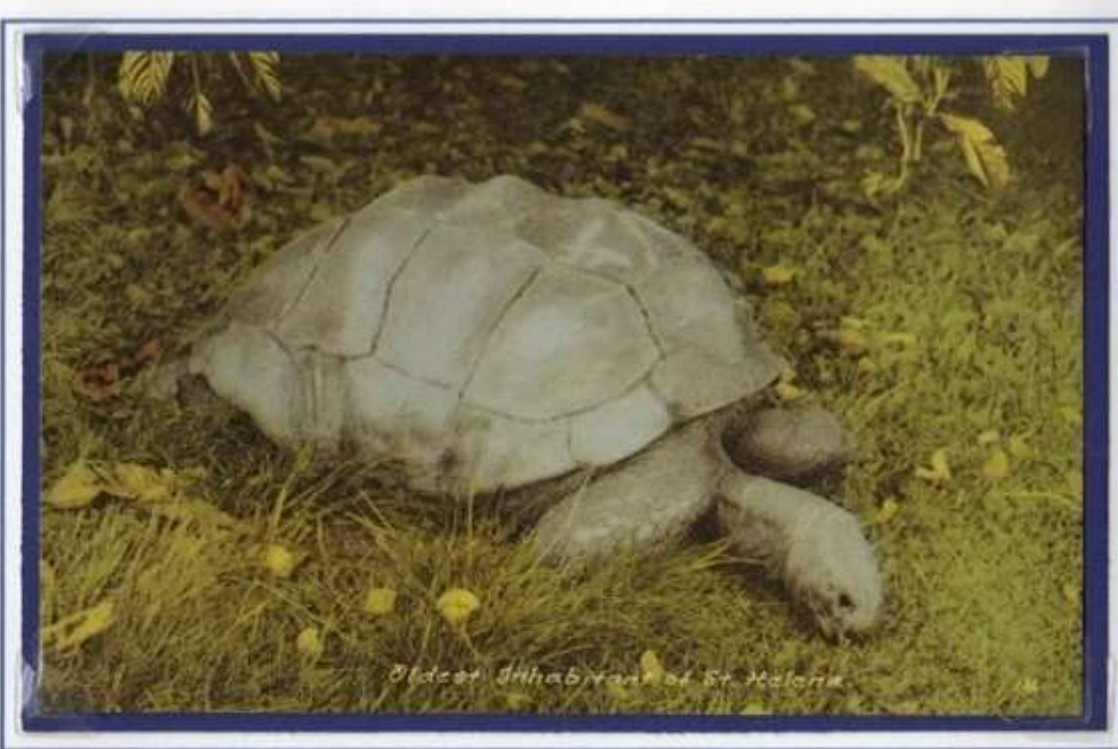
Why is St. Paul's not St James the cathedral?

As to the Cathedral, it was because it was the generally expressed wish of the inhabitants that the Country Church should be made so, that it was named. My view would have been to have made St. James', but I yielded to a general wish - Bishop Gray, 1866

Plantation House today

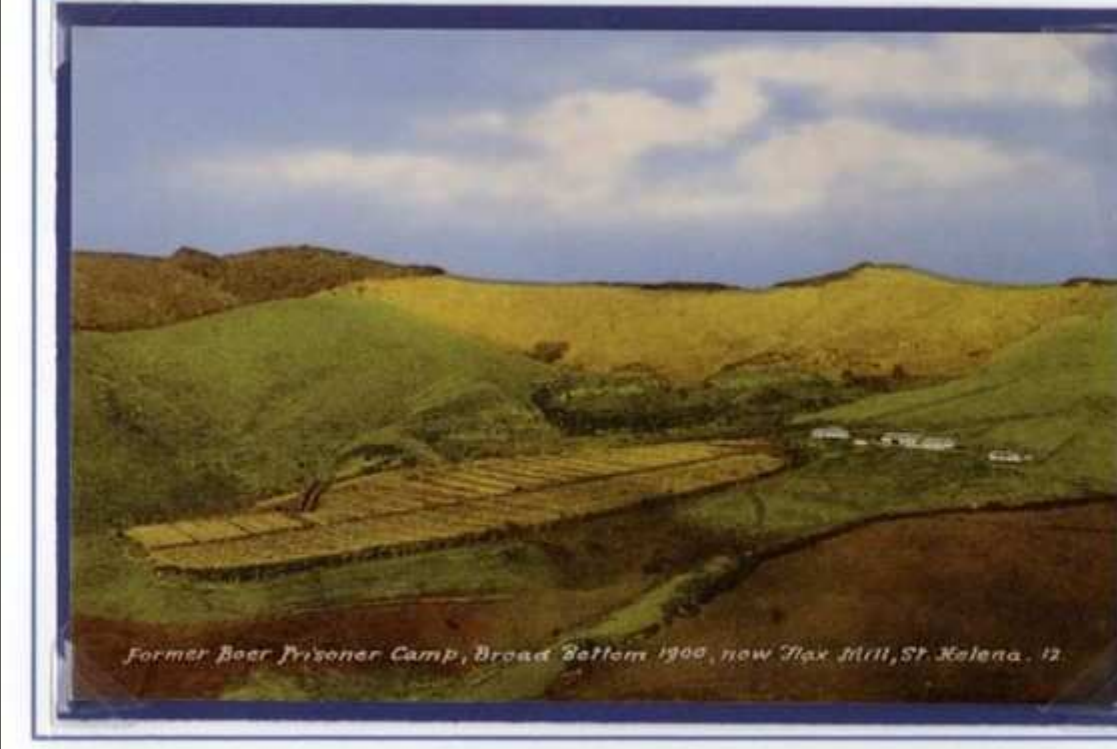


Plantation House, Residence of the Governor of St Helena
Early Governors of St Helena lived and worked at The Castle. The area known as 'The Plantation' was then a farm. The 5½ km road from The Castle to The Plantation was the first road built out of Jamestown, in the 1670s. Plantation House was built in 1791/2.



Jonathan (Card No 14)

Jonathan is one of several giant tortoises that live in the grounds of Plantation House. Jonathan is the best known as he is the oldest, considered by some to be the oldest living land animal on the planet. It's been estimated that he was born in 1832.



Broad Bottom (Card No 12)

Friction between prisoners from the Transvaal and those from the Orange Free State led to two POW camps being established, one at Deadwood on Longwood Plain and the other at Broad Bottom in Blue Hill district. There prisoners lived in tents or huts made from biscuit tins.

"Someday people will discover St Helena for the splendidly beautiful place it is."
- BBC journalist Frank Gillard, covering the 1947 Royal Visit



Francis Plain (Card No 11)

About 5 kms or a 15 minute drive out of Jamestown, Francis Plain was initially used as grazing land. Today it is the site of Prince Andrew School, the country's secondary school. It is also the country's sports field.



ST HELENA

THE POLYTECHNIC POSTCARDS



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Before the Polytechnic



THE POST OFFICE, ST. HELENA.

Thomas Jackson's Pharmacy, Main Street, Jamestown

The pharmacy of T Jackson is seen located right next to St Helena's Post Office on this real photo card with a divided back produced by an unnamed publisher

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The Anchorage

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The Quay

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Sea Front, St Helena.

No 8* - The Sea Front (Card No 5)

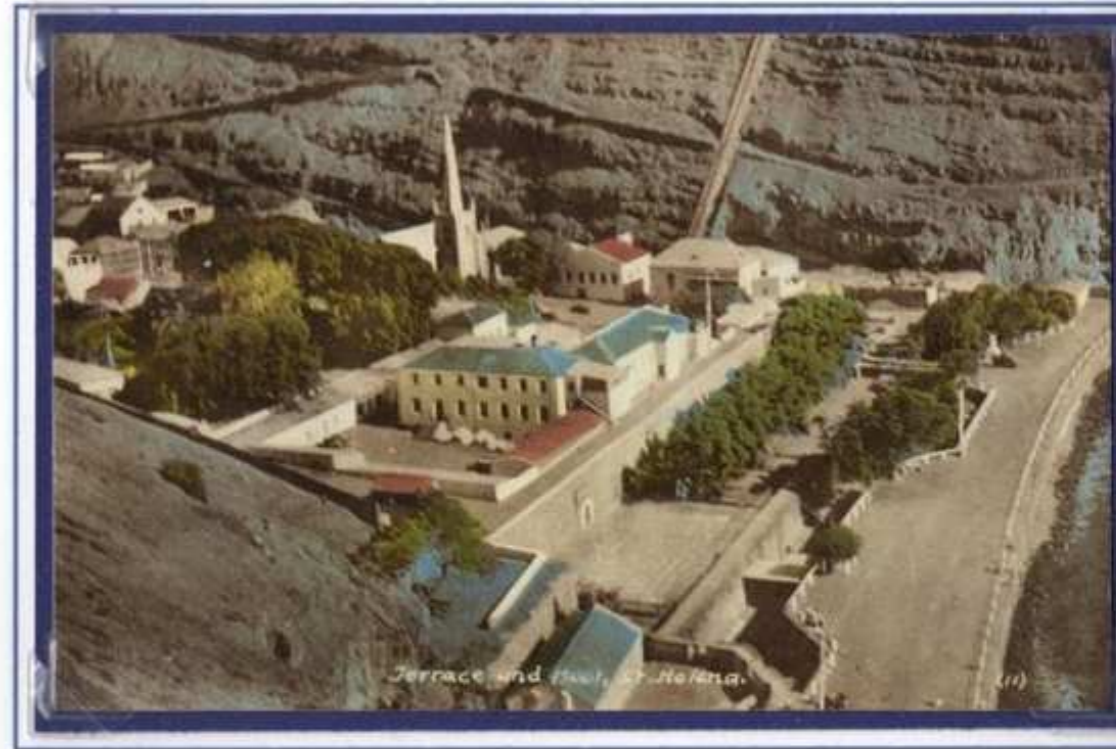
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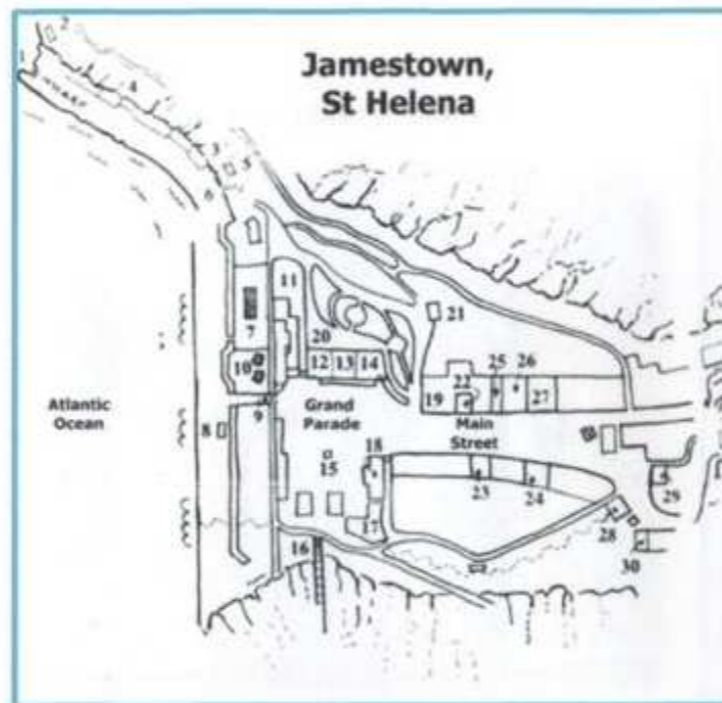
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Grand Parade, Jamestown, St Helena

No 15* - Grand Parade

For years this area served as a parade ground for the military but today its main use during the day is as a car park. It is surrounded by The Castle, the Court House, the country's library, St James' Church and HM Prison.



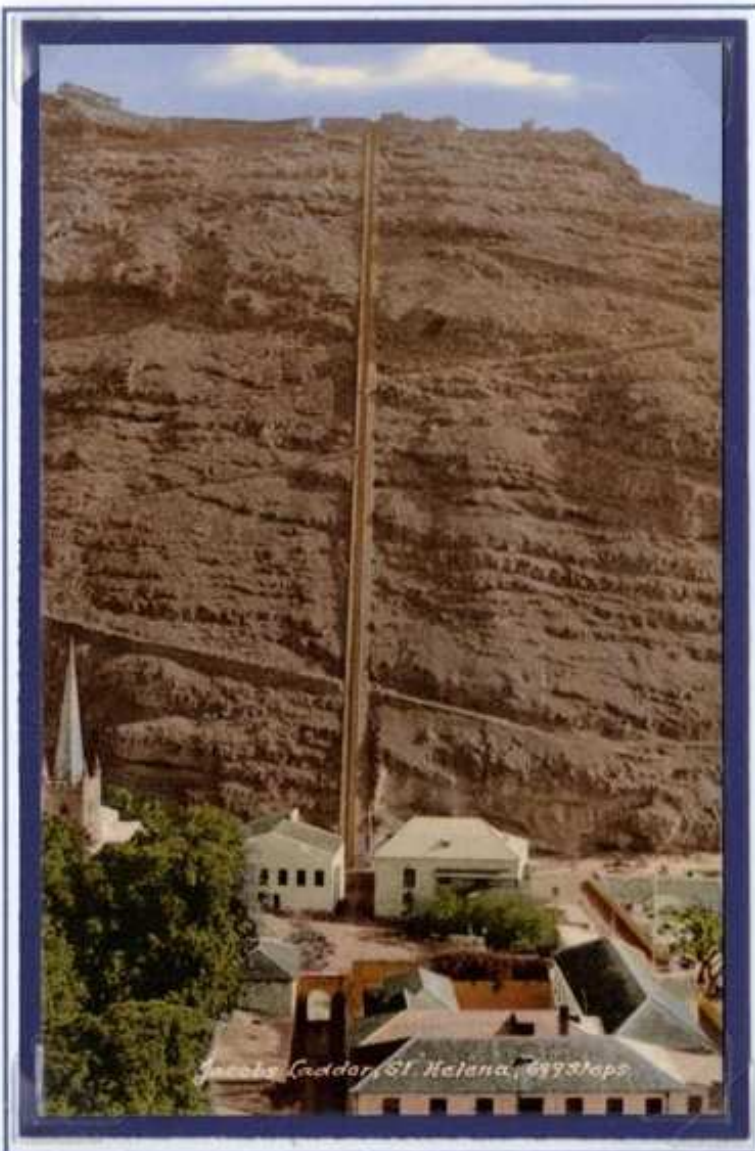
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Entrance to the Castle, St Helena

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Unnumbered card

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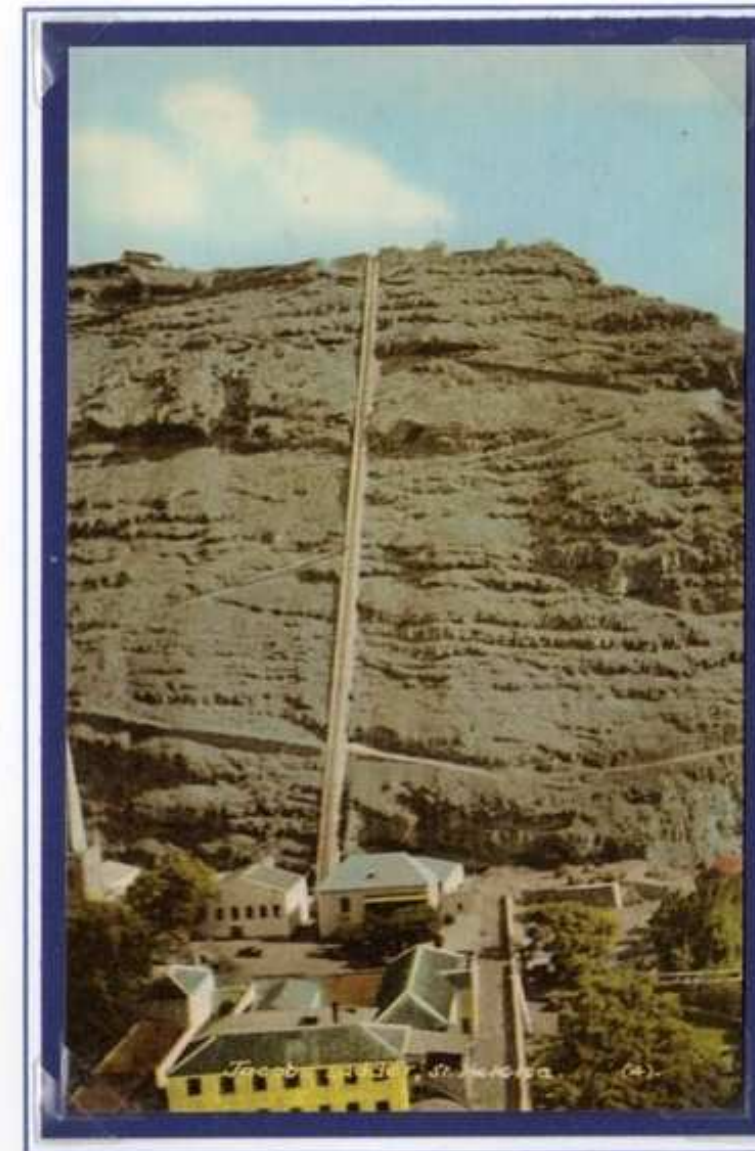
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This ladder of 699 steps is the remains of a funicular system opened in 1821 to take manure from the gardens of Jamestown to the farmers at the top of the ladder and farm produce down to the town. Officially known as the "Inclined Plane" a capstan bar and ropes worked by mules at the top saw one car going up one side of the stair case whilst simultaneously a 2nd car was going down the other side.

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Today it remains the most direct way to travel between the town and Ladder Hill Fort



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Text 58 mms long

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A similar scene but from a slightly different angle

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Jamestown looking north

Jamestown is built in a narrow enclave, James Valley, sandwiched between steep cliffs limiting habitation for its 900 residents to the long, thin and densely populated valley floor. The town has some magnificent examples of Georgian architecture, much of it looking as it did when built in that era

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 - Eliza Fay, Letter, 1817 (during Napoleon's incarceration)



Pilling School and Moores Flats (Card No 20)

Pilling Primary School caters from Nursery to 11 years of age when children move on to the island's only secondary school, Prince Andrew School, on Francis Plain. Children get to school by bus from the outlying areas in the catchment. Those living in Jamestown walk. Moores Flats were the 1st multi storey living accommodation units built in the country



Primary School late 1970s



Lower Jamestown (Card No 16)

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Upper Jamestown

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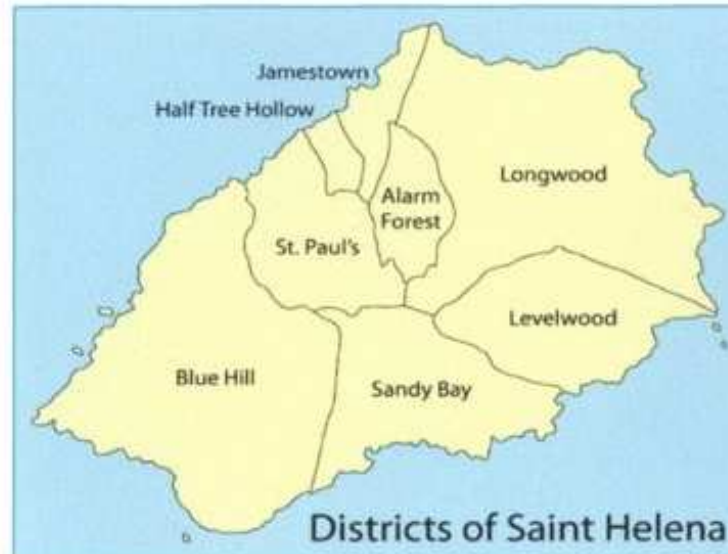


Lot and Sandy Bay
 Lot and Lot's wife are two rock pillars in the Sandy Bay District

"The devil shat this rock when he passed from one world to the next"
 - Fanny Bertrand (wife of Count Bertrand, member of Napoleon's entourage)

Card Data

On either side the cards of "Lot and Sandy Bay" show examples of the same scene but with differences in both tint and text alignment



Located in the south east of the island Sandy Bay is one of St Helena's 8 districts.



Lot and Sandy Bay
 They are named after the biblical story in which Lot's wife is turned to salt



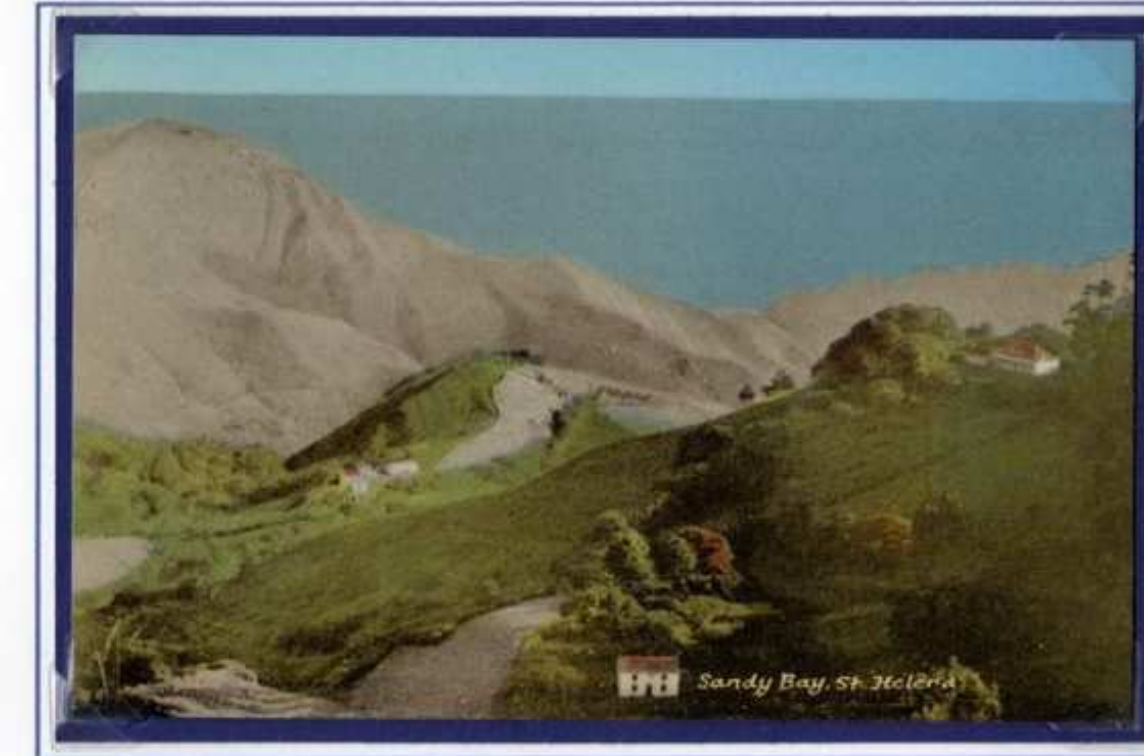
Sandy Bay Flax Mill with Lot and Lot's Wife (Card No 10)

New Zealand flax, used to make rope, was once the mainstay of St Helena's economy. In 1913, a local company, Solomons, opened the island's second mill in the Sandy Bay District at Bamboo Ridge, above. Today the flax industry no longer exists, synthetics having taken over.



The Emperor's last outing

Napoleon visited Sandy Bay on 4 October 1820. There he and his party unpacked their picnic on the lawns of Mt Pleasant, drank champagne and invited the owner of the property, Sir William Doveton, and his family to share the meal they had brought with them. Napoleon struggled on the return journey on his horse and took the offer of a carriage at Hutts Gate for the rest of the trip. In this way he returned to Longwood House, never again to leave it.



Sandy Bay
 The upper reaches of Sandy Bay district are lush and farmed. Much of the island's coffee is grown here, as are bananas. The lower lying land is arid.



Longwood Old House looking North, St. Helena 4

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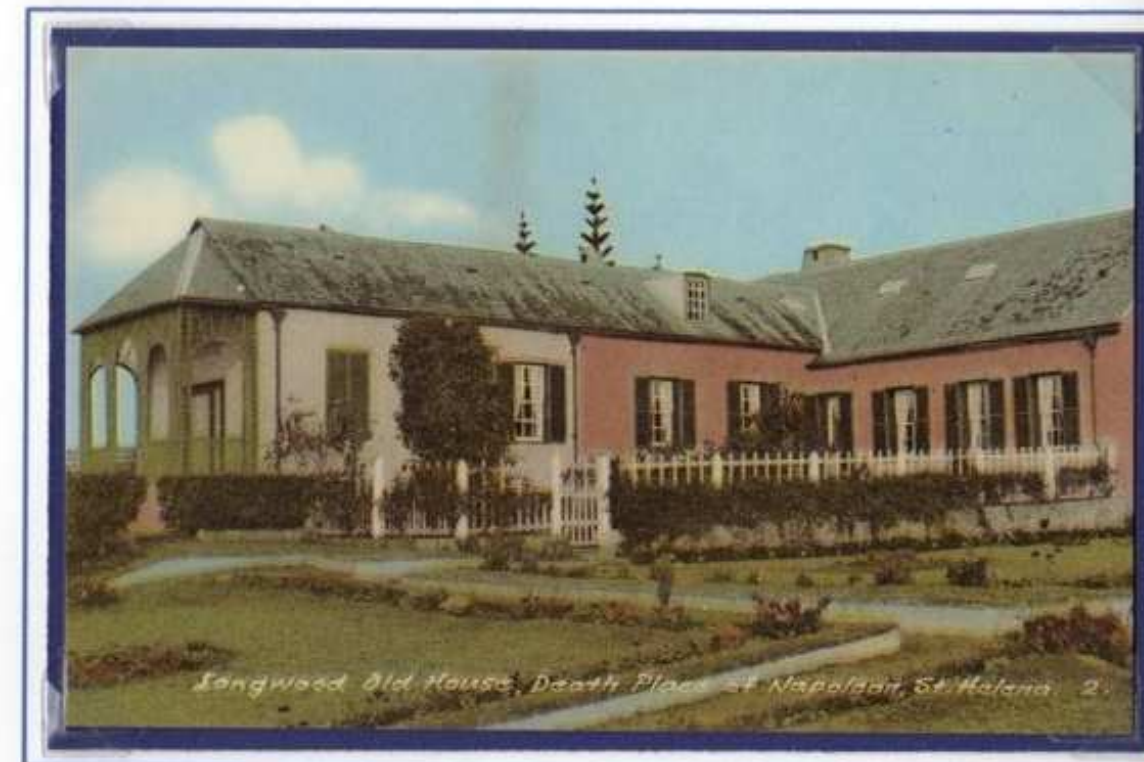
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In 1959 Dame Mabel Brookes, an Australian, bought The Briars and deeded it to France



Longwood Old House, Death Place of Napoleon, St. Helena 2

Longwood Old House Death Place of Napoleon (Card No 2)

Contemporary accounts describe Longwood House as a clammy and cheerless place crawling with mould and swathed with cobwebs that his servants camouflaged by hanging fabric on walls and ceilings. And there were the rats scurrying under the floorboards.



The Gardens, Longwood Old House, St. Helena

The Gardens, Longwood Old House

Napoleon was allowed to walk in the gardens around the house but if he wanted to go beyond the boundaries of the property he had to be accompanied by a British officer.

Napoleon's tomb today,



Geranium Valley, Longwood



Entrance to French Consul's Residence, Longwood, St. Helena 5

French Consul's Residence, Longwood (Card No 5)

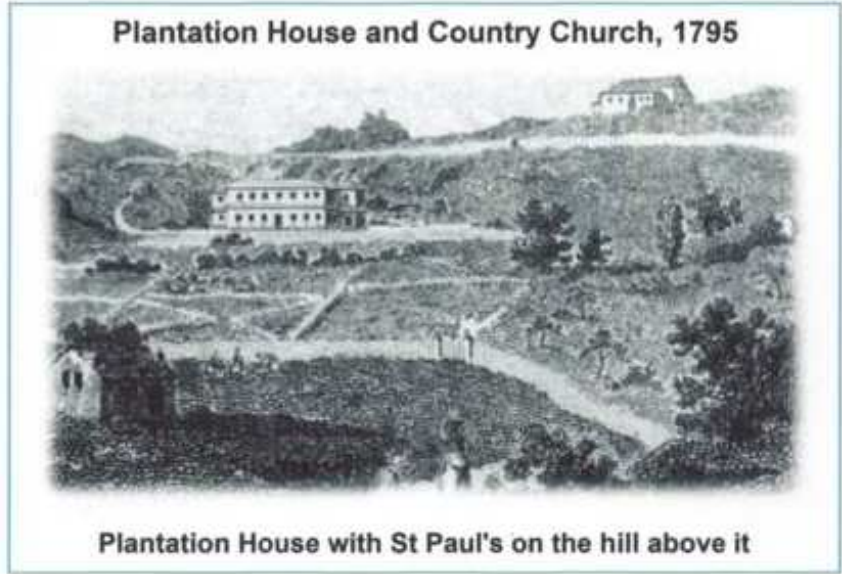
Today France has a consul on St Helena and he has his residence within the grounds of Longwood Old House



St Paul's Cathedral

Built as a church for country folk outside Jamestown and known as "The Country Church", several restorations and rebuildings saw it become, for a while, the cathedral for the diocese of St Helena, Ascension Island, Tristan da Cunha, Rio de Janeiro and the Falkland Islands.

"Everything is judged by comparison in this world. The island of Elba, which a year ago was thought disagreeable, is a paradise compared to St Helena. As for this island, it may set all future regret at defiance."
- Napoleon, 1816



Plantation House with St Paul's on the hill above it



St Paul's Cathedral

The 1st recorded burial at the church was in May 1830, a month before the 1st recorded marriage. In its grounds is buried the last Boer Prisoner of War who died on the island in 1958 after spending 58 years in the country



Plantation House, Residence of the Governor of St Helena

Early Governors of St Helena lived and worked at The Castle. The area known as 'The Plantation' was then a farm. The 5½ km road from The Castle to The Plantation was the first road built out of Jamestown, in the 1670s. Plantation House was built in 1791/2.

Why is St. Paul's not St James the cathedral?
As to the Cathedral: It was because it was the generally expressed wish of the habitants that the Country Church should be made so, that it was named. My view would have been to have made St. James'; but I yielded to a general wish
- Bishop Gray, 1866



Plantation House today



Jonathon (Card No 14)

Jonathan is one of several giant tortoises that live in the grounds of Plantation House. Jonathan is the best known as he is the oldest, considered by some to be the oldest living land animal on the planet. It's been estimated that he was born in 1832.



The Briars Village (Card No 13)

Landing at Jamestown Napoleon spent his 1st night at Porteous House on Main Street. He was unimpressed, astounded at the meagreness of the house. The next day he rode out to visit his future quarters at Longwood. He was unimpressed. He thought its few, dark, low ceilinged rooms unsuitable. On the return to Jamestown he passed through the Briars Village.

"I never left a place with so little regret as I did St Helena. The comforts it affords are few indeed."
 - William Hickey, Memoirs, 1749 - 1809

Home for an Emperor, Briars Pavilion, St Helena

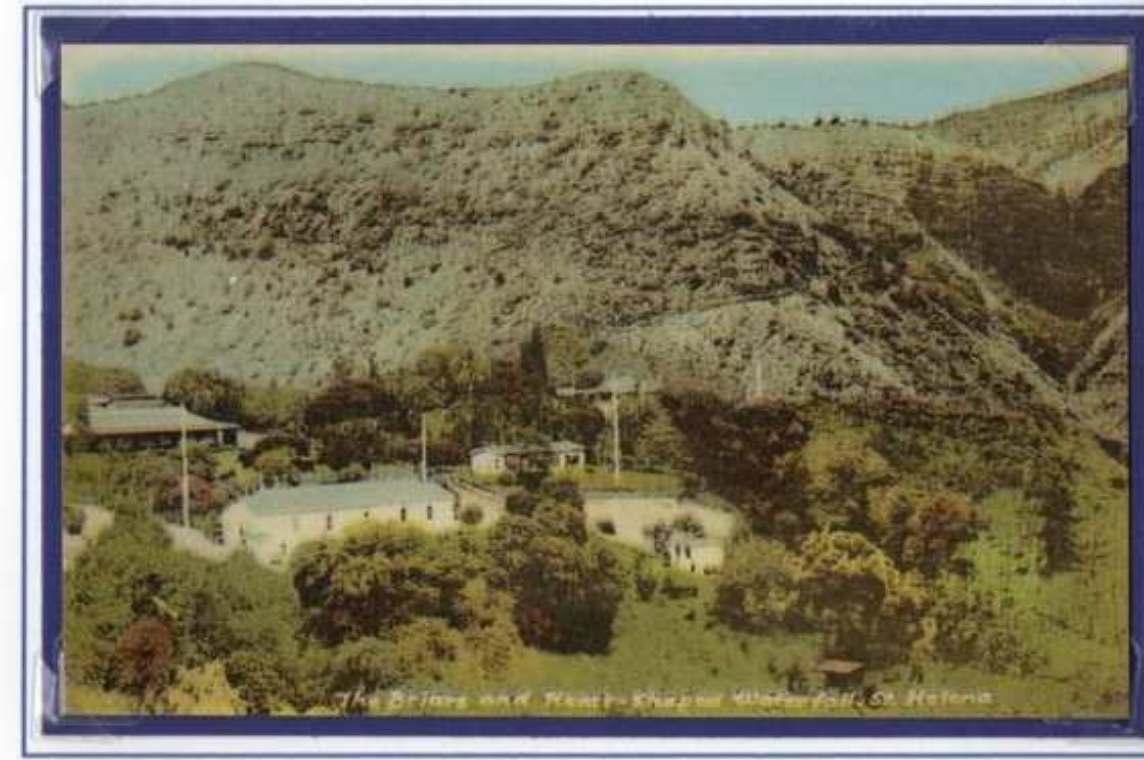


The Australian connection

The Balcombe family of St Helena who owned The Briars Pavilion resettled in Australia in 1824. In 1846 Alexander Balcombe, a son of William Balcombe, the original owner of The Briars and host to Napoleon during his first days on St Helena, bought a property on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula and renamed it "The Briars" a name by which it is still known today.

In 1959 Dame Mabel Brookes, a great granddaughter of William, bought The Briars on St Helena from its then owners and ceded the property to France making it the 3rd place on St Helena where the French flag flies.

"Someday people will discover St Helena for the splendidly beautiful place it is."
 - BBC journalist Frank Gillard, covering the 1947 Royal Visit



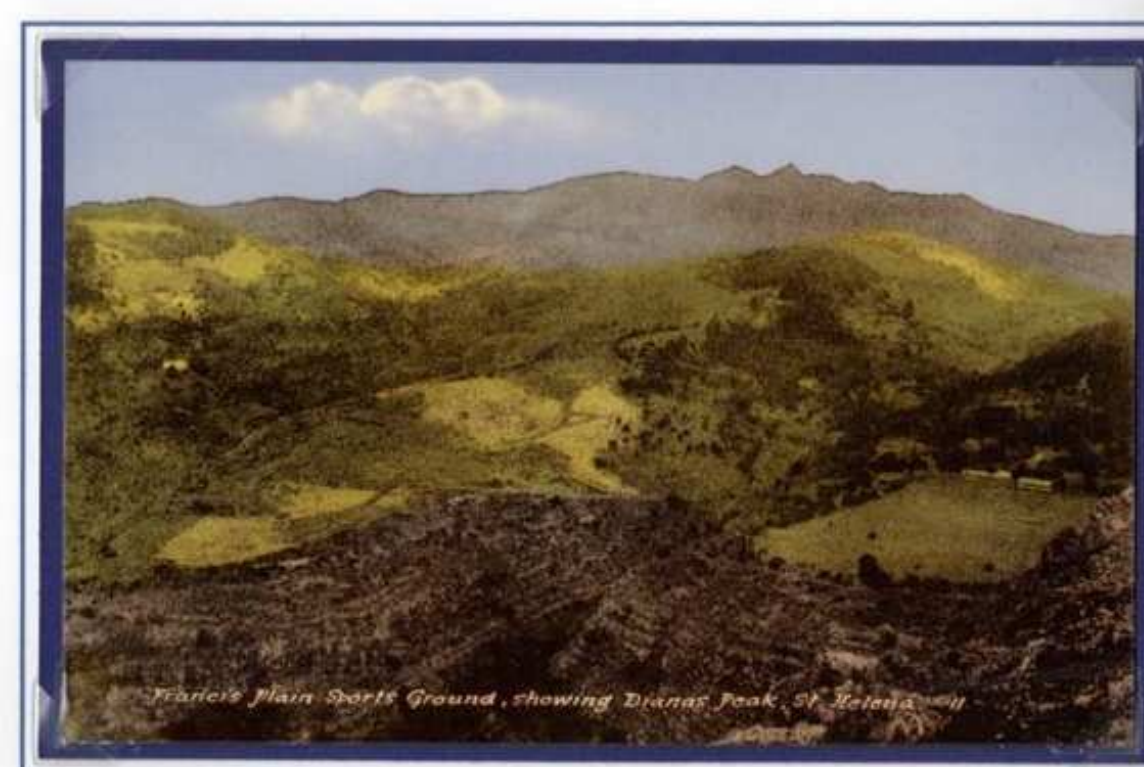
The Briars showing Napoleon's Villa

Napoleon was attracted by The Briars and asked whether accommodation could be found for him there rather than at Longwood. The property was owned by the Balcombe family who offered Napoleon the use of the Pavilion. During the 2 months he spent at the Briars Napoleon struck up a friendship with Betsy Balcombe, the 13 year old daughter of the owners.



Broad Bottom (Card No 12)

Friction between prisoners from the Transvaal and those from the Orange Free State led to two POW camps being established, one at Deadwood on Longwood Plain and the other at Broad Bottom in Blue Hill district. There prisoners lived in tents or huts made from biscuit tins.



Francis Plain (Card No 11)

About 5 kms or a 15 minute drive out of Jamestown, Francis Plain was initially used as grazing land. Today it is the site of Prince Andrew School, the country's secondary school. It is also the country's sports field.