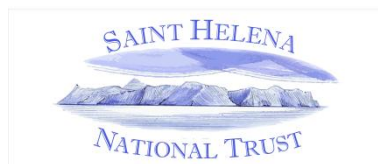


# St Helena National Trust Education Packs

## 1.4 Places of Historic Interest - Pilling School

1. Photo of St Helena Regiment Soldiers
2. Photo of Ladies Playing Croquet
3. About the Photographs
4. St Helena Regiment Notes
5. Extract from Kitching
6. Some rare presentations ..... at lonely St Helena - David Marr



### **St Helena National Trust Education Packs**

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Revised by Chris & Sheila Hillman

The production of this educational pack has been made possible thanks to the generosity of various people's efforts in research and allowing the Trust to use their information or images

## 1. St Helena Regiment Soldiers



c. 1880s Unknown photographer

## 2. Ladies playing Croquet in school playground



Possibly by Jackson or Innes early 1900s

## 3. About the Photographs

### **St Helena Regiment Soldiers, Unknown photographer, c.1880s**

Pilling School grounds used to be parade grounds for the soldiers of the St Helena Regiment. The school buildings used to be barracks. For over 200 years, St Helena was guarded by hundreds of soldiers that would come and go after a few years. In 1842, a regiment arrived that stayed.

The St Helena Regiment soldiers lived in barracks that are now Pilling Primary School.

The British officers and soldiers became a part of Island society. Many soldiers have family connections to these soldiers. When the Regiment was disbanded in 1863, it was decided that once again, soldiers would come and go after 3 years.

Letters in the Guardian show that Saints were dismayed to lose the only Regiment that stayed for 23 years.

Many soldiers and officers married into the island community. Many Saint families are connected to this regiment.

### **Ladies playing Croquet in Pilling School playground, Possibly by Jackson or Innes, early 1900s.**

The Baptist Church dates from 1860s.

## 4. St Helena Regiment Notes

There were in fact two very different St Helena Regiments relating to the different administrations of the island. The first was part of the military forces of the Hon. East India Company, which served as a garrison for the island until it was transferred to the Crown in 1834.

With the presumed dates of the McLaughlin brothers, however, it cannot have been the East India Company regiment in which they served. Instead it must have been the St Helena Regiment formed in 1842, as part of the British army.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 1841/42        | A regiment was recruited in the United Kingdom and called the St Helena Regiment, consisting of five companies, all European. |
| 1 March 1842   | The Regiment was stationed at the Depot at Winchester and Gosport.  |
| 1 May 1842     | Isle of Wight (presumably for training). Embarked from Portsmouth   |
| 4 October 1842 | The Regiment arrived in St Helena.  |

As far as the recruitment of the St Helena Regiment was concerned, with the unit not having any affiliation with a particular part of the United Kingdom, the men could have come from anywhere, and of course, Ireland was an abundant source of recruits in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The only McLaughlin amongst the list of recruits, however, was a James McLaughlin, Pte no. 1311/147 who volunteered from 11<sup>th</sup> Regt. on 1 Feb 1842. James McLaughlin "*Died at Sea*" on 12 August 1842 before even reaching St Helena.

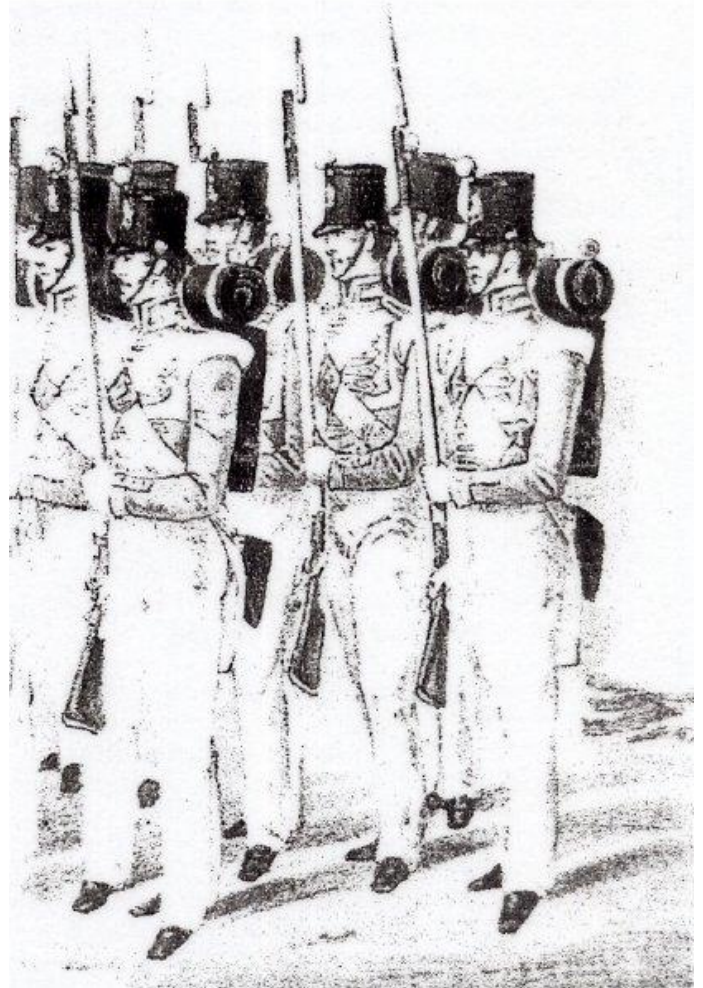
The St Helena Regiment was formed as part of the British army for garrison duty there, and didn't serve anywhere else. The participation of St Helena troops in expeditions elsewhere occurred during the "Company" days, and finally in 1879 when troops involved were British regulars, as the St Helena Regiment had been disbanded by that date - the Regiment in fact disbanded in June 1863.

It is not known what happened to the rank-and-file of the regiment when it was disbanded; they may have either transferred to another regiment, or discharged. The officers were transferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> West India Regiment, but it is unlikely that any of the rank-and-file were similarly posted. On discharge soldiers were entitled to "free passage to England, or to the Cape of Good Hope if desirous of becoming settlers of that Colony". Some undoubtedly decided to settle in St Helena.

### **Uniform of the St Helena Regiment**

The Regiment wore ordinary infantry uniform. The photograph is of the uniform 1840-55 which was probably worn for a while longer by the St Helena Regiment as units in the colonies generally took some time to catch up with new regulations - including the white trousers which were worn aboard (and at home in the summer), a red jacket with collar and cuffs in the regimental facing colour (buff for the St Helena Regiment), and pipe-clayed leather belts to support the equipment.

The photograph is of a print after the artist, Michael Angelo Hayes, which has been tinted rather than painted in strong colouring, hence the rather washed-out appearance of the red. In reality it was a full, strong red.



# 5. Extract from A Handbook and Gazetteer of the Island of St Helena

G.C.Kitching 1947

## **1. The St Helena Regiment of Infantry.**

### **The St Helena Artillery.**

Both were permanent regular troops of the East India Company's service and saw service at the Cape in 1795 and at Buenos Aires in 1807. Detachments attended the funeral of the Emperor, and shared in carrying the coffin on the last part of its journey. Both Regiments were disbanded in 1836.

## **2. The St Helena Militia which was first raised in 1673.**

In 1802 its designation was changed to that of "Volunteers" to "gratify the feelings of the Members", but a compulsory obligation to serve still existed under the laws of the Colony. The Force was reconstituted under the Crown, and was present at the Exhumation when its band played "solemn dirges". It was finally disbanded in 1874.

## **3. The St Helena Regiment.**

A Regiment of the regular British Army raised exclusively for service in St Helena in 1842, five companies strong. As an inducement to recruits, grants of land were made to the men. The experiment was not a success and the regiment was disbanded in 1863.

## **4. The St Helena Volunteers. See Militia**

Volunteers were first raised under the local Ordinance of 1854. The St Helena Volunteer Sharpshooters were embodied in the Boer War, and in the Great War, the St Helena Volunteer Rifles were raised.

## 6. 'Some rare presentations... at lonely St Helena'

David Marr

Feature Magazine Article

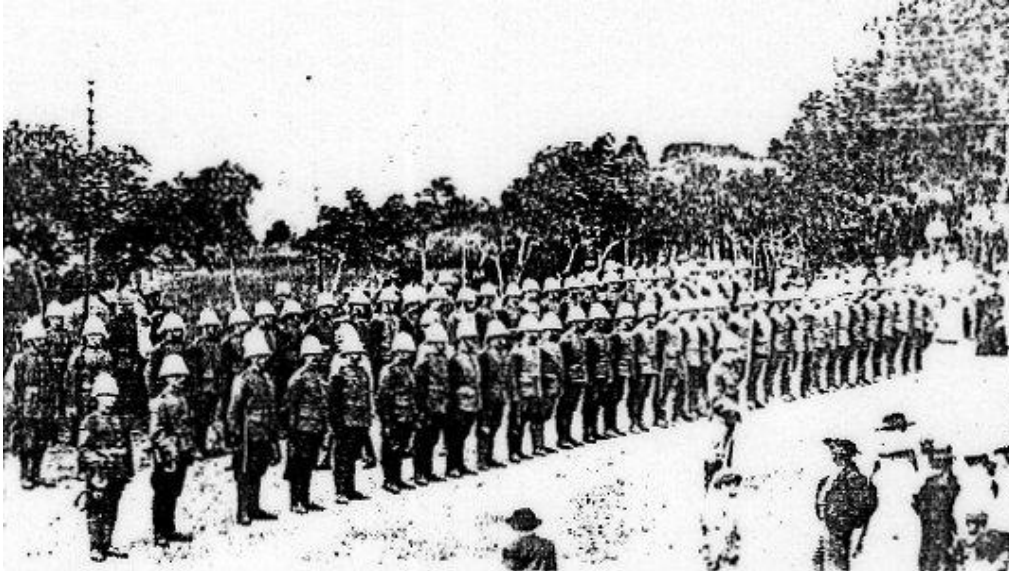
For nearly 300 years, from 1659 to 1945, British soldiers guarded the island fortress of St Helena, "The Gibraltar of the South Atlantic", without getting a single medal! Nevertheless that distant outpost has seen some interesting presentations, made under unusual circumstances, deserving a place in the annals of British military medal history.

St Helena, best known in the western world for Napoleon's brief period of exile between 1815 and 1821, is a rugged 47 square miles of volcanic rock rising almost 2,500 feet in mid-ocean, 1,700 miles from Cape Town and 4,600 from London. Its real importance derived from its role as a vital haven for homeward-bound East Indiamen and as a strategic base for the Royal Navy, enabling Britain to develop her trade and an empire in the East. Indeed, until the end of the 18th century it was her only possession between India and home. Until 1836 this lonely outpost was lavishly maintained by the Honourable East India Company, and garrisoned by its St Helena Regiments of Infantry and Artillery, supported by a local Militia, duly reinforced during the Napoleonic interlude by Royal Navy and Army units. From February 1836, when it came under the Crown, it was manned by detachments of regiments of the line, Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers and other ancillary services, though from 1842 to 1863 it had its own long-forgotten, UK-recruited St Helena Regiment. Nature and military science combined to make the island Britain's most formidable fortress - until 1906 when the garrison was withdrawn under the Haldane Army reforms. Except for wartime and an interwar Royal Marine detachment, it has remained unmanned ever since.

Where medal are concerned St Helena has rarely been considered, even when its people have been in action. In the recent Falklands War, for example, the RMS *St Helena* served as a mine-hunter support ship, but only now are claims being made for medals for the island crew. During the French Wars, in 1795, the St Helena Artillery led the capture of the Cape from the Dutch at the Battle of Muizenburg, and in 1806 the St Helena Corps helped capture Buenos Aires from the Spanish in support of Sir Home Popham's South American escapade, while at sea the island's forces were in action boarding enemy ships, capturing prizes worth millions of pounds. But no medals were ever struck on their account. Still, two local medals, both silver, were struck for civil purposes, one in 1805, known from a photograph reproduced by Dr Phillip Gosse in *St Helena 1502-1939*, to have been awarded to Hamlet, an "*Honest, Diligent, Faithful, Sober*" slave, and the other in 1847, recorded in E.L. Jackson's *St Helena, the Historic Island*, presented to an American seaman, Joseph Roach, for rescuing Florella Seale from one of 19 ships smashed to shivers by the huge waves of the "The Rollers" on February 17, 1846.

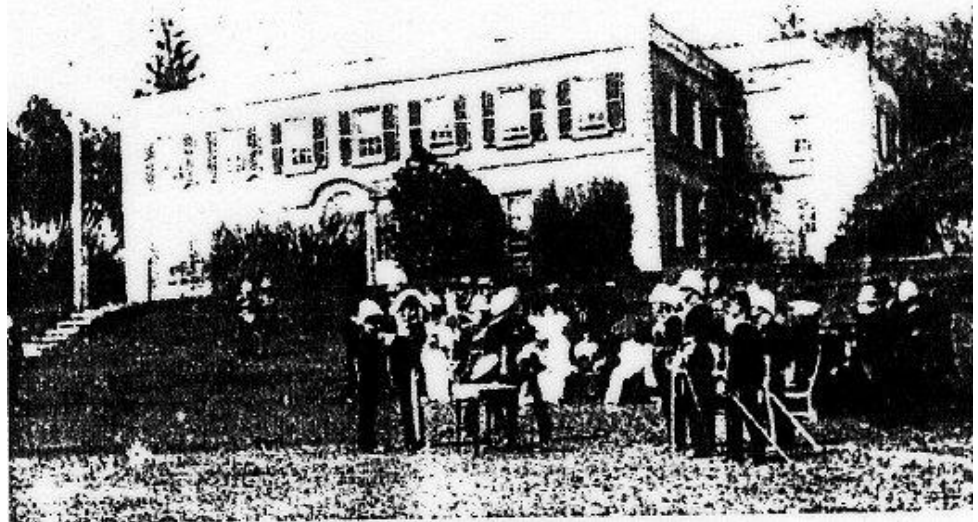
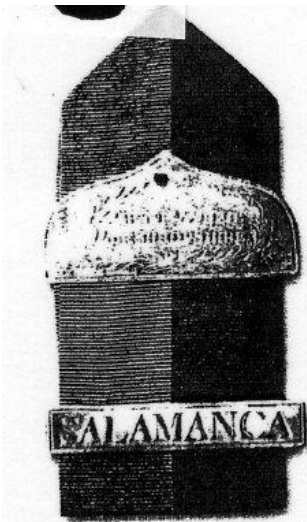
Presentations of campaign medals to men of British regiments serving on the island were made on at least three occasions, however. The first, in 1815, saw the presentation of Peninsula War battle honours to 15 sergeants of the 2nd Battalion, 53<sup>rd</sup> (Shropshire) Regiment. This was authorised by their absent Commanding Officer, Colonel Sir George Abercromby, and carried out at Hutts Gate Camp on October 2<sup>nd</sup> by Colonel Sir George Blinham, the popular commander of the troops guarding Napoleon of whom the 53<sup>rd</sup> were among the first. The 'badge' consisted of a blue and crimson ribbon mounting a silver regimental clasp with recipient's name on the reverse, and bars for the battle honours awarded as can be seen from that presented to Sergeant Thomas Cox for service at Salamanca held by the Shropshire Regiment

Museum at Shrewsbury. In his Regimental order of the day Colonel Blingham stressed that *“these badges...became the property of the sergeants and cannot be taken from them on any account...These marks will remind them during their lives-and after their deaths, their descendants to the latest period of time - of the green actions in which they have been engaged under the first captain of our age....”* Should a holder later be reduced or court marshalled *“he will still wear the distinction, which will remind him of the situation he once enjoyed and .... may once more attain.”* The names of the recipients of this rare distinction, with their many battle honours, are listed in the table of this article.



*Presentation of South African War medals to the 9th RGA attachment at Jamestown, 1902*

The next presentation at St Helena was of Zulu War campaign medals to men of the 91<sup>st</sup> Argyllshire Highlanders in April 1881. It was made by Major-General Sir Frederick Roberts no less, recently knighted and fresh from popular acclaim at home for his victory at Kandahar. He was Commander-in-Chief Bombay, and had been on leave in UK after nearly 30 years Indian Army service, when he was sent post haste to the Cape to be “High Commissioner of South Africa”, to deal with the crisis following the Majuba Hill disaster against the Boers in February. En route he landed at St Helena *“to distribute the South African war medals to the detachment of 91<sup>st</sup> Highlanders who had lately returned from Zululand”*, briefly reported by Mrs Jackson in her history of the island. Captain Mills and his Company of Highlanders may thus have been the first to receive these campaign medals, certainly from “Bobs” whose appointment as “High Commissioner” was short-lived. By the time he reached Natal, peace had been restored with the Boers and he returned at once to England, resuming his command at Bombay in the autumn.



*The Regimental Award for Salamanca to Pte. Cox, now on display with the Regimental Collection in Shrewsbury castle*      *The Governor presenting medals to the 3rd Battalion Manchester Regiment*

The third distribution of medals at St Helena, that of the less prestigious Queen's (later King's) South African Medal after the Boer War, occurred under no less curious circumstances. The island may have been far removed from the seat of war but it became deeply involved in that conflict nevertheless. Between April 1900 and August 1902 it was a virtual prison camp housing nearly 6,000 Boer PoWs - 4,650 on Census day, April 7, 1901 - who thus far out-numbered islanders. They ranged from General Cronje and Commandant Eloff (President Kruger's grandson) down to bemused 16 year-olds. Some lodged in private houses, but most lived in two tented camps at Deadwood Plain and Broadbottom, separating feuding Orange Free Staters from Transvaalers, with troublesome "intransigents" confined in the citadel at High Knoll. To guard them, with the local St Helena Volunteer Sharpshooters only numbering 50 when at full strength, contingents of regular troops were sent from the Cape and UK.

All men serving on St Helena during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) were eligible for the medal, whether or not they had served in South Africa. Those awarded to the local volunteers were inscribed around the rim "*St Helena Vol Shpshts*", while those for men who had served in South Africa were distinguished by a clasp. Recipients of the latter who also served on St Helena came from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions of the Buffs, The Royal Sussex and Wiltshire Regiments, and the 84<sup>th</sup> Company Royal Garrison Artillery. Medals without clasps would have gone to men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions of the Manchester and Middlesex Regiments, the 4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, the 97<sup>th</sup> Company RGA and 43<sup>rd</sup> Company RE, who had all come to the island from UK.

It is impossible to say how many men actually received their medals on the island; however, no mention was made of any presentation in the Colony's *Annual Reports*, for example, despite their significance. However, a photograph in Jackson's *St Helena*, published in 1903, shows that a "*Distribution of medals*" was made by Governor Sterndale, an old Indian Mutiny veteran whose pacific policies towards the Boers had defused a potentially explosive situation. From a report in a surviving copy of *The St Helena Guardian* we know that another "*distribution*" was held by his successor, Lt-Col. H. L. Gallway, CMG, DSO, of the East Lancs Regt, who was himself to receive a unique distinction by being the only person ever knighted at St Helena, when HRH the Duke of Connaught visited the island aboard *HMS Balmoral Castle* in 1910.



Governor Gallway's presentation was made before men of the Manchester Regiment's 3rd Battalion who had not been to the Cape, and shows how such occasions were managed on the island.

The ceremony, on July 10, 1903, was held outside Plantation House, the governor's country residence, *"the scarlet tunics and white helmets of the military making a bright and festive scene such as is not often witnessed at Plantation"* enthused the *Guardian*. The troops on parade, 7 sergeants and 174 rank and file, having marched a tortuous four and a half miles from their tented camp at Deadwood Plain, were drawn up under four of their officers to await the emergence of His Excellency. The official party of military and civil dignitaries, with their honoured guests, having assembled, Colonel Gallway began his inspection at 12:15, after which the troops were reformed into three sides of a square to hear his address. The Governor began by reminding them of the battle honours on their colours, from Egmontop-Zee, Guadaloupe and the Peninsula, to New Zealand, Afghanistan and Egypt, focusing finally on the regiment's service in South Africa at Elandslaagte, Ladysmith, and the memorable defence of Caesar's Camp at the Battle of Wagon Hill, where two VCs had been won. *"It is for you Manchesters who have not had the good fortune to yet earn a medal, when the time comes, to emulate the deeds of those gallant comrades."* He then told the men to remember their regimental motto, *"Ut Veniant Omnes"*, and wished the recipients good luck and a long life.

The *Guardian* report presents the distribution like an anti-climax by merely noting that medals and clasps went to a footman at Plantation House (ex-Private Wright of the Sussex Yeomanry) and to *"several of the Manchester Regiment"*. The troops then gave the Royal Salute and marched back to camp, while the Governor and his guests - 80 were named representing St Helena's great and good from Church and State, garrison and trade, with wives and daughters-retired indoors to be *"regaled to a sumptuous luncheon in relays in the dining room"*.

From the thousands stationed on the island during the war, relatively few seem, therefore, to have received their South Africa Medals there. It would be interesting to hear from any readers who can cast further light on these, or similar exceptions. The evidence most easily traced might relate to men of the St Helena Sharpshooters, some of whose names I have found and give in the appendix below. Members of some leading island families - Deason, Thorpe and others - who left to fight in South Africa would have received the medal with clasp, but where they were presented, and where the medals are now, have yet to be discovered.

## **Acknowledgements**

In compiling this initial account of St Helena's medal history I wish to thank Trevor Hearl for assistance, and Tommy Riordan for his Peninsular War medal research.

<b>Peninsular War Awards 1815: 53rd Regiment NCOs, and battle honours</b>	
Bannister, George	Salamanca, Vittoria, Pyrenees, Nivelles, Toulouse
Brooksbank, William	Salamanca, Toulouse
Cockcroft, Henry	Talavera, Salamanca
Cox, Thomas	Salamanca (medal in Regimental Museum, Shrewbury)
Hartley, William	Salamanca, Vittoria, Pyrenees, Nivelles, Toulouse
Mellor, James	Talavera, Salamanca, Vittoria (Sgt.Maj), Pyrenees, Nivelles, Toulouse
Peel, Abraham	Talavera, Salamanca
Robertson, John	Talavera, Vittoria, Pyrenees
Rushton, Joshua	Talavera, Salamanca (QMS), Vittoria, Pyrenees, Nivelles, Toulouse
Smith, John	Salamanca (later commissioned)
Sutcliffe, Samuel	Talavera, Salamanca, Vittoria, Pyrenees, Nivelles, Toulouse
West, William	Salamanca, Vittoria, Pyrenees, Nivelles, Toulouse
Whitehead, James	Talavera, Salamanca, Vittoria, Pyrenees, Nivelles, Toulouse
Whitely, John	Talavera, Salamanca, Toulouse
Wilton, John	Talavera, Salamanca (Sgt.Maj; later commissioned Bn.Adjt.)

<b>King's South Africa Medal 1902 to the St Helena Volunteer Sharpshooters</b>	
Captains	Privates
Deacon (Deason?), J	Andrews, A.
1/Lt Hands, A.	Benjamin
2/Lt Pegge	Drabble
Col Sgt Adams	Flower, J.
Qms Clayton	Peters, A.
Sgt Adams	Samuel, H.
Sgt Jameson	Swain, J.
Sgt Young	Young, T.
	Yon, W