



ON BRITISH ICE

Antarctic Base Expansion and Expeditions in the 1950s



A presentation to the Royal Philatelic Society of London

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MARCH 11, 2021

On British Ice – British Antarctic Base Expansion and Expeditions in the 1950s



This presentation combines tales of British pluck and daring do in the icy cold wastes of Antarctica, with mentions of Bovril and Huntley and Palmer Golden Puffs.

You will also see a Rolex watch and meet Dick Barton, Special Agent, during the presentation.

We start with a view of probably not the nicest task in the world, being underneath a Trans Antarctic Expedition Snocat wedged in a crevasse attempting to cross the continent in the late 1950s. The Trans Antarctic Expedition forms part of the story later in the presentation

1943-44

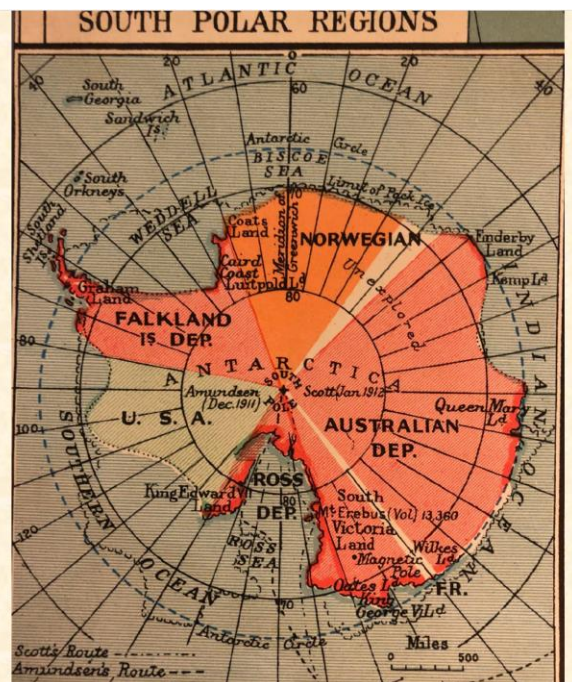
Military concerned over potential use of Falkland Islands and Dependencies for bases and/or refueling

Territorial claims by Argentina and Chile

As war ends also an increased US presence in area

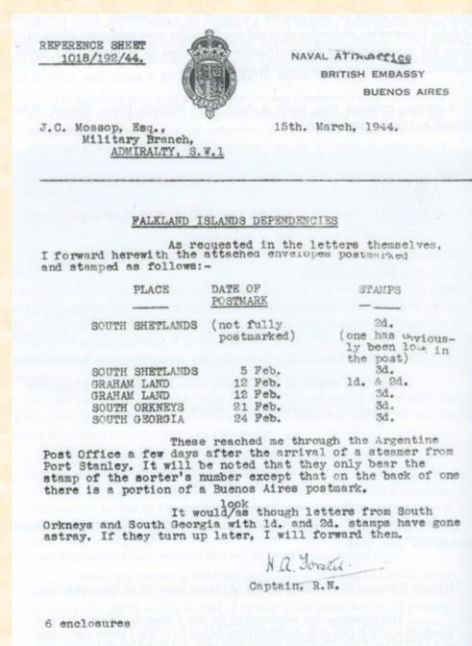
BRITAIN NEEDS TO DEMONSTRATE SOVEREIGNTY

Bases, Mapping, Science, Meteorology AND A POSTAL SERVICE



Britain had generally ignored what was called the Falkland Islands Dependencies through the 1930s. Whaling and the revenue from licencing, had declined as shore stations closed and the Great Depression hit.

As World War II broke out the military was worried about the use of the Falklands or the Dependencies as a coaling and supply base to move between the Pacific and Atlantic. There was a further concern about the undefended and uninhabited Antarctic area becoming subject to Territorial claims from both Argentina and Chile. The US was also active in the area, especially after the end of the War. Britain needed to demonstrate its sovereignty over the area. That could be done with sciences such as cartography and meteorology, but even more important physical bases. If these had a postal service, even better.



REFERENCE SHEET
1018/192/44.

NAVAL ATTACHE
BRITISH EMBASSY
BUENOS AIRES

J.C. Mossop, Esq.,
Military Branch,
ADMIRALTY, S.W.1

15th. March, 1944.

FALKLAND ISLANDS DEPENDENCIES

As requested in the letters themselves, I forward herewith the attached envelopes postmarked and stamped as follows:-

PLACE	DATE OF POSTMARK	STAMPS
SOUTH SHETLANDS (not fully postmarked)		3d. (one has obviously been lost in the post)
SOUTH SHETLANDS	5 Feb.	3d.
GRAHAM LAND	12 Feb.	1d. & 3d.
GRAHAM LAND	12 Feb.	3d.
SOUTH ORKNEYS	21 Feb.	3d.
SOUTH GEORGIA	24 Feb.	3d.

These reached me through the Argentine Post Office a few days after the arrival of a steamer from Port Stanley. It will be noted that they only bear the stamp of the sorter's number except that on the back of one there is a portion of a Buenos Aires postmark.

It would be thought letters from South Orkneys and South Georgia with 1d. and 3d. stamps have gone astray. If they turn up later, I will forward them.

N.A. Mossop
Captain, R.N.


6 enclosures

Operation Tabarin

Establish 3 bases (plus South Georgia)

Issue overprinted Falkland Islands stamps and open Post Offices

"Prove" mail can be sent especially to Argentina and Chile



WAR ECONOMY
OPEN by affixing any other Label
RE-USE with Economy

On His Majesty's S

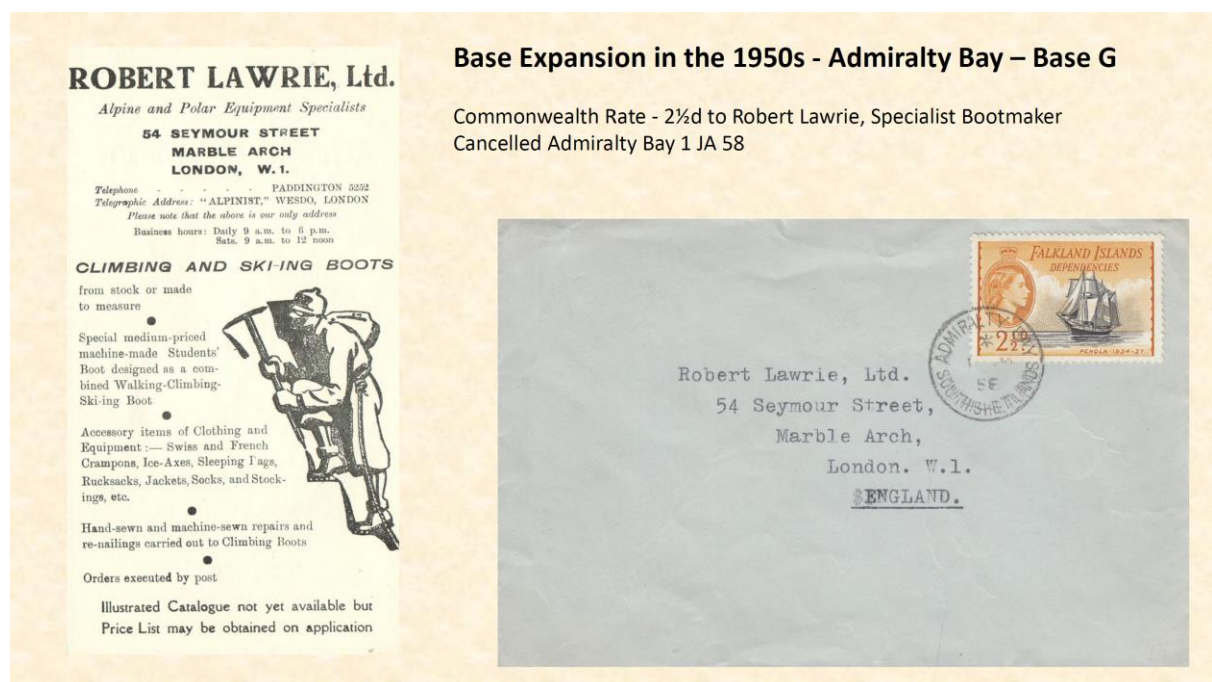
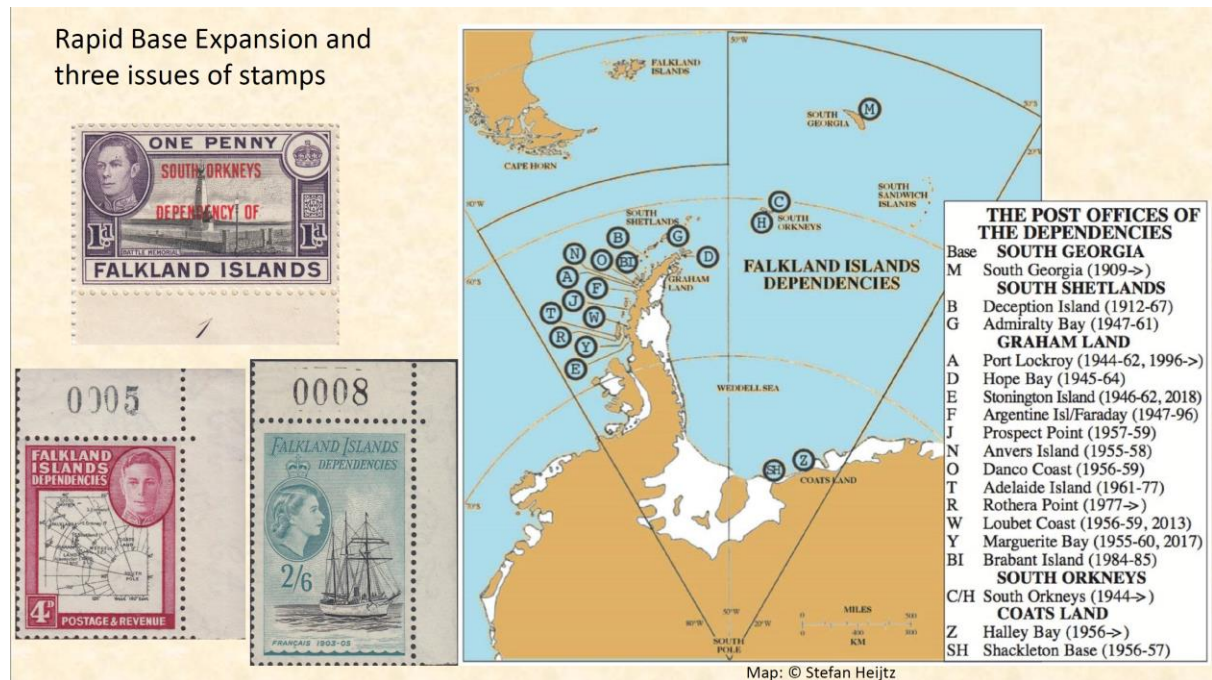
Captain H.A. Forster, R.N.,
Naval Attache,
Edificio Britanico,
Calle Reconquista 314,
Buenos Ayres.

THREE PENCE
SOUTH SHETLANDS
South Shetlands
06 FEB 1944
FALKLAND ISLANDS

This presentation will not say much about Operation Tabarin, partly because it was in the 1940's and partly because it is a subject that deserves a Royal presentation in its own right. But this was the military operation that eventually became the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (known as FIDS) through the 1950's. It established three new Antarctic Bases at Port Lockroy, Deception Island and the South Orkneys, plus linking to the existing British administrative base at South Georgia. Each of these new bases opened a Post Office and Falkland Islands stamps were overprinted to use at these Post Offices. Importantly mail was posted to Chile and Argentina to "prove" that mail from the Dependencies would be handled by their postal service – here is an example of one of these envelopes to Buenos Aires, the second item in the list from the letter shown to the left.

The 1950's were a time of rapid base expansion, mainly along the Antarctic Peninsula, to reach its peak number in the late 1950's. The location of the bases, each designated by a Base letter, can be seen in this map here. During this period two further stamps issues were made, what was called the Dependencies "Map" set, which had two issues, the Thick Map in 1946 and the Thin Map in 1948. This was followed by the beautiful two colour recess printed Dependencies "Ships" set in 1954. Various commemoratives such as Victory, Silver

Wedding, UPU and Coronation omnibus issues were made for the Dependencies as well. We will take a look at some of the Base Mail during that expansion period. Commercial mail is difficult to find with us talking about a hundred or so base personnel in total even at the peak of expansion.



This is a 2½d Commonwealth surface rate cover from Admiralty Bay in the South Shetlands sent in 1958, a pretty ordinary rate but a nice addressee to Robert Lawrie who made specialist boots for mountaineering and skiing in London. This is likely to be correspondence from a base member about the boots, or even an order. There were 8 people at Argentine Islands that season.

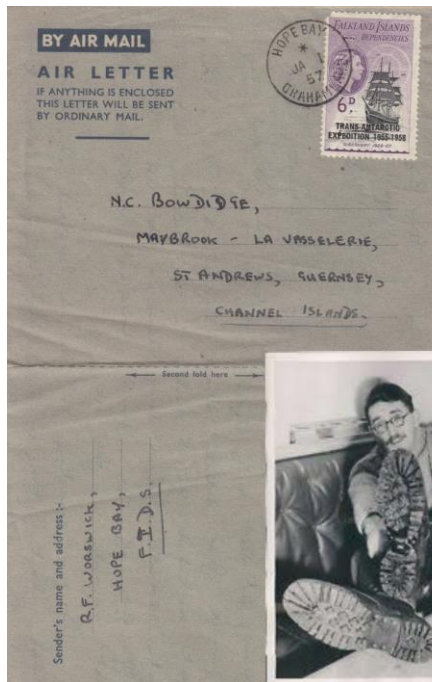


This is what I consider a value for money cover. 1/2d allows you send a Christmas and New Year card from the Argentine Islands on the Antarctic Peninsula at Commonwealth Surface Printed Matter rate all the way to New Zealand. The downside to this rate is it took over a year to arrive! I suspect it wasn't picked up until the end of the season in March/April time then went all the way back up to the UK and then onwards by ship to New Zealand. There were some attractive cards produced for the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey each year to send as Christmas cards.



The next couple of illustrations look at an interesting concept when you are on the ice in the Antarctic Peninsula, air mail. Air mail would consist of a supply or relief ship taking your mail, probably to Port Stanley. There it would go on the Falklands mail and supply ship,

either *Fitzroy* or *Darwin*, to Montevideo. There it would be put on a flight to the UK. So your air mail would have a minimum of a week before it even reached an aircraft. There are two examples here, firstly 2nd Class Air Mail from Marguerite Bay, not officially introduced in the Falklands and Dependencies until 1966, but seen earlier at this 6d rate. Secondly we have a 10gm. weight cover which should be 2/- sent from Port Lockroy. Only 1/6d is on the cover. An “Insufficient Postage for Carriage by Air” cachet was applied in Stanley and the unfortunate item was switched to surface mail by ship.



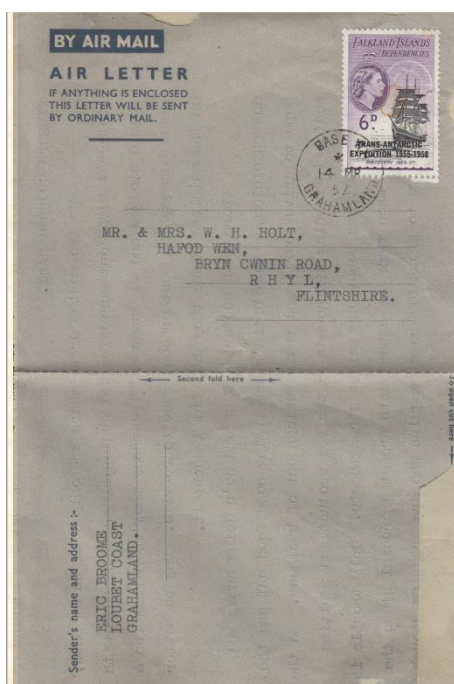
Base Expansion – Air Mail from the Antarctic Hope Bay – Base D

Air Letter Rate - 6d sent by “Lofty” Worswick – Base Leader & Met.
Cancelled Hope Bay JA 1 57

Air Mail rate 1/- (used for Air Mail postcards as well)
Sent by Mike Fleet – Geologist
Cancelled Hope Bay FE 24 62



Two more examples of air mail. An air letter at the 6d aerogramme rate from Hope Bay sent by Base Leader and Met Officer Lofty Worswick. The address is nice being Guernsey. A very unusual air mail type from a base was an air mail postcard; again no official rate existed until



Base Expansion – The “Base Letter” Cancels

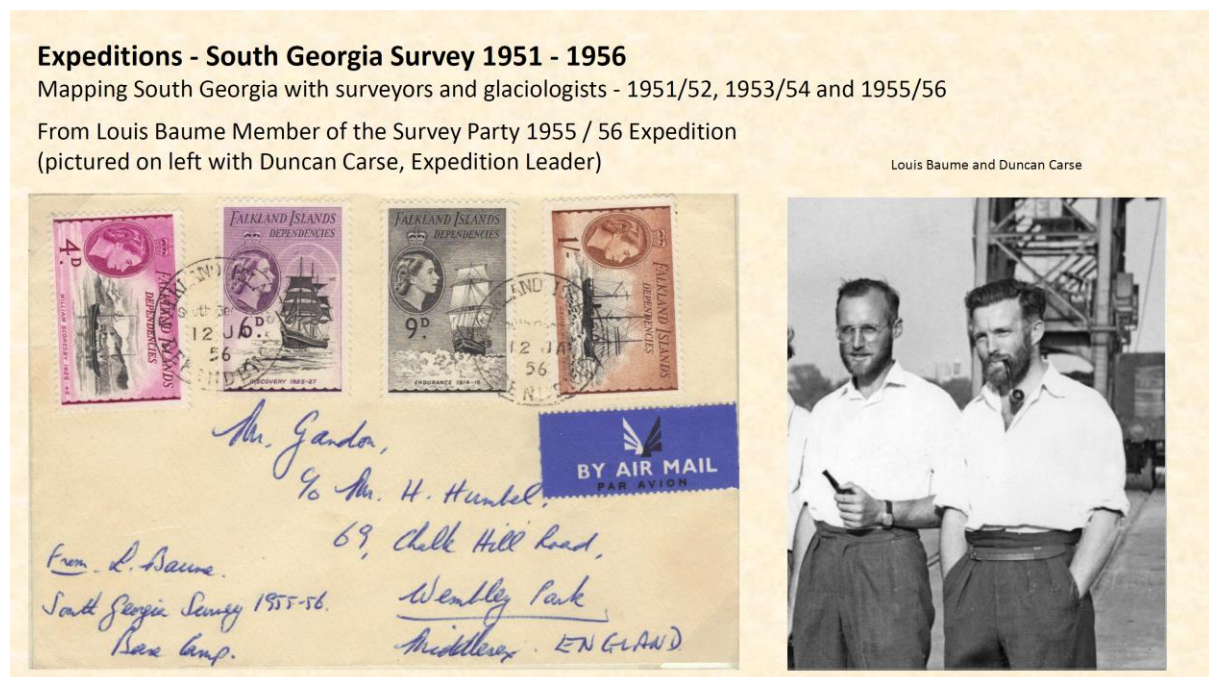
Base W
Loubet
Coast

Base O
Danco
Coast



1974, but of course they could be sent at the 5gm. air mail rate of 1/-. This example is from the geologist at Hope Bay in 1962.

Most of the Bases, as they were opened up had their Base name on the canceller as we have seen. However some of the smaller bases had just the Base Letter designation, that were shown on the map earlier, on their canceller. A rule of thumb is that commercial mail with a Base letter cancel are scarce. Below are two examples, one an air letter from Base W, the Loubet Coast Base sent by radio operator Eric Broome at the 6d aerogramme rate. The other is mail that is to a collector, but contains a letter thanking him for the items that he had sent in the mail, so with a commercial linkage. This is on the Base notepaper and cancelled with Base O for the Danco Coast.



Having shown some examples of mail from the rapid expansion of the FIDS bases in the 1950s, we take a close look at the Expeditions that promoted mapping and scientific research through the 1950s in the Antarctic. These were again vital to demonstrate sovereignty over the area by Britain. Although South Georgia had been used for whaling under British licence since 1909, the island had never been seriously mapped. Over three summer in the 1950s surveyors and glaciologists mapped areas of this mountainous island. The expeditions were led by Duncan Carse, pictured on the right in the photograph here, it may be recognizable as the name of the actor who played Dick Barton, Special Agent in the radio show of the late 1940s. Carse is pictured with Louis Baume, a member of the watch making family who sent this cover in 1956 from the Expedition.

The second expedition we discuss is the British South Georgia Expedition. This was a private expedition with four members of the Oread Mountaineering Club from Derbyshire, together with an RAF Doctor and experienced climber Ian Brooker. They managed to persuade Salvesens Whaling Company to give them cheap passage on a whale tanker, *Southern Opal*, where they are photographed leaving Glasgow, and got sponsorship from the Daily Telegraph and others such as the Everest Foundation. It also required some negotiation for

support from suppliers to the expedition, such as Bovril who gave them 25% discount on an inordinate amount of Bovril Expeditionary pemmican.

Expeditions - British South Georgia Expedition 1954 - 1955

Primary Objective Mountaineering, Secondary Objective Surveying and Glaciology

Bot. of **BOVRIL, Limited.**
148-146, Old Street, 73-77, Bunhill Row, and 2, 4 & 6, Banner Street
LONDON, E.C.1

3.4.54 CONVEYANCE per Passenger Train

BOVRIL

150 X 1 lb Tins Bovril Expeditionary Pemmican
£ 12/- per tin.
Less 25% discount 22 10 - 67 10 -

NO. 98726
31 AUG 1954
£ 67 10 -

ALL goods included on this invoice are hereby guaranteed to be of the highest quality and of the best material.

Carriage and packing charges to be paid by the consignee, unless otherwise stated.

Carriage and packing charges to be paid by the consignee, unless otherwise stated.

Courtesy Derbyshire Records Office

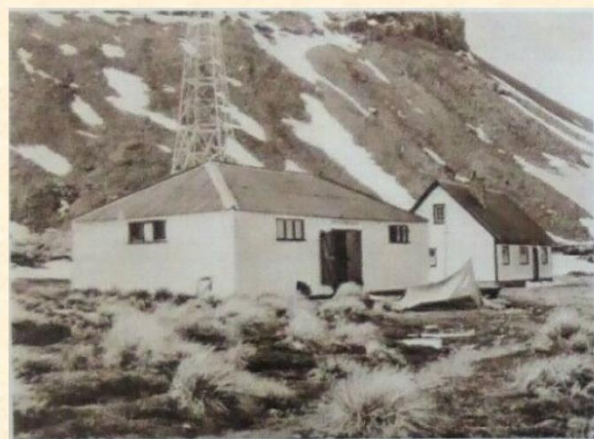
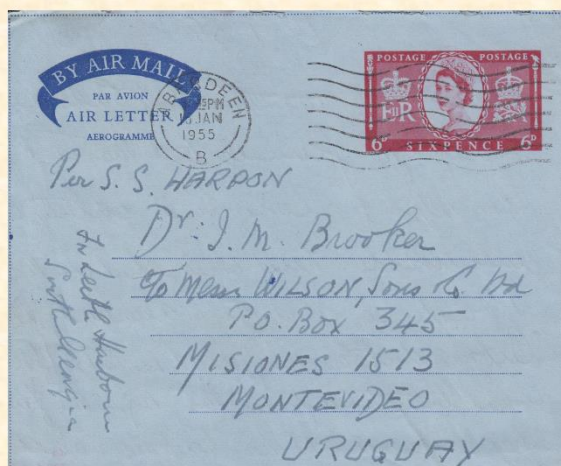


Expedition members, from left, Clive Webb, Harry Pretty, Dr Ian Brooker, Richard Brown and George Sutton, leaving Glasgow

The main focus of the expedition was to climb South Georgia peaks, but the expedition had surveyors and they assisted Carse with surveys for his mapping. They had an unusual home for the expedition, the gaol at South Georgia, in fact it was often used as an Expedition base. Families would be able to send mail via routes knowing which ship was planning to go to South Georgia, in this case an aerogramme to Ian Brooker, the Expedition doctor, was sent via the Expedition Agents in Montevideo and then on board the supply ship *SS Harpon*.

British South Georgia Expedition 1954 - 1955

Inward Air Letter at GB 6d rate to Expedition Doctor Ian Brooker from his father cancelled Aberdeen 15th January 1955. Sent via Agents in Montevideo. *SS Harpon* was a transport ship.



The Gaol at King Edward Point – Expedition HQ

British South Georgia Expedition 1954 - 1955

Air Letters at 6d rate from Expedition Doctor Ian Brooker, left cancelled South Georgia 3 DE 54, right 15 DE 54

Taken by Whale oil tankers or supply ships returning to Montevideo or Aruba, Caripito



Here are two examples of air letters sent by Ian Brooker, one on the left to his wife, on the right to his mother. The aerogramme rate was 6d and they should really only carry a single 6d stamp, but here aerogrammes with three stamps were accepted. These were carried by whale oil tankers heading north, put into the air mail at Montevideo or Aruba.

British South Georgia Expedition 1954 - 1955

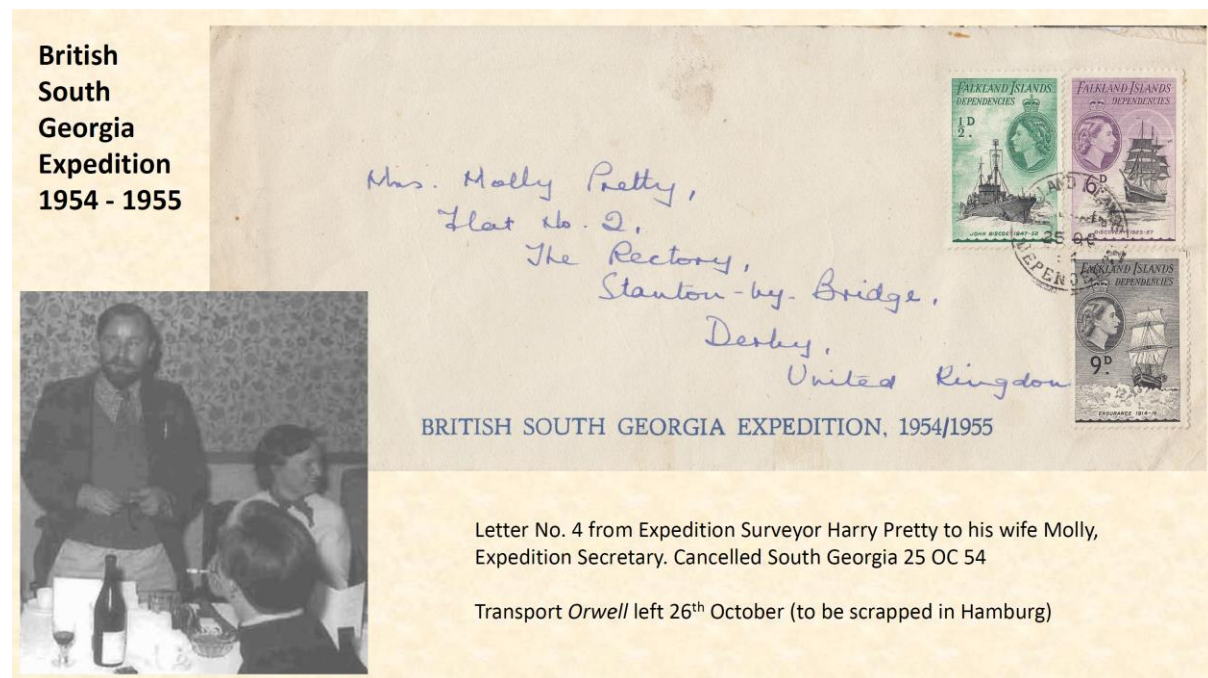


The Daily Telegraph was a sponsor of the Expedition

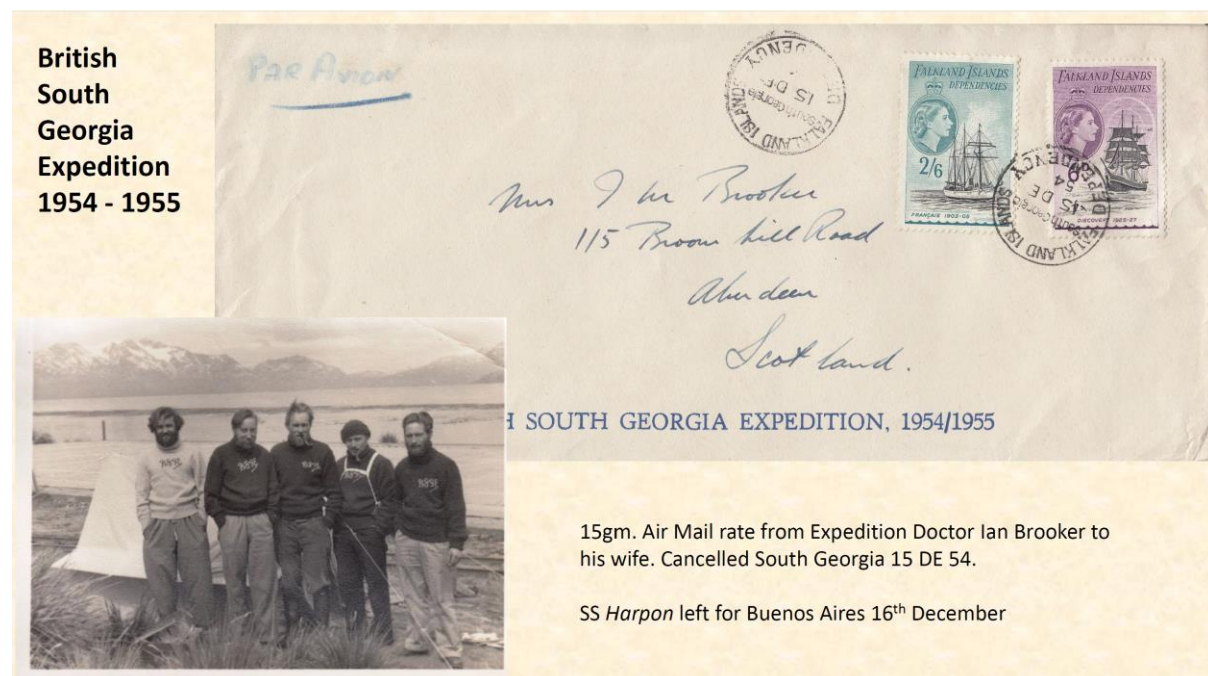
"Field Despatch No. 2" from Expedition Leader George Sutton, Cancelled South Georgia 26 NO 54. Damaged in post and resealed Tanker *Gauthiod* left on that day

I mentioned the Daily Telegraph as a sponsor, here the expedition leader George Sutton has sent a Field Report to Colin Coote, the editor of the Telegraph. He has used one of the printed expedition envelopes. Sutton is photographed making an attempt on the summit of Mount Sugartop 7,628 feet, the party failed to make the summit of either Sugartop or Mount Paget, at 9,629 feet, the highest mountain on South Georgia, but they claimed several slightly lower peaks. You can see that the envelope was damaged in transit and was

resealed either by the Stanley or British Post Office (they both used the same resealing tape).



A couple more examples of Air Mail from the Expedition, this one is from Expedition deputy leader and surveyor Harry Pretty to his wife Molly, who was the secretary for the Expedition back in Derbyshire. They are pictured here at an Oread club dinner in 1956.



The final example from the Expedition is this cover from Ian Brooker to his wife sent at the 15gm. Air Mail rate. Also pictured is the Expedition Party at South Georgia modelling what is nice line of Expedition leisureware with BSGE embroidered on their sweaters.



Cover from Colin Brown, surveyor to his parents at 4/- 10gm. air mail rate

Wings Over Ice

**Expedition -
Falkland Islands and Dependencies
Aerial Survey Expedition
1955-1957**



The next Expedition certainly took some bravery, flying over the Antarctic Peninsula in a Catalina flying boat from a base at Deception Island. This was the Falkland Islands and Dependencies Aerial Survey Expedition or FIDASE as it was known. It lasted for two Antarctic "summers" in 1955-56 and 1956-1957. You can see an airmail envelope from one of the surveyors Colin Brown, sent 20gm. air mail with an Expedition label.

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FALKLAND ISLANDS AND DEPENDENCIES AERIAL SURVEY EXPEDITION 1956/57
ORGANISER & EXPEDITION LEADER: P. G. MOTT, B.A., A.M.I.C.E., F.R.A.C.S., FLYING MANAGER & DEPUTY LEADER: J. H. SAFFERY, D.A.C.

First Season: December 1955 – April 1956
Establish base and build aircraft taxiing areas
Start aerial photography and surveying
Much less mail from 1st season. Expedition label used on mail

Second Season: December 1956 – April 1957
Majority of aerial photography (including Falkland Islands)
Visit from HRH Duke of Edinburgh
Majority of Expedition mail and collectors mail, using cachet in violet or black

Aerial Survey Expedition:

Objective: Map Antarctic Peninsula to support claim of sovereignty

High level aerial photography

Surveying to establish trig points, flying in by helicopter from support ship

Based at Deception Island, South Shetlands

Expedition Leader
Peter Mott

The Colonial Office funded the Expedition and gave the contract to Hunting Aerosurveys to map the Antarctic Peninsula (and incidentally the Falkland Islands also). That mapping would support the British claim for sovereignty over the Peninsula. In addition to the aerial survey, a helicopter flown from the Expedition ship would put down surveyors to measure trig points to assist the mapping. Peter Mott, pictured led the Expedition and they set up a hut next to the FIDS Base at Deception Island. Much of the first season consisted of setting up

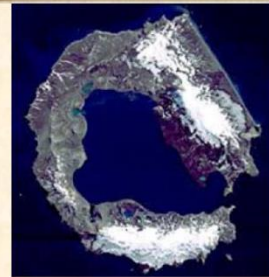
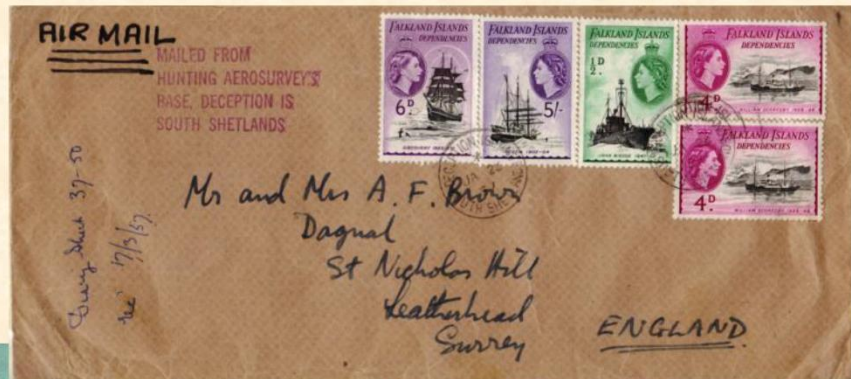
this base and building a taxiway to get the the Canadian Catalinas (known as Cansos) out of the water. A black and white Expedition label was produced for members to use on mail home. A large amount of aerial surveying was completed in the second season, this time a cachet was used on Expedition mail.

The Aircraft

Two Catalina "Canso" flying boats from Hunting Survey Corporation in Canada

Dexion metal taxiway built to enable aircraft to leave water

Two flying teams at Deception Island



Here is a picture of the Canso aircraft out of the water at Deception Island. Deception is a huge volcano caldera where the about 500m of the wall has collapsed and let the sea in, as at the bottom right of the small aerial photograph. The Island is about 12km in diameter. The Expedition mail was handled by the FIDS base commander, at one point he was wrongly adding 2½d for surface mail to Montevideo – an additional charge not needed. That is why you see this 30gm. Air Mail at 1/- per 5gm. actually charged 6/2½d for postage.



Expedition Ship: Oluf Sven

Chartered 950 ton Danish freighter, pictured left at Deception Island Helicopter landing area



Captain Jan Ryge, cover sent to his wife in 1st season.

"m.s. OLUF SVEN" cachet in violet at bottom left

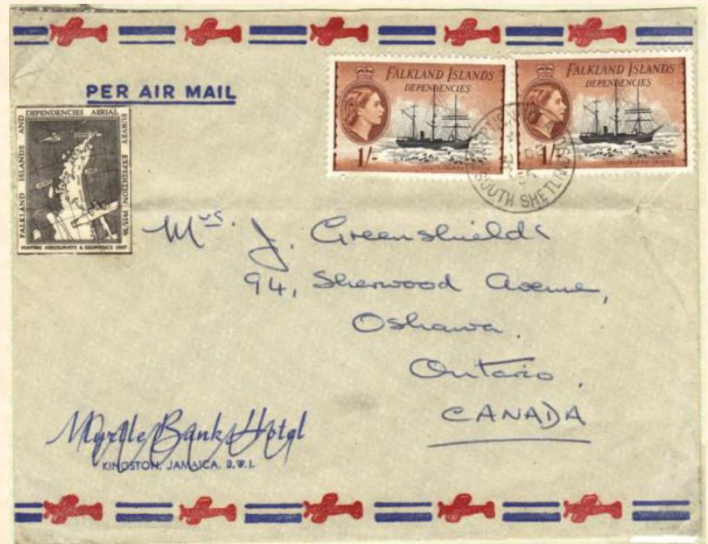
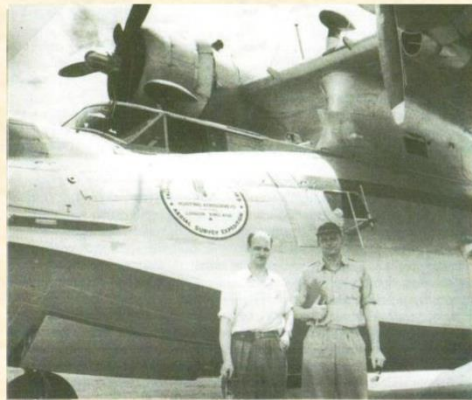


The Expedition ship, the *Oluf Sven* brought the expedition hut, helicopter and supplies from Tilbury down to Deception. It also brought down a considerable amount of avgas, so much so that hobnail boots on deck were banned! Here is a cover from Captain Jan Ryge back to his wife in Denmark. There is a small cachet of the ship in violet. The helicopter flew off the ship, some really good flying given the weather conditions in open seas.

Canso Pilot Jim Greenshields (1st Season)

Pictured left in photograph

2/- 10gm. Air Mail rate
and Expedition 1st Season label



Illustrated is some mail from Expedition members. Here is a cover from pilot Jim Greenshields in the first season, sent at the 10gm. air mail rate with an expedition label. The envelope used was from the Myrtle Beach Hotel, Jamaica as the aircraft flew down from Canada, stopping at some warmer destinations before reaching Port Stanley and then the 1300km haul to Deception Island.

Canso Pilot Chris Gavin-Robinson (Both Seasons)

Pictured middle in Huntley & Palmer advert

2/- 10gm. Air Mail rate (plus 2½d surface rate
requested in error by Base Postmaster)



Next is a colourful cover from pilot Chris Gavin-Robinson to his son at school back in England, sent at the 10gm. air mail rate, with the FIDS postmaster wrongly adding the 2½d surface mail rate. Gavin-Robinson is pictured centre in a publicity photo for Huntley & Palmer Golden Puff biscuits, he seems to be enjoying them!

Lead Helicopter Pilot: Greville "Bim" Jacques

6/- 30gm. Air Mail Rate – 1st season Expedition label



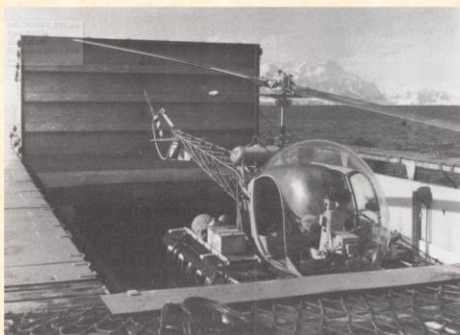
The helicopter pilot in both seasons was Bim Jacques here is pictured piloting the Bell 47D helicopter, good visibility with the Perspex bubble, but just an opening, no doors. Here is a cover to his wife sent with the 1st season expedition label at the 30gm. air mail rate.

Helicopter Engineer: Brian Davey (2nd Season)

Cover to parents using the scarce small 2nd season cachet (the larger cachet was nearly always used on mail) in black.

2/- 10gm. Air mail rate.

Plus 2½d requested mistakenly by Base Postmaster for surface rate



The helicopter engineer was Brian Davey. On board the ship a clever folding hatch was constructed with a lift that allowed the helicopter to be lowered into the hold, making maintenance easier. Unfortunately in the second season the helicopter crashed on Tower

Island in a whiteout, both Bim Jacques and surveyor John Noble were unhurt but the helicopter was a write off and required a voyage to Montevideo to pick up a new one. Here Brian Davey is sending a letter to his parents in the second season, at the 2/- 10gm. air mail rate with the surface rate added again. This time there is a small version of the Expedition cachet, a cachet rarely seen on expedition mail.

Head Office: Frank Wills MBE (Managing Director)

Sent by Peter Mott just after a helicopter crash on Tower Island, when it was not clear if the Expedition could continue.

1/- 5gm. Air mail rate plus 2½d requested mistakenly by Base Postmaster for surface rate



Back at Head Office they were probably worrying about Hunting Aerosurveys work going on some 8,500 miles away in the Antarctic. This was a cover back to the Managing Director of Hunting Aerosurveys, Frank Wills. He had formed the first aerial photography company in the UK in 1919, Aerofilms and was acquired by Hunting Aviation in 1942. This was sent by Peter Mott just after the Tower Island helicopter crash and was probably considering if the


Projects Manager Mail: Large Expedition Envelope

Scan of part of envelope (not shown 2nd season and Oluf Sven cachets) to Projects Manager, Hunting Aerosurveys at 12/- 60gm. Air Mail Rate, plus 5d 2oz. Surface rate mistakenly added by Base Postmaster. **Scarce commercial use of 1954 Ships 10/-**



expedition could continue. It is sent at the 1/- 5gm. air mail rate and again we see the wrong addition of the surface rate. The larger 2nd season expedition cachet is applied in violet.

My favourite item of Expedition mail is showing part of an A4 sized envelope sending documents back to Hunting Aerosurveys shown above. Two things really appeal to me. The first is the scarce commercial use of the Ships 10/- stamp. The second is the tortuous calculation used by the Base Leader, Percy Guyver, to work out the rate. The air mail rate is metric, 12/- for 60gm. But the surface rate calculation is imperial and the weight takes it above the 1oz. limit for surface mail of 2½d, so 5d double rate for up to 2oz. is used. The 12/5d requirement for franking is indicated in ink above the stamps.




Visit of Duke of Edinburgh – 3rd January 1957

HRH Duke of Edinburgh visited Deception Island on *Britannia* and visited the FIDS Base and Expedition buildings

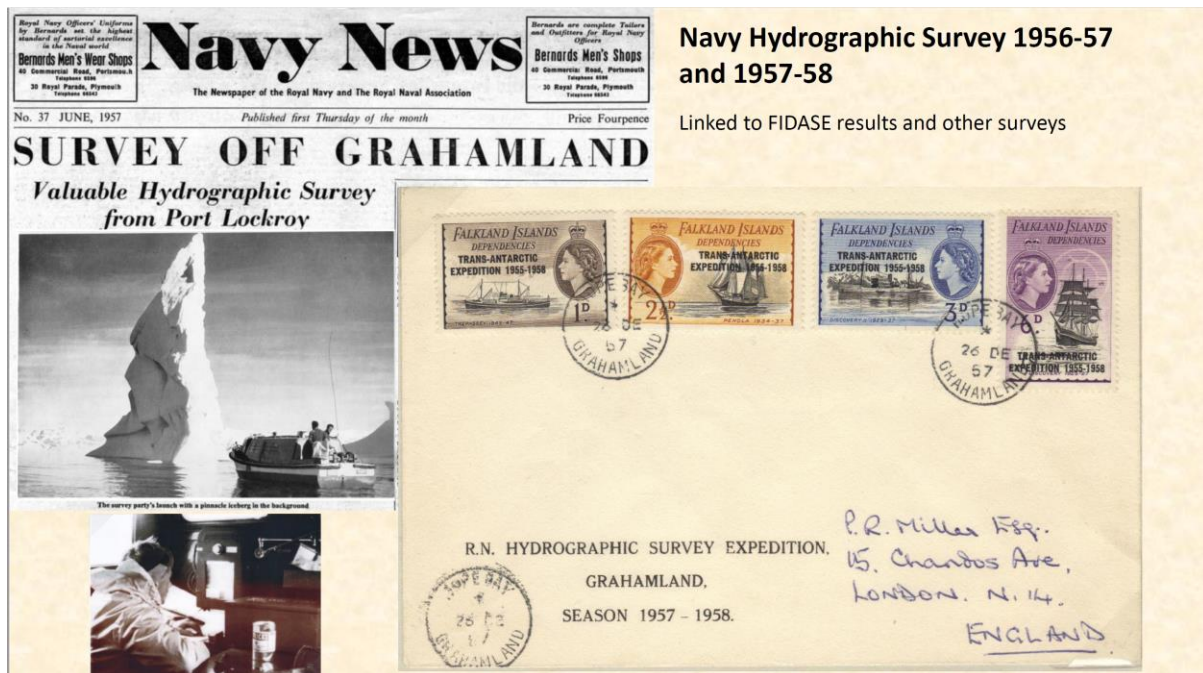
DofE (second left) pictured walking with Peter Mott (third left)

Cover cancelled Deception Island JA 3 57, the day of the visit.

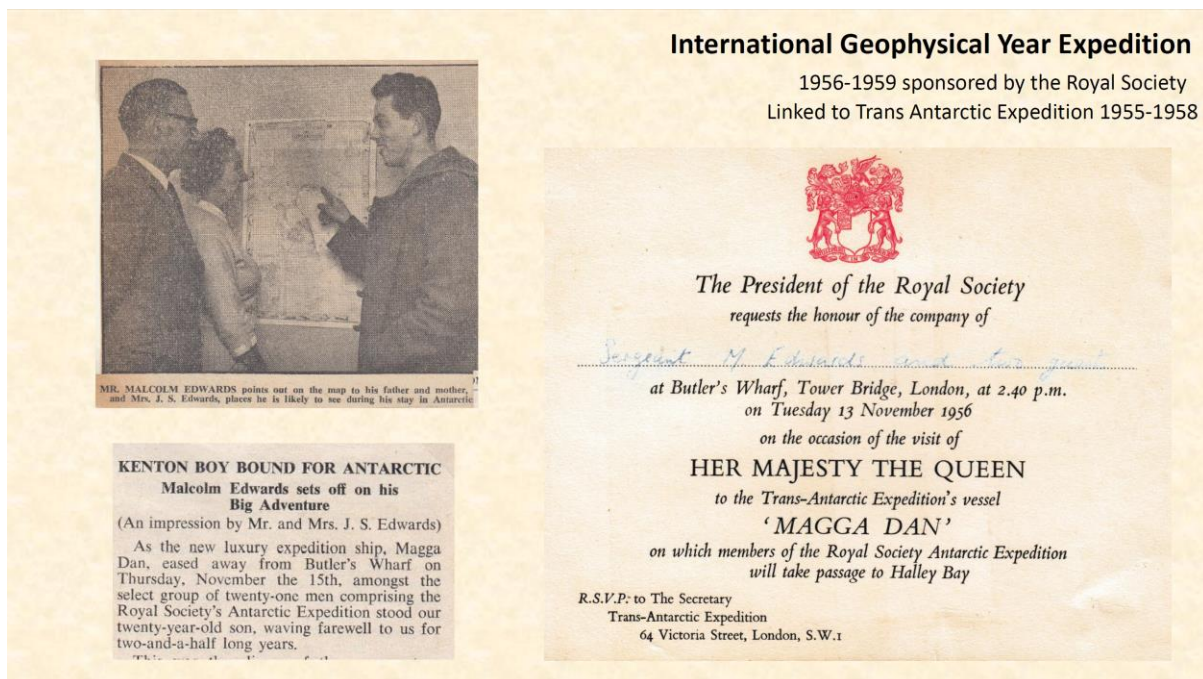
Scarce 2nd season small version of cachet in black



Not the most obvious visitor you would expect to the Expedition, but the Duke of Edinburgh arrived on 3rd January 1957, on board *Britannia* as part of his round the world tour, after opening the 1956 Olympics in Australia. He had already visited bases on the Antarctic Peninsula, then after Deception Island headed for the Falklands, South Georgia, Tristan and St Helena. Prince Philip had lunch at the FIDS base with the FIDS team and the Expedition members and then all went on board *Britannia* in the evening to watch *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, This was a cover sent on 3rd January, using the smaller expedition cachet.

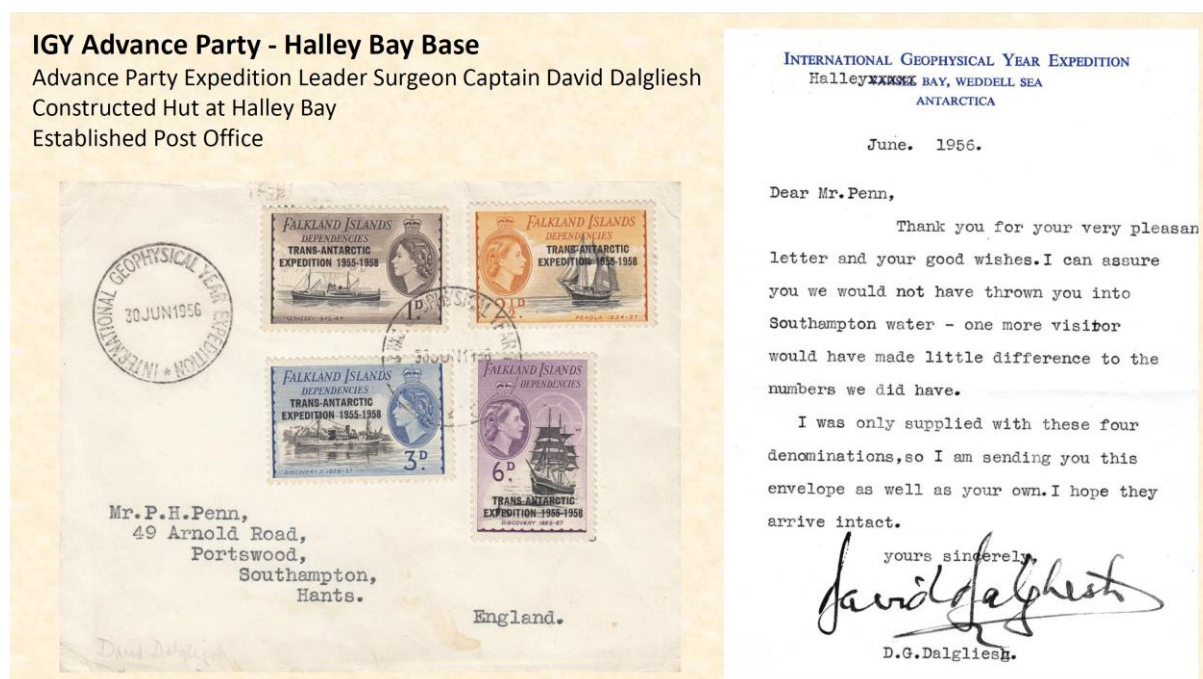


A small expedition linked to the aerial survey work was a Royal Navy hydrographic survey in 1956-1957 and 1957-1958 to understand the channel depths and underwater topography around the Antarctic Peninsula. Small motor boats were used and mail from this expedition is scarce, here using an expedition printed envelope.



In the latter half of the 1950s, two major expeditions took place at similar times, the Trans Antarctic Expedition led by Vivien Fuchs and Edmund Hillary with the objective of crossing the continent and the International Geophysical Year Expedition sponsored by the Royal Society promoting scientific work, especially in the ionosphere. I am showing mainly IGY material here, a little bit of Trans Antarctic Expedition. I was lucky to get hold of some scrapbooks from the cook on the IGY Expedition, Malcolm Edwards. The postal material was stuck down on very fibrous 1950s scrapbook paper and probably stuck in using Gloy glue.

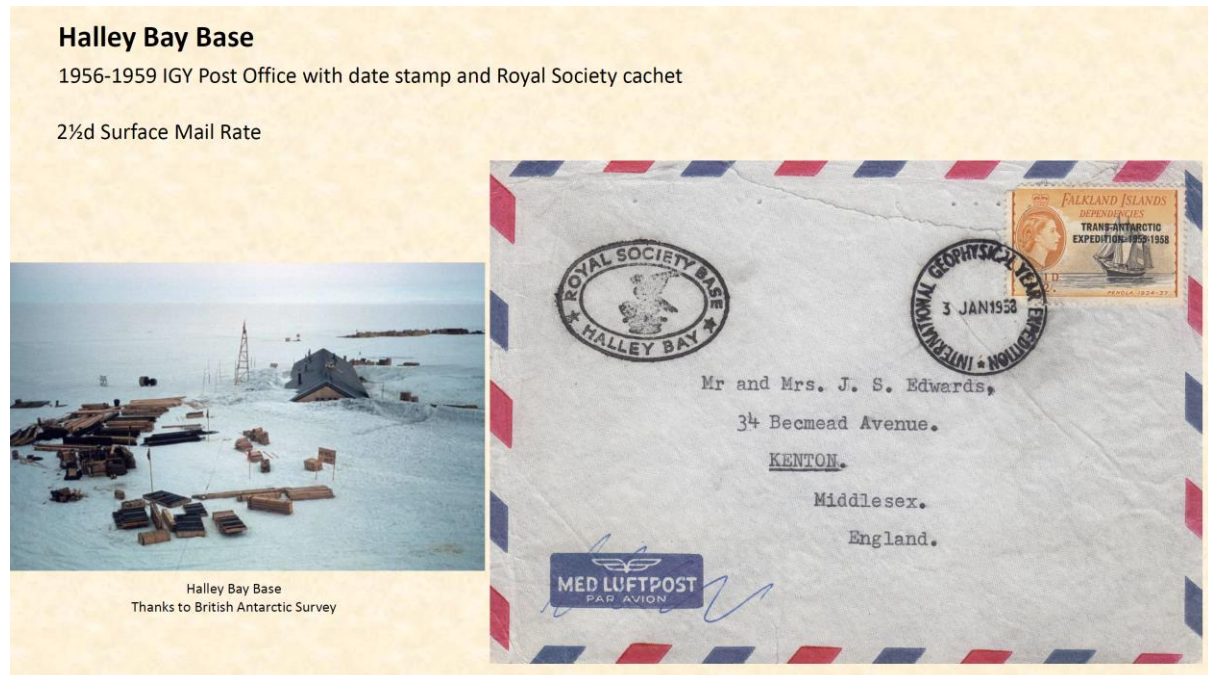
Mike Roberts from Ilkely provided great help in restoring the material, particularly difficult with flimsy air letters. The two expeditions left for the Antarctic together on the ship *Magga Dan*, Her Majesty the Queen visiting the ship before it sailed.



The two expeditions were going to use new Bases built on the ice shelf in Coats Land, so there needed to be Advance Parties that constructed the huts while living in tents. The IGY Advance Party was led by Surgeon Captain David Dalgleish. The Advance Party ship, the *Theron*, got stuck in the ice and the IGY Party decamped there and built their base further north of their intended target Vahsel Bay, at what became named as Halley Bay. Here is a letter from Dalgleish, stating he was only supplied with the four TAE stamps on the cover and altering his preprinted stationery. He is using the new IGY canceller, used during the Expedition at Halley.



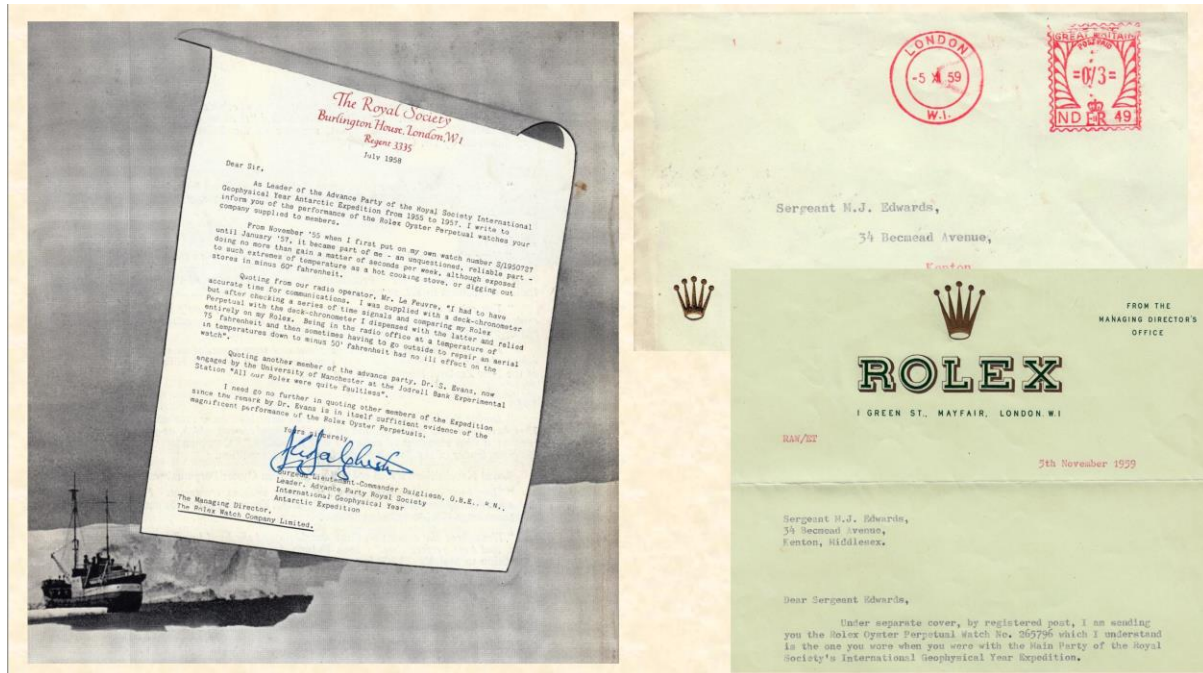
Halley was surrounded by large cravasses so wasn't suitable for the Snocats of the Trans Antarctic Expedition. Fuchs took *Theron* further south and was nearly completely trapped in the ice. He left eight men to build Shackleton Base and managed eventually to extricate *Theron* from the ice. They had a torrid time, losing a large amount of stores from broken ice and living in tents and the tractor crate while the hut was eventually constructed through the blizzards. Here is a cover from the opening of the Shackleton Post Office on 30th January 1956, with a nice ship cachet of the *Theron* and the new Shackleton cancel.



Here is a cover at the Commonwealth Surface rate of 2½d sent by the cook, Malcolm Edwards to his parents in Kenton. There was a Royal Society Halley Bay cachet used on some mail and seen here.



There was air mail from the Expedition as well and two examples are shown. Of course Air Mail was dependent on the odd passing icebreaker or waited a long time for a relief ship to arrive. There is an air letter at the 6d rate from Malcolm Edwards to his parents. The TAE set was often used to pay the air mail first step of 1/-, even though it meant the letter was ½d overpaid. Here is a cover from Les Barclay, Ionospherics, to his son. Both covers received the Royal Society cachet.

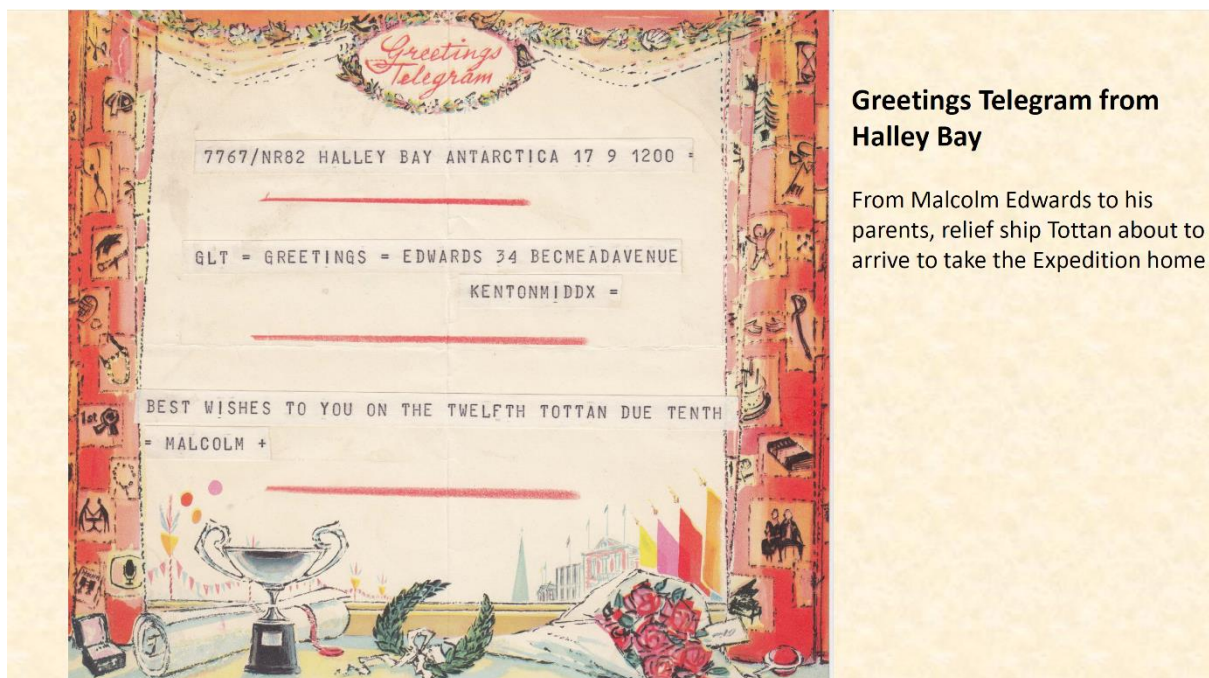


At the start I mentioned Rolex watches and this is why. All the members of the IGY party received a watch and you can see David Dalglish provided some advertorial for Rolex singing the praises of the watches. It appeared that the watches were handed back when the expedition ended, but here is a letter to Malcolm Edwards from the Managing Director telling him he would receive his watch following shortly. A nice touch from the company.



There were some unusual ways that messages could get back home. One opportunity available to the Expedition party as well as the other FIDS bases was to radio a message to the Met Office at Port Stanley. They would type the message onto an aerogramme and send it Air Mail via Montevideo back home. There is an example here, notice of course the Falkland Islands 6d stamp rather than the Dependencies one. Note also at the bottom of the air letter, up side down in the view, the Meteorological Office Falkland Islands cachet.

A strange route for mail was provided when an Argentine Navy ice breaker called at Halley Bay. The party took the opportunity to dash off a letter home. I suspect that the letters were all bagged and sealed because the letter was eventually posted in London, perhaps the meter mark is from the Royal Society. Argentina was known to interfere with Falklands mail and stamps at this time, so perhaps that explains the approach taken



There was also opportunity to send telegram messages. It is quite nice to see the Greetings telegram form used with the Halley Bay, Antarctica originating office. This telegram was sent just before the final relief ship Tottan arrived for the party after two years stay at Halley Bay.

After two successful years of scientific experiments *Tottan* took the party home with the IGY Post Office closing on 12th January 1959. Here we see a last telegram from Malcolm Edwards to his parents sent on the 12th. The cover I show is from the day before, the 11th, but has nice usage again of the 10/- Ships stamp paying part of the 60gm. air mail rate. Halley Bay base was taken over by FIDS, the FIDS Post Office opening with a Halley Bay canceller on 13th January. Malcolm Edwards says that the old canceller “was filed away never to be used again”.

End of IGY Expedition – January 1959

60gm. Air Mail rate cancelled
IGY Halley Bay 11th January 1959

Telegram from Malcolm Edwards

Charges to pay
s. d.
RECEIVED

POST OFFICE
TELEGRAM

No. 11 OFFICE STAMP
11 JAN 1959

Prefix. Time handed in. Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Words.

At 16 m

From 7857 CW 1 HALLEYBAY 16 12 1200= To

By

GLT = EDWARDS 34 BECMEDAVENUE KENTONMIDDY =

TOTTAN ARRIVED AS SCHEDULED ALL MAIL GIFTS

RECEIVED WITH THANKS = MALCOLM+++

PO C AND W L DN + 34 +++

For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form B or C at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form, and, if possible, the envelope.

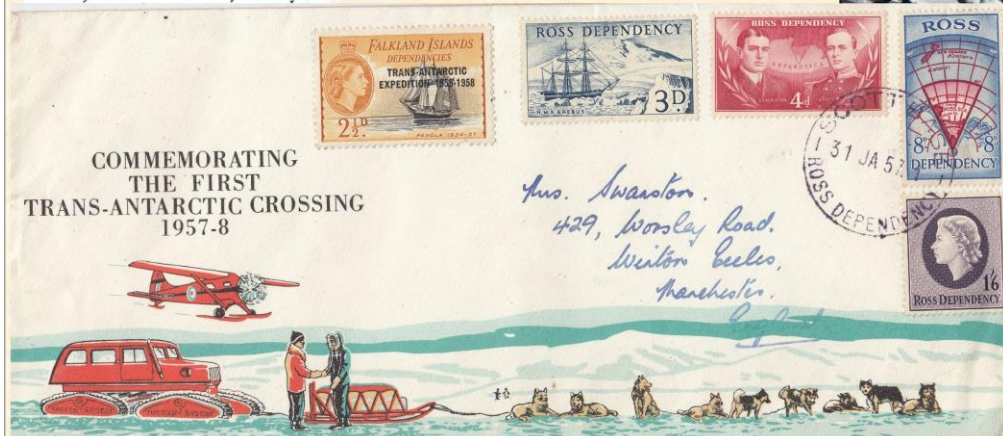
MR E. BLAKE
94 QUEENS DRIVE
WEST DERBY 13
LIVERPOOL
ENGLAND.

1330279 1/59t. Lethbridge 2.
(Home address) 40, Woodhouse Rd.
Bristol 2.
to Newport.
Mon.
Jan. 26th 1958

Dear Mr Swanton

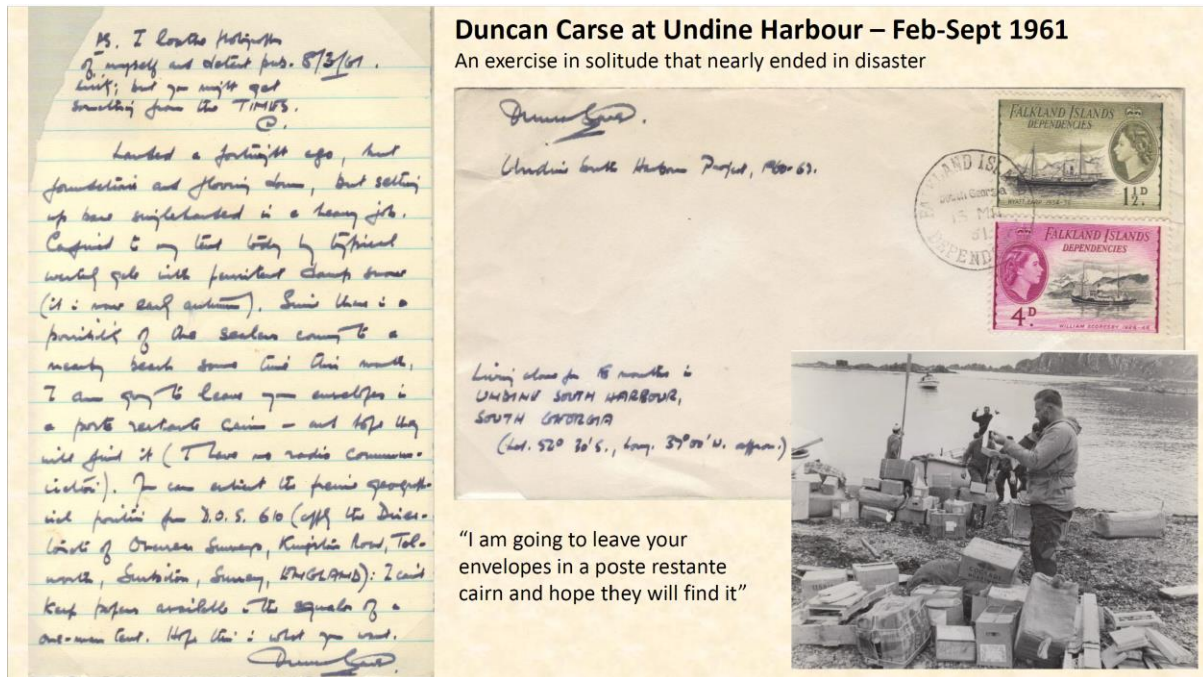
I'm sorry it has taken
so long to answer your letter but Swanton
has the first as I have only recently

Trans Antarctic Expedition Flight Flight between Shackleton Base and Scott Base across the continent



Meanwhile the Trans Antarctic Expedition was successful, Fuchs crossing the continent from Shackleton Base to Scott Base in the Ross Dependency using his Snocats. There was also a crossing of the Antarctic by plane on 6th January 1958, a small De Havilland Otter aircraft and this cover was sent by the radio operator on the flight, Taffy Williams, with an enclosed letter.

We finish this presentation back on South Georgia with Duncan Carse, our Dick Barton Special Agent. Carse was depressed after being overlooked for leadership of the Trans Antarctic Expedition, not even being a member, so decided to embark on an 18 month "exercise in solitude" at the isolated Undine Harbour that he leased from the Crown for 1/-. No radio and only likely to see a passing whaler or sealing boat. After landing his stores and hut to self-build in February 1961, in May a freak wave destroyed his hut completely and



took most of his stores away. Fortified by a salvaged case of burgundy and emergency rations he managed to survive until rescued by a sealer in September 1961. Here is a letter he sent in March with an unusual post box "I am going to leave your envelopes in a poste restante cairn and hope they will find it". Carse returned in the 1970s to make a BBC film about his experiences, well worth watching on YouTube.