

# MR EDWARD HIBBERT AND MR TONY CROSS

by Trevor W. Hearl

St Helena has lost two more loyal friends, the postal historian Edward Hibbert and the surgeon, Tony Cross.

Mr Hibbert was by profession a solicitor. After war service in North Africa at El Alamein, in Tunisia, Greece and Italy where he was wounded, he settled by chance in Oxford. He contributed much to his adopted city. He practised for almost 40 years with one of its oldest law firms while devoting himself to charitable work as a Rotarian, through the Oxford Round Table, and in support of city churches, raising over £80,000 for the oldest, St. Michael-at-the-Northgate. In 1987, with his brother, the popular historian Christopher Hibbert, he compiled the *Encyclopaedia of Oxford* and he was also an authority on the postal history of the City and its Colleges.

In philatelic circles he is best known for his study of St Helena's postal history, however. His interest in stamps began in the 1950's, he joined the Oxford Philatelic Society and became its President. St Helena beckoned after reading in Robson Lowe's *Encyclopaedia of British Empire Postage Stamps* that it offered "considerable scope for research". Discovering that no book has been published on its postal history he determined to "fill that gap". He built up a collection which won international awards, led to his election as a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society and provided material to illustrate the book slowly taking shape. No mere collector, he delved into the colony's culture.

"A collection of the stamps of any country is greatly enhanced by a knowledge of its history, and in compiling this book I have paid particular attention to the historical side".

Thus he spent much of the leisure time of two decades and in February 1972 paid the Island a long-anticipated visit. His interest in its affairs remained, donating valuable items from his collection to the schools only last year. The importance of stamps to St Helena's economy and international image places it deeply in Mr Hibbert's debt for bequeathing it a work of such outstanding quality of which it should be justly proud.

Latterly Mr Hibbert lived at Eynsham in Oxfordshire where he was no less active in village life. He died on 23rd December, leaving a widow and two sons.

Mr Anthony Bruce Cross, O.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.S.I., who last visited St Helena in November 1991 while a Medical Officer on *RMS St Helena*, will probably be best remembered for his work in 1987 advising the Government on the treatment of the disabled on the Island. He also took a keen interest in its medical history and in June 1989 contributed a detailed study of 'The 1945 St Helena poliomyelitis epidemic after 40 years' to the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*. Mr Cross, who died suddenly on 31st January, had retired from the service of the East Birmingham Health Authority. A major interest of his at the time of his death was re-

searching the life and work of Dr W.J.J. Arnold, “the best friend St Helena ever had”, to quote the Memorial in Jamestown. Like Ted Cannan, Edward Hibbert and Tony Cross fortunately have their memorials on the printed page where their words will always be at the service of St Helena’s welfare.

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