

PHOTO FLASHBACK TOM JACKSON'S 'PHARMACY'

by Trevor W. Hearl

Can any readers remember Tom Jackson's 'Pharmacy' before the First World War? If you can, the Editor would like to hear your recollections of it - and of shopping in Jamestown in those days. This photograph was taken in 1902 for the Jacksons' *Souvenir of St Helena*; the owner stands in the doorway of his new shop shortly after moving from smaller premises across the street. Tom Jackson, dentist and chemist, had married the Government school teacher, Emily Warren, and business was booming, with Boer prisoners and a large garrison adding to his usual trade.



He certainly provided a wide range of services, selling 'Patent Medicines, Perfumery, Pure Drugs and Chemicals', dispensing prescriptions 'carefully', extracting and filling teeth, making and fitting false teeth, even acting as 'General Merchant', stationer and tobacconist, He made his own 'aerated water' sold in bottles embossed 'Thos. Jackson St Helena', and offered another unique attraction in 1902, as Emily proudly explained in *A Pictorial and Descriptive Souvenir of Saint Helena* (p.14): 'Mr Jackson (whose stores contain the most varied assortment of stock it is possi-

ble to imagine) has his house and store fitted with electric light, worked by his own engine and dynamo. The engine also works his large, aerated water manufactory, which is capable of supplying the whole of the troops and residents’.

In *St Helena the Historic Island* (pg. 162) she noted another of the ‘Pharmacy’s facilities, ‘a lending library and reading room’. Opposite, Solomon’s offices also housed ‘Jackson’s store, so well-known to all passengers outward or homeward bound’.

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Yet Tom Jackson is best remembered nowadays for another aspect of his business. For he was a photographer, selling his own postcards (printed in England and Germany), taking ‘Views of the Island - Portraits a Speciality,’ producing innumerable prints of people, places, and events at his ‘Photographic Studio and Stores,’ recording the story of St Helena in pictures during a dramatic period of her history. These sepia scenes of St Helena occasionally come to light today, crumpled and creased, bought long ago perhaps by a passing Union Castle passenger or some long-forgotten ex-patriate official, soldier or Eastern telegraph employee. More rarely they are found in Scrapbooks, a yellow portrait of Dinizulu with his uncle Ndabuko, vague pictures of visiting dignitaries such as ‘Admiral Sir Percy Scott leaving the Castle on relinquishing the South Africa station, ‘hazy views of the island landscape and frustrating anonymous family groups, each with the photographer’s ‘copyright’ stamp on the back, with blue oval imprint ‘T. Jackson - Chemist & Dentist – St Helena : Shipping Supplied Mineral Waters + General Merchant’.

Not all Jackson's photographs are crumpled among family papers or fading in Scrapbooks, however some were published in his wife's books about St Helena. But that needs another 'Flashback!'

Having started 'Photo-Flashback' at 'The Pharmacy', I had better complete the story by showing a picture of Tom Jackson's earlier shop in Main Street. It must have been on the East side; if you know where, please tell the Editor!



The photograph was taken by Jackson before 1902 because it appeared in his booklet *Pictorial Views of St Helena* published that year. It looks so typical for the period with its advertisements and colourful chemist's flasks in the window that it could well have been taken in an English 'Regency' town like Cheltenham, where tourists would pause to view the postcards on display in the large display case beside the door. But underneath, a small noticeboard seems to be written in Afrikaans, for this is St Helena during the Boer War. The Jacksons had good relations with the prisoners; Emily helped promote a Boer handicraft exhibition and had 'Kingshurst' built by prisoners on parole. This goodwill no doubt benefitted their business.

Tom Jackson was not only a leading tradesman in Jamestown; his name was well-known overseas - indeed it still is - through his photographs, his post-cards, his booklets, and even his bottles (of aerated water). Yet surprisingly little is known about him. Dr Gosse said that he was 'a Durham man', but when or why he came to the Island, or when he retired in favour of his brother-in-law, E. J. Warren, are among the basic facts that no-one, so far, has put into print. I have read somewhere that he died during the First World War, and that Emily left for Cape Town

after the War, where she died in 1923 - but that may merely be hearsay. Through their books, Emily and Tom Jackson's names may be familiar, but their considerable contribution to the St Helena story should surely not be allowed to fade into ghostly oblivion. Who will help rescue their memory and put the record straight?

Meanwhile readers may like to know something about their books with the old St Helena photographs - just 85 years ago. Wait for another 'Flashback!'

Just 85 years ago, during 1920-1903, no fewer than three new books appeared about St Helena. And all were the work of one husband-and-wife team in Main Street! Yes, you've guessed - Tom and Emily Jackson.

The driving force behind these popular publications was no doubt Emily - the former Government contract schoolteacher, Emily Warren, whose story (or the little that is known) has already been told in *St Helena News* (Vol. 1, No.50) But their books were really collaborate efforts, with Emily providing the text, and Tom the illustrations, though he got little enough acknowledgement for his contribution. Their books are veritable mines of information, especially about the 1890's and early 1900's on St Helena and provide a good source of pictures of the period, but Emily's jumbled texts make two of them infuriating to use as works of reference. Let's take them in turn.

The first was a slim, oblong picture book, *Pictorial Views of St Helena*, with 'Illustrations of the Military Camps and Boer Prisoners of War'. It had 16 full-page photographs ('Copyright, T. Jackson') stapled in red paper covers (6" x 72"), with a map of the island drawn by a Prisoner of War, 1902' - from which we learn the date of publication. There was no text or title page, just a brief caption to each photograph.

Next to appear, also in 1902, was E. L. Jackson's *Pictorial and Descriptive Souvenir of Saint Helena*, issued, it said, in 'the 400th year of the discovery [...]'. Also in red covers and oblong format (64" x 9"), with 50 pages it was larger and bulkier than the earlier booklet. As the title suggests, it was divided into 'pictorial' and 'descriptive' parts, giving scope for Emily's writing (14 pages of text) and Tom's photography (29 full-page pictures plus a central double-page spread showing 'Ladder Hill Fort, West Rocks and Ladder). Some photographs appear in both booklets - Broadbottom Camp, Boer Exhibition Committee, Longwood House and The Tomb - but not that of Jackson's 'Pharmacy!' The first showed the old shop; the second, the new one. They were not only producing books in 1902 but moving the business. No printer's name appears in either, so we cannot be sure where they were manufactured.

Emily, meanwhile, was writing their third book, her 'magnum opus', *St Helena, the Historic Island*, published in London in 1903. Tipped in among its 343 pages were another 49 pages of illustrations providing no fewer than 74 photographs. Many were taken from the two previous booklets, and 29 related directly to the Boer Camps and the garrison. Yet neither on the title page, nor on the photographs themselves is Tom's name mentioned. There were two issues of the book: in grey covers (undated) and in red (dated 1903), with only slight differences between them.

It is just fifty years ago since the last popular Souvenir series of St. Helena picture books went on sale in Jamestown. A later, post-war edition was planned by 'The Polytechnic', I believe, but it did not go into production. As many readers no doubt have copies of one or more issues, something should surely be said to mark the anniversary.

The series is easily recognisable by its colourful cover picture showing Napoleon, arms folded, standing on the deck of HMS Northumberland, scowling, presumably at the sight of St. Helena. A more appropriate decoration, perhaps, on the covers of all but the last edition, was the red embossed 'seal' bearing the colony's coat-of-arms. All were of uniform size (9" x 6"), in rather drab paper covers, without a printer's name - except the 1937 issue which was fawn and produced in England by Alf Cooke Ltd., Leeds and London.

Four different editions can be found at least, published between 1909 and 1937. Was this another of Emily Jackson's enterprises? Neither name nor date on any of them, but who else at 'The Pharmacy' in 1909 would have produced a second, trimmed-down version of her 1902 Pictorial and Descriptive Souvenir of Saint Helena using Tom Jackson's photographs? It could have been her younger brother, E. J. Warren, who produced later editions, but somehow it seems unlikely. Therefore, I call the issues so far identified 'Jackson I & II' and 'Warren I & II.' Readers may like to check their copies with my brief descriptions; if yours are different, please let the Editor know!

JACKSON I (1909) has Governor Gallwey's portrait as frontispiece, with a 'League of the Empire' announcement on the inside front cover - 'The League...helped to establish the Lace Industry in St. Helena' and an advertisement for Emily's St. Helena inside the back cover. The 28 pages provided 24 photographs - two panoramas spanned the centre pages - and 7 pages of text (pp.2 - 8). The latest date refers to 1908 allowing publication in 1909. The text was much shorter and better organised than Emily's 'Souvenir of 1902, but unfortunately an error crept in, giving Napoleon's exhumation as in 1842 instead of 1840, which was to remain incorrect throughout the series. Of the 24 photographs, 14 came from earlier (1902) booklet, most of the new ones illustrating Napoleon's furniture at Government House and the flax industry. (On my copy, the purchaser pencilled 'Visited St. Helena June 1918', presumably showing that the 1909 edition was then still on sale).

JACKSON II (1915) has Governor Cordeaux's portrait (p.3). It carried the same advertisements but printed on extra pages leaving the inside covers blank, making a booklet of 32 pages, with a title page and extra photograph (25 in all). Six illustrations were changed - mainly different views of the same subjects - leaving captions little altered. The text (pp. 4-10) also underwent only minor alterations. The latest date - flax industry exports for 1914 - suggests that publication was planned for 1915. Did the outbreak of World War I (4th August 1914) prompt Jacksons to stock up with a second edition in anticipation of prison camps returning to the Island? Or did the War prevent stocks reaching them - if printed overseas - as suggested by the '1918' date noted in my 1909 edition above?

Tom Jackson's photographs of his Pharmacy shops in 1902 shown in 'Photo Flashback' recently have raised some tricky questions. For example: 'Were there really two shops - or only one?' I am hoping someone knows the answer!

What evidence do we have? Mainly two photographs taken by Jackson and published in 1902 showing two quite different shops, each called 'Pharmacy'. The later picture was certainly of the fine large shop next to the present Post Office. The earlier one seemed to be of a much smaller building that must have been put on the other side of Main Street. 'Look at the cellars,' everyone remarked to me. 'It must have been somewhere on the East side.' But now I have good reason to doubt it. For when Benjamin Grant wrote his Descriptive Guide to St. Helena 20 years earlier, Jackson's shop was apparently on the same site as his later Pharmacy - next to what was then the Officers' Mess, but is now the Post Office. So, did he rebuild and enlarge it in 1902 so drastically that they could look like two quite different shops in the photographs?

Yet this raises another query. For when Philip Gosse photographed Warren's 'Pharmacy' in 1937, he featured not Jackson's shop, but the one next door, now the Polytechnic. So, did Warren move the business - and if so, when? Oh for a Jamestown Street Directory! If you think that I must be playing the old 3-card trick with the photographs, I can assure you these are serious questions. If anyone knows the answer, please tell the Editor; Information Officers like to get the facts right about their Island.

Readers, meanwhile, may like to know exactly how the line-up buildings went on the west side of Main Street a hundred years ago. Above the Church, wrote Grant in his Guide of 1883, 'first are three fine large buildings, which are officers' quarters [...]; then the club, the Polytechnic Warehouse, Mr Jackson's showy Dispensary and drapery shop, the commodious officers' Town Mess House, the fine shop called 'The Star', and a neat little shop, to the left of which are the Lower Bazaar, Mr M George's Dispensary, in front of which are three peepul trees [...] and a roofless building called the Canister.'

We see that many of today's shop names are not so modern as they sound. Also, there were two chemists in Main Street 100 years ago. Grant clearly preferred George, 'the oldest established chemist in St Helena', to Jackson with his modern methods. Matthew George, who lived at Kent Cottage, 'may well be styled Doctor George', wrote Grant (p.88), 'since he is often called upon to attend sick persons and more particularly children, when medical practitioners are engaged out of Town, and his advice at all times is valuable.' George's shop still carried its chemist's sign long after he had gone; I think it had a date in the 1840's. Perhaps some readers will remember it.

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