

The St Helena Ambassador

... An Extraordinary Place on a Path to Prosperity



Issue: 11 September 2013

Elizabeth Clingham to attend International Whale Shark Conference

Marine Conservation Officer, Elizabeth Clingham from the Environmental Management Division is to attend the 3rd International Whale Shark Conference to be held in Atlanta, Georgia in October.

The aim of the Conference is to bring together the Whale Shark research community and enable the sharing of knowledge worldwide.

A Whale Shark is the world's largest fish and very little is known about the species. They are listed as vulnerable on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List of threatened species and international protection for this fish is a priority.

Whale Sharks frequent St Helena waters annually and as a result of the numerous and large group sightings in James' Bay in February of this year, Elizabeth was invited to attend this four day conference. To Whale Shark researchers information from small oceanic Islands complete many data gaps.

Elizabeth's trip is being funded by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in the UK and while at the conference Elizabeth will present the Whale Shark data collected on the Island and raise the profile of

St Helena and its marine life. Elizabeth will then encourage international researchers to include St Helena in their research efforts.

Elizabeth said:

"To date St Helena and its mega fauna have been protected by its isolation. When the airport is completed and with a vision of a developed tourism industry we must now start raising awareness of our marine environment with a view to enjoying and protecting it.

"Getting a chance to attend the conference is a valuable step in gaining the underpinning knowledge to do that."



While in Atlanta, Elizabeth will participate in some additional training and commence drafting of procedures for the protection of St Helena's mega fauna.

GIS Technician Off to Gibraltar Conference

GIS Technician, Murray Henry, from the Environmental and Natural Resources Directorate is to attend the UK Overseas Territories GIS Specialists Conference, being held in Gibraltar from 8 to 9 October.

This is the first time for St Helena to be represented at this conference which aims to bring together GIS specialists from across the UK Overseas Territories to discuss topics and share experiences. Topics to be discussed at the conference include GIS and the Environment (using spatial information as a communication tool), GIS for Government (Linking Science to Policy), GIS Best Practice (Benefits of standardising data management presentation and metadata) and GIS and Ecosystem Services (GIS use in valuing ecosystem services and green economic planning).



Continued over page →

Murray will also take part in a workshop focusing on the issues and challenges for UK Overseas Territories in GIS implementation. While at the Conference Murray will note the various issues discussed and network with GIS specialists from other Overseas Territories. Murray is particularly interested in learning about how other Overseas Territories use GIS in their work, about spatial datasets, how they are related to other datasets and how best they can be incorporated into the environmental datasets used within the GIS system on St Helena.

Murray said:

"I am really excited about the opportunity to represent St Helena at an event like this. I am hoping to learn new GIS related techniques and to connect with other GIS users to build some valuable working relationships."

Murray's trip is jointly funded by the St Helena Government and Joint Nature Conservation Committee in the UK. He will leave the Island on 26 September and return on 30 October. GIS or Geographic Information System is designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present all types of geographical data.

Building Inspector Returns from Overseas Training

Recently returning from overseas training was SHG's Building Inspector, Theron Henry.

Theron left the Island in August of last year to undertake a Higher National Certificate course in Building Construction, at the City of Bristol College.

Sponsored by St Helena Government the 10 month academic course required full time attendance and provided an overview of construction methods including Concrete, Timber and Steel. It also highlighted the environmental and sustainable issues involved in Construction, Health and Safety, Quantity Surveying and Professional Projects.

While on the course Theron was also able to visit different construction sites where he could see the composite materials being used.

Theron said:

"Undertaking this course has improved my confidence in building inspections. I will now share the skills that I have learnt with other staff in the Buildings Team to ensure that Building Control is more professional when vetting applications against building regulations approval, offering advice and carrying out building inspections."



"The course also provided the necessary qualifications for me to progress in the field of construction and I am now pursuing the possibility of studying for a degree in Building Engineering, via distance learning."

On his return journey to St Helena Theron took the opportunity to spend three days in Cape Town with Civil and Engineering Consultant, Henry Fagan, viewing structural design drawings in his office and then spending two days on site.

Theron returned to the Island on 18 August 2013 and has already settled back into his normal job role.



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HMS Richmond Enjoys Two Day Visit

The Royal Navy Type 23 Frigate HMS Richmond visited the Island for two days from Thursday 29 to Friday 30 August. Her short stay in James' Bay was a result of being deployed in the South Atlantic for 7 months to promote British interests and provide a continuous security presence in the region. While on this deployment HMS Richmond will undertake maritime security operations, including counter-narcotics and anti-piracy patrols, providing opportunities to work with a number of other navies to further strengthen ties and demonstrate the Royal Navy's commitment to the region.

HMS Richmond's visit to the Island was a particularly joyful one for the Fowler family of St Pauls as parents Sidney and Ingrid Fowler welcomed home their son, Leading Seaman, Jamie Fowler. This is the first time that Jamie has seen his family since leaving the Island 12 ½ years ago. The Commanding Officer, Robert Pedre, invited Jamie's family onboard for tea and were also given a tour of the ship.

A programme of activities had been planned in advance of HMS Richmond's arrival and included tours at Longwood House, tennis matches at Prince Andrew School and a football match against a local side. The majority of HMS Richmond's crew were able to come ashore and take part in these activities.

HMS Richmond also hosted tours onboard for various groups.

Governor Capes and other officials were invited to lunch onboard the ship on arrival and a Sunset Cocktail reception was hosted for 60 people during HMS Richmond's first night in port. Governor Capes returned the favour by hosting a lunch at Plantation House on Friday for the Commanding Officer and 5 members of the crew.

Early risers on Thursday would have seen the HMS Richmond helicopter circling the Island. The helicopter has provided St Helena Government with some useful aerial photos of the Island, requested by the St Helena Fire and Rescue Service, to map out difficult-to-access areas in case of an emergency.

Governor Mark Capes Commented:

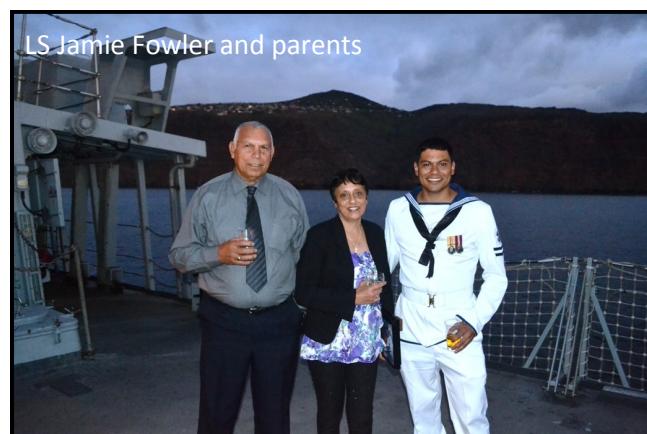
"The presence of one of Her Majesty's warships in James' Bay carries great significance. It brings further reassurance of Great Britain's enduring commitment to the Island and serves as a powerful reminder of the Island's close historical links with the Royal Navy over several centuries.

"The Captain and entire crew of HMS Richmond exemplified the professionalism and high standards of the Royal Navy. I know that all on St Helena will join me in warmly thanking them for their visit and wishing them well as they continue their deployment in the South Atlantic."

HMS Richmond departed the Island in the early evening of Friday 30 August.



Governor Capes and the Commanding Officer of the HMS Richmond



LS Jamie Fowler and parents



HMS Richmond Hosts Reception onboard

School Spruce Project Moves Ahead

Project 'School Spruce' 2013 is moving ahead as each Primary School gets ready for exciting changes to their playgrounds and general school surroundings.

The community-based project aims to visually and physically improve St Helena's three primary schools - St Pauls', Pilling and Harford Primary.

Involved in the project are staff from SHG, the Private Sector, St Helena National Trust, Enterprise St Helena, Civil Society, parents, teachers and the children themselves – all are working towards providing a play area for each school using donated recycled materials. Other proposed improvements include the building of seating areas and a general revamp of the schools. However the extent of the other improvements depend on the amount of funds remaining after the build of the playgrounds – each school has £2500 for improvements, a proportion of which was raised through individual fundraising by the schools.

In this issue we focus on St Pauls' Primary School and what they hope to gain from the 'School Spruce' project.

During sessions with St Pauls' Primary at the beginning of the project, pupils were encouraged to come up with ideas on how they could improve their schools with the money and materials available – children were then able to design their own playground based on their interests and needs. To raise funds for their school playground and improvements St Pauls' Primary organised a sponsored walk as part of this year's Walking Festival. The Conservation Walk was from St Pauls' Primary to Casons. The entire school of approximately 120 children took part in this event, raising around £1300.

St Pauls' Primary will be using a proportion of their funds for improved play facilities. They will be having 2 main play areas, one for early year pupils (aged 3-6) and one for

junior pupils (aged 7-11).

For the early years their playground will consist of a sandpit, a small seesaw, small swing, caterpillar climber, a tunnel and car made out of tyres. The junior playground will contain a balance beam, seesaw, swings, climbing frame and a maze, car, steppers, bridge and tunnel made out of tyres. In addition to this, the playing field at St Pauls' Primary will soon be levelled to provide a safer and improved environment for the children to play sports on.

As well as their new playgrounds St Pauls' Primary will also have new seating areas and planters. If funds permit,

decking outside the Nursery classroom will also enable learning to take place outdoors in warmer weather.

St Pauls' Primary also hopes to procure an interactive projector, 3 CD players and an all-in-one printer; however this is dependent on funds left over after completion of the playgrounds.

Head Teacher of St Pauls' Primary, Pat Williams said: *"The School Spruce project is a wonderful idea for our schools as it will allow us to have further*

funding to upgrade our school, especially our playgrounds as we don't have surplus in our budgets to carry out all that we would like to do.

"St Pauls' playgrounds really do need some new equipment and a facelift. The Parents Teachers Association (PTA) is playing a proactive role in this project and I sincerely would like to thank them all for getting this off the ground for us. Staff and pupils will certainly look forward to the end result of this project which I know is going to take quite a bit of money but can be achieved if we work as a partnership. The PTA has also added their wish list as to what they would like to see happen at school but of course we have to prioritise the needs.

"Thanks to all involved in the Spruce Project and good luck!"



Aerial Shots of St Helena taken by the HMS Richmond Helicopter



Jamestown and Harbour



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