

# The St Helena Ambassador

... An Extraordinary Place on a Path to Prosperity

Issue: 1 November 2012

*hello!*

and welcome to the first edition of the St Helena Ambassador, issued by the SHG Press Office. This newsletter, for internal and external distribution, replaces previous newsheets and is designed for a varied audience, including Saints overseas. It will chart the path that St Helena is taking, at this time of immense change across the Island. And we will balance serious news against lighter, more community –focused stories. Naturally, as a new publication, we welcome feedback at the contact points provided overleaf.

## Milestone for St Helena Airport!

3 November 2012, marked exactly one year since the signing of the airport contract between St Helena Government and Basil Read. One year on, enormous progress has been made, both in terms of the airport itself and preparations in general across St Helena. Basil Read has now moved out of the mobilisation phase and into full construction, employing more than 300 people, of which over 200 are Saints. The workforce has

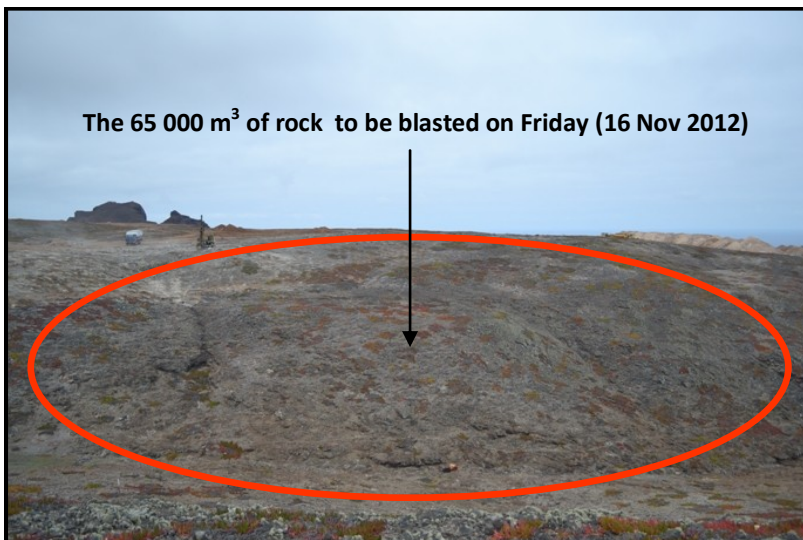
clocked up over 300 000 hours without any injuries. Let us hope this excellent record continues. The remarkable 14 km Haul Road from Rupert's to the airport site is now in place, and for the first time in St Helena's history, a large ship has berthed



Work continues filling in Dry Gut

alongside. The NP Glory 4 (the Basil Read ship) now regularly calls at the purposely built temporary jetty in Rupert's Valley, bringing vital heavy plant and other supplies. Its last shipment included 13 containers of explosives to continue blasting operations at Prosperous Bay. A major blast is planned for next Friday, using 32 tonnes of explosives to blast 65 000 m<sup>3</sup> of rock. This type of blast will now be common over the next 18 months, as Basil Read generates 20 000 m<sup>3</sup> of rock a day. This rockfill is needed to fill Dry Gut, and this will mean raising and lowering Prosperous Bay Plain by various amounts at various places. This is an incredible engineering challenge which will be tackled day and night. The New Year will mark the start of the night shift.

The 65 000 m<sup>3</sup> of rock to be blasted on Friday (16 Nov 2012)



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The workforce is now housed at the newly-built Bradley's Camp, which can accommodate 130 workers.

BR's Island Director, Deon De Jager remarked: *'I cannot believe that a year has gone by so quickly! Just a year since Charles and I first came to the Island. What we have achieved I can only describe as remarkable.'*

*'We faced various challenges: to get the right team together (Expats and Saints); to construct a brand new temporary jetty; to construct a camp in time to accommodate skilled labour; to construct the 14 km Haul Road from Rupert's to Prosperous Bay Plain to allow us to move heavy plant and material for the airport construction; to construct a temporary fuel facility to enable us to feed all of these machines, and last but not least, to construct an access road down into Dry Gut where the bulk of the work lies!'*

*This would not have been possible if it wasn't for the fantastic **teamwork!** From everyone at SHG, its Access Office, DfID, Halcrow, the Basil Read off-Island team headed up by Jimmy Johnston, and of course my team on site. Without all of these people, working together, this would not have been possible.*

*'I am happy to report that we are on time and are looking forward to an even more successful 2nd year – the real work starts now!'*

Governor Capes added:

*'Basil Read is doing a tremendous job on what is a very difficult and challenging project. They are making great progress and know what they are doing. I am sure that they and the people on the Island are going to be very happy with the product in a few years time.'*



Dinner is prepared at Bradley's Camp



Heavy work in Dry Gut



Spreading the rockfill in Dry Gut



Ascending the 14km Haul Road



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## A STRESS-FREE ENVIRONMENT FOR ST HELENA'S OLDEST RESIDENT



The Island's oldest resident, Jonathan the Giant Tortoise, who resides at Plantation House (the home of the Governor) is being protected against over-enthusiastic visitors with the building of a new fenced walkway alongside the Paddock.

The new layout is designed to satisfy visitors, but also to give Jonathan (and David, Emma, Fredrika and Myrtle) some privacy from eager tourists, who too frequently ignore the '2 metre rule' to get that once in a life time snapshot with the oldest known living animal on the planet.

Tortoises are sensitive creatures and Jonathan, as we know, is getting very old, having famously exceeded his life expectancy of 150 years by probably 30 years or more. At this great age, his senses and ability to eat are impaired, and we can consider him to be a rather frail old gentleman - one who has good and bad days. We

wish to do everything possible to extend the latter part of Jonathan's life by protecting his welfare and to ensure that he is not overly disturbed or stressed. As tourism grows on the Island, properly caring for Jonathan and his friends inevitably means that access to them must be restricted. The design has been put together to improve visibility of all five tortoises right across the length of the new walkway, as well as giving delightful views of Plantation House and linking visitors to the popular forest paths. Jonathan declined to comment, but we are certain that he and his friends will enjoy their improved home.

## New faces on-Island and soon to arrive...



Already on Island, Rachael Cornall,  
Radiographer



Soon to arrive, Andrew Crowe,  
Housing Executive



Also soon to arrive, John Gilchrist,  
Audit Executive

Also coming  
soon...Martin David,  
Prison Manager



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## IT'S NOT JUST STATISTICS...IT'S THE BASIS FOR FUTURE PLANNING

Whether you know it or not, the Island is shaped by the work of its National Statistics Office—which produces the facts and figures that are the basis for good policy and decision making, allowing us to better plan the road ahead for the Island.

Impending air access and the fundamental changes on St Helena which accompany this mean that good evidence-based decisions are more important than ever.

The Statistics Office's Mission is: **To produce relevant, timely and accurate statistics for St Helena and her people, and to provide reliable evidence for effective decision making.**

Objectivity and impartiality are watchwords.

Key areas of work are collection and processing of data, and making sure that this information is available to anyone who needs it. Reviewing these results over time allows us to monitor the effectiveness of Government policy and understand changes over time. This in turn allows us to better plan future policy changes.

The Office is currently reviewing the range of statistics it produces and the way these are communicated.

*If you have any views on what information you would like or how you would like it presented, then please get in touch (details below).*

### The Statistics Team, November 2012

L to R: Justine Joshua (Statistics Assistant), Kelly Clingham (Senior Statistics Assistant) Dr. Paula McLeod (Statistician), Natasha Stevens (Statistics Assistant)



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## AND FINALLY, TWO KEY FIGURES COMPLETE THEIR WORK AND DEPART ST HELENA



Mike Dean, Tourism Development Executive



Robin Swaisland, Public Sector Modernisation Leader, and wife Nanette

After sterling work on St Helena, two key members of the Public Service complete their duties and depart on the RMS on 21 November 2012. Mike Dean, has been pivotal in raising the standards of the Island's tourism offer, and much else besides. Robin Swaisland has led a multitude of improvements in professionalising the way that the Island's Government operates—too numerous to mention individually. Both will be sorely missed. At a farewell reception he hosted at Plantation House HE Governor Mark Capes paid tribute to the pair: ***'Mike and Robin are leaving soon having made an excellent contribution to St Helena. Both have been willing at all times to take on work that really went beyond their core responsibilities—allowing SHG to make the most of their energy, skills and experience. It is that positive 'can do' attitude that is so important to making progress here. We will miss them but I sense that we may see them again one day. Knowing the affection both hold for St Helena they will take a close interest in it's future and I feel sure that they will want to return at some point to renew friendships and to see how the Island is progressing. You both leave with our grateful thanks and best wishes.'***