

The St Helena Ambassador

... An Extraordinary Place on a Path to Prosperity



Issue 29 March 2015

Students Represent St Helena in UK Commonwealth Day

Every year on the second Monday in March Commonwealth Day is celebrated across the Commonwealth by communities, civil society organisations and schools. The theme for this year's Commonwealth Day was 'A Young Commonwealth'. St Helena took part in the Day's celebrations with special Commonwealth assemblies in each Island school, a flag raising ceremony and activities planned around this year's theme.

St Helena was also represented in the UK by students Lee Yon and Robyn Sim, who took part in a prestigious programme of events. The objective of the programme was to introduce the youth to the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Parliamentary democracy.

Robyn and Lee had a packed programme in London where they were able to learn about the work of a High Commissioner and the functions of a High Commission, find out what the role of an MP was and participate in a session focusing on 'A Young Commonwealth'. They were also able to tour the Houses of Parliament and the Palace of Westminster, attend the Commonwealth Day Observance at Westminster Abbey and visit the London Eye.

The conference brought together a group of 31 young people aged between 18 and 25 from around the Commonwealth. Both Robyn and Lee found the day exciting and informative and were able to meet lots of different young people from other Commonwealth

Countries.

Robyn

commented:

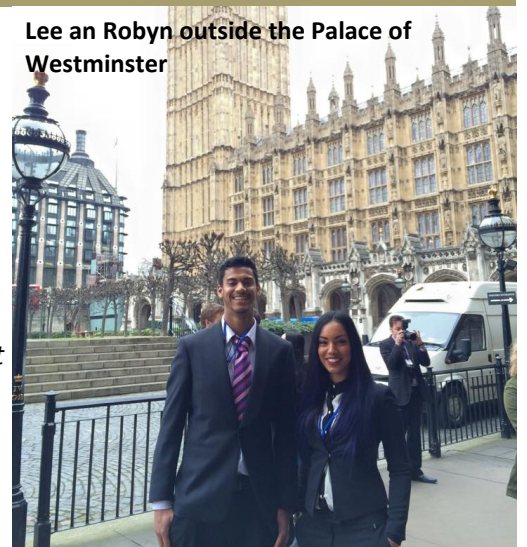
'It was a great opportunity to participate in this event and represent St Helena's youth, but the highlight of the day was being given the chance to interact with other people

from around the

Commonwealth. It was a pleasure to share experiences, learn about other countries of the Commonwealth and to be able to relate to each other. Despite it being a bit disappointing, but understandable, that we didn't get to see the Queen personally, we did it in a congregation among the Royal Family during the church service which was terrific.'

Commonwealth Day provides an opportunity to promote understanding on global issues, international co-operation and the work of Commonwealth organisations. This year's theme highlighted and recognised the capacity, contribution and potential of young people, who play a vital role within sustainable development and democracy.

Lee an Robyn outside the Palace of Westminster

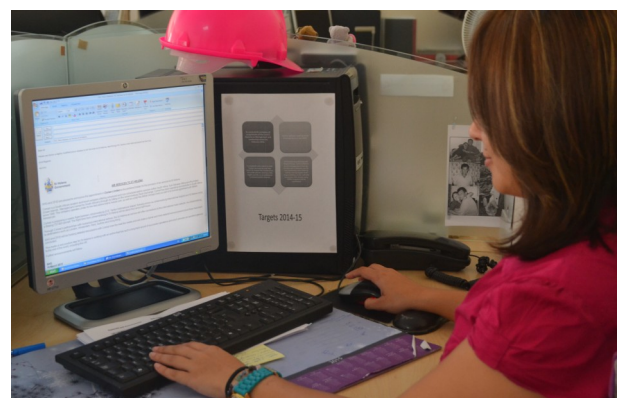


Young Saint Makes History

Pictured is the moment on Monday 16 March 2015 when SHG Press Officer, Kerisha Stevens, made history on St Helena, pressing the 'Send' button to transmit around the world the news that St Helena had selected the airline (Comair) and main hub (Johannesburg OR Tambo airport) for the first ever air service to the Island.

Kerisha said: *'It was only when a colleague pointed it out, that I realised the significance and distinction of the moment - that I was sending truly wonderful news for St Helena.'*

SHG and DFID will now conclude negotiations with Comair and further details will follow.



Commonwealth Day on St Helena



Student Vice-President Chrystabel Greentree raises the Commonwealth flag



Invited Guests at the Flag Raising Ceremony

Walking Festival 2015



During March 2015 the St Helena Tourist Office has arranged a programme of walks aimed at promoting and celebrating St Helena's natural environment.

St Helena has hosted an annual Walking Festival since 2009 and the Post Box Walks have been a particular favourite for many - with participants

describing the Island's scenery as 'spectacular'. The Festival of Walking is not only for the 'fit', but is aimed at people with a range of walking abilities. Past Festivals of Walking have been very well attended, even despite bad weather. This year is no different. Some of the comments received from participants were: "fantastic walks" and "beautiful scenery".

The Historical Town Walk was regarded as "a very good introduction to St Helena and Jamestown. I would recommend all visitors to take this walk, as Basil George is an excellent guide and you get to see so much in only a small area."



Tourism officer, Christina Stroud commented: "The Festival of Walking is a great way to bring the community together and the programme has been put together to include walks that are easy, moderate and difficult - appealing to people with different walking abilities, including youngsters. We would love to encourage more charities and organisations to participate in the Festival of Walking and use it for fund

raising."

In fact, this year the St Helena National Conservation Group has arranged a Coast to Coast sponsored walk, while the St Helena Ladies Craft Fundraising Group has organised a Plantation Forest Sponsored Walk on Saturday 21 March, to support senior citizens and the less privileged in our Island community.

Christina concluded:

"We would like to encourage everyone to participate and enjoy the walks that are on offer."

To view the Festival of Walking schedule, please visit: <http://sthelenatourism.com/what-to-do/events/festival-walking/>



This year Jersey, Channel Islands, will be hosting the 2015 NatWest Island Games, from 27 June to 3 July. 24 Islands, including St Helena, will compete in 18 sports - more than 2,700 competitors will be taking part this year.

Ten athletes on St Helena have been selected by the National Amateur Sports Association St Helena (NASAS), because of their talent, dedication and training. Six Shooters - Jordie Andrews, Madolyn Andrews, Chelsea Benjamin, Jodie Scipio-Constantine, Kayleigh Harris and 2013 Gold Medallist, Simon Henry; two Golfers - Martin Buckley and Patrick Sim; Swimmer - Ben Dillon and Athlete - Alexia Reynolds have all been selected to participate in this year's Games. The team will be accompanied to Jersey by three officials, Gavin George, Pat Henry and Barbara Osborne.

Chairperson of NASAS, Nick Stevens, commented: *"I am really pleased for all selected to take part in this year's Games, which rewards them for all their hard work. NASAS believes that it's all about creating opportunities for people who are committed to their sport, and it's a fantastic opportunity for these athletes to participate in their chosen sport on a world stage."*

The team will depart St Helena on 20 June 2015.

We caught up with one of the first time competitors, Alexia Reynolds, to find out what it feels like to have been

selected for the Island Games, in the 100m Sprint and Long Jump.

Alexia said:

"I'm proud to be representing my Island as it's a huge opportunity for me and will be a great experience. I hope to meet new people, learn and improve my skills as an athlete and I hope this experience will boost my confidence for other Games to come. I will be participating in the 100m Sprint and the Long Jump. I chose to compete in these particular sports, as I enjoy them so much and find they come naturally to me."



Alexia is physically preparing herself for the Games by doing fitness training, Boot Camp and Sprint training.

The first Island Games was held in 1985 on the Isle of Man with the aim of providing hundreds of sportsmen and women with the opportunity to compete and enjoy international competition with other small Island nations.

Primary Schools Gala Day

The Primary Schools Swimming Gala is held Annually, providing all schools with the opportunity to compete with one another and for pupils to showcase their swimming skills.

On Friday, 13 March 2015, all three primary schools gathered at the Swimming Pool in Jamestown with great competitive spirit dressed in their school colours. Headteacher of Pilling Primary School, Elaine Benjamin and Assistant Education Director, Wendy Benjamin gave opening speeches followed by a demonstration of swimming techniques by the Youth Team who will be competing in the Commonwealth Games later this year.

What followed was a great success and much excitement was felt as records were broken by swimmers in a number of events. At the end of the day, Chairman of the National Amateur Sports Association, Nick Stevens, gave a closing speech before the presentation of the Gala Cup by new Director of Education Shirley Wahler - who announced both St Pauls Primary and Pilling Primary as joint winners with 114 points each.

Head teacher Elaine Benjamin commented on her School's success:

"We are proud that Pilling has secured first position again this year, being tied winners with St Pauls on this occasion. Pilling has won the Gala for many consecutive years now even though this year saw tough competition. We are delighted."

Headteacher of St Pauls Primary, Pat Williams, added:

"It was wonderful for St Pauls to finally get to the top spot



which I think shocked us all - but the skills and techniques shown were fantastic. I think from this event we can all see the potential in our children who could go on to participate in the Commonwealth Games!"

On coming second with 89 points, Headteacher of Harford Primary, Carlene Crowie, commented:

"Even though we did not come first place our children's performance in swimming gave the rest of our school the motivation to strive to do well for next year's Gala."

Awards were also presented at the end of the day to Brooke Yon from St Pauls who was awarded Female Swimmer of the Day and Aiden Yon-Stevens from Pilling Primary who achieved Male Swimmer of the Day.



Empowering Women - Empowering Humanity: *Picture It!* was the theme of this year's International Women's Day – a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their Communities and nations.

This year's theme envisions a world where each woman and girl can exercise their choices – participating in politics, getting an education, having an income, and living in societies free from violence and discrimination.

St Helena celebrated International Women's Day and the theme of empowerment by hosting a special event at the Mule Yard on Sunday 8 March 2015. WISH (Women's Issues St Helena) and the Girl Guides Association are both organisations dedicated to empowering women and young girls on St Helena and jointly organised the event - which involved performances from a variety of female artists, and performers.

Human Rights Facilitator, Catherine Turner, commented:

"The day was very successful. The weather stayed



beautiful, there was a good crowd throughout the day enjoying a relaxed evening of music and performance."
"We have had lots of very positive comments, some new people wanting to get involved in WISH, and WISH and the Girl Guides Association enjoyed working with each other so much that we are planning a couple of new projects in the next few weeks."



In the West, International Women's Day was first observed as a popular event after 1977 when the United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8 as the UN Day for women's rights and world peace. In Russia it has been celebrated since 1913. In Nepal it is a public holiday for women only, and in some of the Eastern European Countries there it is a public holiday with women being given presents and cards.

On display were a variety of posters relating to women's issues, including employment rights, safeguarding and domestic abuse.

Around 200 people attended Sunday's busy event and enjoyed singing, dancing and poetry readings from the Girl Guides, songs from the Bug Eyed Tuna girls' choir, Tracy Thomas, The O'Keeffe sisters and the Big Easy. The Girl Guides were entertained by Creative Saint Helena's circus equipment, the Motor Forum Art Project and by taking part in a series of interviews asking girls of all ages what they want to be when they grow up. Refreshments were on sale from the Guides tea and cake stand, and Get Carters.

Catherine concluded:

"It is important to observe International Women's Day, to remember women of the past, some of whom gave their lives insisting on equal rights for women and girls. We need to remember too those that are currently suffering violence and inequality, being forced into lives of slavery and prostitution. Plus the six million girls that are not getting an education."

"We have come a long way in the last century, but women still form the large majority of victims of domestic and sexual violence. There is still a long way to go to reach a common understanding that we are all people of equal value all equally deserving of respect and dignity."



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