

The St Helena Ambassador

... An Extraordinary Place on a Path to Prosperity

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World Book Day 2017

On 2 March 2017, over 100 countries across the globe, including St Helena, celebrated the 20th annual 'World Book Day.'

Activities in schools around the world included comic making, quizzes, and even '*Reading Together*' – an initiative which links two schools via video conference to read the same book aloud.

This year, for the first time, the Public Library hosted World Book Day.

Twenty-five children of varying ages attended the event and took part in a range of activities including craft work, quizzes, word searches and, obviously, reading.

Taking advantage of the clear, warm weather, the children gathered outside in the Castle Gardens just before lunch, where, under a tree, Teeny Lucy read aloud a well-known story entitled '*The Tiger Who Came to Tea*'. This was very engaging – the children interacting with the reader throughout.

After a day of fun, the children all took a break and finished the afternoon with the viewing of the popular film '*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*'.

Staff at the Library were very pleased with the success of the day and thanks all who supported and contributed to such a special event.





An article entitled *'Up close and personal with the whale sharks of St Helena'* has appeared on the website of popular marine-themed journal *'DIVE Magazine'*.

The article was written by DIVE Magazine writer, Mark Russell, who recently visited St Helena. Many will remember Mark's presentation in the Museum entitled *'Learn about the International Scuba Diving Tourism Industry'*.

In his article, Mark reminisces on his first ever Whale Shark encounter – a 4m juvenile in Ras Umm Sid, Egypt. Although the encounter was brief and Mark didn't get too close, he ranked the experience among his greatest – that was until he came to St Helena.

On just his first trip out during his time on-Island, Mark got to see an adult whale shark from on-board their boat. By trip two, Mark had already lived out a dream; spending thirty minutes swimming with one of the giants of the sea.

He commented:

"Some people might have expressed disappointment that there was 'only one' whale shark, but for me, it was one of the most singularly magical experiences of my life, more than 17 years after I first learned to dive. The first time might have been great, but this was far greater – closer, more intimate; alone in the water with a whale shark in one of the most remote and isolated locations on the planet."

Mark was also joined on the trip by Karl Thrower, who currently resides on Island. Mark was very grateful to Karl who managed to capture the magical moments through some amazing underwater photography.

Mark has announced that a full report on his trip to St Helena will be published in the summer print of DIVE Magazine.

He concluded:

"Combined with the experience of visiting St. Helena – remote and isolated but so very much alive – this is one encounter that will remain indelibly etched in my memory."

Reference: www.divemagazine.co.uk



Dutch Tall Ship, the Gulden Leeuw (Golden Lion) arrived in James Bay on Tuesday, 7 March 2017.

The vessel, which was built in 1937, is one of a few tall ships delivering the 'Class Afloat' programme. Operating the scheme for 30 years, West Island College International prides themselves as *'one of the world's leading providers for experimental education.'*

The Gulden Leeuw stayed in James' Bay for a few days, departing the Island on Friday, 10 March 2017. During their time here, the 35 student's enrolled in the 'Class Afloat' programme, enjoyed



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some free time touring St Helena and enjoying the marine life.

On the afternoon of Thursday, 9 March 2017, a friendly football game was held at Francis Plain where a few students, including girls, took on a team of local footballers. This was enjoyed by all, with the students even joining the local team before the end of the match. The game was followed in the evening by a live band performance at the Mule Yard.

Some of the students have declared St Helena as the best stop of the voyage so far.

Severe Sea Conditions

A Severe Swell Forecast was issued for Monday, 20 February, with the expectation of 3-4 metre swells around the Island.

As the RMS left the harbour en-route to Ascension, large north-westerly swells rolled into St Helena bringing with them high waves that would make even a veteran surfer nervous.

During the earlier part of the week, waves crashed in hard at the Sea Front and could be heard from offices in lower Jamestown. Vehicle owners had to restrain from parking too close to the railings as salty seawater splashed over into the road above. Despite the ferocity of the South Atlantic, the rough seas did provide some excitement with many of the community taking a stroll down to the Wharf just to witness Mother Nature's power.



Large waves at the Sea Front on Tuesday, 21 February



Photo by St Helena Tourism

The Festival of Walking is an annual event organised by St Helena Tourism in partnership with the St Helena National Trust (SHNT) and St Helena Nature Conservation Group (SNCG).

The event aims to showcase the beautiful walks and scenery that St Helena has to offer, while promoting fitness and a healthy lifestyle.

The idea for such an event came about in 2009 when Tourism recognised walking as a popular pastime for locals and visitors alike. The programme involves many walks in different locations all over the Island, varying in difficulty; allowing all walking abilities to participate.

The duration of the programme differs and is often planned to coincide with the arrival and departure of the RMS St Helena, allowing visitors to also take part in the walks.

This year's Festival of Walking started on Saturday, 11 March 2017, with a moderate walk to Blue Point. It culminated with the ever-popular Lot's Wife's Ponds walk and Mackintosh walk on Friday, 19 March 2017.

Tourism Officer, Christina Plato, commented: *"The programme does differ each year although the favourite Post Box walks e.g. Diana's Peak and Lot's Wife's Ponds are included on the programme each year. This year SNCG devised a new walk called 'Port to Port' whereby there were thirty participants. We also added walks that had*

not been on the programme for some time."

The new 'Port to Port' walk involved a journey beginning from St Helena Airport and finishing at Jamestown Wharf. The route went via the Weather Station, Mulberry Gut, Deadwood, Flagstaff, Sugar Loaf, Rupert's, Sampson's Battery and Sister's Walk.

During the Festival of Walking last year, in 2016, participation numbers broke the 100 mark. This year all participants will receive a certificate and the person who completes most walks will receive a prize.



Photo by St Helena Tourism