

# The St Helena Ambassador

... An Extraordinary Place on a Path to Prosperity

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## St Helena at Glasgow Commonwealth Games

The Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games has now come to an end and most of the athletes will have returned to their home countries. This is not the case for St Helena's small team who has still to travel the 8,000 miles by air to Cape Town and the 1,200 nautical miles by ship to St Helena. They will, when they arrive home, have been the longest time-travelled team to the Commonwealth Games - a record in itself.

Having participated in shooting, badminton and swimming the team reported that they have thoroughly enjoyed the Games. No medals were won, but our athletes won the hearts of many people from many nations who praised them for the courage they had shown and the effort they had made in participating in the Games.

*"It was at first a daunting experience", said one of the athletes, "but we were soon made to feel at home and enjoyed every moment of our time in Glasgow."*

The athletes are returning with a new experience of exposure, a new level of skills, fond memories of the Games and an added list of new-found friends. One participant said: *"It is an experience I shall never forget".*

And there were other memorable events for the athletes. One team member was honoured to speak with Her Majesty the Queen, two others sat down for a meal hosted for her Majesty, and others were in conversation with Royalty at the Barry Buddon shooting range.



Eric Benjamin, Chairman of St Helena's Commonwealth Games Association said: *"These Games gave St Helena the greatest positive publicity, attracting the attention of reporters and broadcasters who made St Helena known to the world."* Facebook comments strongly supported his statement.

Attendance at this event has also guaranteed St Helena funding for a minimum of five

places at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Queensland, Australia. *"I trust that this will be an incentive for all sportsmen to train diligently and raise standards over the coming four years in order to claim a place at these Games"* said Eric.

Eric added that the standard of competition at the Commonwealth Games is greater than at an Island Games, with the next due to take place in Jersey next year. He said that his Committee is doing everything it can do to send a Team to the Jersey Games, as it was Jersey who brought St Helena back into the international Games arena with their generous donations in 1997. *"However, to do this, new funding will have to be raised"* said Eric. His Committee welcome suggestions as to how this can be achieved.

When the RMS St Helena next returns from Cape Town to the Island, she will bring the team members home.

Eric concluded:

*"I am proud of our team for their bravery to travel and compete in international competition and for the manner in which they represented St Helena. They deserve a warm welcome home."*





## Primary Schools' Open Days

Over the past two weeks, St Helena's Primary Schools have been opening their doors to parents, guardians and members of the public for their annual 'Open Days' and prize presentations.

The aim is to let people see the children's work and see pupils working during their normal lesson time.

Pilling Primary kicked off with their Open Day on Wednesday 30 July starting with a prize presentation recognising pupils' outstanding efforts and achievements made throughout the year. Certificates for Standard Attainment Test results (SATs) and book prizes were also awarded. The school also performed a musical piece to showcase their musical and singing talents.

Headteacher Elaine Benjamin commented:

*"Parents are very supportive of this, and are always keen to come in on an open day and see their child perform. We had a brilliant attendance and some great comments and feedback."*

Harford Primary held their Open Day on Tuesday 5 August 2014 and parents gathered at the Harford Community Centre in the morning to watch the pupils perform small sketches and musical pieces in year groups - followed by a Prize Presentation. In her opening remarks, Headteacher Carlene Crowie spoke of the importance of Primary education and preparing children for Prince Andrew School and helping them towards a brighter future.

Some of the sketches were entitled, 'Stir up the Porridge', performed by Nursery, and 'Cindy' performed by Year 5/6 - a modern performance based on 'Cinderella' with local places included such as the Consulate Hotel and Joshua's Taxi.

Certificates were awarded to children in each year group for the highest achiever and best effort.

Carlene commented:

*"Our open day displayed all of the children's' work, various projects and artwork which parents and the public were very pleased with. They were overwhelmed by the children's' performances, and we had great feedback about what we do as a school."*

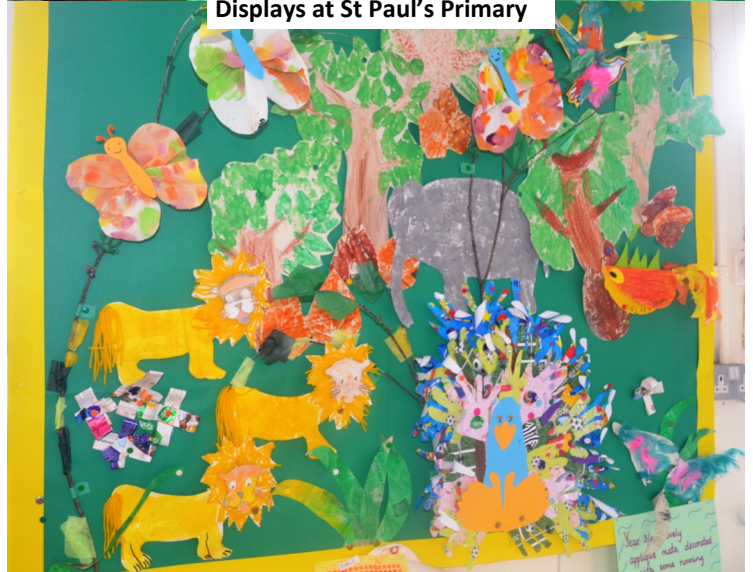
St Paul's Primary brought an end to the Open Days for 2014 on Wednesday 6 August, with performances from Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils. Both groups performed small drama sketches, dances, and songs for their parents in the school hall - followed by their prize giving ceremony. A presentation was shown at the end showcasing activities during the school-year. Parents were then invited to take refreshments and browse the school to view children's work on display.

Headteacher Pat Williams said:

*"I think everything went very well and parents seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves."*



Displays at St Paul's Primary



Pilling Primary Pupils at their Open Day



Pilling Primary Crafts



Harford Primary Performers



## St Helena Shares Experiences with Shetland Islands

The Glasgow Commonwealth Games has been on the tip of everyone's tongue for the past few weeks, and as part of the celebrations the Shetland Islands held a week long local celebration in which St Helena featured.

With funding from the Big Lottery Fund, the event began on 28 July 2014 with the focus on a number of different countries and territories participating in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. The Shetland Islands chose to concentrate on St Helena, Jamaica, Ghana, Canada and Malaysia and held a number of sports, cultural and social events related to these countries during a week of events.

St Helena participated in a video conference with the Shetland Islands on Wednesday 30 July. Chairman of the National Amateur Sports Association (NASAs), Eric Benjamin, Tourism Project Manager, Merrill Joshua and Pamela Murray from Creative St Helena took part from St Helena and connected with Robert Thomson, a Fetlar Island Development Worker and his colleagues from the Shetlands.

The aim of the discussion was to compare the different lifestyles and cultures on both Islands. Topics discussed included the economy, industries, Island Games, immigration, local art, the Airport and tourism development.



*discussing these and freely sharing information, it can help everyone. We were especially interested in how St Helena is attracting back many Islanders who have been working away, as this is a real challenge we face. We look forward to keeping in touch."*

Merrill added:

*"The video call with Robert Thomson and his colleagues was fascinating.*

*"We have many similarities between the two Islands and it became apparent we were empathetic to each other's situation, despite being in two different Hemispheres. I was eager to emphasise that the Shetland Islands played a huge part in the early stages of development of SHAPE.*

*"The wealth of knowledge about St Helena Island by Robert was impressive. He was able to comment on St Helena facts and current affairs and made reference to what the Shetland Islands was like before the oil boom, which is similar to the construction of our Airport. Robert also commented on the MFV Extractor and wished our local fishermen the best of luck.*

*"It was good to meet residents of remote islands who have an interest in St Helena. Eric Benjamin suggested that we should establish a video link between our schools and the Shetlands to learn from each other, and we will stay in contact with our friends from Fetlar."*



Robert commented:

*"We were very pleased with how the video conference went. Many small islands all over the world face similar issues and by*

## Governor Capes Welcomes Senior Colleagues

The Governor and Mrs Capes welcomed to the Island new senior colleagues - Chief Executive Economic Development (CEED) Niall O'Keeffe and Chief Auditor, Phil Sharman - at a special reception held at Plantation House on 24 July 2014.

The Governor extended a warm welcome to Niall and his wife Aine and wished them a happy and successful stay. Noting that Niall was taking up his new role at an exciting moment in St Helena's history, Governor Capes said:

*"There is much challenging work ahead of you to help prepare St Helena to make the most of the opportunities that will come with air access in just 18 months or so from now. But you inherit an energetic team at Enterprise St Helena, plus a strong and effective Deputy in Susan O'Bey. Combined with your valuable skills and experience, I am confident that we will see much progress in the busy months ahead."*

In warmly welcoming Phil Sharman and his wife Sarah-Jane, the Governor said:

*"I'm pleased to welcome back to St Helena Phil and Sarah-Jane who were here in the 1990s. Phil served St Helena well then as Chief Auditor and I have no doubt that he will do so again now. That he and Sarah-Jane wanted to return for a further three years speaks well for St Helena. It is interesting to note that having arrived by sea, when Niall and Aine and Phil and Sarah-Jane leave St Helena at the end of their time here - they will leave by air."*



## Governor Opens New Media Centre

The new media centre of the South Atlantic Media Services (SAMS) was officially opened on 25 July 2014 by His Excellency Governor Capes.

Situated in the Castle Gardens, Jamestown, the new media centre is a permanent home for SAMS Radio and the Sentinel newspaper.

In the presence of invited guests, Chairman of the SAMS Board Terry Richards welcomed everyone and remarked on the successful 2 ½ years of the media service. Special thanks were given to building contractor Ronald Williams and his team for their tremendous work on renovating the building, to SURE South Atlantic Ltd for their delivery and maintenance of the SAMS radio network, to SHG for their support throughout and to the SAMS dedicated team and all who have contributed to the success of the organisation.

The building was blessed by Father Dale Bowers, followed by the cutting of the ribbon by the Governor who formally declared the opening of the new media centre.

Governor Capes commented:

*"This is really special day for St Helena and a very proud one now that we have a new home for SAMS. St Helena is changing, developing and going in a new direction and it is absolutely crucial to the Island that it has an objective and sustainable media organisation that people can rely on and trust - one that has a true interest in the development of the Island, particularly community development."*



*"SAMS radio and the Sentinel have given us a real piece of documentation that tells us in pictures and in words what's happened in our community, and that's a really valuable thing to have - it's already being used in our schools as an educational tool."*

*"Thank you to all who have made SAMS a success, it is a truly great service for St Helena and I will always look back on the development of SAMS as one of the great achievements of these past few years. Well done to you all."*

## St Paul's Primary - Big Write Up

As part of St Pauls Primary School's on-going initiative to encourage and promote children's love of reading and writing, the 'Big Write Up' was held on 28 July 2014.

The children focused on the theme of animals and sea life and were split into groups to enable them to focus on individual projects. Years 5/6 covered topics from animal myths to developing their own information leaflets - using laptops brought from home.

Sherell Thomas (English Advanced Skills Teacher) organised the day and said:

*"We have students in the class who aspire to be journalists, and 'The Big Write Up' allowed them to be journalists for the day, conducting research, putting it into context, designing and working with equipment they don't normally use at school but which professional writers use every day."*

All paper based projects will be collated into a giant school book.

Sherell highlighted that throughout the day her class would be focusing on vocabulary, connectives, openings and punctuation.

Danika Ellick and Myla Thomas, both aged 10, said they enjoy activity days such as this, as it brings fun into learning. Both girls said that English was not their favourite subject, but the 'Big Write Up' allowed them to learn in a way that they found enjoyable.

Speaking about making presentations in the School Hall, Danika and Myla commented:

*"Usually I am quite afraid to give presentations and to speak in front of large groups, but when everyone has to do that, it makes it easier."*

Deputy Head Teacher Nicky Adams emphasised the importance of 'The Big Write' day, which allows students to not only focus on writing but their speaking and listening skills too. Her class focused on lions and whales in the land and sea kingdom.



Nicky commented:

*"It is about how the students see the world of animals, how they research and interpret them and how it fits into their world. I want to encourage a love for research and to encourage creativity. There is a lot of independent learning occurring in the class today, as now they have their topics and they are focused on learning and completing their work. One student is fascinated with the 'Lion King' story and their work is going to focus on their favourite paragraph in that book."*

A different scene was present in the Nursery class, where students focused on creativity through texture and being able to re-tell a story in their own way with images - from gluing sequins to form squids, painting sharks and building crabs. These activities allow them to develop visual storytelling skills before they reach reception, when reading development will begin in earnest.