

The St Helena Ambassador

... An Extraordinary Place on a Path to



Issue: 15. January 2014

First Cruise Liner Visit for 2014



The first cruise liner to visit St Helena for 2014 anchored in James' Bay on Tuesday 7 January at 11.30am. En-route from Walvis Bay, South Africa, to Dakar, Senegal, the MV Costa Neoromantica enjoyed a six hour stopover at St Helena in glorious sunshine. This is the Costa Neoromantica's first visit to the Island. Onboard were 1347 passengers with 352 booked on pre-arranged tours and other passengers preferring to explore the streets of Jamestown and the St Helena countryside at their own pace.

Passengers booked on pre-arranged tours were able to view popular St Helena tourist spots, such as Napoleon's Tomb, Napoleon's House, Stitches Ridge, Plantation Grounds, Ladder Hill and Jamestown.

Cruise Ship visits are welcomed by St Helena Tourism, promoting the Island to international shipping markets and increasing positive reviews by travellers to potential visitors. Tourism Manager Merrill Joshua, commented on Tuesday's visit:

"Longwood House, in particular, was in huge demand and taxi services were in even greater demand. On this occasion, Plantation House was relatively quiet. The general feedback from tourism related businesses included the language barrier slightly slowing sales -but most businesses were happy and prospered from the cruise ship visit. Congestion on the roads at key points was the extent of any other major concern."

"Every cruise ship visit brings a different nature of visitors, and we have greatly benefited from this last call."

Alongside the tourism benefits of visiting cruise ships, their visits also play a significant role in contributing towards the

Island's economy and revenue.

Financial Secretary Colin Owen said:

"The arrival of each cruise ship to St Helena is positive news for the economy and revenue figures. Significant revenue is generated from immigration fees but this is dependent on tourists landing on St Helena. We are currently estimating a total revenue stream from immigration fees from cruise ships of £25,000 per annum. Each passenger will also spend money on the Island, which helps support local businesses - this can be significant but all depends on the length of stay of each cruise ship."

Government Economist Ian Smyth added:

"The cruise industry's recovery from both the global recession and some high profile incidents presents a significant opportunity for St Helena. For example Costa Crociere, a major cruise operator is seeking new destinations for its smaller ships, and our location off the coast of Africa and on the route between Australia, the Far East and Europe, puts us in a good position to take advantage of this industry trend. To reap the benefits for our economy, we need to be ready to showcase the full range of experiences St Helena has to offer visitors, even if they are only ashore for a few hours. The opportunity to sample this beautiful Island will hopefully encourage some of them to return for a longer stay once the airport is open."

Passengers who came ashore on Tuesday were seen taking in the sights of Georgian Jamestown and buying local products at stalls in the Grand Parade.

The MV Costa Neoromantica departed the Island at 6pm, bound for Dakar.



What it means to be a Councillor on St Helena

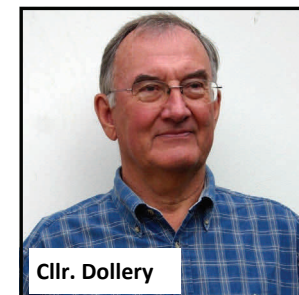
A Bye-Election to elect a Councillor to fill a vacant seat on Legislative Council (following the resignation of Councillor Tony Green in December 2013), will be held on Wednesday 12 March 2014.

The Bye-Election is a chance for St Helenians to stand for Legislative Council and to vote for someone they think will be able to represent the Island and the views of her people.

St Helena Registration Officer, Gillian Francis explained:

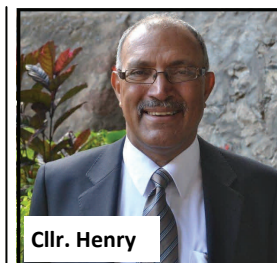
"It is important that we have a full Legislative Council to represent the people of St Helena. If you are 21 years of age and on the Register of Electors, with a genuine interest in the Island's affairs then you should seriously think of becoming a Councillor. This is an exciting and interesting time in our history and Councillors have the opportunity to influence and guide policy changes and development to help ensure economic growth that will improve the quality of life for present and future generations. I am more than happy to talk people through the election process if they are genuinely interested but unsure of the process of submitting a valid nomination."

Still unsure? To give Saints an idea of what it means to be a Councillor, we caught up with Councillors Nigel Dollery, Lawson Henry and Christine Scipio-O'Dean - elected during the 2013 General Election.



Cllr. Dollery

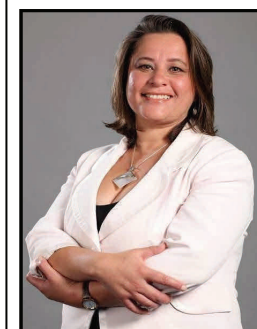
"I was elected for the first time at the last election. As a Councillor and Representative of the people of St Helena I try quite hard to listen to the concerns of the general public and follow them up. I do feel that we, the Islanders, must be much stronger in dealing with issues that bother us. I will help in any way I can." - Hon. Nigel Dollery



Cllr. Henry

"It is a great Honour to be an Elected Member of Legislative Council, it means that I am partly responsible for helping to shape what St Helena will be like in the future, making those tough choices now that will give Saints of tomorrow a better and brighter

future. The benefit of representing the people of St Helena is that you get to meet many people and share their concerns and they, quite rightly, expect you to take their concerns into account when you make decisions. I also get the opportunity of informing people why government has to make certain decisions, which is an important part of been a Councillor." - Hon. Lawson Henry



Cllr. Scipio-O'Dean

"Becoming a Councillor is rewarding and a privileged form of public service, as you will be in a position to make a difference to the quality of other people's daily lives and prospects. Being a Councillor requires both commitment and hard work, but I can't imagine getting the range of experience, knowledge and skills in any other role." - Hon. Ms Christine Scipio-O'Dean

The deadline for nominations for the Bye-Election is 12 noon on Wednesday 26 Feb 2014. Only persons who are named on the Register of Electors will be eligible to vote, or stand, in the Bye-Election. See press releases of 20 December 2013 and 2 January 2014 for more information.

Reading Awareness Day

"The greatest gift is the passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives you knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind. It is a moral illumination." - Elizabeth Hardwick, Novelist and Literary Critic

St Helena's Reading Awareness Day was hosted by the Public Library in Jamestown on Thursday 9 January 2014, promoting the importance of reading and encouraging children to enjoy reading as part of their daily routine.

The day started at 10am with various reading-related tasks at the Library for both Primary and Secondary age groups, followed by a multitude of other activities, including public readings on the radio.



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January - Restructuring in SHG

The signing of the airport contract in November 2011 represented a game-changing moment for St Helena and signalled major transformation for the Island. To adapt to the opportunities and challenges this presented SHG continued to restructure to increase efficiency in the public service. Restructuring developments included the Finance Directorate, the Secretariat, Strategic Policy and Planning and Human Resources, coming together as Corporate Services.

February - DAPM Aide Memoire for 2013/14 Agreed

The visiting DfID Development Aid Planning Mission (DAPM) and the St Helena Government signed an Aide Memoire on 19 February 2013. The Aide Memoire finalised the budget for the financial year 2013-2014. Headlines included the following: Public spending in St Helena will increase this year, and will continue to be more tightly focused on immediate priorities. Significant UK Government investment of £5 million for Capital Projects was also agreed, including funding for the Island's essential infrastructure before the airport opens, plus continued high level of subsidy for the RMS Support to economic growth and SHG domestic revenue for 2013/14 - forecast to increase by more than 10%. Massive and continuing airport investment puts St Helena in unique position of being able to grow its economy.

March - Times Journalist Michael Binyon Visits

Times Leader Writer and eminent journalist Michael Binyon OBE, visited St Helena from 25 March for six weeks to write about developments on the Island for a variety of high profile outlets, including The Times, The Economist, Chatham House, Diplomat Magazine and The London Magazine. He also offered mentoring for the Island's media.

April - Dissolution of Legislative Council

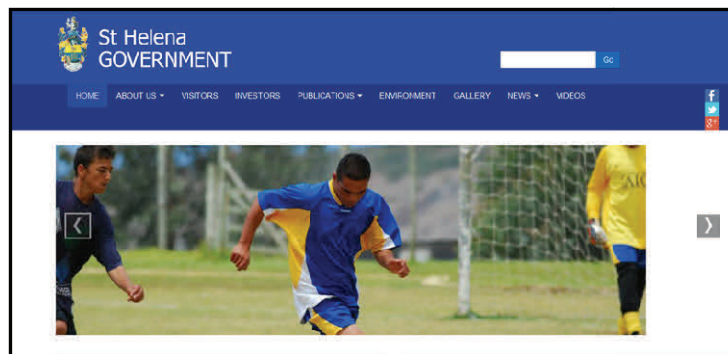
HE The Governor signed a Proclamation dissolving the Council with effect from noon on Friday 19 April 2013. A General Election followed on 17 July 2013.

May - Water Situation on St Helena declared 'Critical'

SHG, working closely with Connect Saint Helena Ltd and others, coordinated action to deal with a severe domestic water shortage (due to several months of very low rainfall), especially in the Red Hill distribution zone. Residents were urged to limit their consumption and a hosepipe ban was introduced across the Island. A Contingency Planning Group was established by SHG to manage the water shortage, and provide regular public information.

June - SHG Launched New Website

SHG announced the launch of its new Website, designed to be more user friendly and attractive than its predecessor. It now appeals to users on and off Island with an interest in St Helena affairs, her people, the Airport construction, St Helena's wonderful environment and her rich heritage.



July - General Election 2013

The General Election 2013 took place on Wednesday 17 July. The Polling Day results were announced by Returning Officer Gillian Francis the following morning, declaring the following candidates as being duly elected to serve as Members of the St Helena Legislative Council: Leslie Paul Baldwin, Nigel Dollery, Wilson Charles Duncan, Gavin George Ellick, Cyril Robert George, Anthony Arthur Green, Lawson Arthur Henry, Brian William Isaac, Bernice Alicia Olsson, Ian Sebastian Rummery, Christine Lilian Scipio-O'Dean and Derek Franklin Thomas. The inaugural meeting of Legislative Council took place on 24 July 2013.

August - Hose Pipe Ban Lifted

Following the announcement of a severe water shortage in May, the Island wide water restrictions were lifted in August, as reservoir levels in the Red Hill area returned to normal. Connect Saint Helena Ltd thanked all consumers for exercising restraint over the last few difficult months.

September - Automated System for Customs Data

It was announced that St Helena is to introduce the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA). This web based system will improve efficiency and speed in the acceptance and clearance of cargo, tax and other transactions, as well as improving Government statistical information, vital for accurate planning and budgeting. To install and operate the new system, Government Officers Jeremy Roberts, Head of Corporate IT and Juliette O'Dean, Customs Administrative Officer, underwent a programme of training in Geneva.

October - Visit from HM Land Registry

Four representatives from HM Land Registry in the UK arrived on 17 October 2013, for a two-week visit, to assist St Helena Government in the modernisation of its current land registration process and records. While here, the team met with the Registrar of Lands (the Chief Magistrate), Land Registry and Crown Estates officers, His Excellency the Governor, the Attorney General and the Head of Planning and Development Control.

November - 2nd Anniversary of St Helena Airport Project

November 2013 marked the 2nd Anniversary since the signing of the Airport contract between St Helena Government and Basil Read. Two years on, impressive progress is evident in the remarkable amount of completed work, both at the Airport site and in Rupert's Valley. The filling of Dry Gut reached the 50% mark in mid-November.

December - Bye-Election Date Announced

Councillor Tony Green announced his resignation from Legislative Council with effect from 17 December 2013. A Proclamation was issued on 20 December 2013 announcing that a resulting Bye-Election would be held on Wednesday 12 March 2014.



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