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Public Relations Office, SHG

St Helena Airport

Dry Gut Fill on Track



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Placing and compaction of rock fill in Dry Gut is now at level 274 and at end-March 2014 was 72% complete. Completion of the Dry Gut fill is scheduled for September 2014.

Airport Access Road on Target

In September 2012 the 14km Haul Road from Rupert's Valley to Prosperous Bay Plain was completed for the transportation of heavy plant and cargo to the Airport site. Working on the construction of the Haul Road since its beginning has been Senior Plant Operator Gene Phillips.

Gene supervises an Excavation Team working on the Haul Road, widening the road to allow it to accommodate two vehicles. Gene explains that the excavation team are now digging from the cliff - the further down they dig the wider the road will be - eventually being wide enough for two lanes.

Gene said:

"I've worked on the Haul Road since day one and I've seen immense improvement since we first started. When we looked at where we were going to construct the road it seemed impossible - but now we have come this far and it's a normal day's work."

Gene works 12 hour shifts six days a week from 6am to 6pm. When the weather is rainy Gene assists at the Airport site as an operator, because of the difficulty of working on the Haul Road in wet conditions. During visits of the NP Glory 4 Gene also operates the crane onboard the ship to offload cargo onto the jetty.

Gene returned home to St Helena in 2011 having worked on the Falklands for 16 years, where from the age of 17 he was trained and has operated most plant equipment. He has been employed on the Airport Project for 27 months.

Gene added:

"It is great to be part of the Airport Project. I think the Airport will change the Island in many ways and I would like to see myself working on the project until the Airport is actually operational."

Gene Phillips



Work on the Haul Road



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Deputy Airport Project Director Back on Island

Deputy Airport Project Director (Construction and Operations) Clare Harris is now back on Island having attended a series of meetings in South Africa and the UK in February and March.

While in Johannesburg Clare and DfID Project Manager Nigel Kirby met with Basil Read and Lanseria International Airport to discuss actions required of each party to ensure that Certification of St Helena's Airport is achieved on time.

The key purpose of Clare's visit to South Africa was to establish working relationships with key team members in Basil Read, Johannesburg, and at Lanseria International Airport. Clare also gained a greater understanding of the processes and flows of passengers and cargo through an international airport, of security arrangements and rescue and fire-fighting services. Opposite is a photo of Clare at Lanseria's fire training rig.

Discussions were held on achieving Certification of the airport, collaboration in preparing documentation for the Regulator, integration of the SHG Programme for Certification and Airport Operations with the Basil Read programme. SHG will be actively engaged in discussions with the Department for Transport (DfT) and Air Safety Support International (ASSI) and will strengthen management capacity in the Access Office in relation to Airport Certification and operational readiness.

During three days of meetings with Basil Read Clare and Nigel reviewed the programme to achieve Certification, clarified responsibilities and agreed a programme of action, which will be monitored on a monthly basis.

The issues discussed in South Africa were followed up with Clare's visit to the UK where she met with the Regulator, ASSI, looking in particular at the programme of visits and reviews needed prior to Certification of the Airport. She also met with UK DfT who advised on security requirements.

Clare said:

"It was very useful to meet with colleagues that I have been working with remotely for a while, as it is far easier to build working relationships face to face than via email and teleconferences.

"I was able to view behind-the-scenes operations at Lanseria International Airport in South Africa and London Biggin Hill Airport - and I found that passing through an airport as a passenger is very different to seeing an airport from the airport operator's viewpoint. There are procedures and policies that must be in place and adhered to, which we need to have in place for our Airport to become operational."



Environmental Operations at the Airport

To mitigate the environmental impacts of the excavation of the runway, rescue operations have been undertaken on site. This can take several forms, but generally involves the translocation of vulnerable or rare species. For example, lichen covered rocks and plants have been removed from the runway alignment and stored elsewhere for safekeeping. Seeds from plants have also been collected and last week a significant amount of the endemic lichen *Dimelaena triseptata* was removed from the northern end of the runway alignment and translocated to a suitable area that will not be affected by project earthworks.

Following translocation, the specimens are regularly monitored in their new location to check that they are surviving, or even better, prospering in their new environment.

Where suitable, specimens will also be used in the various habitat restoration programmes under the Landscape, Ecology and Mitigation Programme (LEMP) at the Airport site.

David Pryce moves lichen from the Airport site



Paving Specialist on Island



Terry Winder

Currently on Island from Halcrow is Paving Specialist, Terry Winder. Terry, an engineer specialising in asphalt and concrete pavements, will be on Island until 30 May to ensure that the concrete used for the Airport runway meets the contract, specifications, requirements and international standards.

Terry has been observing the paving trials at the Apron and is working closely with Basil Read and the Project Management Unit.

Terry has 40 years experience of working on various projects around the world. He has said that from a newcomer's point of view, progress on the Airport is coming along very well.