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Press Office, SHG

St Helena Airport

St Helena Airport Project Celebrates 4th Anniversary



First Ever Aircraft Lands at St Helena Airport (15 Sep 2015)

Tuesday, 3 November 2015, marks exactly four years since the signing of the Design, Build and Operate contract between St Helena Government and Basil Read to build an airport on the Island. Four years on and the progress has been magnificent, as evidenced by the number of milestones reached in the past 12 months alone. This culminated with the first ever aircraft landing at St Helena Airport to take part in a series of calibration flights on 15 September 2015. The amount of work that went into making this moment a reality cannot be understated and it is not just the physical work on the ground - but also the ongoing 'behind the scenes' work within Government and other partners in preparing the Island for air access in 2016.

Airport Project Director, Janet Lawrence, commented:

"These four years have flown by and we have come an incredibly long way. Some people might see only the changes brought about through construction, as we went from a desolate site at Prosperous Bay Plain to having something that actually looks like an airport. But just as important as the actual construction are the numerous other developments that the Airport Project has brought about. For example, we've been working on legislation and policies, on staff training and development, on various pieces of environmental mitigation - the list goes on.



Janet Lawrence

"I'm proud of what we've achieved so far. There's still lots to do and on a project of this scale and complexity there are always new challenges to be overcome. With the support of the highly professional and dedicated teams in Basil Read, Halcrow, SHG and DFID, I'm confident that we're going to deliver a successful project and a first rate facility."

Basil Read Island Director, Deon de Jager, added:

"How time has flown! It is hard to imagine, four years on and we nearly have a completed Airport. Many of us witnessed the first landing of an aircraft, albeit a small one, during September which illustrates the fruit of our efforts. It has required extreme commitment, perseverance, sacrifices, long hours, blood sweat and tears from all involved on this hugely impressive project. To these people and their families, I extend my sincerest appreciation for their efforts and truly believe that we have achieved something that we can be very proud of in years to come.



Deon de Jager

"Numerous milestones and achievements have come and gone, but nothing will compare to the first commercial flight landing at St Helena Airport."

All parties involved in the Airport Project are now working together towards achieving certification.

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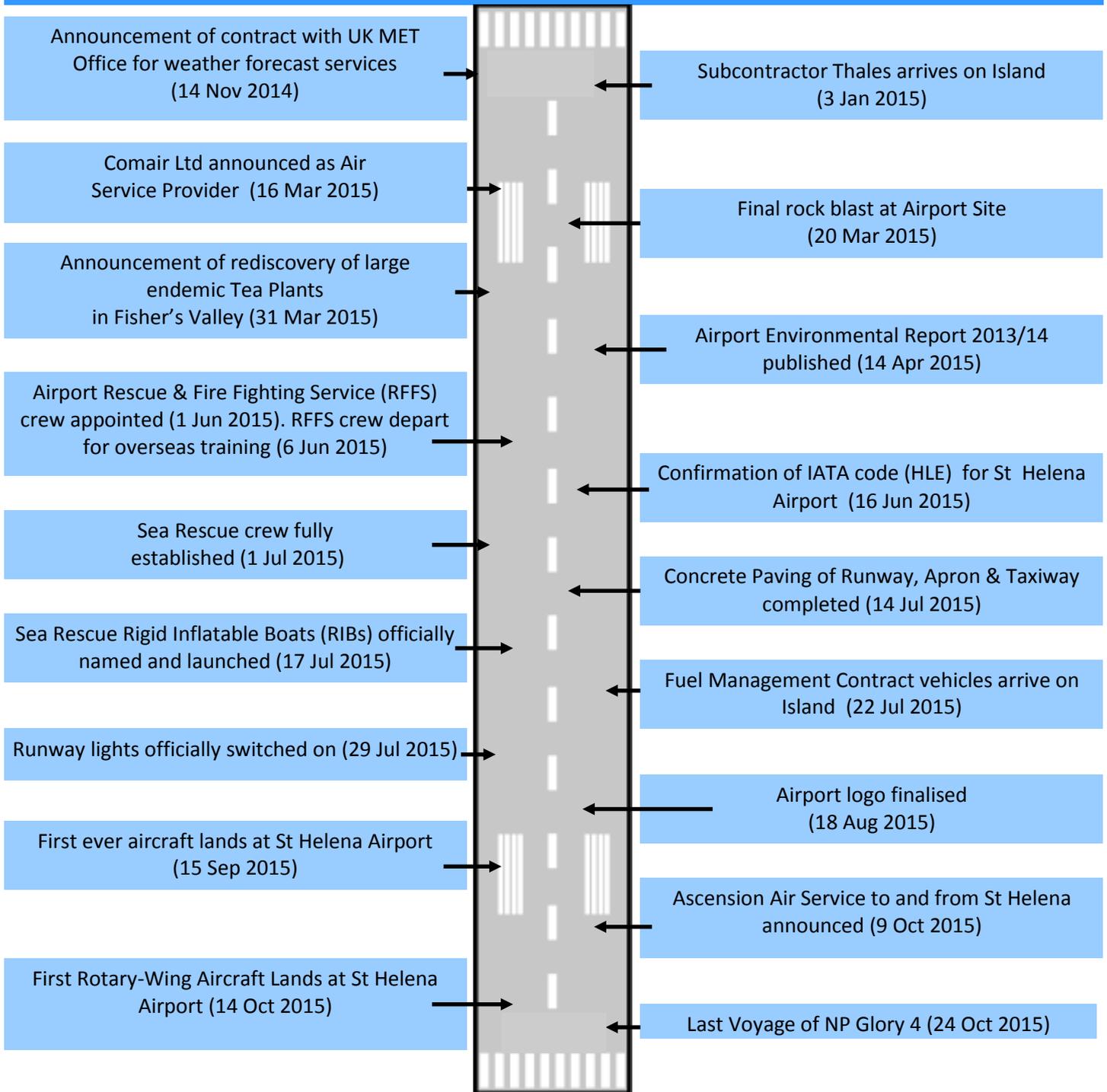
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Key Airport Milestones - November 2014 to November 2015



NP Glory 4 Docks at Rupert's for Final Time

The NP Glory 4, or the '*Basil Read Ship*' as she is locally known, anchored in Rupert's Bay for the final time on Saturday 24 October 2015 - after three years serving the St Helena Airport Project with an impressive 48 voyages and thousands of tonnes of cargo.

The NP Glory 4 first docked at the temporary jetty in Rupert's Valley on 11 July 2012 - the first ever ship in recent history to berth alongside. On her 21-day round trip cycle between St Helena and Walvis Bay in Namibia, she has brought so much essential plant, equipment, materials and fuel for the Airport Project.

Basil Read now expect to charter another ship to transport remaining plant and equipment to South Africa at the end of the project.

The NP Glory 4 departed the Island for the final time on Wednesday 28 October 2015, bound for Thailand.



NP Glory 4 docked in Rupert's on her final voyage
© Halcrow

The NP Glory 4 is a 78m long ocean going landing craft with a width of 16m and a draft of 3.5m, when fully laden. She has a 70 tonne ramp and deck space of 800 square metres.

Past and Present - Key People Involved in the Airport Project

Geoff Dawson (pictured) and the late Gary Thomas were involved in the collection of weather data prior to the arrival of Basil Read. They initially collected weather information manually, three times a day, and then both manually and electronically for a period of approximately eight years between 2005 and 2012. The essential information gathered included maximum and minimum temperatures, cloud height and coverage, wind speeds and rainfall.

Geoff commented:

"I think that Basil Read have done a remarkable job, especially considering the logistics involved. I am looking forward to the reduced travelling time once we have an operational Airport."



In 2009, Merrill Joshua participated in the infamous 'A' Parade after the Airport decision was 'paused'. The 'A' Parade created an opportunity to unite and strengthen the desire for 'Option A' - an Airport for St Helena. It allowed supporters of the airport to stand up for what they believed in and collectively their presence was of great significance.

Merrill commented:

"Looking back over the past four years, St Helena has been one of the most exciting places to live - monumental progress has been made in such a short space of time. When I see milestones reached by the Airport Project in 2015, it inspires confidence in what we are all trying to do for St Helena. I am extremely excited about the Airport opening next year and for St Helena's future with air access."



In the 1980s, Hilton 'Bernie' Thomas of China Lane, was involved in the extraction of two unexploded ordnances found in the Central Basin at Prosperous Bay Plain, close to the Airport site.

The ordnances were thought to have been fired from Ladder Hill Fort during the war and had fallen short, landing in the Central Basin. Bernie, who at the time was working for the Public Works Department (PWD) as a truck driver, was asked by Halcrow to investigate the ordnances and determine if they were a threat.

Bernie and a work colleague were able to explode the ordnances without any significant damage.

Bernie commented:

"Although a small role, my involvement was key in removing the shells, which no one had any prior knowledge of. I've followed the Airport project ever since then and while I know the Airport will be good for the Island, I hope it doesn't change it too much. I look forward to its opening next year."



Basil Read Airport Manager, Nigel Spackman, joined the Airport Project on 2 May 2015. Since relocating to St Helena, Nigel is now directly involved in planning and coordinating the systems and procedures needed for the Airport to be issued an Aerodrome Operations Certificate. This includes recruitment, background checks, and training - plus completing all the manuals and carrying out necessary exercises. Nigel is also responsible for ensuring that airline ground handling and other operational procedures are all in place.

Nigel said:

"Going forward we will have some challenges, but this is to be expected. I am confident that we will achieve certification and thereafter operate a world class Airport facility."



DFID Airport Project Manager Nigel Kirby first became involved in the Airport Project in 2002, working as the DFID Overseas Territories Infrastructure Adviser, before taking over the airport lead within DFID in 2003. Over time, there have been a number of ups and downs - the first SHELCO proposal, the feasibility study, preliminary designs, the first tender, the 'pause' during the financial crisis and now, finally, construction.

Nigel commented:

"Throughout, I have had the pleasure of working with great teams in SHG, Atkins, Halcrow, Basil Read and DFID, all dedicated to delivering an airport for St Helena. On this fourth anniversary I would particularly like to remember Sharon Wainwright and Clive Warren. Both would be immensely proud of the contributions they made and what has now been achieved - I wish they were here to see it. While many challenges lie ahead for the Airport and for St Helena, it is hugely rewarding and exciting to be so close to achieving air access and with it the potential for a brighter future for the Island."



Gerald Yon joined Basil Read as the Security Supervisor for St Helena Airport on 1 October 2015. He is responsible for the Airport Security team and for delivering excellent customer service and a safe and secure journey through the Airport for all visitors. Gerald has over 25 years of aviation experience, including previously working at London City Airport and on Ascension Island. He is a Department for Transport-certified Aviation Security Manager and a Firearms and Explosives Instructor.

Gerald said:

"I am thrilled to have returned home and be employed in such a key position at the new Airport. I am looking forward to building my working relationships with colleagues as we prepare for Airport certification and working collaboratively with the Airport authorities on security matters. I am immensely impressed with the facility. It is world class, a 'mega-structure' in my view, incorporating cutting edge technology and equipment which will contribute to its operational safety and security."

"Everyone involved in the project management, design and build can be very proud of their achievement."



Looking Forward to an Operational Airport

Four years after the signing of the Airport contract, we are now moving away from construction works and into the operational phase of the project.

For St Helena Airport to provide commercial flights in 2016 various requirements need to be met - the most important being to gain Airport certification.

The formal audits for certification, undertaken by Air Safety Support International (ASSI) will run from Saturday 31 October to Sunday 8 November 2015. During these crucial audits the Airport, associated infrastructure and personnel need to demonstrate compliance with the standards for airport safety and security as mandated in the Overseas Territories Aviation Requirements (OTARs).

Arriving for these audits on 31 October 2015 were Owen Healey, Principal Inspector of Rescue & Fire Fighting at the UK Civil Aviation Authority, Nigel Kirby, DFID Project Manager, and Jimmy Johnston, Basil Read Project Director. Owen Healey is inspecting Airport Rescue & Fire Fighting Services and verifying all aspects of emergency planning. At the same time, ASSI personnel in the UK are auditing essential procedures focusing on operational safety and likely to include live testing of the Airport operations team by telephone link.

As part of the ongoing preparation for Airport certification, various exercises have been conducted with the Airport teams and Island Emergency Services, as an essential part of the certification process and to provide confidence to ASSI of our ability to operate the Airport safely and securely.

The results of phase one of the audits are expected in mid-November and will be used to inform the second phase - planned for January 2016. Only after the results of these audits will we know if the Airport is certified.

Airport Contract Manager, Edward Jerrard, said:

"With the construction works at the Airport almost complete, the emphasis is now moving to the operational phase of the contract with Basil Read. This revolves around the day-to-day business of running St Helena Airport and preparing for handling the Comair flights - and possibly other private and charter flights which may want to land at St Helena Airport.

"The Airport, in conjunction with other government bodies such as immigration, customs and the fuel management company - plus all the various full and part-time staff - are over the next few months beginning training on the equipment and processes necessary to comply with international regulations. We are also very conscious of the need to provide an efficient and high quality service to aircraft operators, passengers and suppliers."

In the meantime Comair Ltd, Air Service Provider for St Helena and provider of air services between St Helena and Ascension Island - in consultation with SHG - is in the process of determining final ticketing prices, and bookings will open for sale once St Helena Airport has been granted certification. Comair is very much looking forward to its role in the operation of the Airport.

CEO of Comair, Erik Venter, said:

"We're very proud to be selected by St Helena Government to offer air services to the Island. We'll be operating a brand new 737-800 aircraft, which we'll take delivery of in early February 2016, only a few months way. We expect to be delivering very safe, reliable and comfortable services between South Africa and St Helena Island and we look forward to landing for the first time on St Helena Airport in just a few months time."

St Helena Airport - Then & Now

April 2014



October 2015



Progress on Key Components of Airport Project

Construction Element	Progress		
	Jul 2015	Aug 2015	Sep 2015
Combined Building	90%	96%	94%
Terminal Building	69%	75%	83%
Access Road	94%	94%	81%
Sea Rescue Building	20%	29%	59%