



## First Flight to Ascension Island



Airlink plane on Wideawake Airfield, Ascension

The regular commercial charter service between St Helena and Ascension Island began this month with the first flight landing at Wideawake Airfield, Ascension, on the afternoon of Saturday, 18 November 2017. This marked the first of a regular inter-Island charter service that will take place on the second Saturday of each month.

**Accountable Manager & Head of Operations at St Helena Airport, Gwyneth Howell, said:**

*"The ground operations were well-co-ordinated, the team excelled in ensuring a smooth transition from an international arrival to a domestic departure. Airlink also took the opportunity to introduce a further four pilots to the St Helena route, this creates rostering flexibility and a larger pool of staff for Airlink. Overall, I was pleased with the team's performance and professional manner in which they conducted their operations."*

**Governor Lisa Phillips, passenger on the First Flight, added:**

*"Speaking as a passenger on the first inter-island flight between St Helena and Ascension, I can confirm the journey was very smooth. Taking off, the Island quickly disappears and no sooner have you left, it feels like we start our descent onto Ascension and the journey comes to an end. There were a lot of people on Ascension who had come out to see this piece of history being made. It's unbelievable to imagine that I would take off one day for Ascension, manage to have a number of meetings, and return to St Helena the next day. The return flight was in fact only 1 hour 20 mins. A lot of the St Helenians returning home remarked on how quick that was and how it makes them feel closer to home. This is another big step forward in terms of progress for both St Helena and Ascension."*



Passengers with pilots onboard the first inter-Island flight.  
Photo: Pamela Roberts

Continued overleaf

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## First Flight to Ascension Island - continued

**Airport Contracts Manager, Alan Shaw, concluded:**

*"The monthly charter flight from St Helena to Ascension and return marks another historic milestone in the evolution of connectivity and contactability for Saints and Ascension Island residents. The world is now closer with the establishment of the monthly flight and what used to take days and weeks can now be achieved in a day or a weekend. Family and friends are more reachable as well. We have seen the dawn of a new age in travel that brings both Islands into the aviation era which will bring social and economic benefits to us all."*

Former Administrator of Ascension Island, Marc Holland, was present to greet passengers arriving to Ascension on the first flight and was delighted with the successful start to the new inter-Island air link. He was quick to praise the work of organisations both here and on Ascension for making this regular commercial charter service a reality.

## Meet Basil Read's Representative & Technical Manager

**Name:** Tony Le Roy

**Job Title:** Contractor's Representative & Technical Manager

**Employer:** Basil Read

**Job Role:** To complete all outstanding works on the project, in particular the Fuel Facilities.

**Main challenges:** The work is at a critical stage from a programme point of view. The Fuel Facilities are technically very challenging and require very focused attention to every detail. The remoteness of St Helena and logistical challenges keep us on our toes!

**Other projects worked on:** Infrastructure on

platinum, coal, iron ore and manganese mines. Infrastructure for large International Hotel Group. Various building and infrastructure projects in Botswana, construction of regional sewage treatment works, a 900 MI/d water treatment plant, various industrial plants, emergency water schemes and a dam.

**Thoughts about Airport Project and Island:** I see the Airport as a fantastic step forward for St Helena. To bridge the gap for Saints to have ready and almost 'instant' access to the rest of the world will change lives forever. I think the unique features and remoteness of St Helena will be an attraction for many and the air bridge will make visiting the Island so much easier for family and visitors alike. Already, we have seen many medical evacuations, which alone, make an immediate and positive difference to people's lives.

**Any other comments:** We enjoy the hospitality of the Saints, the beauty of the Island, the photo opportunities that are presented every time my wife and I have an opportunity to explore a new location. I include my most recent 'favourite shot' taken from the waterfront in Jamestown (see photo below).

I have enjoyed being a part of a great team including Basil Read, DFID, SHG, numerous consultants, sub-contractors and service providers that have all contributed to build the Airport, the Wharf and the new Fuel Facilities. It is a project that we are all very proud of and will remember forever.



Photo taken by Tony Le Roy at the Sea Front

Tony Le Roy

