

The St Helena Ambassador

... An Extraordinary Place on a Path to Prosperity



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PUBLISHED WRITER HOSTS WRITING WORKSHOP

Creative Saint Helena held their second 'Writing Workshop' at the Mantis St Helena hotel on Thursday, 12 July 2018.

The workshop, which was led by published writer Joe Hollins – affectionately known on St Helena as Joe the Vet – saw three enthusiastic people in attendance and comprised of a BBC recording of Joe's short story, 'The Mermaid's Tale', which he wrote for BBC Radio 4, a Q&A session and a writing exercise.

Joe has written in a variety of genres and styles, including short stories, which have been broadcast on BBC Radio and read at festivals, such as the Bath Literary Festival. Joe has also written many travel articles for major newspapers and journals, including the Financial Times and the Telegraph.

Joe explained his inspiration for writing:

"As a child I wrote short stories about King Neptune and his mermaid and posted them into a post box made from a washing-up liquid bottle for my mother to collect and read. Later, after travelling to Africa I tried writing travel articles and found they got accepted. I went on a writing



The Writing Workshop at Mantis St Helena

course in Greece taken by Louis de Bernieres (who wrote 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin') and wrote my first short story for the BBC."

Creative Saint Helena has been hosting Writing Workshop sessions for the past two years - meeting regularly one evening a week to participate in writing exercises led by Teeny Lucy. Creative Saint Helena would also like to run further individual workshops in the future with authors on-Island who would like to share their experiences.

Joe concluded:

"To anyone who might be interested in writing, read a lot – you absorb words and writing styles osmotically. When you read a good book you'll find even your everyday speech has an improved vocabulary. Find your voice – in other words your writing style, just play around with words, don't be shy with yourself. Try and try again."

Another Writing Workshop with Joe will be scheduled this month if there is enough interest.



Writing Workshop at the Canister on 10 May 2018



THE EVOLUTION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT ON ST HELENA

Until 2012, waste management on St Helena consisted of customers depositing black bagged waste on the kerbside for manual loading into refuse collection vehicles. This waste was then openly disposed of into Horse Point Landfill Site (HPLS). Both these processes created their own environmental impacts, including scavenging pests prior to collection and significant bird activity at the landfill site, due to the organic content of the waste providing a food source. It was decided that action was needed to mitigate these environmental impacts, especially with the Airport constructed less than 2km away.

2013 – 2015:

A sizeable investment in waste management saw the following upgrades to services: design and construction of 20 dedicated waste cells for domestic and commercial waste, with the active cell netted to reduce bird activity, construction of a bird-proofed Waste Reception Building, two geo-lined and leachate-proofed hazardous waste cells, a Public Recycling Facility with waste bays, using old tyres and distribution of new 240ltr and 1100ltr wheelie bins to Island properties.

2015 – 2017:

Waste Management Services (WMS) integrated into the Environmental Management Division (EMD) and the following work was achieved: improved sanitation regimes for public areas and toilets, public engagement and education programmes and remediation of landscapes by removing bulky wastes. A revised WMS strategy was also developed and approved for implementation to include: development of a Materials Recycling Facility at HPLS with appropriate collection services, an economic evaluation for the development of a new landfill site and a feasibility study to develop organic waste reduction opportunities.

2018:

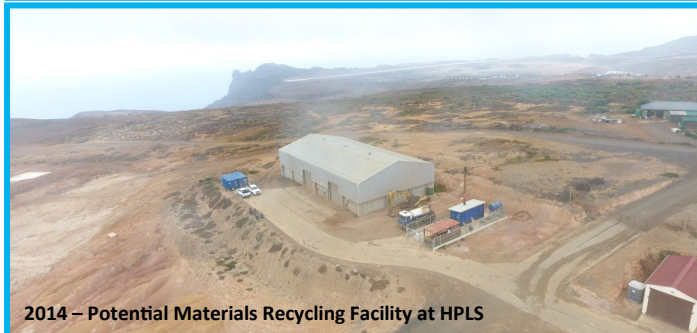
WMS, working in partnership with the Marine Section and the Saint Helena National Trust Marine Team and SHAPE, will deliver a project entitled: 'Sustainably manage plastic waste on St Helena to minimise marine debris'. This project, which is externally funded through the UK Government's Department for Environment, Farming & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), aims to: establish a marine debris monitoring programme along St Helena's coastline, monitor the use of single use plastic on-Island and how much of this enters St Helena's waters, raise awareness of marine debris and its negative impact and locally manufacture plastic recycling equipment. In support of the project, WMS have engineered a new waste bay into the Public Recycling Facility at HPLS for the disposal of mixed plastic waste. They will also be locating new light grey wheelie bins for plastic waste across the Island, alongside existing red bins for glass and blue bins for cans recycling, and implementing a recyclable waste collection service.



2012 – Potential bird strike risk to aircraft at HPLS



2013 – Engineered waste cells with Mobile Aerial Netting System



2014 – Potential Materials Recycling Facility at HPLS



2015 – Public Recycling Facility at HPLS



2015 – RCV with bin lift capability negotiating the Island's roads



2017 – Maximizing the use of previously used land for increased waste capacity



An Open Day to celebrate 38 Years of Conservation on St Helena was held at the Endemic Nursery, Scotland, on Friday, 20 July 2018.

The day began with an opening speech by Chairman of the Environment & Natural Resources Committee, Councillor Russell Yon, who said:

"This year, we celebrate 38 years of endemic plant conservation on St Helena. The late George Benjamin is rightly regarded as the forefather of the modern conservation efforts on the Island. His keen eye was responsible for numerous rediscoveries of plant species thought to be long extinct. With limited resources, he created the first endemic nursery with his famous blue buckets and oil drums cut in half. From those early beginnings, international interest was sparked, funding followed and the nursery gradually developed."

In attendance were various SHG officials, students and members of the public who were able to enjoy tours, activities and informative presentations delivered by staff of the Environmental Management Division (EMD), Landscape Ecology & Mitigation Programme (LEMP) and other sections.

Various display boards, photos and plants were dotted around the nursery and a kid's craft area was used to raise awareness about conservation on St Helena and, in particular, highlight the importance of St Helena's endemic flora.

Stedson Stroud, who rediscovered many endemic species, gave a talk on how he rediscovered the St Helena Bastard Gumwood, he said:

"In 1982, I was tracking foraging bees up and down the valley below Burnt Rock. The bees seemed to be very busy making hundreds of flights up and down the valley. So, using binoculars for further investigation, I saw the bees working on clusters of whitish flowers on a tree hanging out of a very high cliff further up the valley. There were no other trees in the area that looked like this one, just lots of Tunjie. A day later I contacted our late, great Botanist, Mr George Benjamin MBE. He immediately started asking many questions, but because I wasn't able to get real close to the tree, I couldn't give him many answers - so we both decided to visit the site. That was on the Friday afternoon and on the Monday morning George had walked from his home at Pouncey's and got to me around six in the morning. I was hardly out of bed - that was how eager George was to see the tree."

The day concluded with guests mingling and enjoying refreshments.



Isabel Peters giving her presentation



Pupils viewing a log of the now extinct St Helena Olive



Various display boards and photos of conservation throughout the years



Endemic 'Old Father Live Forever'



School Pupil receiving body paint in the crafts section

The 2018 Agriculture Programme Working Group held a Farmers Market & Social at the Harford Community Centre on Saturday, 14 July 2018.

Business Development Co-ordinator of Enterprise St Helena, Delia Du Preez, explained:

"The Farmers Market came about as a result of the need to give further focused emphasis on the importance of agriculture to this Island and the economy, and especially when considering the Sustainable Economic Development Plan (SEDP). The idea was to give agriculture its recognition within our community whilst encouraging the community to be supportive of agriculture, and to spark and encourage youth-interest. The best vehicle for this was an agricultural programme comprising a series of industry days/farmers market with a social tag."

Despite the unfavourable weather, many people from across the Island turned out to support the cause.

The day began with an opening speech from Councillor Russell Yon, who said:

"What is being presented here is to give the farmers and other associated stakeholders involved in farming or with products connected to locally made handicrafts, preserves etc the opportunity to showcase their products and perhaps sell to you throughout the afternoon."

A total of 14 stalls were available throughout the day all selling various products from local crafts, pot plants to baked items and fresh produce. Stall holders included Abiwans, Thomas Brothers, Stevens' Family Butchery, Elvina Mercury, Roddy's Chicken Farm, Lucky Lynn's Nursery and the St Helena Donkey Home.

The day concluded with a Social by the Harford Community Centre with musical entertainment provided by RD & the Country Boys.

The launch of the 2018 Agriculture Programme was held at Kingshurst Community Centre on 28 April which was a business and social engagement event in the form of an Agriculture Industry Family Fun Day. The finale event, a Country Fair, is scheduled to be held at Francis Plain on Saturday, 27 October 2018.

