

The St Helena Ambassador

... An Extraordinary Place on a Path to Prosperity



Issue 78 July 2019

GOVERNOR'S BLOG ON GETTING READY TO COME TO THE ISLAND

In my first blog I explained the way you hear about being selected to become Governor. But, there was a catch. You are not allowed to tell anyone. At a stretch you can mention it to your spouse or partner but no one else. They too, are sworn to communication celibacy.

Why, you may think? Well, it is all explained when you make first contact with the Overseas Territories Directorate (OTD). Amidst your buzz of excitement at wanting to get started and fix a date to get to St Helena, the Old Hands at the Directorate in the polite, traditional civil service way begin by saying: *"Well, you do not actually have the job yet"*. I make the inevitable reply: *"What! But I have this email from HR."* *"Ah yes, I am sure you do but you see its all conditional."*

The cold shower of reality then begins to trickle over your head. Governors are not only selected after applying to a jobs listing on an internal civil service web page. They also have to be 'approved'. The Old Hand continued by explaining Governors perform two distinct but compatible roles. They are the representative of the Crown on the Island and also the most senior representative of Her Majesty's Government. *"Consequently"*, said the Old Hand, *"you have to wait until the Foreign Secretary and the Queen each approve your selection and, of course, they are very busy so it will take some time."*

My OTD mentor was not wrong. For the green light to make an announcement of my appointment I had to wait nervously for four months until December last year. During this passage of time in limbo there was a change of Foreign Secretaries from Boris Johnson (now the new Prime Minister) to Jeremy Hunt and the Court of St James was inevitably preoccupied with State visits and overseas tours.

Finally, a 'go' decision on announcing my appointment came through. Going public was a wonderful release. Imagine having to bottle up good news from everyone you know for months and months. Probably on a par to not being able to announce the forthcoming birth of a baby even though you were out buying new sets of clothes and decorating rooms ready for the new arrival. Once 'announced' everything changes. You suddenly become visible. People from many places and organisations make contact and the next few weeks are a busy whirl of briefings, meeting people and getting to hear about every aspect of the Islands, their hopes and their problems.

The rapid increase in one's pace of life does not end with briefings. There are meetings with Islanders passing through the UK; meetings with the London-based representatives for St Helena and Tristan da Cunha; and getting out to track down the energetic and committed members of the diaspora. For St Helena, Swindolina was where I and my wife headed, and to Southampton for the Tristan da Cunha supporters.

That is not all, there are mandatory FCO training courses to attend on a bewildering array of topics, from things to remember as a head of mission to budgeting; a security refresher to learning about social media; and even one on maintaining your mindfulness. Then, amidst this hectic schedule you and your family have to find time to have medical and dental checks, get your vaccinations up to date and get around to packing your life's possessions into five separate piles: the items to stay in Britain; the items you will need in St Helena but not just yet (they will go by sea freight); the items you will need promptly (they will go as air freight); the items you simply cannot do without (they will go in your checked baggage); and lastly, the things you should have thrown away years ago. You try dividing your entire life's possessions into several parts. It's a nightmare.

Nevertheless, somehow with the adrenaline flowing it all comes together. Finally, almost forgotten in the rush, the travel tickets arrive just in time. Then and only then, with those tickets to fly in your hands, sitting in a seat on the plane, does the reality that you are not long away from becoming the 69th Governor of St Helena finally sink in. Phew!

HE Governor Dr Philip Rushbrook



CREATIVE ST HELENA YOUTH CHOIR NAMED JOINT-WINNERS OF 2018 COMMONWEALTH COMPETITION

Creative St Helena Commonwealth Youth Choir (CSHYC) have been named joint-winners of the Commonwealth Children's Choir Competition 2018.

Over the last few years the Commonwealth Youth Orchestra has been in the process of creating a Music Partnership for all the choirs, orchestras and music schools in the 53 countries in the Commonwealth. In May 2018, St Helena joined the Commonwealth Music Partnership. The mission of the Commonwealth Youth Orchestra & Choir is to 'use music as a means of international dialogue, knowing no boundaries'.

The CSHYC was organised and coached by Director of Creative St Helena, Teeny Lucy. The 13 members of the Choir, aged between 11-14 years, consists of Abigail Yon, Alaina Johnson, Amber George, Rio Franconi, Callum Duncan, Ella Stevens, Hannah Beard, Jaede Benjamin, Keira Brown, Kiera Joshua, Philippa Castell, Radka Henry and Victoria Miskell.

To enter the competition, CSHYC were required to perform 'The Commonwealth Anthem', 'A Song For The Commonwealth' by Simon Haw MBE and 'St Helena Island' by Keith Yon. The performances were then videoed at St Paul's Cathedral by TL Productions and uploaded to YouTube for judging. CSHYC, along with each choir entering the Competition, were also required to write 500 words about the importance of music in their community.

The CSHYC will now take up a 12-month role as Commonwealth Music Ambassadors from Commonwealth Day 2019. The Choir will need to learn a new Commonwealth song called Believe and must host a Commonwealth celebration event such as a concert. Prize monies will go toward the cost of video recording, choir T-shirts, music printing and toward providing opportunities to be involved in next year's competition.

Director of Creative St Helena, Teeny Lucy, commented:

"The young people this year showed commitment and enthusiasm and worked hard to learn three songs in a relatively short period of rehearsal time. They deserve their success and I am very proud of each and every one of them."

"I am grateful too to Mrs Penny Bowers at Prince Andrew School for allowing us a practice time and to Mrs Dulcie Herne and Miss Sharon Clingham who supported during rehearsals."

Please click the following link to see the CSHYC recorded performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4s4gPkAv24&feature=share>.



PRIMARY SCHOOLS' OPEN DAYS 2019

The Island's three primary schools - Harford, Pilling and St Paul's - held their annual Open Days during July/August.

Each open day started with an Entertainment & Prize Presentation for parents, guardians, and invited guests.

Throughout the schools, the entertainment was performed by students of KS1 and KS2 and comprised of music, drama and dance.

The prizes were awarded for overall performance, best effort and highest achievement in various subjects and the Jean Beadon Art Competition.

Following the entertainment and prize presentations, invited guests, parents and guardians were invited back to the school for tea and refreshments, after which the school was opened to the public for viewing.

Director of Education, Wendy Benjamin, commented:

"All three primary school's Open Day and Prize Presentations were fantastic. There was variety, fun and laughter and also a serious side. We have a wealth of talent in our schools and Open Days give us opportunity to showcase this. I was really impressed with the performances of our children and the imagination and creativity that was presented through the creation of the props. Special mention must be given to the Planetarium at Pilling. I feel that all who attended had a wonderful experience. Everyone did a brilliant job and I am proud of all staff and pupils for their achievements."

