

Presentation to the Opening of the St Helena Research Institute

12 November 2019

Anne's Place, Jamestown

Ladies and gentlemen. Scientists, researchers, students and... we lay folk.

I extend a warm welcome to this remarkable event for St Helena. The opening of its first institution to encourage, facilitate and undertake research, the St Helena Research Institute.

I also welcome the many people who have gathered in London to attend a simultaneous opening event and to colleagues at SAERI in the Falklands for its support and involvement in helping St Helena reach this important moment.

Today is all about human endeavour and being willing accomplices in aiding and abetting mankind's relentless pursuit of knowledge. A pursuit that, literally, knows no bounds. It is a trait in humans, may be even an obsession, which is not found in any other species. It is that inquisitiveness to improve our understanding of the physical world around us and the cultures and heritage of the peoples who inhabit it. It is a challenge to decipher the mysteries of the stars above our heads and the fragilities of the wildlife with whom we co-exist.

This new research institute is a starting point for researchers on the island, and those who come to our shores, to base their operations and be able to begin their important work as quickly and smoothly as possible. I have high expectations for the Institute to become a catalyst that encourages Saints to embark upon research of their own, to encourage researchers from around the world to see St Helena as a place of choice to conduct their work, and to be a gathering point for the many scientific studies undertaken here in past times. I hope too, that St Helena is now able to work in collaboration and share information with researchers around the globe.

The Institute begins today as the host for new research. I understand there is a range of work already underway, so often quietly in the background and unrecognised by the public, and the array of research in the offing for the future. From its humble beginnings now I look forward to seeing it expand and utilise the other facilities around the island. Our laboratory at Scotland, the new marine centre on the quayside in Jamestown whose construction begins imminently, the field studies centre at Harpers, the weather station at Bottom Woods, our seismograph arrays and whatever more the ingenuity of people can develop.

My sincere congratulations to all involved in bringing this project to fruition and I welcome, in advance, all researchers who will use the Institution in the coming years.

Thank you.

Governor Dr Philip Rushbrook

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