

DECEMBER 2022

THE ST HELENA AMBASSADOR



Editorial

Hi, welcome to the St Helena Ambassador!

In this edition you can read an account from a Marine Conservation and Fisheries Apprentice about their experience on-board the RRS Discovery, find out how Jonathan the Tortoise celebrated his 190th birthday, and read about a seven year old from St Paul's Primary School who won the Governor's Office Christmas card competition.

If you'd like to contribute a story to the St Helena Ambassador or have any suggestions on what you'd like to see included, please feel free to contact me on tel: 22470 or via email: jodie.s-constantine@sainthelena.gov.sh.

**Jodie Scipio-Constantine
SHG Press Officer**

IN THIS ISSUE

**RRS DISCOVERY VISIT -
ACCOUNT BY MARINE
CONSERVATION AND
FISHERIES APPRENTICE,
CERYS JOSHUA**

**JONATHAN THE
TORTOISE CELEBRATES
HIS 190TH BIRTHDAY**

**NATHANIEL BENJAMIN
WINS CHRISTMAS CARD
DESIGN COMPETITION**

RRS Discovery visit

Account by Marine

Conservation and Fisheries Apprentice, Cerys Joshua



The RRS *Discovery* visited St Helena between 26 November and 5 December 2022 to conduct scientific surveys.

Members of staff from the Marine and Fisheries Conservation

Section of SHG, and members of the St Helena National Trust (SHNT) joined the vessel to help carry out research with the on-board scientists from Blue Belt partner organisations.

Amongst the SHG Marine and Fisheries Conservation Section was Cerys Joshua, Marine Conservation and Fisheries Apprentice, who was invited to join the ship to gain further experience and knowledge of St Helena's waters and to observe and assist the on-board scientist with their research.

Cerys worked the 4am to 4pm shift and during her time on-board, both inshore and at the seamounts, engaged in a number of activities, including sorting and processing samples from the Rectangular Mid-water Trawl (RMT) nets in the 8 degree 'cold room', these species were collected in nets from depths of around 1000m at various places around the Island.

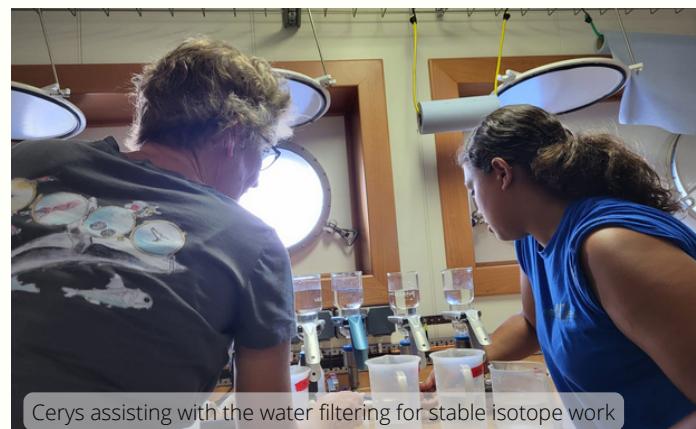
Cerys toured the CTD which measures conductivity for salinity, temperature and depth of the water, and helped prep the water for the sieving of micro-plastics.

Cerys also observed as the BRUVS (baited remote underwater video system) were deployed and retrieved and helped to add the way points into

the GPS and time dropped onto a data sheet. There were six BRUVS in total and each recorded about an hour and a half of footage.

Another piece of work that Cerys worked on was the bait acoustics. This is a sonar device with different frequencies to find schooling fish (in this case the hope was for bait fish). This work is to measure the population biomass of the bait. The team collected biological samples of length, weight, sex and maturity and otolith of the species of bait fish. Cerys, along with SHNT Marine Apprentice, Kirsten Augustus, were tasked with getting small samples of the bait species for stable isotope research.

Cerys concluded: *"I think my take away from the trip is that the people on-board really love what they're doing they showed this by allowing me to ask a lot of questions and give me real in-depth answers, and showing me how to do things by giving me the opportunity to actually carry out the work. I would just like to say a big thank you to the team on the Discovery for allowing me to utilise their knowledge and experience in order to help me establish the grassroots into the marine field."*



Jonathan the Tortoise celebrates his 190th birthday



Plantation House staff presenting Jonathan with his birthday 'cake'

St Helena's national treasure, Jonathan the Tortoise, celebrated his 190th birthday in 2022.

Jonathan holds two Guinness World Records; the world's oldest living land animal, and the oldest chelonian to have ever lived.

In celebration of his 190th, a three-day birthday party was held at the Governor's residence, Plantation House, between 2 and 4 December 2022.

Everyone from across the Island came together to celebrate this historic milestone.

From Friday, 2 December, and throughout the weekend, a range of posters celebrating Jonathan's life were displayed at the grounds of Plantation House. Some of the posters bore pictures and messages from those who visited him over the centuries, and others depicted the major events and milestones Jonathan has lived through since his 1832 hatching and 1882 arrival to St Helena.

On Saturday, 3 December, Jonathan was live-streamed on the St Helena Tourism Facebook page. The live stream gave viewers a unique insight into Jonathan's daily life, and featured key players in Jonathan's care, such as

former veterinarian, Joe Hollins, and the Governor and his wife, who fed Jonathan some of his favourite veggies.

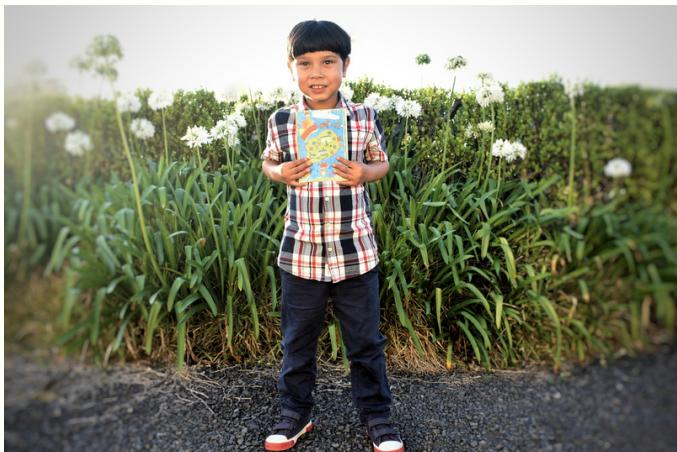
On Sunday, 4 December, Jonathan's birthday celebrations continued at the Plantation House Christmas Market. During the Market, a locally produced animated video and song dedicated to Jonathan's life was premiered, and Jonathan was presented with his birthday 'cake' made entirely out of his favourite healthy foods, including cabbage and lettuce. A separate, 'real' birthday cake was on offer, and 190th birthday memorabilia was given as prizes for the novelty tortoise-themed games. Exclusive certificates, hand-signed by the Governor and bearing an exclusive image of Jonathan's footprint, were available for visitors to collect on the day and throughout the weekend.

Prior to the celebrations, an art competition was held inviting participants to submit art in any medium including painting, drawing, sculpture, woodwork, etc with the theme 'celebrating Jonathan'. The winning entries were also displayed at the Plantation House Christmas Market.

Additionally, Jonathan's birthday celebrations secured him hundreds of major news features across the globe, including on The Drew Barrymore Show and on CNN. SHG's Marketing function led the event and conducted three live broadcasts from Plantation – featuring Teeny Lucy on BBC Breakfast and BBC News, and the Governor on Sky News Breakfast.



Nathaniel Benjamin of St Paul's Primary School wins Christmas card design competition



Nathaniel Benjamin, aged 7, of St Paul's Primary School (SPPS) was recently announced the winner of the Governor's Office Christmas card design competition.

In November, the three Island Primary Schools were invited by the Governor's Office to participate in a Christmas card design competition, with the winning entry to be used as the Governor's official Christmas card for 2022.

His Excellency Governor Nigel Phillips CBE decided that the public should be asked to choose the winning card from a shortlist of candidates.

Following the difficult task of sifting by Mrs Phillips and the Plantation House team, 10 of the entries were selected and displayed at the Plantation House Christmas Market.

The public were then asked to cast their vote for the winning card throughout the day.

Nathaniel's card has now been printed and was sent to officials, departments and organisations both on-Island and across the world.

Head Teacher of SPPS, Pat Williams, commented:

"We are thrilled to know that Nathaniel had the winning card. It's such a great boost for him and he's becoming a little artist. We're also pleased to know that he also came third in the art competition for Jonathan's birthday celebrations too. Well done to Nathaniel and to his parents who are so proud of him."

Governor Phillips concluded:

"I would like to congratulate Nathaniel on being selected the winner, and thank him for designing me such a wonderful Christmas card! There were so many excellent entries that I would not have been able to choose one myself, so I'm grateful for the public in helping to select this year's card. Nathaniel should be very proud of his design, which will now be seen by a great many people all over the world."

Thanks are extended to the teachers for organising the competition within their respective primary schools, to all the students who participated in the competition and to all the many members of public who helped to select the winner.

