

MAY 2023

# ST HELENA AMBASSADOR



## Editorial

*Ella LABIOD (SHG Press Officer)*

Hi, welcome to the latest edition of the St Helena Ambassador! In this issue, you'll discover all the activities that took place in St Helena during the King's Coronation, and find out more about Let's Training, the company that provided vital training to St Helena based staff throughout the month of May. Last but not least, you'll also find out about the progress of research into pathogens affecting our endemic species, following the closure of St Helena's Peaks National Park.

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:  
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# King's Coronation Celebrations on St Helena

This month, St Helena geared up for a once-in-a-lifetime celebration for the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and The Queen Consort.

Things kicked off on **Saturday 6 May** at the Community Care Centre, where residents and Acting Governor Greg Gibson enjoyed High Tea.



Community Care Centre residents



Greg GIBSON

The main Island celebrations then took place on **Sunday 7 May**. The day began with a parade of uniformed contingents and a commemoration service at midday on the Supreme Court terrace.

From 1.30 there were events and activities for people of all ages so everyone could really make the most of the extra-long bank holiday weekend and celebrate this exceptional moment in history with their families and friends.



The programme of events included:

- A Royal Bake Off cake contest, to award the most royally delicious pastry. Special thanks to our hardworking three judges who had to taste all of the creations and decide between our talented cooks/pastry chefs.
- Royal-themed marquee to watch the festivities whilst enjoying hot tea and delightful pastries.





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- On the big stage, little queens and little kings (aged between 7 - 11 years old) looked fantastic parading with their most beautiful costumes and smiles.
- Over 40 intrepid participants competed to set the fastest time up Jacob's Ladder, trying their hardest to beat the all-time record! Congratulations again to all participants who went to the end of their strength and endurance.



For everyone else, there were stalls, games, food, drink, novelty sports activities, bingo, and live music across the streets of Jamestown.

Finally, Miss St Helena cut a specially designed celebratory cake and shared it with the public, before the celebrations continued long into the night.

## Crane and Stacker training

Following an internal audit report, SHG identified a need to improve training for staff that use a crane or reach stacker as part of their role. Solomons in another hand was seeking to upskill and re-certify operators therefore it was an opportunity to share costs to facilitate the training

In conjunction with Solomons, Customs and Port Control staff have been undertaking training to certify operators to use both cranes and stackers. This has been delivered locally by "Let's Training" (Logistic Employment Training Services Ltd), a UK-based company.

"Let's Training" offer practical training in lifting operations for forklift trucks, telescopic handlers, access equipment, slinging, cranes and lift planning, as well as other plant equipment used in the construction, industrial and port sectors.

All of their courses are delivered by qualified instructors and meet the Health and Safety Commission's approved code of practice for both instructors and operators.



**St Helena  
Government**

Mr Willie Mclean, a fully qualified instructor/trainer, delivered both novice and refresher training on the use of cranes, stackers, and forklifts. He also delivered a course on slinging training to Solomons Stevedore team.

Willie carried out an on-site assessment of crane operations during cargo discharge, as well as Port Control's current processes and procedures for boat and container lifting, to determine what training might be required.

The training was then delivered over a three-week period, and approximately 20 persons across SHG and Solomons attended the courses.

First, novice staff attended the theoretical part of the training at the Malabar, following which they started on the practical side of crane operations at the lower wharf.

The next steps were to ensure that all staff who passed the training received ongoing tuition on both the crane and stacker and a positive step towards compliance and uplift in technical competence and skill development.

"Let's Training" will also be carrying out similar courses in the near future on Ascension Island.

Thanks are extended to Solomons for putting the training schedule together and to LETS for the delivery of the training. As a joint venture, it was a pleasure to see both parties working together to help upskill our workforces and create a safer operating environment. This will ensure that all lifting practices are carried out in a safe and proper manner, improving public safety.

## Invasive Species

In 2022 some of the Island's endemic cabbage trees, such as black cabbage, white wood, and dogwood, showed signs of wilted (droopy) leaves and dieback of the tree canopy.

Since this observation, the **Saint Helena Research Institute (SHRI)** have been monitoring 12 selected black cabbage trees to find an explanation and a solution to this phenomenon, and thus preserve the endemic cabbages of Saint Helena.

The **Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI)** believes that invasive pathogens are responsible, something that infects a host and causes disease, and *Phytophthora* specifically.

*Phytophthora* species are soil-inhabiting pathogens that favour wet conditions and infect trees, woody plants and even vegetables. Although previously considered fungi, *Phytophthora* species are now considered to be in a separate classification called oomycetes.

Species of *Phytophthora* produce resting spores that survive for years in moist soil in the absence of a suitable host.

Identifying *Phytophthora* in plants is highly challenging, and the team are now expanding their methods of testing for the plant pathogen.





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One method, named baiting, is when you get a sample, say for instance a Black cabbage leaf, and put it into water with suspected contaminated soil. You then leave it for a set period of time and record if any signs of infection develop.

Another is the inoculation of healthy trees under a controlled environment. This is where you isolate what is believed to be the plant pathogen, grow it in a lab and infect a healthy tree so you can compare symptoms from in the field vs under a controlled environment, before sending the specimen away to confirm infection of the species.

If completed successfully, both ways will offer insight into what might be an effective control measure to implement. This could be a chemical agent or even a biological agent, such as introducing a type of fungus that kills the *Phytophthora*.

Presently, many areas that could possibly have the pathogen are closed to the public, and there are strict bio-security regulations in place in places where authorised personnel are permitted to enter, such as foot baths with 'clean kill'.

CABI and SHRI are now monitoring ill trees and the trees around them in the cloud forest, as well as the nurseries from which the plants were recruited.

**CABI and SHRI thank the community for the help in not spreading the invasive species, and hope to have more news to share in the not too distant future.**



White wood soil sampling



White wood negative test



CABI team with ENRP and SHRI teams

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