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THE ST HELENA AMBASSADOR



Photo credit: Jannes Du Plessis

Editorial

Hi, Happy New Year!

Welcome to the St Helena Ambassador!

In this edition you can read about a reception that was held at Plantation House for Sam Collins, and also read an account from Selene Gough about her Darwin Plus Fellowship in the UK. We also shine a spotlight on the milestone of SHG signing a contact with Google to connect St Helena to the Equiano Subsea Cable.

If you'd like to contribute a story to the St Helena Ambassador, please feel free to contact me on tel: 22470 or via email:

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The Governor hosts reception to thank Sam Collins



L-R: HE Governor Nigel Phillips CBE and Sam Collins

HE Governor Dr Nigel Phillips CBE hosted a reception at Plantation House on Tuesday 16 January 2024 to say thank you to Mr Sam Collins for his generous monetary donations to two local charities.

Sam, together with his partner Ella, publicly auctioned their silver Volkswagen Fox for £4,300. This money was split evenly and donated to two local charities, the Happy Hearts Club and St Helena Disabled Person's Aid Society, both of which support the disabled and vulnerable members of St Helena's community.

During the reception, the Governor thanked Sam and said:

"Occasionally there are acts of outstanding generosity and kindness and when they occur it seemed appropriate to recognise what you have done both for the Happy Hearts Club and St Helena Disabled Person's Aid Society. We are all aware of the difficulties and challenges on the island of raising money for charities, the amount of money that you have raised will make a difference and will have an enduring effect."

Sam concluded:

"I would just like to say a few words about a very special lady, without whom I would not be here today. She has been very kind and loyal to me over

very many years and she came all the way from England to St Helena with me; a beautiful European model and I'm talking of course about my Volkswagen Fox! I was so happy that she made so much money at the auction, I never thought that when I bought the car that she would triple in value over the five years that I had her."

"My personal thoughts are that Saints are very generous people by nature, generous with money and time. I'm happy that the money went to a good cause. Thank you to everyone for so many happy memories on St Helena and for making Ella and I feel so welcome."

Sam worked for St Helena Government's Health and Social Care Portfolio as a Social Worker and recently departed the island following the conclusion of his two year contract. While on-island, Sam was an active member of the community and was well known for his participation in the local football, and Sam even broke the official record for ascending the 699 steps of Jacob's Ladder before departing. The previous record holder, Graham Doig, ascended the Ladder in 5:16.78 and Sam, on his second attempt, set a new record of 5:04.19.

Congratulations Sam and all the best for the future!



St Helena's Fibre Optic Cable Project – SHG signing a contract with Google to connect St Helena to the Equiano Subsea Cable



St Helena's Fibre Optic Cable Project (delivering high-speed internet connectivity to St Helena) is now 100% complete following the final commissioning works in June 2023.

The six-year long cable project has been one of the most significant projects the island has ever undertaken, and there were a number of significant milestones which had to be reached in order for the project to progress.

In last month's edition of the Ambassador we focused on the signing of the financial agreement for funding the project, and in this month's edition we will focus on St Helena Government (SHG) signing a contract with Google to connect St Helena to the Equiano Subsea Cable.

In December 2019 St Helena Government signed a contract with Google to connect St Helena via a branch of the Equiano Subsea Cable.

Equiano is a private international cable owned by Google. Equiano connects Sesimbra (Portugal) to Cape Town (South Africa), with branching units to Lagos (Nigeria), Lome (Togo), Swakopmund Namibia and St Helena. The branch between the main trunk of the Equiano cable and the Island is 1154 km long.

The signing of the Letter of Intent, which took place during July 2019 to secure the branch during Phase 1 of the Equiano Project, was followed by the signing of the contractual agreement between SHG and Google on 23 December 2019. This followed a long negotiation with Google, led by Financial

Secretary, Dax Richards; Chief Digital Officer, Jerry Roberts; supported by AG's Chambers and technical consultants, Pelagian.

The contract included the building of the branch which was undertaken by Alcatel Submarine Networks (ASN) through its various subcontractors.

Separately SHG has a contract with Telecom Egypt to move the data traffic on the branch from St Helena to both Portugal and Cape Town. The movement of this traffic is a key part of the jigsaw in being able to provide improved connectivity to St Helena. The final piece of the jigsaw was the connection between the Cable Landing Station in Rupert's Beach to the local network run by the local service provider.

In the next edition of the St Helena Ambassador newsletter we will shine a spotlight on the milestone of selecting a preferred bidder for Phase 1 and 2 of the Civil Works.



Data Manager, Selene Gough, shares her Darwin Plus Fellowship Scheme Experience



database management systems and develop biodiversity analysis skills, from on-site technical experts. This was to support my role at the St Helena Research Institute, managing the recently launched biological records database called iRecord St Helena.

"One of the first things I began learning at CEH is the statistical based programming language called R. It's great to learn for the management and analysis of datasets, and once you're a bit more experienced it makes data cleaning a lot more fun! Working at CEH meant I had the right software, access to larger datasets, and guidance from data scientists, which really helped with practicing different programming activities as I went along."

"I also had access to the database management system iRecord St Helena is currently hosted on. Observing the structure of a database managed by such a large scale records centre was enlightening to say the least. Highlighting important data management skills and ways to query information from the system whilst behind the scenes."

"Overall, during my time at CEH I learned about data management, tools for data analysis and gained insight into different biodiversity recording tools and schemes. All of which I thoroughly enjoyed, and I'm thrilled to share my experiences and ideas with project partners on St Helena!"

St Helena Research Institute's Data Manager, Selene Gough, recently completed a Darwin Plus Fellowship in the UK.

The fellowship scheme aims to provide funding for UK Overseas Territories to access training opportunities, and draw on wider technical and scientific expertise in the fields of biodiversity and the environment.

Here's an account of Selene's recent experience:

"I began my fellowship in June 2023, where I spent three months working at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) in Wallingford, Oxfordshire. With the objective to gain technical experience in

