

MARCH 2024

THE ST HELENA AMBASSADOR



Photo credit: James Du Plessis

Editorial

Hi, welcome to the St Helena Ambassador!

In this edition you can read about a team from St Helena Government and St Helena Airport who participated in victim identification training; a French research vessel's visit to St Helena; and how staff from the Safety, Security and Home Affairs Portfolio supported another Portfolio by cleaning the surroundings at Ebony View.

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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Multi-agency team participates in Disaster Victim Identification training



A multi-agency team from St Helena Government and St Helena Airport took part in a Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) training course between Monday 4 March and Wednesday 6 March 2024.

The training was delivered by the UK Home Office thanks to funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Conflict, Stability and Security Funds (CSSF) Overseas Territories Justice Programme.

Although such incidents are fortunately rare on St Helena, it is crucial that responders train, plan and prepare for disasters that may involve the loss of life.

The training was managed by two UK DVI policing professionals - Detective Superintendent and National DVI Coordinator, Jonathan Marsden, and Civil Contingencies Policy Manager from the College of Policing, Andy Woodward.

The multi-agency teams were guided through the DVI process and principles, followed by practical scene and mortuary exercises. The course has ensured that 21 DVI responders are now available to deploy should the need ever arise. All of those involved are extremely conscious of the role that they have volunteered to perform, a role that can be extremely challenging and demanding.

Jonathan and Andy commented:

“Throughout the course delegates listened carefully to a variety of lectures and showed true professionalism and enthusiasm. They are a credit to the island. Without question the course delegates are now trained to deliver an effective response during the initial hours and days of any disaster. They would be supported, incident dependent, by UK teams should that be required and as part of existing plans or arrangements for mutual aid.”

“We are extremely grateful to all involved in the careful planning of this training delivery and to the delegates for their enthusiasm and energy throughout. We would like to thank the St Helena Airport management for hosting the course, Mr David Price (Chief of Police), staff within the Emergency Planning Department and the UK Home Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office for their support regarding course funding.”

The Chief of Police, David Price, concluded:

“This is a very important step forward in further developing St Helena’s preparedness for dealing with major incidents. We are very grateful to the UK and the Disaster Victim Identification training team for their support that has enabled us to deliver this course and to the staff members who volunteered for this role and worked very hard to achieve their qualification.”



French research vessel visits St Helena

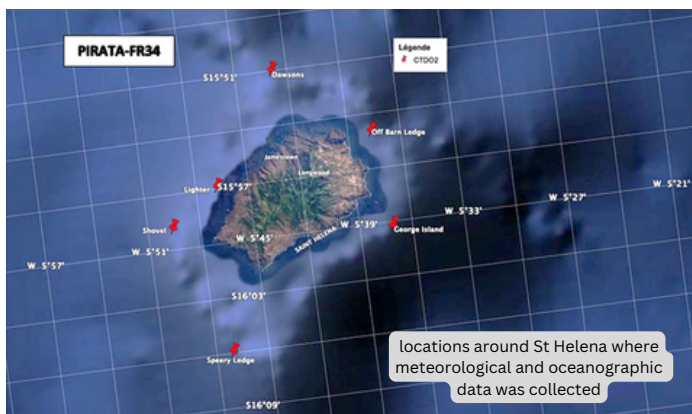


The French research vessel *Thalassa* visited St Helena from Saturday 16 March to Sunday 17 March 2024.

The stopover in James Bay came during the *RV Thalassa's* annual marine scientific research programme in St Helena's Marine Protected Area (MPA) that forms part of the long term 'Prediction and Research Moored Array in the Atlantic' (PIRATA) Programme. The *RV Thalassa* first visited the island in 2020 and now returns annually to St Helena's MPA to service one of its moored buoys which collects oceanographic data.

Whilst in St Helena's waters the *RV Thalassa* was able to offer 24 hours free service in support of the island's MPA and the scientific team and crew work closely with the Marine and Fisheries Conservation Section (MFCS) to agree priorities for assistance.

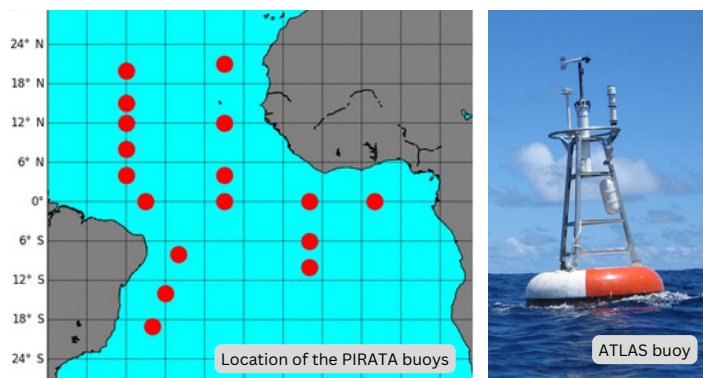
During the last two visits, the *RV Thalassa's* science team conducted measurements at six fixed points around the island, as shown by the red pins in the map. The measurements are of depth, temperature, conductivity (salinity), dissolved oxygen, and fluorimetry. The data gathered by the vessel is shared with the MFCS and will be used to underpin evidence based management of St Helena's MPA.



Marine and Fisheries Conservation Officer, Kirsty Jones, commented:

"The oceanographic data collected by the RV Thalassa was provided to us and will allow us to add these data to a long term monitoring programme already established by the MFCS. This research is aiming to assess the baseline condition of the inshore environment which can help inform any future scenarios such as fish deaths, as well as establish understanding of the parameters of our waters. We'd like to thank the scientists on board for their dedication to providing scientific assistance to St Helena and furthering our understanding of our MPA."

The PIRATA Programme was formed in 1997 and is a multinational programme (France, Brazil and USA). The programme maintains a network of 18 moored observation 'Autonomous Temperature Line Acquisition System' (ATLAS) buoys in the tropical



Atlantic Ocean which collect meteorological and oceanographic data. Each ATLAS buoy measures wind speed and direction; air temperature; humidity; rainfall; solar radiation; pressure; temperature and conductivity to 500 metres below sea level.

The data collected by the PIRATA array helps scientists to better understand climatic events in the tropical Atlantic to improve weather forecasting and climate research worldwide. The data is transmitted in real time via the internet.

The PIRATA programme carries out yearly cruises to replace all the ATLAS buoys. France maintains six of the 18 ATLAS moorings. Brazil and USA maintains the other buoys.

The current PIRATA programme cruise is the 34th French cruise of this programme and the main objective is the yearly servicing of the six ATLAS buoys located in the eastern tropical Atlantic and of one of the three equatorial current meter mooring.

Safety, Security and Homes Affairs Portfolio staff clean up at Ebony View

On Friday 9 February 2024 and Friday 22 March 2024, staff from various sections of the Safety, Security and Homes Affairs (SSHA) Portfolio took time out of their general duties to help support the Social Care Directorate by tidying up the surroundings of Ebony View for the residents and staff.

Ebony View, based at the old Half Tree Hollow School, provides 24 hour person-centred individualised residential care for adults with learning and physical disabilities, enabling the residents to live as independently as possible with privacy and dignity.

The SSHA Portfolio were made aware of the huge workload on the Social Care's small maintenance team, who have to upkeep a long list of properties, and wished to assist that team and the community.

Portfolio Director for SSHA, Alex Mitham, commented:

"I am very grateful to all those across the SSHA Portfolio who kindly and generously took time out from their normal work to support another portfolio.

"Only by us supporting each other, and especially those most vulnerable in our community, can we improve our island.

While this may only be a small gesture (although I think everyone's arms and backs ached!) I hope it benefits those who work, and especially live at Ebony View."

