

MAY 2024

# THE ST HELENA AMBASSADOR



## Editorial

Hi, welcome to the St Helena Ambassador!

In this edition you can read about an award ceremony for students who participated in the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition; an emergency preparedness exercise testing the resilience of St Helena Government's plans; a ceremony awarding King Charles III's Coronation medals; a reception celebrating International Nurses Day; and coverage of Culture Month and the launch of the 'Celebrating St Helena' booklet.

If you'd like to contribute a story to the St Helena Ambassador, please feel free to contact the Communications Hub on tel: 22470 or via email: [communications@sainthelena.gov.sh](mailto:communications@sainthelena.gov.sh).

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# The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition 2023



St Helena's primary schools have maintained a long tradition of participating in the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition, the world's oldest running school essay competition established in 1883. Last year, the primary schools were joined by writers from Prince Andrew School, the island's secondary school.

Drawing thousands of participants annually, the competition serves a vital role in acknowledging student achievement, empowering young voices, and fostering essential creative writing skills.

Every year, the competition focuses on a theme that champions Commonwealth values, cultivates empathy in future leaders, and prompts young minds to explore diverse viewpoints on global challenges. Past themes have tackled issues like environmental sustainability, community building, inclusivity, youth leadership, and gender equality.

In 2023, the theme of the competition was 'A Youth Powered Commonwealth', asking entrants

to explore the power young people hold within the global community and to consider how this power can be harnessed to make a meaningful impact in the world.

An awards ceremony was held at Plantation House on Thursday 9 May 2024, presented by Governor Nigel Philips CBE, Head Teacher of Pilling Primary (PPS), Elaine Benjamin, and Deputy Head Teacher of PPS, Steve Plato.

All successful entries received a Certificate of Participation. In addition, 16 students were awarded bronze medals and five were awarded silver medals at the ceremony. The silver medal award winners were given the opportunity to read their writing aloud to their families, teachers and invited guests.

Head Teacher of PPS, Elaine Benjamin, said: *"The event of the evening was a huge success! We are grateful to Governor and Mrs Phillips and the hardworking Plantation crew for making the great atmosphere possible. It was incredibly motivating to hear our young pupils take on challenging global concerns and even come up with heroic solutions for St Helena's problems. We especially applaud the teachers who helped these young people accomplish such remarkable outcomes. Your poetry and essays were incredibly motivating."*



# Emergency Planning Exercise Conducted



On Thursday 25 April 2024, an emergency planning exercise was held at Plantation House. This was a table-top exercise organised by the Emergency Planning section of the Safety, Security and Home Affairs Portfolio.

The exercise centred on a hypothetical emergency event affecting critical national infrastructure in Rupert's Bay. This included a number of casualties and significant ongoing impacts to critical supplies.

Participants considered the immediate steps needed to react to the unfolding situation, along with the short, medium and long term measures required to effectively recover from the incident.

National emergency planning exercises are held regularly. These involve ministers and officials from relevant agencies, both SHG and non-SHG, and at all command levels; bronze, silver and gold. Scenarios differ for each exercise, and aim to stress test emergency preparedness plans, as well as challenge and upskill those involved in responding to a major incident.

Following this exercise a number of recommendations will be made. These will aim to refine the emergency preparedness plans in place, as well as identify any additional training that may be required for those involved in

implementing these plans in an emergency situation.

Commenting on the exercise, Head of Emergency Planning, Simon Wade said: *"This exercise posed a number of challenges for participants, and was a solid 'stress test' of our emergency preparedness plans. It was good to have all command levels involved, from operational to tactical to strategic and Political oversight. The exercise provided a lot of unexpected events to tackle throughout, it allowed commanders to practise their crisis decision making, discuss options / contingences and to be place under pressure in a controlled environment."*

The Major Incident Response Plan has been developed on the principles of Integrated Emergency Management, those being: Anticipation, Assessment, Prevention, Preparation, Response and Recovery. During a major incident the model for Command, Control and Coordination will broadly follow the UK principles of command and control; Gold (Strategic), Silver (Tactical) and Bronze (Operational).

This particular exercise focused on all command levels, from operational to strategic. The command structure ensures clarity so that all staff deployed knows who reports to whom, who is accountable for what, and which individual / organisation is responsible for specific functions / tasks.

It should be noted that the command structure is role and not rank specific.





# King Charles III's Coronation Medal Ceremony

On 7 May 2024, Plantation House hosted a reception to award King Charles III's Coronation Medal to eligible persons on St Helena.

Assisted by Kerry Lane, Manager of Governor's Office, Governor Nigel Phillips CBE presented the King's Coronation Medal to various recipients. These included the Coronation Working Group, the core planners behind the official celebrations held on 6 May 2023. Additionally, medals were awarded to members of St Helena's uniformed and frontline emergency services who had completed five years of service before the Coronation date.

The King's Coronation Medal commemorates the official coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla, along with the celebratory events that took place in May 2023. It serves as a token of appreciation for those who contributed to these historic services across the realm.



## Governor recognises International Nurses Day

On 14 May 2024, Governor Nigel Phillips CBE hosted a reception at Plantation House to celebrate International Nurses Day, which falls on 12 May each year. The day honors the birthday of Florence Nightingale, a founder of modern nursing.

During the reception, the Governor expressed his gratitude to nurses for their vital role. He acknowledged the unique challenges they face due to St Helena's remote location and limited resources. He also commended the broader healthcare team.

Six nurses were also recognised for achieving a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing Studies through demanding distance learning at Derby University in the UK. These dedicated, locally trained individuals balanced their studies with their nursing duties, demonstrating a true commitment to professional development.



# Celebrating St Helena during the island's first Culture Month



The contents of a 'launch box'

May 2024 marked a significant milestone in St Helena's history, as the island celebrated its inaugural Culture Month, an initiative spearheaded by the St Helena National Trust.

This month-long festival was a celebration of our unique cultural heritage and identity, encapsulating the essence of what it means to be a 'Saint' through various events and activities that engaged the entire community.

Although St Helena's Day officially occurs on 21 May, this year we celebrated our national day on Sunday, 19 May 2024, with the traditional parade and a lively street party. The Grand Parade in Jamestown was alive with the sounds of local music and colourful displays of cultural pride, as residents and visitors alike joined in the festivities.

This day not only celebrated our national identity but also served as the perfect backdrop for the launch of an important tool — the 'Celebrating St Helena' booklet.

This booklet was launched locally on 19 May 2024, at an interactive stall in the Castle Courtyard, by the St Helena Government (SHG)

Marketing team with assistance from St Helena Tourism. The booklet was also launched internationally on 21 May 2024, with a few stakeholders and diaspora members in the UK and South Africa receiving 'launch boxes' that brought the essence of the local celebrations, to life overseas.

The booklet documents the collective identity of our island, as defined through the voices of those who know St Helena best. The booklet was the culmination of interviews conducted in 2021-2022 by SHG's Marketing function, involving more than 400 adult stakeholders and input from all local schools. It aims to encapsulate the common words, themes, and ideas from the research, that together form a community-defined view of 'what St Helena is all about', providing a clear articulation of the St Helenian experience today in the 21st Century.

The Celebrating St Helena booklet is designed to enable everyone to more easily and consistently be able to communicate the authentic narrative of our island to the world, and to each other. It not only serves as a valuable resource for helping others to understand our rich heritage and vibrant community life, but also acts as a mirror for Saints everywhere to see the reflection of their shared identity and values.

You can download this booklet from the St Helena Government website for free via: <https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Celebrating-St-Helena-Brand-Booklet-2024-downsized.pdf>

To learn more about the booklet and how it can be used on the local and on international stage, contact [communications@sainthelena.gov.sh](mailto:communications@sainthelena.gov.sh)

Thank you to everyone who participated, and who contributed to making the first Culture Month a success; and a special thanks to everybody who visited the Celebrating St Helena stall on 19 May.