

JUNE 2025

ST HELENA AMBASSADOR



Editorial

Katelyn Benjamin

Welcome to the June 2025 edition of the St Helena Ambassador!

Last month, the Dutch sailing ship Oosterschelde made a memorable visit to James Bay, leaving a lasting impact. Their time here included engaging with Darwin Leaders on conservation films, donating to the Millennium Forest, hosting hundreds of students for ship visits, and conducting valuable research trips.

International Nurses Day was celebrated last month to recognise their vital role in our community's health with inspiring speeches and heartfelt tributes.

In addition, St Helena's Day "St Helena and the Sea" highlighted our unique culture with the traditional float parade, sports and entertainment.

Our very own Cerys Joshua - a young St Helenian proudly represented the island at the United Nations Conference (UNOC3) in France, providing valuable insights into global marine issues reinforcing the crucial role of youth in ocean conservation.

A candlelit vigil was held in May to raise awareness of domestic abuse. This event brought the community together and is set to become an annual fixture, reinforcing support and awareness efforts.

Finally, in the recent Men's Mental Health Month, a successful charity bike ride boosted awareness and open dialogues, fostering intergenerational connections, and has ambitious plans for future community gatherings and support initiatives.

If you'd like to contribute a story to the St Helena Ambassador or have suggestions for future editions, please contact katelyn.benjamin@sainthelena.gov.sh or call 22470.

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SAILING FOR CHANGE: OOSTERSCHELDE'S LEGACY ON ST HELENA

On Saturday, 10 May 2025, the Dutch sailing ship Oosterschelde docked in James Bay, marking the beginning of a week filled with community engagement, education, and conservation efforts on St Helena. During their visit, the crew supported three St Helenian Darwin Leaders, who were selected to travel to Ascension Island aboard the Oosterschelde to gain hands-on experience by creating short films for the St Helena National Trust, highlighting the island's past, present, and future conservation efforts.

Darwin200 generously donated £1,500 to support tree planting in the Millennium Forest and facilitated educational visits for local students—welcoming 101 secondary students aboard the ship and arranging ferry trips for 192 primary students, one of which even spotted a whale shark on the return journey. The crew also delivered presentations at all four schools on the island, focusing on maritime history and careers, and gifted each school library a Hanson Box of educational books.

For the broader community, they held a public lecture on the DARWIN200 project at the island museum. In addition, they produced a special film on the Millennium Forest for the St Helena National Trust, intended to be shown to HRH the Duke of Edinburgh—patron of the Millennium Forest project—during a presentation in London this July. A dedicated research trip was also organised for the Trust, taking 30 of its members on a circumnavigation of the island to document little-known seabird populations on remote sea stacks. Another film was created for Rebecca Cairns-Wicks, exploring Darwin's travels on the island and the unique invertebrate life of the Eastern Arid Area.

"A massive thank you for making all of the above possible, and for such a special week on beautiful St Helena," said Stewart McPherson, DARWIN200 Leader.



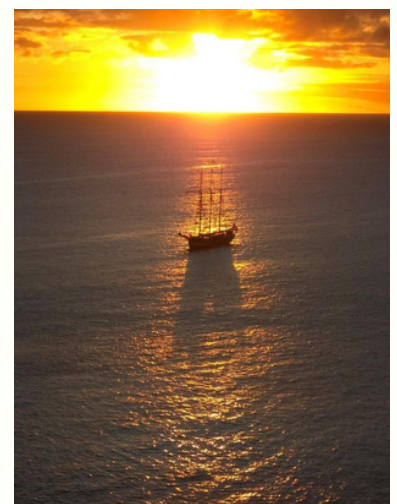
DARWIN200 Leaders at Millenium Forest



Darwin200 Leaders visiting Pilling Primary School



DARWIN200 Leaders on Ascension Island



"Oosterchelde" in Harbour

CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY ON ST HELENA

On 12 May 2025, International nurses day was celebrated at the Health Education Centre at General Hospital. The theme was recognised by the Royal College of Nursing, which was “Our Nurses. Our Future. Caring for nurses strengthens economies”. The event was attended by nurses as well as retired nurses. The event commenced with a heartfelt tribute to their dedication and service on the island.

The day started with a warm welcome from Chief Nursing Officer Marilyn Essex, who expressed appreciation for the hard work and compassion of all our nurses. The ceremony was officially opened with a prayer led by Father Tsepeo and Deacon Bobby setting a tone of unity, hope, and gratitude for the nurses.

The event was also attended by distinguished guests, the Minister of Health, Martin Henry, and Acting Governor Natasha Harris. Their presence added significance to the celebration and underscored the high regard in which nurses are held on the island.

The Master of Ceremonies Sister Busisiwe Ramaru skillfully guided the proceedings, which ensured a smooth and meaningful flow to the celebration. A memorable moment was when Sister Jackie Henry shared reflections on how the nursing profession was in the past, when some of the retired nurses were still actively working. Her words brought a sense of nostalgia and pride, reminding everyone of the rich history and enduring dedication of our nursing community.

Minister Henry delivered an inspiring speech emphasising the vital role nurses play and encouraging them to continue their excellent service with passion, resilience and compassion.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks from Sister Rachel van Heerden, expressing gratitude to everyone who supported, donated, and participated in making the occasion memorable. She highlighted that nurses are the foundation of our healthcare system, whose dedication, kindness, and strength consistently motivate and inspire us every day. During the event, there were exciting raffle draws where nurses had the chance to win hampers. The event wrapped up with the distribution of additional gifts to all nurses and a shared meal, fostering camaraderie and appreciation among attendees.

This celebration reaffirmed the vital role that nurses, both current and retired, play in our community's health on St Helena. It was a memorable occasion that honoured their invaluable contributions, professionalism, and compassion, while also sharing moments of humor and nostalgia, inspiring continued excellence in nursing.



Certificates awarded to Nurses



Prayer led by Father Tsepeo



Speech given by Minister of Health and Social Care - Martin Henry

ST HELENA'S DAY CELEBRATIONS 2025: ST HELENA AND THE SEA

Residents from across the island gathered at the Grand Parade on Wednesday, 21 May to celebrate the island's cherished public holiday — St Helena's Day. Organised by the St Helena Football Association, this year's event was held under the theme "St Helena and the Sea," honouring the island's deep connection to its maritime heritage.

The day began with the traditional morning service, a ceremonial start that brought together members of the community. It set a respectful and reflective tone, reminding attendees of the island's unique history and identity.

At 2pm the much-anticipated float parade commenced, featuring four entries — two from the St Paul's district, one from Longwood, and one by the Bennett family. Each float creatively interpreted the "St Helena and the Sea" theme, showcasing elements such as sea creatures, island traditions, and maritime scenes. Local danced and performed in the parade, energising the crowd and transforming Jamestown into a lively corridor of colour and sound.

The Grand Parade area was transformed into a bustling market, with over 20 stalls offering an array of local goods, including local teas, cakes, hot foods, sushi, sweets, and plants, alongside a variety of locally made crafts, jewellery, and other handmade items. The diversity of stalls highlighted the entrepreneurial spirit of the island and offered something for everyone to enjoy.

Taken place inside the castle courtyard was "Culture in the Courtyard" this turned the culture month's theme "*We just made do*" into a celebratory journey. It was a simple but meaningful way to celebrate the island's culture and resourcefulness. The laughter, memories shared and community spirit said it all.

The afternoon also featured a full line-up of novelty sports and family-friendly activities. Popular competitions such as tug of war, and the Little Mr and Miss St Helena pageant returned to enthusiastic crowds. Children were treated to fun attractions including a bungee rebound, bouncy castle, and various games.

Entertainment continued into the evening with live music and DJ sets, including a headline performance by the local group Love Affair, who delivered a well-received show that had the crowd dancing well into the evening.

At 7pm, a spectacular fireworks display, generously sponsored by the Football Association, lit up the night sky above Jamestown, providing a fitting finale to a day of celebration.

The official programme concluded by midnight, allowing the community to wind down and prepare for the working day ahead.

St Helena's Day 2025 proved once again to be more than just a public holiday — it was a celebration of culture, community, and island identity. With strong attendance, creative participation, and a rich variety of events, the day was widely considered a success by both organisers and attendees.



Longwood District's Float - Sea Rescue



Bennett Family's Float - At the Beach

MY JOURNEY TO UNOC3: REPRESENTING ST HELENA AND DIVING DEEP INTO OCEAN CONSERVATION

I was honoured to be selected as youth representation for St Helena as part of the Green Overseas (GO) Programme, which enabled me to participate in this year's United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) held in Nice, France, from 8th to 13th June 2025. The GO Programme brought together young people from various UK and EU Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs), each representing their islands and communities on an international stage. Our youth delegation was made up of ten representatives from:

- Bermuda
- Aruba
- New Caledonia
- French Polynesia
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- Saint Martin
- Montserrat
- St Helena

The primary objective of my participation was to gain a deeper understanding of the range of marine issues that other territories and countries are facing, whether that be climate change and overfishing to illegal fishing practices and invasive species. It was also an invaluable opportunity to connect with fellow youth from these regions, learn about the similarities and differences between our territories, and identify shared interests and goals for the future of ocean conservation.

As someone at the beginning of my journey in marine conservation, I found the experience incredibly immersive. I attended a wide range of talks and panel sessions, tailoring my schedule to focus on topics relevant to St Helena's Marine Protected Area (MPA). Sessions on sustainable fisheries, MPA management, and ocean data collection helped me think more deeply about how conservation is approached in different parts of the world. These insights gave me a greater appreciation for the scale of the challenges facing marine environments globally and the importance of data and collaboration in tackling them.

Living on St Helena, it's easy to feel somewhat sheltered from the outside world. We're fortunate to be surrounded by a well-protected marine environment, but hearing about the challenges facing other regions was a powerful reminder not to take that for granted. It was both eye-opening and heart-warming to see that, despite the global challenges, there are passionate individuals and organisations working hard to protect what remains of our oceans for future generations.

The main takeaway from UNOC3 for me is the importance of youth engagement. The state of the world's oceans will be inherited by our generation, and it is essential that young people have a voice in the decisions being made today. We are not just the future, we are active participants in shaping a more sustainable world. UNOC3 strongly reinforced that we, as youth, must speak up and contribute meaningfully to the solutions. Finally, I hope my experience encourages others in our community, especially other young Saints, to take up opportunities like this. Being on St Helena, so geographically isolated, it can sometimes feel daunting to travel and attend international events. But these experiences are truly eye-opening. They allow you to build lasting friendships, forge meaningful connections, and return with a sense of pride and accomplishment. Stepping into a space like UNOC3 pushed me out of my comfort zone and forced me to face imposter syndrome head-on. But in the end, I am incredibly grateful that I took the leap. I am proud to have represented St Helena and to have been part of a global dialogue focused on ocean sustainability and youth empowerment.

The GO-Green Overseas Program is an EU funded project, implemented by Expertise France that aims to contribute to the sustainable, resilient and inclusive development of European and British overseas countries and territories

Story by: Cerys Joshua



· Group picture of some of the youth delegates representing their respective OCTs at the Green Zone event area

CANDLELIT VIGIL IN HONOUR OF VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The recent Candlelit Vigil, held on 03 May at the Jamestown Market, proved to be a successful and deeply meaningful event, with sincere appreciation extended to everyone who contributed.

The vigil commenced with a moving bagpipe performance by Mr Andy Cant, thoughtfully setting a reflective tone for the evening. Following this, Minister Christine Scipio delivered a compelling opening address. She gracefully acknowledged the victims and survivors of domestic abuse, stressing firmly that domestic violence will not be tolerated and highlighting the community's ongoing responsibility to raise awareness.

The vigil then concluded with Mrs. Coral Yon leading attendees in heartfelt prayers for peace and healing for all those affected by domestic violence. This moment was beautifully followed by the extinguishing of candles, a symbolic gesture where participants collectively and silently wished for domestic violence to become a thing of the past.

Looking ahead, this impactful event is now projected to become an annual Candlelit Vigil. Its purpose will be to consistently reinforce awareness of domestic violence and serve as a vital continuation of the objectives set forth by White Ribbon Day.

Organisers extend their gratitude to the dedicated ambassadors and all community members for their participation in making this vigil such a powerful experience.



Attendees of Candlelit Vigil



Candle Display



Candle Display

DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMENS RIDE 2025

This past Men's Mental Health Month saw an incredible initiative take to the roads, proving that passion and purpose can drive powerful conversations. A charity bike ride, aimed at raising awareness and fostering open dialogue around men's mental health, roared to success, far exceeding expectations.

"The main goal was to raise awareness for Men's Mental Health Month, and in my opinion, I feel this event was a success," commented organiser Lee Yon. "The amount of people we had to both ride and spectate was shocking." Indeed, 42 riders, many in costume, participated, creating a vibrant spectacle that captured the community's attention.

Kyle Bennett, another organiser, echoed this sentiment. "The amount of people that's showed up and showed dedication during the event was shocking and also pleasing." He emphasised the core mission: "Our goal was to give men a space to open up and share and feel safe by doing something they love. It was also to target the older age group of men and get the, to show up with their classic bikes. This in itself was a success"



**DGR Riders at Plantation House - Photo Creds:
Craig Williams**

The event successfully brought together a diverse group, with "a variant of older and younger generations, sharing stories, laughing and just enjoying each other's companies." This intergenerational connection was a testament to the event's welcoming atmosphere.

The impact of the ride is clear, with total funds raised reaching an impressive £1255. Special recognition goes to the top five "Money Makers"

- Ivan Gough - £414
- Terri Clingham - £249
- Alonzo Henry - £229
- Johnny Herne - £118
- Gary Rowe - £83

The success of this event has sparked significant interest, with requests from both riders and the public for more rides and new routes. Looking ahead, the momentum continues with the next ride already scheduled for 17 May 2026. Even more exciting, locals have generously offered to expand future events into a full day, incorporating food, stalls, and games, creating an even larger community gathering.

The organisers have ambitious future goals, aiming to build on this success:

- Establishing future club for bike maintenance, potentially even teaching skills.
 - Collaborating with Motocross to create a charity that keeps some of the raised money within the local community.
 - Exploring potential different routes to gain more public exposure.
 - Securing a potential property to house the club, offering a dedicated, safe space for men to open up freely and feel heard.
- This initiative truly demonstrates how shared passions can create powerful platforms for vital conversations, driving awareness and fostering a supportive community for men's mental