

THE ST HELENA AMBASSADOR



September 2021



Editorial

Hi, welcome to the St Helena Ambassador! In this edition you can find out about an endemic species that was brought back from extinction, the Queen's Baton Relay and their plans to visit St Helena, how St Pauls Primary School celebrated International Literacy Day, and the HMS *Protector* visit.

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: jodie.s-constantine@sainthelena.gov.sh.

Jodie Scipio-Constantine (SHG Press Officer)

The Queen's Baton to visit St Helena

The Queen's Baton for the 16th official Queen's Baton Relay is set to arrive at St Helena in December 2021 and the Baton Bearers are expected to spend two days exploring the community.

A spokesperson from the National Amateur Sports Association St Helena commented:

"Trusting that nothing unforeseen happens, the first day the Baton and all the Baton Bearers will bus tour Island-wide visiting all the districts, including the care homes etc so that as many people as possible will be able to see and touch the Baton. The second day will be visiting all the schools and crèches, Jonathan and an underwater dive to a wreck (sea conditions permitting). It is hoped that HE the Governor will host a party for the Baton and NASAs Committee will be organising a St Helenian BBQ."

The Baton will carry the Queen's Message to athletes ahead of the Commonwealth Games which will be held in Birmingham between 28 July and 8 August 2022.

The Queen's Baton Relay will commence on 7 October at Buckingham Palace, where Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will place her Commonwealth message into the Baton.

The Baton will then visit all 72 nations and territories of the Commonwealth, a journey expected to take 294 days to complete, before arriving back in England in July 2022.

Before arriving at St Helena, the Baton will have just visited Botswana. After departing St Helena, the Baton will make its way to South Africa.

Here we introduce you to components of the Baton:



The Queen's Baton to visit St Helena continued ...

[1] Queen's Message Compartment

A mechanised chamber beneath the brass leaf plaque will hold The Queen's message to be opened at the 2022 Commonwealth Games' Opening Ceremony.

[2] 360 Camera

Fitted with a 360-degree camera, the Baton has 'eyes', and a 'brain' which record and transmit imagery and digital information, and GPS technology allows the Baton to be tracked on its travels.

[3] Copper, Aluminium and Brass

The Baton has been cast using accessible, non-precious metals of copper, aluminium and brass to represent the bronze, silver and gold medals that athletes will be competing for.

[4] Platinum Strand

Woven throughout the Baton and lining the length of the curved shape is a platinum strand, paying tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, in her Platinum Jubilee year.

[5] LED Components

The Baton features LED lighting and a heartrate sensor that display the heartbeats of 'Batonbearers'. The lighting also changes when two people grip the Baton.

[6] Sensors

The Baton has 'lungs', consisting of atmospheric sensors with laser technology that analyses the environmental conditions.

Photos: © 2021 Birmingham Organising Committee

HMS Protector visits St Helena

The Royal Navy's ice breaker HMS *Protector* visited St Helena between Monday, 6, and Friday, 10 September 2021. The ship came directly from Gibraltar where she departed on 20 August 2021.

The purpose of the HMS *Protector's* visit was to carry out crew changes that coincided with the Titan Airways charter flight. While in St Helena waters, the HMS *Protector* also carried out a hydrographic survey and surveillance of the seamounts.

As the crew had been on-board for more than 10 days, they were not required to quarantine on arrival but as per St Helena's mandatory COVID-19 quarantine and testing arrangements, all personnel on-board the vessel were tested for COVID-19. All crew tested negative and were permitted to come ashore.

Once ashore, personnel were able to participate in Island tours, visit local attractions, and enjoy snorkelling, mountain biking, and a five-a-side football match organised by New Horizons.

Head of Visitor Information Services, Matt Joshua, commented:

"The recent visit of the HMS Protector provided a much-needed revenue boost to many of those in our hospitality and tourism sectors. It was also a refreshing reminder of what it's like to have visitors on the Island. How great to have a bit of buzz again! – Particularly in the pubs, bars and restaurants. Many of the service providers gave very positive feedback, welcoming the extra money in their tills. The sailors also spent money in the shops and hired taxis. Besides the formal events, activities such as Island tours and a five-a-side football match organised by New Horizons, gave the crew opportunities to stretch their legs, see the Island and meet new people."

While in St Helena waters, the HMS *Protector* was also open to members of the public to board the ship for a tour on Tuesday, 7, and Wednesday, 8 September. Once

on-board, persons were able to view the deck, equipment, interior, and the bridge. The HMS *Protector* departed St Helena for Ascension on Friday, 10 September, to conduct survey works there and crew were able to go ashore following COVID testing.

The HMS *Protector* is now back in St Helena waters to continue survey works following her trip to Ascension. She will be at the anchorage from Thursday, 14, to Wednesday, 20 October, to conduct the second crew change that coincides with the arrival of the flight from the UK on Monday, 18 October. Before the new Watch joins on Wednesday, 20 October, personnel from the *Protector* will once again enjoy some shore time and ship's personnel will help the Sea Rescue team with some training. Tours of the ship are also being arranged. In between survey work and leading up to Thursday, 14 October, the HMS *Protector* will land small groups of people to come ashore and take part in various community projects. As with the first visit, all COVID protocols will be strictly adhered to.

The HMS *Protector* will remain in St Helena's waters up until 23 October completing survey work, before she departs on her southbound journey.



Another St Helena Endemic Species Back From the Brink

The 'She Cabbage' (*Lachanodes arborea*) was once a common tree of the central ridge. It was thought to be lost to the Island until Norman Kerr discovered six old trees growing near the ridge above Grapevine Gut. When these subsequently disappeared the tree was again thought to be extinct until 1976 when George Benjamin discovered three old trees and some seedlings in a cattle pasture above Osborne's Cottage, owned by W.A. Thorpe & Sons, growing in a hedge of *Erythrina caffra*.

The St Helena She Cabbage is one of our unique tree daisies that we call Cabbage Trees. The She Cabbage has beautiful purple velvet stems and can reach the height of 10m in favourable conditions.

When the She Cabbage was discovered in 1976 seedlings raised from these trees were planted in the Clifford Arboretum, Cason's, Pouncey's, Mount Pleasant, Pleasant Valley, Wranghams, Napoleon's Tomb, and below Cabbage Tree Road.

The trees planted below Cabbage Tree Road died of old age in 1995. The last tree growing at Pleasant Valley was blown down by heavy winds in 1998. The last old tree at the Tomb died in 2011. But young seedlings were planted to replace it and She Cabbages can still be found growing in this area and are being used as a living gene bank by the Terrestrial Conservation team supported by the French Consul and his team. Mount Pleasant's old tree died in the 1990s. Dr Rebecca Cairns-Wicks has worked closely with the Conservation team since and has also secured and developed a living gene bank. The last tree at Clifford Arboretum, Cason's, died in the early 2000s. The last wild trees at Osbornes died in 2012 and since then the She Cabbage has been classified as extinct in the wild.

Continuous effort to propagate the She Cabbage and maintain stocks in living gene has been carried out since the 1990s. However, it has not been possible to propagate the She Cabbages in large numbers because seed production has been very low despite profuse annual flowering. Most of the seeds were infertile which made it hard for the Terrestrial Conservation Team to secure and protect this fast growing and short lived tree species. A further conservation challenge is that the seed cannot be stored like other endemic species. Despite attempting many seed storage techniques over the years, only fresh collected seeds germinate.

Before the She Cabbage became extinct in the wild the Terrestrial Conservation Team at Scotland secured and developed a living gene bank at Cason's planting a few hundred She Cabbage trees over the last 12 years when seedlings could be raised from seed collected.

Nurseries Officer (Species Team), Vanessa Thomas-Williams, commented:

"This year has been a year like no other as we have seen a massive difference in the production of fertile seed and between July and September collected a whopping 20,000 seeds. All of these seeds have now been sown and we are getting almost 100% germination success. The Scotland Nursery shade houses are currently filled with over 10,000 potted on She Cabbage seedlings and staff are working furiously to pot on the rest."

"We are not entirely sure why this year is different to others but we suspect that a number of factors have affected pollination success. The weather is likely to be one factor, and the availability of pollinators but we also suspect genetics has a key role to play. Continuous production to maximise genetic variation over several generations could well have helped to break possible mechanisms causing incompatibility preventing seed development. But what we are confident about is that this year's production of 20,000 seedlings hails a brighter future for the She Cabbage."



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| [1] The Species Team | [6] Sorting She Cabbage seed |
| [2] She Cabbage being watered | [7] shade house which is full with She Cabbage seedlings |
| [3] She Cabbage seedling germinating | [8] She Cabbage seed developing |
| [4] Casons living gene bank | [9] She Cabbage seed ready for sowing |
| [5] She Cabbage seed developing | |



St Pauls Primary School celebrates International Literacy Day

International Literacy Day - a day used to remind the public of the importance of literacy as a matter of dignity and human rights - was celebrated on Wednesday, 8 September 2021.

St Pauls Primary School (SPPS) celebrated International Literacy Day by hosting activities around books - Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and KS1 focused on Julia Donaldson and KS2 focused on author David Walliams.

The day started with an assembly led by Deputy Head, Sherell Thomas, who spoke about Literacy and how the COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted the learning of children, young people and adults across the world. Guest speakers - Latisha Fowler, Teeny Lucy, Paul Brown and Gavin (Jack) Thomas - spoke to the children about how they use literacy in their jobs and the importance of reading and writing skills across all subjects.

Nursery explored the book 'The Gruffalo' and painted Gruffalo pictures using a range of colours. The children also used their creative skills to model the Gruffalo out of play dough.

Reception focussed on 'Sharing a shell' by Julia Donaldson. Activities centred around the story, such as describing a shell, created a sea display centred around the shell and sang sea songs.

Year 1 focused on the book 'The Slightly annoying Elephant'. Pupils had to match different objects on a poster that were bigger or smaller than an elephant and choose/draw their favourite food they would give the annoying elephant if he turned up at their house for dinner. The pupils also finger painted a template of the annoying elephant.

Year 2 watched a video of the book 'The Slightly Annoying Elephant' and created pop-up elephants and gave them names.

Year 3 read the book and did activities around the book 'There's a snake in my school'. The class was split into groups and made a collage using different medias of the different animals from the book - the big fat cat, the tall dog, the cute Gerbil, The 100 year old Tortoise and the small fish.

Year 4 focused on the book 'The World's Worst Parents'. Pupils painted their feet green, stamped them on paper and then wrote imaginative poems about their parent's feet.

Year 5 read the book 'Ratburger' and used their imagination to draw animals that they would take around the world and then wrote their dream on where they would like to visit.

Year 6 read a book 'Grubby Gertrude' from The World's Worst Children collection. Pupils made a rubbish monster out of different media and then wrote a paragraph describing the monster.

Personnel from Sure South Atlantic Ltd, The Bank of St Helena, Sea Rescue, the Police Department and a farmer all read a book to each class throughout the day.

All pupils had an incredible day learning through a book.

