

UK OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

THE NEWSLETTER OF UKOTA · SEPTEMBER 2017



UK Territories: rebuild must endure



- | **British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Turks and Caicos face nature's fury**
- | **UK's Caribbean citizens: London's essential support**
- | **Lessons from Montserrat show need for sustainable response**

'Among the worst storms on record'

Hurricane Irma, the first of the major September storms to strike the UK Overseas Territories in the Caribbean, has been listed as one of the worst on record. Winds of 185mph battered Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, and the Turks and Caicos, alongside French, Dutch and independent islands.

The level of destruction is immense. The islands were stripped of vegetation while infrastructure was devastated. Boats were flung from the sea and roofs ripped from buildings.

Reports from the British Virgin Islands say a staggering 60-80% of the country's buildings have been affected. The Turks and Caicos witnessed immense structural damage, with streets flooded, utility poles snapped and a widespread black-out on the capital island of Grand Turk.

Thousands of homes, boats, businesses, and livelihoods have been destroyed in the wake of the storms. Damage to essential infrastructure such as airports, hospitals, roads, shelters and schools has left the affected societies in need of vital assistance.



The United Kingdom's Response

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship Mounts Bay led the UK's first response to the disaster, with emergency supplies and a contingent of Royal Marines and Army engineers. As the initial shock subsided, Leaders of the devastated UK Territories called on London to stand by their people for the long term.

Speaking in his capacity as President of the UK Overseas Territories Association, the Premier of Bermuda, The Hon E. David Burt MP, expressed deep concern and sympathies for all those affected. Calling for stronger British government relief action, he said: "We welcome the commitment from the UK Government in providing immediate resources to British nationals within the Caribbean. We call upon the UK Government to examine and develop the long term economic self-sustainability of the Overseas Territories."

Acknowledging that the people of Britain's Caribbean Territories are courageous and resilient, Premier Burt also noted that they face unprecedented devastation. He believes that now, more than ever, the British Overseas Territories need the United Kingdom to fulfil its obligations by providing comprehensive and lasting support to ensure a sustainable future.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson visited Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands after the Hurricane Irma, noting it was "clear this place has been through an absolutely hellish experience". Acknowledging the UK's obligations, he observed: "People don't realise that these are British people, these are British islanders and we have a duty to them." The Foreign Secretary hoped his visit would act to "show the commitment of the United Kingdom", adding: "We are here to help."

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| **London meetings for OT Leaders** |

| **OTs represented at WWI commemorations** |

| **Student event** |

| **Territory elections** |

TERRITORY NEWS

Brexit theme for London meetings



Overseas Territory Leaders with Lord Ahmad and Robin Walker MP at Lancaster House.

Leaders and Representatives of the Overseas Territories met in London in July to prepare for the annual Joint Ministerial Council.

The meeting, chaired by Pitcairn Councillor Leslie Jaques OBE, included discussion on Brexit, the UK/OT relationship, security and access, environment, pensions and child safeguarding.

Brexit affects all the Territories and on 10 July the Leaders and Representatives appeared before the House of Lords European Union Committee. The session gave the opportunity to inform the Committee about the individual concerns of the Territories. It was aired on the BBC Parliament channel and covered on BBC Radio 4's 'Today in Parliament'. Transcripts are available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/eu-select-committee/>

On 12 July, the newly appointed Foreign Office Minister for the Overseas Territories, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, hosted a meeting of the special Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council on European negotiations at Lancaster House. The meeting was co-chaired by Robin Walker MP, Minister in the Department for Exiting the EU. Topics included future trade, market access, EU funding, borders and immigration, and sanctions.

UKOTA's AGM



Kimberley Durrant, UKOTA Chair

Bermuda Representative Kimberley Durrant was elected UKOTA Chair at the Association's 2017 AGM. The Premier of Bermuda, the Hon. David Burt JP MP, is President of the UKOTA Political Council.

The outgoing Chair, Benito Wheatley, Representative of the British Virgin Islands and outgoing President, BVI Premier Dr. the Hon. Orlando Smith OBE, were thanked for their work over the past year.



Students, delegates and speakers at National Maritime Museum.

Student event at Greenwich

Thirty five students from five Overseas Territories met in March at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich for a conference, under the theme "OTs Connected: From a Shared Maritime History to a Unique Post-Brexit Future." Supported by UKOTA, the day included talks

on the Museum's collection of OT-related archives and on the risks and opportunities of Brexit. A workshop allowed the students to craft a new narrative for the OTs in their own words. The day concluded with tours of the museum and galleries.

Territory Representatives at WWI commemoration



Laying of Wreaths by Representatives of 19 nations and territories that served in the First World War

Representatives of Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat were present at the commemoration for the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele on 30 July. In 1917 the Territories lost soldiers at the battle in Ypres, Belgium. The Representatives laid wreaths along with other dignitaries including TRHs the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and the Prime Minister.

Territory to Territory Partnership



Minister Hogan with staff members from SAERI © Penguin News

Hon. Claude Hogan, Montserrat's Minister of Agriculture, Trade, Lands, Housing and Environment, visited the Falkland Islands in August, as part of a 'Territory to Territory' partnership. The aim is to establish long-term collaboration between the two UK OTs on shared issues such as fisheries, marine planning, and data management.

The UK Government supports the partnership through its Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. The support was provided via the UK's Joint

Nature Conservation Committee, which in turn contracted the Falklands-based South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI). SAERI staff have visited Montserrat to provide expertise and support.

Mr. Hogan commented, "Montserrat is very keen to further develop the Territory to Territory partnership that we have established, and it is important that we both visit each other's islands to really understand how we can work together to share and develop ideas."

The Hon. Michael Poole, member of the Falklands' Legislative Assembly agreed, "I have supported this partnership between the Falklands and our sister island in the Caribbean, as we both have a common understanding of working on small islands and have good skills and experiences to share with each other."

BERMUDA

New Government and Premier elected



Premier the Hon. David Burt JP MP

The General Election on the 18 July resulted in a victory for the Progressive Labour Party (PLP). The Premier of Bermuda, the Hon E David Burt, JP MP was sworn in by Governor John Rankin the following day, moving in the direction of Canada, France and Ireland, as the youngest Premier in our history.

The Premier has vowed to work his hardest for "every single Bermudian", pledging to "...build an economy that works for everyone" and "serve the people of Bermuda" in his first address to the nation with a unifying tone. The PLP's campaign had emphasized their intention to focus efforts on Bermuda's social infrastructure.

The most recent general election, however, was historic in more ways than one. In addition to Mr. Burt's ground-breaking accomplishment, PLP's win has been recorded as the highest margin of victory under the modern 36 single-seat system, which was established prior to the 2003 general election. The PLP retained all of their seats while gaining seven from the previous governing party, in the end winning 24 seats to former government's 12, beating the previous highest margin of 22-14. The new government claimed an impressive 58.89% of the overall vote, officially marking Bermuda's largest general election landslide. In addition to winning 24 seats, the PLP increased their winning percentage of the vote in multiple seats, while recording considerable margins of victory in many of the seats claimed from the previous Government.

Premier, the Hon. David Burt, JP MP said, "I am proud and humbled to be the Premier of Bermuda. My parliamentary colleagues and I have formed a government with a clear and decisive mandate that will focus on making Bermuda stronger and better for all Bermudians.

Cabinet ministers are already hard at work reviewing and addressing the issues facing Bermuda. I have held meetings with our stakeholders to identify and implement the necessary policies that will ensure continued success for Bermuda and our local and international partners.

We will lay out the Government's legislative agenda and quickly put in place the priorities for our long-term economic and social vision for Bermuda."

The Premier has committed to retaining Bermuda's position as Chair of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories Association and President of its Political Council.

35th America's Cup

This year marked the 35th America's Cup (AC), a prestigious competition known to be the world's oldest sailing event. Bermuda was chosen over 11 candidates to host the competition, prompting the island to open its harbours and marinas for 445 boats, including 75 super yachts. With such a surge of visitors, Bermuda had the opportunity to showcase its island charm to spectators and participants who came for the occasion.

Bermuda was selected based on numerous factors including geographic location, sailing conditions, hospitable accommodation and financial capacity. Moody's predicts that economic growth will spurt to an average of 2.3% between 2016 and 2017 and rise an additional 1 and 2% three years after the the America's Cup.

In addition to the visiting spectators, the AC was also beamed to 162 countries by 29 broadcasters. Bermuda exhibited its aptitude to host events of this scale and is in a favourable position to host similar international sporting events. Presently, Bermuda is being considered as the venue for the ITU World Triathlon Series.



Team New Zealand took home the cup for the competition but Youth Team BDA represented their island well. They were an assembled team of athletes who did not have previous experience sailing the type of boats used in the AC. They set the tone as the host nation of the cup in style by winning the first racing event.

The foil boat racing used in the AC requires high performance sailing which made for a great display but action didn't only take place on the sea. Other excitement could be found in the America's Cup Village, which was the centre of the AC.

The AC Village was situated in Dockyard, a

popular area for tourists and citizens, historically known as a British naval base. The AC Village was utilised as the hub for entertainment, activities, and merchandise. According to the ministry, there were more than 100,000 visits to the AC Village from residents and guests. 71% of those visits were from locals, emphasizing the support and interest shown by the island's community throughout the 22 days of the AC.

There is an overall consensus in Bermuda that the AC was a positive experience for all those involved. Bermuda is pleased to have successfully hosted the America's Cup and looks forward to accommodating similar spectacles in future.

Bermuda – At a Glance

Capital: Hamilton | Size: 53.3 sq km | Population: 64,237 (2010 estimate) |
Currency: Bermudian Dollar (BMD) | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -4 hours |

British Virgin Islands

Leading on international advocacy for islands



Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources & Labour Dr. Hon. Kedrick Pickering addressed the United Nations (UN) on behalf of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) on 9 June at the High-Level Ocean Conference at UN Headquarters in New York from 5 – 9 June, which was held to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development.

In a statement delivered in plenary at the General Assembly Hall, the Minister who is responsible for the marine environment and fisheries said, "We wholly support the implementation of SDG 14. As a microstate surrounded by water, I can truly say that the sea means everything to us. It is a source of food, culture, livelihood, health, and more especially, our well-being. The sea also serves as inspiration, transportation and a driver of economic activity. We have an intimate relationship with the sea that is at the heart of our development and identity as a people."

The Deputy Premier called on the United Nations to provide greater support from across its various agencies to Overseas Countries and Territories that are Associate Members of the regional commissions. He also welcomed the commitment by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to provide the BVI with technical assistance for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Additionally, on 8 June, the BVI delegation as a Co-Chair of the Global Islands Partnership (GLISPA), co-sponsored a high-level reception at United Nations Headquarters that saw attendance by the President of the UN General Assembly, His Excellency Peter Thomson, and involved senior UN officials who pledged their support for Small Island Developing States. They also congratulated GLISPA for its leadership on island issues.

Athletic trio make history at IAAF World Athletic Championships in London



Three of the Territory's top athletes competed in the IAAF World Championships in London from 4 - 13 August. Kyron McMaster competed in the 400m hurdles, Ashley Kelly competed in the 400m and Chantel Malone competed in the long jump. Ms. Malone made history by



Kyron McMaster ranked fastest 400m hurdler in the world

Kyron McMaster is ranked fastest in the world in the 400m hurdles after securing gold at the Jamaica Invitational Meet on 20 May. Mr. McMaster won the race with a world-leading time of 47.80 seconds, finishing ahead of Jamaican hurdler, Jaheel Hyde.

In an interview following his win, an ecstatic McMaster said, "As far as putting BVI on the map, it feels good. We are a small nation, so that opens up a lot of opportunities, not just for me, but for other athletes as well."

becoming the BVI's first athlete to advance to the final round of competition at the World Championships where she finished in 7 place overall. Ashley Kelly advanced to the 400m semi-finals and Kyron McMaster advanced to the second round of 400m hurdle heats.

British Virgin Islands – At a Glance

Capital: Road Town (Tortola) | Size: 153 sq km | Population: 28,000 |
Currency: US Dollar (US\$) | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -4 hours |

Cayman Islands

General elections



With the publication of their final report on the 11 July, the Elections Observation Mission of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association gave the entire election the seal of approval. The mission of six observers, led by Steve Rodan, the President of the Tynwald in the Isle of Man, found that the election under the new system met international standards for democratic, genuine and transparent elections and said that “the results truly reflect the will of the people”.

The mission began their observation on 19 May, a few days ahead of polling day. They visited all 19 electoral districts and watched the last few days of campaigning, as well as polling day itself, which was on the 24 May.

“The Mission commends the people of the Cayman Islands for the way these elections were conducted, especially given the challenge of implementing elections with new electoral boundaries,” said Rodan. “The election process was conducted in a peaceful manner; where freedoms of expression, assembly and association were respected. The Mission was very impressed with the administration of the elections by the Supervisor of Elections and his staff.” The Elections Office was highly praised by all for the manner in which the election was administered. Their officials enjoyed the confidence of the public including political parties, and officials acted in a transparent and impartial manner. He said that it was of an extremely high standard with regards to all aspects of the process and was conducted with a meticulous attention to detail.

In their final report, the team described the 74% turnout as very impressive by international standards.

Mental health facility contract awarded

The contract to design the Cayman Islands’ first-ever dedicated mental health facility, won by Toronto-based architects Montgomery Sisam, along with local partners, DDL Studio, is worth CI\$898,285 officials confirmed. The overall cost to complete the project is estimated to be up to \$16 million. The designers, however, will also be working out the final figure as part of this specific deal with the Cayman Government which will in turn shape the next tender for a contractor.

The facility, which will be in East End, will incorporate a central building and a series of nine small cottages, each of which can accommodate six patients. A main building and seven of the cottages will likely be developed in the initial phase of construction, and the rest will be built in the future as demand dictates.



Jennifer Ahearn, Chief Officer at the Ministry of Health, and long a supporter of the project, said, “The chronically mentally ill will be accommodated; persons who have serious and persistent mental illness requiring care in a holistic, safe and secure environment using a therapeutic approach.”

Psychiatrist, Dr Marc Lockhart, Chairman of the Mental Health Commission, commented “It’s absolutely wonderful news to have the contract signed, as we have been working for many years to establish this much-needed facility to care for our mental health patients, who are among the most vulnerable in our community.”

The facility is scheduled to be completed by April 2019.



Annual student reception

More than 60 guests attended an evening with the Governor Helen Kilpatrick CB on 27 July, to celebrate four years of Cayman Connection U.K.

The event takes place in Cayman every year to bring together Caymanian students who are studying in the United Kingdom and those who are preparing to go to the UK for the first time.

Kate Kandiah, co-founder of Cayman Connection UK, spoke to guests about the network and recent events in Britain. Updates included information from the Cayman Islands Government Office in London, reports on student activity in the UK over the past year; social events and updates on current affairs, including the U.K. and Cayman Islands elections and recent terror attacks in England.

Ms. Kandiah described how these things affect Caymanians abroad, and how the group assists through communicating with Caymanians in Europe.

“This year we welcomed a great cross-section of students studying in all fields,” she said. “This is a great opportunity for them to mix and chat, share experiences and to help each other.”

“As CCUK is now four years operational, it’s fantastic to welcome previous student members who have now graduated and are working with the network to assist new students.”

For more information, visit www.caymanconnection.org.

Cayman Islands – At a Glance

Capital: George Town | Size: 264 sq km | Population: 58,440 |
Currency: Cayman Islands Dollar KYD | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -5 hours |

Falkland Islands

The United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation

The UN Decolonisation Committee (C24) met in New York on 23 June where it was addressed by Falkland Islands MLAs, the Hon. Ian Hansen and Hon. Mike Summers, OBE.

In a robust session, MLA Hansen talked about the Islands' current economic growth, trade and development opportunities, whilst MLA Summers, in his last address to the Committee before retirement, made clear his longer term disappointment at the lack of progress of the Committee.

MLA Hansen reiterated the diverse nature and long history of the Islanders living in the Falklands, with his own family being sixth generation, moving from Scandinavia 175 years ago. Unlike most former colonies, there was no native population in the Falklands before his ancestors and others from around the world arrived to settle. The 2016 census data underlines this with residents from more than 60 countries out of the 3,200 population.

The MLAs pointed out that since 2007 the Falklands economy has continued to grow at an annual rate of more than 2.3%, through a combination of carefully managing sustainable fisheries, increased environmentally friendly tourism and improved agricultural performance,

along with the initial developments of hydrocarbons. The Islands have full employment and an almost 90% labour participation rate. The population is also increasing, with the latest census showing a 4% annual growth rate.

Hon. Mike Summers OBE gave his valedictory address to the Committee. He robustly defended the Falklands against the colonial aspirations of Argentina and reiterated that the Falkland Islands are internally self-governing and economically self-sufficient, save for the cost of defence. He thanked those Members of this Committee who believe in de-colonisation, and the fundamental principle of self-determination which sits behind it; and for their enduring attempts to "drag this Committee into the 21st century, and to employ some new thinking... to achieve some positive progress. The problem is that the C24 is stuck in an ideological time warp, seemingly unable to recognise or accept that being non-self-governing is not the same as being a colony."

Both speakers extended an invitation the Committee to visit the Islands and see for themselves the political, social and economic developments described, and a peaceful community wanting no more than to prosper and have the right to determine their own future.

30th Anniversary of the Falkland Islands Fishery



The creation of the Falklands Interim 150 mile Conservation Zone in 1987 was the first step in making the fishery sustainable, as opposed to the uncontrolled and unreported fishing by large trawlers of many nationalities until licensed fishing began.

In 1990 the zone was extended to 200 miles, creating the Falklands Outer Conservation Zone. Licence fees transformed the Falkland Islands' economy and paid for the policing of the zone by patrol ships and aircraft, as well as extensive scientific work required to inform the management of the stocks. The industry, in partnership with Government, has also improved the conditions for the fishing vessel crews.

The Individual Transferable Quota system gives a secure environment for the industry to invest in long-term, and also promotes greater stakeholder involvement in research, as the fishing industry can directly benefit from it.

There are three new ships being built in Spain, destined to fish Falkland Islands waters. However, the main challenge currently, and concern facing the industry, is the post-Brexit trade arrangements, as the major market for Falkland Islands fish produce is Europe.

Islanders celebrated the 30th anniversary of the fishery with a 'Fish day' in Stanley. The day gave Islanders the opportunity to get a general overview both of the fishery and the Fisheries Department.



The NatWest Island Games

A team of 51 competitors represented the Falkland Islands in eight sports at the 17th Island Games held in Gotland, Sweden at the end of June. As well as the familiar archery, badminton, football, golf and swimming, this time the Islands had runners in athletics and the triathlon, and cyclists in the Time Trials. Despite competing against many more populated islands,

the Falklands team managed a bronze medal in archery, improved rankings in badminton and several national records in the swimming, while fielding a young team. The Falkland Islands also won the respect of many other competitors for travelling the farthest to attend the Games and for their enthusiasm and commitment to sport.

Falkland Islands – At a Glance

Capital: Stanley | Size: 12,173 sq km | Population: 3,200 |
Currency: Falkland Island Pound | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -3 hours

Gibraltarian Firefighter at Grenfell Tower Tragedy

One of the first rescuers on the scene at the recent Grenfell Tower tragedy was a Gibraltarian third-generation firefighter, who went on to help save a woman from a flat on the 21st floor.

Russell Gonzalez, 31, was part of a four-man search and rescue team wearing breathing apparatus and tasked with dashing to the top floors in a bid to save people trapped there. This act of incredible bravery was recounted for the Gibraltar Chronicle by Russell's father Albert Gonzalez, himself a retired firefighter who served for 30 years in the London Fire Brigade and whose own father, the late Adolfo 'Popo' Gonzalez, served with the City Fire Brigade in Gibraltar.

Albert told how he switched on the television that morning to see Grenfell Tower covered in flames and billowing smoke. This was a building he knew well, having been stationed in the area for several years. He quickly realised that his son, who is based at Paddington Fire Station, would have been despatched to the fire.

Russell, who is trained in the use of extended duration breathing apparatus, which allows firefighters to stay inside burning buildings for longer, was one of more than 200 firefighters and 40 fire engines that attended the scene after the blaze ripped through the 24-storey block in west London. Mr Gonzalez proudly commented, "Russell's Gibraltar ancestry is well known in the Brigade as he is an extremely proud Gibraltarian and on the night of the fire he did his firefighting family, the London Fire Brigade and Gibraltar proud."

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference



Chief Minister Picardo addresses CPA delegates and guests

Gibraltar was host to the 47th British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Annual Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) on 21 – 24 May.

The three-day conference, which focused on strengthening the role of the BIMR and considering the role of small branches post-Brexit, was attended by some 40 Parliamentarians from 11 Commonwealth countries and territories. Parliamentarians were welcomed to the conference by the Chief Minister, The Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, following the Official Opening by the President of the Gibraltar Branch of the CPA, Adolfo J Canepa. The full and varied programme included

a panel discussion with The Hon Dr Joseph Garcia MP, Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Exiting the EU; Tavish Scott, Member of the Scottish Parliament; and Lisa-Marie Hart, Deputy Greffier of the States of Jersey, who discussed the effect of Brexit on the Region.



CPA delegates Lord Chidgey and Baroness Hooper, with The Hon Joe Bossano MP, Minister for Economic Development, Telecommunications & the GSB

New Representative to the UK



Dominique Searle MBE

Former Editor of the Gibraltar Chronicle Dominique Searle MBE has been appointed as Gibraltar's Representative to the United Kingdom.

Mr Searle has been working between

London and Gibraltar for HM Government of Gibraltar since May 2015 when he

was appointed Chief Minister's Special Representative. He continues in those duties as well as taking on the additional responsibilities of Director of Gibraltar House in London. A journalist of over 30 years standing, 20 of these as Editor of the Chronicle, established 1801, he read Comparative Literature at Essex University and also holds an MA in Sociology of Literature from Essex University. He took up his appointment in July 2016, following the retirement of Albert Poggio GMH OBE, who had been in post for some 28 years and was a founder member of UKOTA.

Remembering those who died as a result of Volcanic Activity



The Plaque being taken to the National Museum

On 25 June - exactly twenty years since the catastrophic eruption of the Soufriere Hills volcano - many people on the island gathered at the Cultural Centre for a Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance organised by the Government of Montserrat in recognition of the 19 people who died on 25 June 1997.

Among those attending the Service were the Honourable Premier, Mr Donaldson Romeo and other ministers of Government, Her Excellency the Governor Ms Elizabeth Carriere, Leader of the Opposition Mr Easton Farrell Taylor, Former Governor of Montserrat Mr Frank Savage, who was Governor at the time of the eruption, DFID representatives on the island and relatives of those who perished on that day.

Several of the dignitaries present addressed those gathered. In a poignant speech, Hon. Premier Donaldson Romeo recalled his last encounter with those 19 people, just days before their tragic death, and his efforts to effect the evacuation of those areas. The Premier on behalf of the Government and people of Montserrat "...express our sympathy and offer prayers and support to the families and friends of those who lost their lives twenty years ago today. This commemoration indicates that we remember your pain and your grief and we will never forget each and every one of the 19 who lost their lives that day."

Also paying tribute was Her Excellency the Governor Ms Elizabeth Carriere, who read a message from the FCO Minister for the Overseas Territories, Lord Tariq Ahmad. A message from Minister of State at DFID, Rt. Hon. The Lord Bates, was read by Martin Dawson, the DFID representative on the island.

Tributes were also heard from the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, Mr Easton Farrell Taylor, and from the daughter of one of the victims.

An integral part of the service was the unveiling of a commemorative plaque which shows the names of persons who died. The memorial plaque was then taken, under military escort to the National Museum, where former Governor of Montserrat, Mr Frank Savage, placed it in its permanent home.

Volcanic activity on the island commenced on July 18th 1995 when the Soufriere Hills volcano roared to life with prolific steam and ash venting. The ongoing volcanic activity has transformed both the physical and cultural landscape and has rendered the southern parts of the island uninhabitable including the capital town, Plymouth, which is now considered a modern-day Pompeii. Throughout the life of the eruption there have been many noteworthy events but none quite as poignant as the midday eruption which occurred on Wednesday, 25 June, 1997 in which 19 lives (the youngest being just 11 months old) were tragically lost and villages in the east of the island severely damaged.

Opening of Water Valley Harbour



Disembarking - The first passengers arrive via longboat

© Melva Evans



Members of the Pitcairn community celebrate the opening of their alternative harbour. © Melva Evans

The alternative harbour at Water Valley was officially opened on 27 May by Mayor Shawn Christian and Deputy Governor Robin Shackell.

The new harbour will provide a safe, alternate landing facility for the community as well as another opportunity to land tourists on Island from cruise ship tenders if conditions at Bounty Bay are unfavourable.

This European Union project, funded under European Development Fund (EDF), was beset by a number of delays in shipping and landing of heavy equipment, by some on Island capacity issues, by the need to widen some roads to move the heavy equipment and finally by persistent bad weather which prevented work on the project for a number of months.

It was with a sense of excitement and pride that the community including some seniors in their 80s and 90s boarded the longboat in Bounty Bay to make the trip to Water Valley, on the other side of the Island for the opening ceremony. A celebratory barbeque was held in the town square at Adamstown in the evening as a thank you to all those involved in the project.

Tourism is Pitcairn's highest income earner providing government income from landing fees, passport stamps and travel on the government supply ship Claymore 2. Tourism also provides a number of revenue opportunities for the local community including homestay accommodation, Island tours and sale of curios and souvenirs. Pitcairn's EDF funding allocation under EDF 9, 10 and 11 all have a tourism focus in creating infrastructure to facilitate increased tourism and increased economic development of the Island.

Montserrat - At a Glance

Seat of Government: Brades | Size: 102 sq km | Population: 4,922 |
Currency: Eastern Caribbean Dollar (EC\$) | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -4 hours

Pitcairn - At a Glance

Seat of Government: Adamstown | Size: 47 sq km | Population: 57 |
Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD) | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -8 hours

Airport moves towards scheduled commercial flights



Airlink's Proving Flight arrives at St. Helena Airport



On 9 June, St Helena Government (SHG) announced that SA Airlink had been chosen as the preferred bidder for the provision of a scheduled commercial air service to the Island.

Following a period of contractual negotiations with Airlink, it was announced on 21 July that SHG and Airlink had signed an agreement for Airlink to provide scheduled commercial air services to St Helena. Airlink will also operate a monthly charter service between St Helena and Ascension Island.

Airlink carried out a 'proving flight' to St Helena on 21 August. This proving flight was for Airlink to demonstrate to the South African Civil Aviation Authority operational proficiency

in terms of Extended Range Twin Engine Operations requirements.

The inaugural flight for Airlink's scheduled air service to St Helena will take place on 14 October. Airlink will operate a weekly service between St Helena and Johannesburg and St Helena and Cape Town (via a stopover at Windhoek International Airport in Namibia).

The sale of tickets for flights to St Helena Island will commence early in September 2017.

Ticket prices start at £804 (including taxes) for an economy return fare on the Johannesburg route and £846 (including taxes) on the Cape Town route. The basic fares for the

Johannesburg and Cape Town routes are identical but there is a difference in the overall costs due to differing airport taxes.

Airlink is currently pursuing Fifth Freedom Rights on the leg between Windhoek and St Helena, this would allow passengers from other carriers to join or disembark the St Helena service at Windhoek. If granted Fifth Freedom Rights this would mean Airlink could sell tickets for the St Helena and Windhoek legs of the journey.

This is a significant milestone and a huge step forward in SHG's plans to deliver a regular scheduled commercial air service for St Helena.

Historic charter flight brings home St Helena passengers

History was made on 3 May, when a charter plane carrying 60 passengers landed at St Helena Airport.

St Helena Airport - completed in 2016 - is open and operational for small charter planes and medical evacuation flights but the arrival of this flight was particularly significant as it transported from Cape Town to St Helena passengers affected by the cancellation (due to technical difficulties) of two voyages of the RMS St Helena - currently the only means of regular access to the Island.

Air Partner, a commercial organisation that sources charter flights around the world, was contracted to source an aircraft to transport passengers from Cape Town to St Helena.

The flight operation was successfully carried out using a British Aerospace 146 Avro RJ85 aircraft. Among the 60 passengers onboard the incoming flight were HE Governor Lisa Phillips and a young St Helenian baby born in Cape Town.

Crowds of family members, friends and Island residents gathered at St Helena Airport to witness the arrival. Emotions were high and many people expressed that they were excited but emotional about the flight.

Passengers disembarking the aircraft were met by a packed Arrivals Hall, all eager to welcome everyone to St Helena.

Following a quick turnaround, the aircraft

departed with 48 passengers onboard, travelling to Cape Town via Windhoek in Namibia.

Speaking on the day, Councillor Derek Thomas, said:

"What a great day for St Helena to receive our first flight of passengers, and a really good turnout from the people.

"Over the past year there have been many disappointments for air access but despite this our people have been patient while waiting for a successful outcome. The arrival of the aircraft today is one step nearer to commercial use of our Airport and has enabled those people who were delayed in Cape Town to return home safely."

St Helena – At a Glance

Capital: Jamestown | Size: 410 sq km | Population: 4,289 |
Currency: St Helenian Pound | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time |

Tristan da Cunha

A pledge to protect the ocean



For a 10 year-old boy from the world's most isolated community, it was a true test of courage. In June, Kieran Glass from Tristan da Cunha stepped onto the stage of the UN General Assembly hall and pledged to do his bit to protect the world's oceans.

Tristan da Cunha's people are stewards of a vast tract of the South Atlantic. The island lives by its independently-certified sustainable fishery, so every islander is invested in the healthy future of the seas that surround them. Kieran's big moment came when UNESCO invited young people from its maritime World Heritage Sites to appear in front of global leaders on World Oceans Day. Two islands in the Tristan archipelago, Gough and

Inaccessible, form one of the Sites, and by good fortune Kieran was already en route to the US for a family trip.

At the central moment of the ceremony, world leaders watched as the youngsters unveiled their promise: "I pledge to protect the ocean for future generations." The leaders, starting with Prince Albert of Monaco, then lined-up to sign their endorsement.

Kieran also gave a personal presentation on the pristine environment of Gough and Inaccessible to delegates gathered at New York's Explorers' Club, and contributed a personal video message to the UNESCO website, stressing the unbreakable link between a fishing community and a thriving ocean. Tristan da Cunha has begun work towards providing 'Blue Belt' protection across its 750,000 km² Atlantic zone. With Kieran Glass and his young friends as its future guardians, it promises to be in safe hands.



Ocean devotion: Maritime world heritage youth on the UN stage.

New era for education



July brought an education milestone for Tristan da Cunha, as three island girls embarked on a journey that would take them to learn in the UK.

The trio had just taken iGCSE exams at St Mary's School on Tristan, and secured places at Peter Symonds College in Winchester to study for A-levels. The College boasts a boarding facility that's rare in the UK state sector: it already nurtures students from the Falkland Islands. Tristan's young pioneers may be away from home for the entire duration of their two-year courses, as the island's extreme isolation makes it almost impossible to return during vacations.

Island health-care looks to the future



If you fall ill in the world's remotest community, local access to quality care is vital.

So there were celebrations on Tristan da Cunha when the island's new health facility opened in June. The Camogli Healthcare Centre provides a bright modern setting, delivering GP services, minor surgery, dentistry and more to islanders, guest workers and visitors

Tristan is financially self-sufficient for most day-to-day costs, but relies on outside help for the infrastructure projects that will ensure long-term sustainability. So the Centre was funded by the UK's Department for International Development, whose minister Lord Bates was personally thanked by the Chief Islander Ian Lavarello. Ian's ancestor Gaetano was one of two shipwreck survivors from the Italian port of Camogli that gives its name to the new facility. The building was shipped in kit form and assembled by specialist contractors in the island's only settlement, Edinburgh of the Seven Seas.

Two doctors lead the island's medical provision, with a team of local and expatriate nurses and Tristanian auxiliary staff.

Tristan da Cunha – At a Glance

Capital: Edinburgh of the Seven Seas | Size: 98 sq km | Population: 260 |
Currency: Pound Sterling | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time |

Turks and Caicos Islands

Caribbean Development Bank 47th Meeting

The 47th Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Development Bank was hosted by the Turks and Caicos Islands on 24 and 25 May. Five hundred delegates, including Ministers and Government officials, private sector representatives, members of civil society, academia, and media attended the meeting. The flagship event highlighted the impact of the Bank's investments in its 19 borrowing member countries including Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Monserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands. In addition, stakeholders took part in strategic discussions on resolving some of the Caribbean region's most pressing economic and social development issues.

"We extend our appreciation and thanks to the Government and people of the Turks and Caicos Islands for agreeing to host the Bank's 47th Annual Meeting. This is the second time



that TCI has hosted this event. We see this as a strong show of support for our institution and the work we do in helping to drive economic and social development across the Caribbean Region," said Dr. William Warren Smith, President of the Bank.



Commonwealth Parliamentary Association pays visit

The Government welcomed the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in June as they hosted a post-election seminar for newly elected Members of the Legislature to strengthen parliamentary practice and procedure following the recent elections. The CPA is the only Commonwealth body that works to strengthen territorial assemblies

and legislatures such as the House of Assembly in Turks and Caicos, as well as national, state and provincial legislatures.

In her address at the opening ceremony, the Premier, Hon. Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson MP, said that she wholeheartedly welcomed the CPA seminar, the purpose of which was to equip local Parliamentarians with the tools

Athlete captures Bronze in World Juniors Championship

The Government congratulates seventeen-year-old Turks and Caicos athlete Mr. Colby Jennings, who won a bronze medal in the under 17 boys 400 metre race. The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Juniors Championship event took place in Nairobi, Kenya in July.

The track and field competition welcomes junior athletes from around the world and is widely regarded as important stage to gain international experience in building their athletic careers.



and knowledge they need to better serve the people who elected them. She further encouraged: "It is so important that as Parliamentarians we sharpen our skills and that we keep doing so to better equip ourselves."

On 15 December 2016, Turks and Caicos held transparent, free and fair elections. The elections demonstrated the Islands' commitment to the democratic ideals and standards upon which the Commonwealth is founded and the ideals enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter. The election also resulted in the first female Premier, signifying a strong commitment to gender equality and the importance of women's political leadership.

The seminar provided an excellent opportunity for newly elected Members of the House of Assembly to ask questions about parliamentary practice and procedure, and provided Members with a better understanding of the parliamentary system and democratic processes in other Commonwealth jurisdictions. The seminar was opened by Hon. Dwayne S. Taylor, Speaker of the House of Assembly. Commitment to improving democratic processes in the legislature was demonstrated by the active participation in the seminar of Members from all sides of the House.

Turks and Caicos – At a Glance

Capital: Cockburn Town | Size: 98 sq km | Population: 36,689 (2015) |
Currency: United States Dollar (US\$) | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -4 hours |

Member Territories & Contacts



1 ANGUILLA

Mrs Blondel Cluff
UK/EU Representative
Government of Anguilla
C/o The West India Committee,
Hope House, 45 Great Peter Street,
London, SW1P 3LT
Tel: +44 (0) 2077995441
Email: blondelcluff@westindiacommittee.org

The Hon. Victor F. Banks, Chief Minister
Government of Anguilla,
The Valley, Anguilla
Tel: +1 264 497 3518
www.gov.ai
Email: Victor.Banks@gov.ai

2 ASCENSION ISLAND

Ascension Island Council
Tel: +(00) 247 66836
Email: aigenquiries@ascension.gov.ac

3 BERMUDA

Ms Kimberley Durrant
United Kingdom Representative
Government of Bermuda London Office
6 Arlington Street, London SW1A 1RE
Tel: +44 (0)20 7518 9900
Fax: +44 (0)20 7518 9901
Email: kdurrant@gov.bm
londonoffice@gov.bm

The Hon. David Burt JP, MP
Premier
Cabinet Office, 105 Front Street
Hamilton HM12 Bermuda
Tel: +1 441 292 5501
Fax: +1 441 292 8397
Email: cbhayward@gov.bm
www.gov.bm

4 BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Mr Benito Wheatley
Director and UK/EU Representative
BVI London Office,
British Virgin Islands Government
15 Upper Grosvenor Street,
London W1K 7PJ
Tel: +44 (0)20 7355 9570
Fax: +44 (0)20 7355 9575
Email: BWheatley@bvi.org.uk

Dr. the Hon. D. Orlando Smith OBE
Premier
Administration Complex
Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands
Tel: +1 284 494 3701
Fax: +1 284 494
Email: premier@gov.vg
www.bvi.gov.vg

5 CAYMAN ISLANDS

Mr Eric Bush JP
UK Representative/Director
Cayman Islands Government Office
34 Dover St, London W1S 4NG
Tel: +44 (0)20 7491 7772
Fax: +44 (0)20 7491 7944
Email: cparchment@cigo.co.uk

The Hon. Alden M McLaughlin,
Jr. MBE, JP, MLA
Premier and Minister of Home Affairs,
Health and Culture
Government Administration Bldg,
Box 131, Grand Cayman KY1-9000
Cayman Islands
Tel: (345) 949-7900 ext. 2454
Email: Alden.McLaughlin@gov.ky
www.gov.ky

6 FALKLAND ISLANDS

Mrs. Sukey Cameron MBE
United Kingdom Representative
Falkland Islands Government Office
Falkland House, 14 Broadway, London
SW1H 0BH
Tel: +44 (0)20 7222 2542
Fax: +44 (0)20 7222 2375
Email: representative@falklands.gov.fk

Mrs. Cherie Clifford
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Office of the Legislative Assembly
Gilbert House, Ross Road, Stanley,
Falkland Islands FIQQ 1ZZ
Tel: +500 27451 Fax: +500 27456
Email: admin.legislature@sec.gov.fk
www.falklands.gov.fk

7 GIBRALTAR

Mr. Dominique Searle MBE
United Kingdom Representative
H.M. Government of Gibraltar,
150 Strand, London WC2R 1JA
Tel: +44 (0)20 7836 0777
Fax: +44 (0)20 7240 6612
Email: ukrep@gibraltar.gov.gi
www.gibraltar.gov.uk

The Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP
Chief Minister of Gibraltar
6 Convent Place, Gibraltar
Tel: +350 200 70071
Fax: +350 200 76396
Email: cm@gibraltar.gov.gi
www.gibraltar.gov.gi

8 MONTSERRAT

Mrs. Janice Panton MBE
United Kingdom Representative
Government of Montserrat
180-186 Kings Cross Road,
London WC1X 9DE
Tel: +44 (0)20 7487 8233
Fax: +44 (0)20 7487 8235
Email: j.panton@montserrat.gov.org

The Hon. Donaldson Romeo
The Premier, Government of Montserrat
PO Box 292, Brades, Montserrat
Tel: +1 664 491 3463
Fax: +1 664 491 6780
Email: op@gov.ms
www.gov.ms

9 PITCAIRN ISLANDS

Leslie Jaques OBE
Portfolio Holder International Relations
Pitcairn Islands Council,
Pitcairn Islands Office
P.O. Box 105 696 Auckland,
New Zealand
Tel: +64 9 366 0186
Fax: +64 9 366 0187
Email: ljaques@council.gov.pn

10 SAINT HELENA

Mrs. Kedell Worboys MBE
United Kingdom Representative
Government of St Helena
Alliance House, 12 Caxton Street,
London SW1H 0QS
Tel: +44 (0)203 818 7610
Email: shgukrep@sthelelagov.gov

HE Lisa Philips, Governor
The Castle, Jamestown, St Helena Island
Tel: +290 22555
Fax: +290 22598
Email: sean.burns@sainthelena.gov.sh
www.sainthelena.gov.sh

11 TRISTAN DA CUNHA

Mr Chris Carnegie
United Kingdom Representative
Government of Tristan da Cunha
29 Hulse Road, Salisbury SP1 3LU
Tel: +44 (0)7768 622245
Email: ukrep@tdc.uk.com

Mr Ian Lavarello, Chief Islander
1 Hillside Road
Edinburgh of the Seven Seas
Tristan da Cunha
South Atlantic Ocean TDCU 1ZZ
Tel: +44 (0)203 014 5043
Email: ianlavarello@yahoo.co.uk
www.tristandc.com

12 TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

Ms Tracy Knight
United Kingdom Representative
Turks and Caicos Islands
Government Office
83 Baker Street, London W1U 6AG
Tel: +44 207 034 7845
Email: t.knight@tcilondon.org.uk
www.gov.tc

Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson MP
Premier and Minister of Health,
Agriculture and Human Services
Office of the Premier
NJS Francis Building
Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands
Tel: +001(649) 338 5745
Email: premier@gov.tc

UKOTA Secretary, Ms. Siobhan Flax
c/o Government of the British Virgin
Islands - London Office, BVI House,
15 Upper Grosvenor Street W1K7PJ
Tel: +44 (0)20 7355 9570
Email: secretariat.ukota@bvi.org.uk



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Please visit our website at www.ukota.org



Vital need for a resilient rebuild

20 years after the volcano, the inadequate rebuild of Montserrat holds a warning for the victims of Hurricane Irma. Hon. Donaldson Romeo is Montserrat's Premier.

There are clearly very important lessons for us to learn from the experience of Hurricane Irma in the Caribbean region. One such lesson is that disaster preparedness and resilience are vital necessities.

We must with urgency in Montserrat see that our housing stock is brought up to hurricane-worthy standards. Many of the houses built by Government of Montserrat and Department for International Development in the villages of Lookout, Davy Hill and elsewhere must be rebuilt, and soon. Similar action needs to be taken for other houses that are not hurricane-worthy, especially the temporary ones built by evacuees who have been waiting for 20 years for proper housing. Had we been struck by Hurricane Irma, large numbers could have been at best left homeless, with many or most living in shelters and back to where we began 20 years ago, waiting on relief.

When testifying before HMG's International Development Committee in 1998 Mr Frank Savage, then governor of Montserrat, said that UK action to provide housing, government headquarters and other vital infrastructure was at that time 16 months behind the curve of the crisis. Today the very same lack of housing and other basic needs that caused

thousands to relocate to the United Kingdom still exists, and we are now over 20 years behind the curve of the volcano crisis.

The same problem exists in respect of the only hospital. Twenty years ago, we had to move our hospital into a temporary location in a school building. As Irma threatened Montserrat, we had to make the decision to move from this 20 year-old 'temporary location' into another school, one that was recently built. This speaks loudly to the need for renewed commitment to commence construction of a purpose-built hospital that would be built to withstand future hurricanes. In addition, there is also a need for night flight capability at our airport for medical evacuations.

In a hurricane-prone zone, having underground and undersea fiber optic and power cables is a basic necessity for an island that can be easily cut off for long periods, when overground posts and microwave dishes are seriously or even slightly damaged. Lack of communication endangers life, frustrates aid efforts and extends the anguish for those who await news of relatives in affected areas.

A lot of goodwill exists for those affected by natural disasters. But vigilance is necessary to ensure that the assistance provided brings sustainable structures, and greater resilience against future shocks.

