

PRESS RELEASE RE TRISTAN CELEBRATIONS ON THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY

The quinentennial celebrations continued on Tristan da Cunha despite a deteriorating state of the sea.

Today was a public holiday on Tristan. Its exact date of discovery in 1506 is not recorded but 9 February was taken as an appropriate day for a commemorative public holiday. In local parlance the sea became 'bubbly' and so after an initial run of passengers from the RMS all further ferrying was cancelled. This scuppered the eagerly anticipated football match between the island team and the RMS. The football continued with the married islanders playing the 'singles'.

There was also a sports day for the school. This was followed by the adults playing football rounders.

Governor Clancy had lunch at the home of the Chief Islander and sampled local dishes such as stuffed mutton, crayfish pie and cloutie dumpling.

A series of presentations were held in the evening with Administrator, Mike Hentley ably performing the Master of Ceremonies role. Governor Clancy congratulated Tristan on its Q5 and extended best wishes from people on St Helena and Ascension who had celebrated their Q5s in recent years. He also read out a message from the Bishop of St Helena and from Her Majesty the Queen. The Governor went on to announce his contribution of £ 5000 towards updating equipment at the hospital.

There was a special welcome given to Governor Clancy's announcement that DFID had approved funding to supplement European Development Funding of the repair of Tristan's harbour. Studies will begin this year with the intention of refurbishment work taking place in 2007.

Sarah Sanders of the RSPB presented to the Chief Islander, Anne Green the legislative framework for the protection of albatrosses and petrels and also a biodiversity plan which had been worked up with islanders.

Michael Swales of the Tristan da Cunha Association presented a plaque to commemorate the Q5. Inscribed on the plaque is a ship of the type that Tristao Da Cunha was probably on when he came upon Tristan. The ship is set against a backdrop of an outline of the island. Round its edges are set the 7 island names with the dates that these men arrived.

Mr Swales also presented a cheque to the Head teacher of the school, Marlene Swain and announced that the Association would make arrangements for a scheme to offer further education to one student per year.

The evening continued in lighter vein with dancing and an Elvis Tribute concert from Rikki Nolan.

TRISTAN DA CUNHA PRESS REPORT FOR FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY

Governor Clancy attended a meeting of the Island Council at which there were a series of presentations. Sarah Sanders of the RSPB spoke about the Royal Society's continuing interest in the Tristan group of islands because of their world importance for seabirds. A project looking at rats on Tristan was already underway. Preliminary indications were of substantial populations of rats at the potato patches and Settlement. However they did not seem so numerous in the higher areas where the seabirds nest.

Dr Mike Owen, the public health specialist also gave his preliminary findings. He identified a number of practical improvements to secure the quality of the water supply and to reduce risks from the rubbish dump. He noted that the incidence of diabetes was much lower on Tristan than in St Helena but there was no scope for complacency on Tristan with changing diets and trends towards obesity. The Island Council felt that the island might benefit from a visit from a dietician.

Andrew James whose company has the fishing concession set out the economics of the fishing operation and ideas for trying to restrict illegal fishing. The Island Council agreed to continue to work in partnership on these issues.

Governor Clancy referred to words from Her Majesty the Queen's message of congratulations to Tristan and underlined the continuing commitment of the UK Government which had been so recently demonstrated by his announcement about DFID funding being added to EDF monies for the refurbishment of the harbour.

The Governor also presented to the Chief Islander, Anne Green a boxed set of engraved silver ingots. He hoped that this set of 50 ingots depicting the monarchs of England from King Edgar to the present day would be appreciated by the whole of the island as a memento of their 500th anniversary. Symbolically he saw each ingot as representing a decade since Tristan's discovery and the overall theme as indicating the link between the island and the UK.

In the evening the Governor hosted a reception which melded into the 18th birthday party and dance of Wayne Swain.