

The Royal Visit

15th - 17th November 2002

Johnny Drummond in co-operation with OCS



The Princess Royal presenting a Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal to a member of the Emergency Services

Last weekend HRH Princess Anne visited St Helena. The visit formed one of the high points of the many activities organised to celebrate Q5.

The Princess was met aboard the RMS by the Governor and came ashore in *Gannet 2* where the Bishop, the Speaker of Legislative Council, Council Members, the Honorary French Consul and other dignitaries met her. Immediately the joyous song "Welcome, Welcome Princess Anne" sprung into life as school children and members of the public sang to their hearts content. The weather was perfect and the Union Jack fluttered over The Castle happily in the breeze waving its welcome along with many hand held ones – it was a moment to be remembered by hundreds of people who had assembled at the Wharf.

HRH greeted a number of people as she walked along the seafront to the Governor's Office and, after signing the visitors' book, HE Governor Hollamby introduced her to the Heads of Department who had gathered in the Council Chambers for tea and light eats.

In the afternoon at 2.00pm a formal greeting took place on the Grand Parade. On arrival the Princess was presented with a posy by one of the Brownies, Kimberly Thomas. Governor Hollamby welcomed the Princess to the Island and spoke of its history and its significance in the past as a staging post for British vessels travelling to and from the Empire in the east. Princess Anne gave a short address of thanks in which she said how delighted she was to be able to come to the St Helena to be part of the Q5 Celebrations. She said that her mother, HM The Queen, sent greetings and still had fond memories of her visit with her parents in 1947 and in particular remembered the Arum lilies that she saw growing wild on the Island and went on to say that HRH Prince

Andrew well remembered his three-day visit in 1984 to celebrate the Island's 150th anniversary as a Crown Colony.

The Princess Royal was then invited to inspect the Guard of Honour by the Parade Commander, Sgt Clarence Roberts. On parade were the St Helena Police Force, Scouts, Guides and Brownies and Rainbow Guides, Church Lads Brigade, Nursing Staff, the Salvation Army, Pathfinders and the Gettogethers Orchestra. The Princess spoke to almost everyone on parade before returning to the dais. Governor Hollamby then invited HRH to present 22 Queens Golden Jubilee Medals to members of the St Helena Emergency Services. Princess Anne was then invited by the Parade Commander to take the salute from the March Past.

The Governor then escorted her to the St Helena Museum where she presented the Chairman of the Heritage Society, Mr Alan Nicholls with a Ship's Decanter from the estate of HRH The Princess Margaret. The decanter was originally given to her when she renamed the RMS in 1978. This was a very special moment for St Helena. Alan thanked HRH and the decanter was placed into one of the display cabinets by Museum Curator, Sarah Holland. Sarah then gave HRH a tour of the building.

The Princess then departed by car for the General Hospital where she was introduced to Nurses and staff by the Chief Administrative Health and Social Services Officer, Mrs Ivy Ellick and Dr Topliss, the Senior Medical Officer. HRH made her way upstairs to have tea with the senior citizens. She then visited patients in the downstairs wards.

The next stop was Half Tree Hollow where she unveiled the beautifully made foundation stone and named the Community Care Centre after herself "The Princess Royal Community Care Centre."

The foundation stone was made by Colin Yon and his team of Ambledale Workshop who were approached at very short notice. "It was short notice and he rose to the challenge of getting the foundation stone made and inscribed for the unveiling," said Deputy Secretary Ethel Yon. "He deserves credit."

That evening a small group of 22 guests joined HRH for a formal dinner at Plantation House.

The following day, Saturday, 16th November, the Princess Royal made a tour of the Island visiting Napoleonic sites at the Briars Pavilion and The Tomb. She then went to Longwood House where she was welcomed and given an escorted tour of the property by the Honorary French Consul, Michel Martineau. The Princess then travelled by car to Levelwood where she officially opened the new Sheltered Accommodation Centre before going to the Levelwood Community Centre for tea and a chat with 200 invited Senior Citizens. Later, Jessica March, a woman renowned for her talent with lace making, presented HRH on behalf of the people of St Helena with a beautiful lace tray cloth which was embroidered with two arum lilies. HRH then continued her tour through Sandy Bay and arrived at Farm Lodge to have a buffet lunch with members of the Student Council of Prince Andrew School.

The Princess then attended the Q5 Agricultural Show where she was introduced to the Chief Agricultural and Natural Resources Officer, Mrs Wendy Clingham and Agricultural Development

Officer, Mr Vincent March who guided her round the many stalls. The Princess was much impressed by the local produce and arts and crafts on display. She made a particular point of visiting the National Trust stall where she spoke with the Director, Mrs Barbara George and Chairman, Mr Gilbert Yon; HRH The Duke of York is the Trust's Patron. She also viewed the winners of the large livestock competition and the small stock and pets' stalls. She then walked to Prince Andrew School to watch a concert called 'Follow the Dream' performed by the students; she was then invited on stage to meet the Director and cast.

In the evening the Princess Royal officially presented three MBEs on behalf of HM The Queen to Mrs Eva Benjamin, Mrs Phyllis Peters and Mr Brian Clarke at a reception held in the Governor's Office in The Castle, which was attended by family members and invited guests. [See Press Release on page 5]

On Sunday morning Princess Anne attended morning prayers at the Cathedral where Bishop John received her.

She then retired to Plantation House where she bid farewell to the staff and left for the Grand Parade from where she walked to the Customs Gate where she waved farewell to the people of St Helena who lined the Seaside and was then driven to the Wharf Steps to be taken by the *Gannet 2* to board the RMS, which departed on the stroke of mid-day.

Governor Hollamby said: "Clearly it was a very successful visit, and many people are to be thanked for contributing to that success. Her Royal Highness said she was delighted to have been asked to come to St Helena to help celebrate our Quincentenary; furthermore she seemed pleased with the visit and the opportunity to meet so many Saints. I hope that she will be able to visit us again as she indicated in her speech at the welcoming ceremony."



A royal wave upon departure