



Falklands Focus

NEWS FROM THE FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT
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25 Years in London



Falkland Islands Government Office



Falklands Forum



Labour Party Conference



Royal Show

New Chief Executive



Dr. Tim Thorogood took up his position as Chief Executive in January. Previously Chief Executive of the Local Government Information Unit and, prior to this, Chief Executive of Swansea City and County Council, Dr. Thorogood has extensive experience in local government in the UK.

Dr. Thorogood said: "The Falklands have a bright future but face some major challenges, not least the continuing sovereignty claim by Argentina. We need to ensure the continued diversification of the economy and an appropriate balance between on and offshore activity."

January 2008 marks 25 years since the opening of the Falkland Islands Government Office (FIGO) in London. Councillors made the decision to open an official Government Office in London following the end of the Falklands War in 1982. The office relocated many times during its first six years until the move to 14 Broadway, in the heart of Westminster, in 1989.

FIGO is one of the longest established UK Overseas Territories Offices. Sukey Cameron MBE has been the Falkland Islands Government (FIG) UK Representative

since 1990, the fourth person to have held the post.

Over the years, the work of FIGO has grown to incorporate travel and recruitment. Changing perceptions and improving understanding of the Islands is also an integral element of FIGO's activity.

The office includes a 'showcase', open to the public, which exhibits stunning art and photography of the Islands. Informative literature on the Islands is available for people to take away. Falklands products and books are also available for purchase.

FIGO maintains a strong presence in the UK by organising and taking part in major events to highlight today's modern Islands, their thriving economy and self-sufficient status. Highlights include holding two Falklands Forums, focusing on business opportunities in the Islands, attendance at County Shows, hosting the prestigious annual receptions at Lincoln's Inn and exhibiting at the Party Conferences for the past 20 years. FIGO also arranges fact-finding missions for MPs to deepen their knowledge of the Islands.

For more information visit www.falklands.gov.fk



'All Ashore!' - Tourism Industry Welcomes Record Visitor Numbers

The Falklands tourism industry is experiencing strong annual growth in visitor numbers, primarily due to the increased popularity of cruise ship tourism.

Over 81,000 cruise ship passengers are projected to visit the Falklands in the 2007/2008 tourism season, which runs from October to April. This represents a

dramatic 58% increase on the 2006/2007 season. Top visiting nations in recent years include the United States, Britain, Canada, Germany, Brazil, and Australia.

Jake Downing took up his position as the new General Manager of the Falkland Islands Tourist Board in November. He was delighted to welcome 3,779 passengers

from three different vessels in to Stanley on 4 December, the highest number of tourists to ever visit in one day.

Despite increased demands placed on operators and local residents, the day was a great success. One tourist described Stanley as "a wonderful, authentic destination and the highlight of the cruise thus far."

Land-based tourism is also developing; the Islands now receive approximately 1,000 tourists each year staying for at least one week. Partnerships with overseas agencies in the UK, US, Australia, Switzerland, Italy and New Zealand are expected to provide a welcome boost to this lucrative sector.

Visit: www.visitorfalklands.com



Alan Henry

Oil Companies Fuel Exploration Optimism

Oil industry representatives from five companies met in the Falklands in October, for a series of joint operator meetings with FIG and the private sector. The industry is optimistic about the prospects of finding oil and gas around the Islands.

BHP Billiton has signed an agreement with Falklands Oil and Gas Ltd where BHP will be assigned 51% of the licences. The agreement will also result in a minimum of two exploratory wells being drilled within the next three years. Meanwhile Borders and Southern Petroleum has a

large 3D seismic survey underway, and Desire Petroleum has recently conducted site surveys over its respective acreage.

Phyl Rendell, Director of Mineral Resources, said: "BHP Billiton's decision to invest in offshore exploration is a turning point for the Islands. Having a major company committing to drilling wells within the next three years has given everyone involved in the industry something to plan for and I am confident that more investment and further offshore activities will follow."

Visit: www.falklands-oil.com



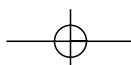
Falklands oil industry representatives meet in Stanley

Fisheries Legislation Ensures Conservation of Marine Resources

The Falklands continue to implement strict fisheries legislation in order to ensure the ongoing conservation of marine resources. There has been a positive outcome for 2007.

The total Illex catch for 2007 was the highest annual catch since 2000; a total of 161.5 thousand tonnes of squid. This also represents the best season ever in terms of catch per vessel per day. The return of Illex in high numbers is reassuring in terms of the state of the stock for this year.

The Loligo fishery was good despite an early closure of the second season for conservation reasons. Total catches of Loligo for the year were almost 42,000 tonnes. The new fisheries law and system has encouraged greater industry participation in the management process.



FOCUS ON EMERGENCY SERVICES

The emergency services in the Falkland Islands are an integral part of the community. Together they employ over 70 dedicated individuals who are proud to protect and serve the Islands' 2,500 inhabitants.

Police

The Royal Falkland Islands Police Force was established in 1846 and still operates from the original Police Station built in 1873, which also incorporates Stanley Prison. Officers are recruited from the local community and the UK. Superintendent Paul Elliott recently joined the force as Chief Police Officer, having served in the Lincolnshire Police Force for 30 years. He oversees the force which comprises one inspector, three sergeants, one detective constable, eight constables, one gaoler and two civilian clerks. The force has an active reserve capability with ten fully trained reserve officers who perform regular duty. As well as 24 hour Island-wide cover, the force also provides cover for South Georgia, South Sandwich Islands and the British Antarctic Territory when necessary.

The policing style in the Falklands is community focussed. The force provides a highly visible and friendly presence on the streets. Partnership work with community and statutory agencies provides opportunities for preventative work, especially in schools. The Falklands prides itself on its very low crime and high detection rate.



Fire and Rescue Service



Organised firefighting in the Falkland Islands began in 1898 with the formation of the "Stanley Volunteer Fire Brigade", which remained a voluntary service until January 1985, when the Falkland Islands Government appointed a Superintendent of Fire Services. The Falklands Fire Service became a stand-alone department in 1986, when the title of Superintendent was changed to Chief Fire Officer.

The Falkland Islands Fire and Rescue Service handles incidents across the Islands; it responded to over 240 callouts in 2007. It consists of eight fulltime firefighters and up to 40 retained personnel, of which three are females. A team can be ferried by helicopter to remote locations or indeed to incidents at sea, some personnel are trained in dealing with ship fires.

The risk of fire spreading in the Falklands is relatively high as the Islands experience frequent strong winds and most of the buildings are constructed from timber and plasterboard. This is common knowledge amongst residents and fire prevention is well publicised and practiced.

Paramedic and Flying Doctor Services

The Falkland Islands Ambulance Service is operated from the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital in Stanley and includes an emergency flying doctor service for farm settlements. Two paramedic nurses and two ambulances ensure rapid responses to all emergency calls in and around Stanley. There is also close liaison with the military services at Mount Pleasant

to ensure the speediest appropriate response. In the case of medical emergencies in Camp (the local term for the countryside) within 30 minutes of a 999 call, a pilot, engineers and air traffic

control staff are informed and a casualty nurse has loaded one of the fixed wing aircraft with equipment necessary to treat the patient. On average, fixed wing aircraft are used in an

emergency eight times a year. In difficult weather conditions, or in cases where fixed wing planes cannot land safely, an RAF helicopter can be called on for assistance.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Falklands 25 Pilgrimage



Veterans on the lawn of Government House

Islanders welcomed 250 Falklands War veterans and next of kin who took part in a Pilgrimage to the Falklands from 6 to 13 November for a week of reflection and to explore the modern Falkland Islands. The veterans were hosted in the homes of local families, who expressed their gratitude for the sacrifices made for their freedom. Commemorations included a service of remembrance held at the Blue Beach Cemetery at San Carlos and veterans made more personal visits to places of importance to them. UK Veterans Minister, Derek Twigg MP, was also in the Islands to coincide with the Pilgrimage.

UK Press Coverage Exhibition

An exhibition of UK media coverage of the Falkland Islands during 2007 was displayed at the Standard Chartered Bank in Stanley from 5 to 16 November. Over the past 12 months, millions of people in the UK have been given a feel for life in the Falklands 25 years on from the events of 1982 through colourful and insightful features which appeared in top print, broadcast and online media.

Diary Dates

- **12 January** - Falkland Islands Government Office, London, 25th anniversary.
- **February – March** - Art work by Shirley Merrell will be showcased at FIGO, London.

Tribute to First Falkland CE

David Taylor CBE, the first Falkland Islands Government Chief Executive, passed away on 8 November. Mr Taylor was Chief Executive from 1983 to 1987 and played a key role in the recovery of the Islands following the 1982 Conflict. In addition to leading the public service through the post war re-construction, one of his main roles in the Falklands was to implement the key recommendations of the Shackleton Report. This included further civil service reform, the process of land reform (farm subdivision), setting up Falklands Islands Development Corporation and the creation of the fisheries zone.

MPs Visit the Falklands

A delegation of MPs from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (UK Branch) will visit the Islands from 12 to 19 February, accompanied by Sukey Cameron MBE.

From 21 to 28 February, a delegation from the Foreign Affairs Select Committee will also visit the Islands, as part of their inquiry into the UK Overseas Territories. The five committee members will be led by the Chairman, Mike Gapes MP (L).

OTCC Meeting



FCO Minister Meg Munn MP with Councillor Summers

Councillors Janet Robertson and Mike Summers attended the ninth UK Overseas Territories' Consultative Council, which took place in London on 4 and 5 December. Issues discussed included the Overseas Territories' relationship with the UK, constitutional modernism, immigration issues and climate change. The event was hosted by Meg Munn MP, the FCO Minister for the Overseas Territories, who visited the Falkland Islands in January this year. Councillor Dr Andrea Clausen and Councillor Summers attended the annual EU Overseas Countries and Territories meeting in Brussels in October.

For further information on the Falkland Islands please visit:

www.falklands.gov.fk



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