

BASIL READ

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT



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Jimmy Johnston, project director for the St Helena airport project, discusses the work being undertaken to deliver the island its own international airport and the benefits this will create

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Temporary fuel farm
in Rupert's Bay

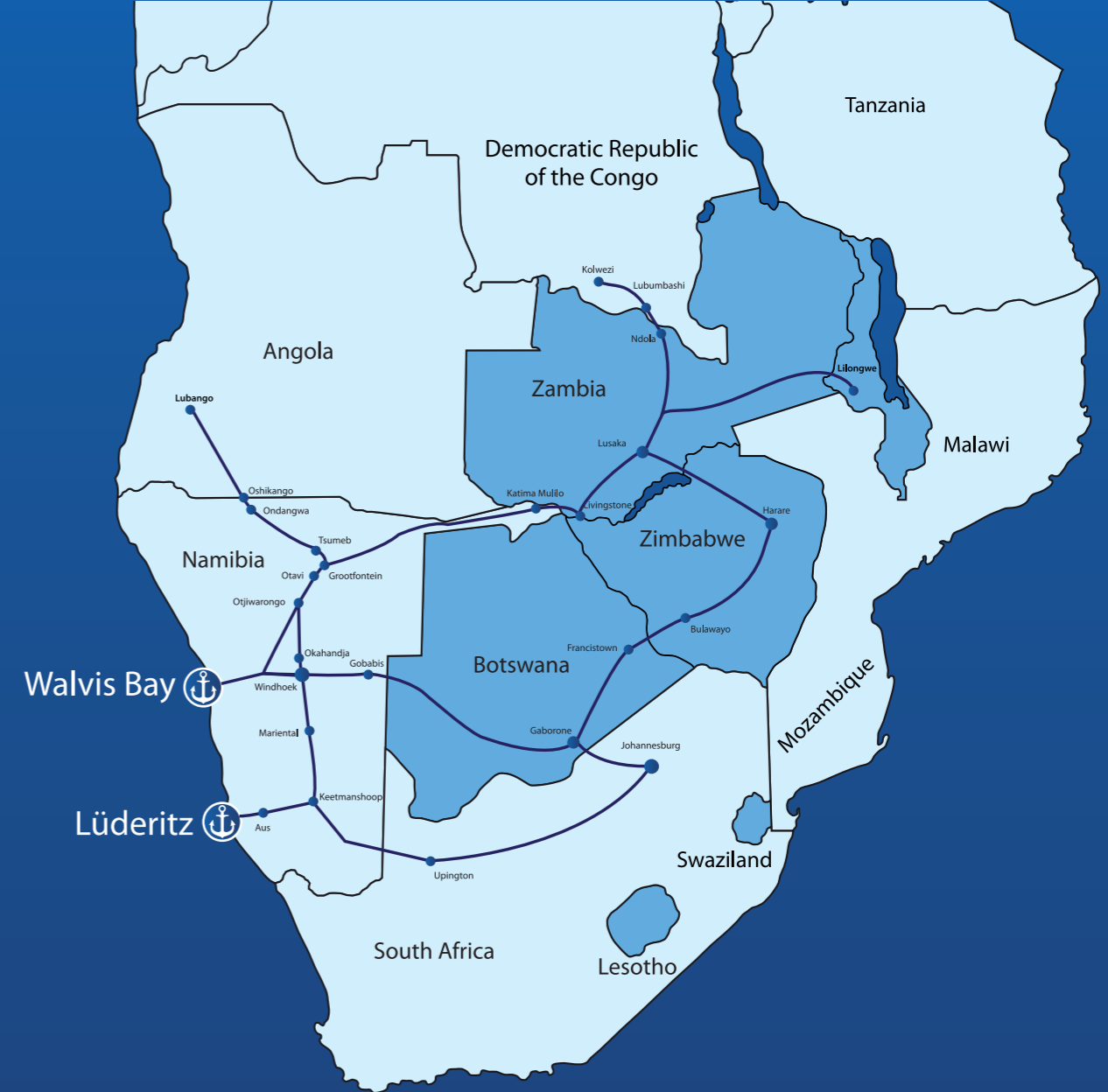
Uninhabited upon its initial discovery by the Portuguese in 1502, and to this day home to little more than 4000 people, the British overseas territory of St Helena remains one of the most isolated inhabited places on earth. Named after Saint Helena of Constantinople, the island is perhaps most famous for being the home of Napoleon Bonaparte during the final years of his life.

Located some 1900 kilometres from the African continent, the island's only lifeline to the wider world since 1989 has been the RMS St Helena, the only ship to regularly pay a visit to its shores. It wasn't until 2011 that the UK government announced its plan to invest over £200 million into the building of an international airport on the island. This news was then followed by the confirmation that Basil Read had been awarded the contract to bring this massive, complex project to life.

As is common place when it comes to remote parts of the developing world, St Helena has watched as large numbers of its population have left the island to seek opportunities further afield. These same people have then had to experience the logistical difficulties presented in getting to the island when they wish to return. It is hoped that the construction of an airport will open up a whole new world of opportunities for St Helena and its people.

"The airport project has been on

The preferred access to Southern Africa



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NAMIBIAN PORTS AUTHORITY



Namibia and Namport have a special relationship with the island of St. Helena dating back to 1977 when the Royal Mail Ship service replaced the Union-Castle line and again when the current RMS St Helena came into service in 1990.

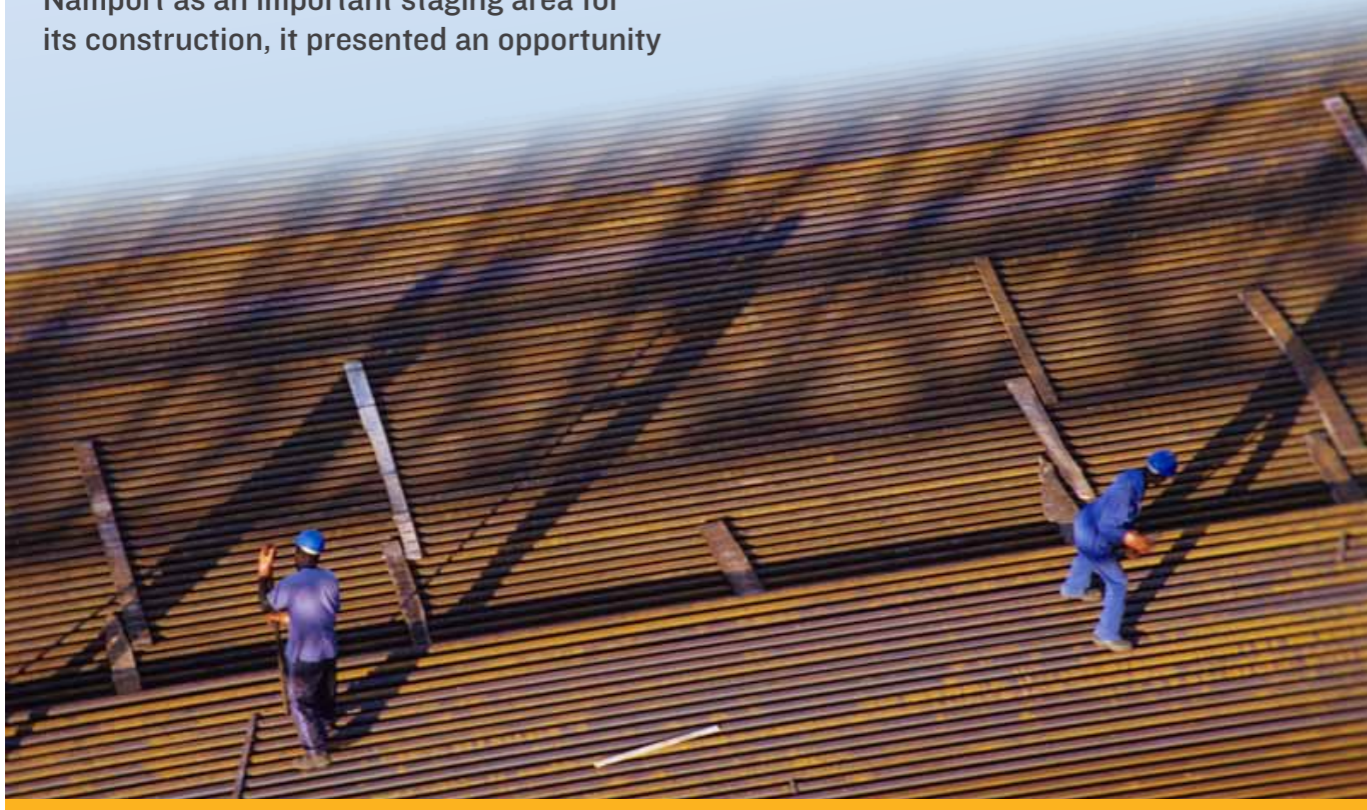
Namibia has many isolated areas in this vast country and we share the same feeling with the Saints as they rely on the regular call of the RMS St Helena. As the service has also become more limited over the past few years by only calling from Cape Town, Namport has missed the regular call of this unique multi-purpose vessel.

When the news came that an airport would finally be built on the island, with Namport as an important staging area for its construction, it presented an opportunity

to repay the Saints for their loyal patronage over the past three decades. Despite space limitations that the Port currently experiences due to rapid expansion, Namport has availed the Basil Read Consortium with prime land and facilities to ensure that construction continues unabated.

The construction challenges that Basil Read faces on the island itself and the pioneering methods of off-loading at the island provide a case study in improvisation. Namport hopes that we can continue to play a small role in the coming years as this exciting project comes to fruition.

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Basil Read ship in Rupert's Bay

the cards for a number of years,” says Jimmy Johnston, project director, “with the goal being to make the island more self-sufficient and open it up to greater levels of tourism. This will in turn boost the economy of St Helena and reduce its dependence on the UK.”

4,000

Population of St. Helena

Read company in 1952 as a humble business that has grown significantly since its formation to become a powerful brand known throughout the construction, engineering and mining sectors

across southern Africa. Not only is the company best placed geographically

to serve St Helena, it also possesses all

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Haul road to the site

“WORKING IN SUCH A UNIQUE PART OF THE WORLD ALSO RAISES A NUMBER OF SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES”

of the necessary design, construction and engineering capabilities to service such an undertaking.

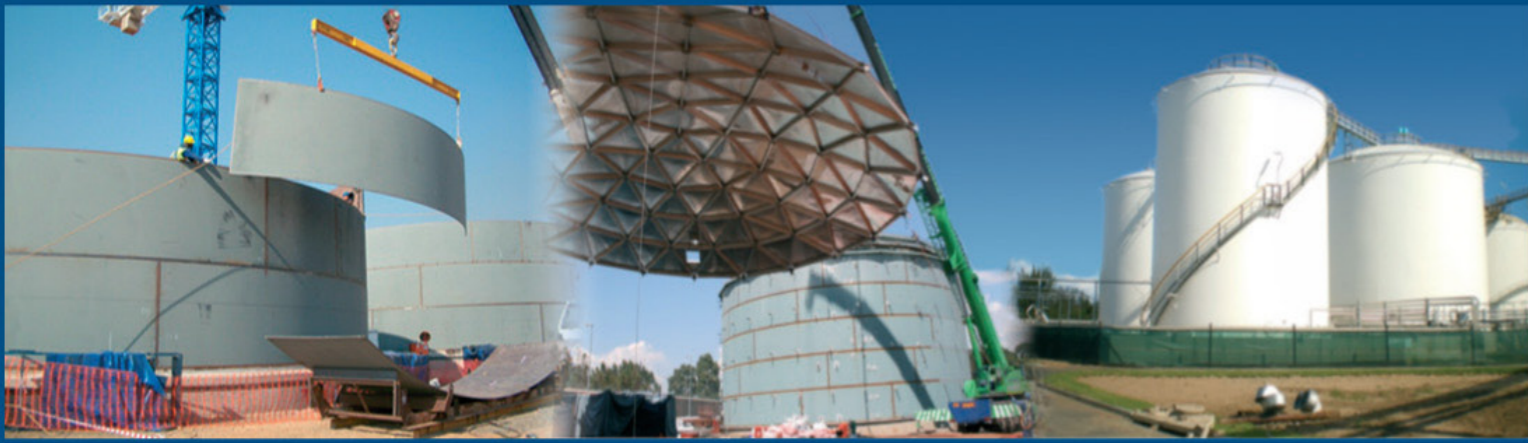
That is not to say that a company as well placed as Basil Read to serve the island hasn't had to overcome some of the considerable challenges that its location poses. With no harbour, the company first had to create its own jetty before

then overcoming the fact that with no natural beaches it would not be possible to approach the island with normal landing craft.

“A site investigation team first arrived on the island in 2007 and it became immediately apparent that getting around the unique logistical features of St Helena was going to be absolutely vital

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Haul road at the top of Rupert's Valley

to the whole project," Johnston explains. Soon after the award of the contract in 2011, Basil Read set about identifying a vessel that would suit its requirements, namely the handling of break bulk, ability to carry a million litres of fuel per trip and the ability to handle container shipments. An offer was then made to charter a vessel and in the time since the company has adapted it by adding additional fuel carrying capabilities and an on-board crane capable of lifting 40 tonne loads.

Working in such a unique part of the world also raises a number of social and environmental issues. With the airport project bringing about big changes for the island and

1,900 KM

Distance from African mainland



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Working at night on the haul road

its people it has been of vital importance to have a strong degree of communication and mutual understanding between Basil Read and the local population. Furthermore, St Helena boasts a unique collection of flora and fauna. This, together with its cultural heritage, has been taken closely into account

throughout the design and construction phases of the project.

“The establishment phase of the project is now nearing completion,” Johnston continues, “with all the logistics and supply chains in place and all transport routes designated. Now the company can commence with the construction phase.”

“THE POTENTIAL FOR ST HELENA TO ACHIEVE SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEPENDENCY IS THERE FOR ALL TO SEE”



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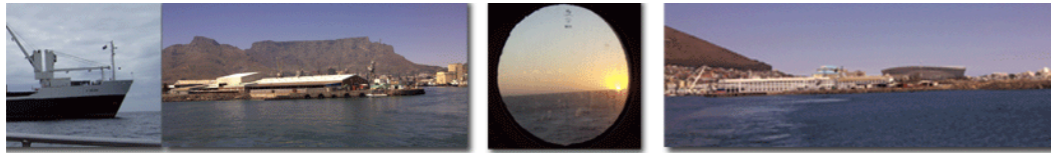
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The first task at hand is a programme of major earth works that will involve the drill blasting and filling of approximately eight million cubic metres of rock. This will be the focus of the company over the next two years, after which it will commence the building of a 1950 metre concrete runway, a terminal building and an air traffic control tower, and the installation of airport ground lighting and navigational aids.

MEIHUIZEN INTERNATIONAL

Arising out of our lengthy association with the island of St Helena, we approached Basil Read to offer our services in respect of the St Helena Airport Project, and were privileged to be nominated as their logistics service provider. We have worked side by side with them over the last year, and have found them to be an extremely professional and most agreeable client, which bodes well for our relationship during the contract period. In consequence we would be honoured to be retained by them for any future logistics business. We wish Basil Read much success with the Airport Project and all their future endeavours.

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One of the central pillars of the island achieving economic self-dependency will be its ability to attract tourists to St Helena. The potential benefit of bringing in higher volumes of visitors is something that has not been lost on either the local or the UK governments. Together the two are moving forward to put into place programmes that will enable the island to easily welcome and accommodate a projected 20,000 tourists per year.

Various developers are in the process of planning where to build hotels on the island, while at the same time great efforts and resources are being put into improving the entire infrastructure of St Helena. What the government



First docking of any ship on St Helena

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Dry gut - position for main fill

1952

Basil Leonard Read started the company

wants is for those people visiting the island to be able to get around and enjoy the usual luxuries they would experience when on holiday, all against the unique, picturesque backdrop that St Helena creates.

Outside of the tourist sector, the very location of the island, halfway across the Atlantic, provides it with the opportunity to act as a stopping point for business air traffic from South America. Opening up the air space around the island could also prove invaluable to business flights making the journey from southern Africa to Europe as it would reduce the potential for delays that occur when flying through another country's airspace.

“The potential for St Helena to achieve significant economic growth and dependency is there for all to see and is clearly linked to the building of its international airport,” Johnston concludes. “It is now the job of DFID, the St Helena government, local businesses and companies like Basil Read to ensure that this potential is realised.” **BE**

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