SAINTS

Spatial identities of the citizens of Saint Helena

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Human Geography
University of Utrecht – the Netherlands
By
Maarten Hogenstijn
Daniël van Middelkoop

SAINTS:
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Chapter 1   Introduction

This thesis is about Saint Helena. That does not seem an obvious subject for a thesis by two human geography students at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. The first two questions we are always confronted with when talking about our thesis are therefore quite logical:

- Where is Saint Helena?

- Why Saint Helena?

In this introduction we will try to answer both of these questions, and we will introduce the central question for our research project on Saint Helena.

1.1   Where?

Saint Helena is a mountainous subtropical island, located at 15 degrees 55'S, 5 degrees 44'W.

The island is relatively small at 122 km^2. The highest point of the island is Diana's Peak at 820 metres. The nearest land is Ascension Island, located about 1200 km to the northwest. The nearest mainland is the west coast of Angola, about 1950 km away. The east coast of Brazil lies about 2900 km to the west. The territorial sea measures almost 22 km (12 nautical miles) and the exclusive fishing zone is 360 km (200 nautical miles).

Figure 1.1 Saint Helena and the RMS route

Saint Helena is a British dependency and therefore one of the last remaining colonies in the world. A British-appointed governor, who usually consults a mainly elected legislative council before taking decisions, rules it. At the moment the island has approximately 5000 inhabitants. Saint Helena has jurisdiction over the islands of Ascension as well as Tristan da Cunha, which is located about 3,250 kilometres southwards in the Atlantic.

Saint Helena is connected to the outside world through the internet, telephone and a shipping link. It does not have an airport. The Royal Mail Ship (RMS) Saint Helena is the only regular shipping service to call at Saint Helena (figure 1.1). It runs a schedule linking Ascension Island (2 days sailing), Saint Helena and Cape Town (5 days sailing). Four times a year it continues to the UK from Ascension, an extra 12 days of sailing. At the time of a UK visit of the RMS the island cannot be reached for approximately 5 weeks, making it one of the remotest places in the world.

1.2   Why?

Life in such a remote community must undoubtedly be different from life on the European 'mainland', which is our background. One thing that will be crucially different is the spatial identity of the people living on saint Helena. There is only limited contact with the outside world, and thus Saint Helenians (or Saints, as they call themselves) live most or all of their life within a small, closed community.

The island is the highest spatial scale on which the daily life of the St. Helena citizens takes place. The Saints will also greatly use the island to determine their spatial identity. Their island is a "little whole of humanity", all facilities have to be present on this small island and

the entire life of the citizens is lived here. The step to a higher spatial scale is huge and often permanent. Interaction with the outside world is limited, although there have been some changes with the introduction of TV and the Internet on the island. This lack of interaction with the outside world has led to distorted images of this world. For the Saints Britain has a central place in this outside world: Saints have a strong British identity.

But things are changing, even on Saint Helena. After many years, there are now finally serious plans to build an airport on the island, connecting it to the outside world more easily. The island is now heavily aid dependent, and its economy is subsidised by British grant-in-aid. An airport could bring in tourists and thus development. But at the same time, the increased exposure to the outside world through the airport could lead to changes in the Saints' spatial identities.

Another change on Saint Helena is connected to citizenship. Until very recently Saints were citizens of "British Overseas territories", which meant they did not have the right of abode in the UK. The restoration of British citizenship allows them to travel to Britain and the EU to work.

Finally, in 2002 Saint Helena celebrates 500 years of discovery. The celebrations were a great opportunity to see the identity and way of life of Saints expressed.

An interest in the community of a remote, small island coupled with the interesting developments regarding access and citizenship made us decide to go to Saint Helena to do research for our final thesis. And what could be better timing than to go in the period of its quincentenary celebrations?

So off we went on the 6th of March 2002. But what did we actually research?

1.3 Central question

The central question of our research is the following:

What are the spatial identities of the citizens of Saint Helena and how will these change as a result of enlarged interaction opportunities, notably the return of British citizenship and the improvement of access?

The first thing that is obvious in this question is the focus on both the present and the future. In the first part of the thesis we will try to answer the part of the question concerning the present: what are the spatial identities of the citizens of Saint Helena *now*? In the second part of the thesis we will focus on the future: what will change?

The concept of spatial identity is a key element of this thesis. Therefore we will explain this concept from a theoretical point of view in the next chapter.

To answer our central question, we have used different methods. First, we studied literature about the island, and we started following the island's newspaper on the Internet. Then we made contact with researchers who visited the island before. We decided to go ourselves and sorted out the practicalities.

We departed Utrecht on March 6th for Cardiff, where we boarded the RMS. After two weeks of sailing we arrived on the island March 21st. We stayed until the 31st of May, and arrived back in the Netherlands on the 12th of June, travelling back through Cape Town.

While on the island, we have examined local literature to broaden our knowledge of the island. However, our most important source of information is formed by the results of 25 semi-structured interviews we held with key figures on the island. This, coupled with many informal talks with locals and a participation in island life during the 2-½ months we stayed

there, led to a better understanding of the island's society. For a more complete discussion of the methodology used, see appendix H. In the next chapters of this thesis we will often use quotes. These are quotes from our own interviews, unless stated otherwise.

What we first need now is a solid theoretical foundation on which to build the rest of our thesis. We will try to provide that in the next chapter.

Chapter 2   Theoretical framework

Saint Helena is unique. Its geographical position and access opportunities make it incomparable to any other place in the world. Therefore there is no theory totally "fitting" the situation of Saint Helena. Still, a number of concepts and theoretical frameworks can shed some light on the causes and consequences of the situation Saint Helena and its people find themselves in.

Saint Helena is an island and it encounters particular problems because of this. The problems and prospects of islands are captured in the term insularity, which will be considered first. Scale is a concept often taken for granted, but a clear understanding of it is essential to clarify the special position of Saint Helena in the wider world, as well as to understand the spatial identities of its population.

The concepts of scale and insularity are strongly related to spatial identity. In the case of Saint Helena they form a rare partnership – the scales of spatial identity are very much limited by the insularity of the island. An examination of spatial identity, in relation to scale and insularity, will therefore conclude this chapter.

2.1   Insularity

According to Biagini and Hoyle (1999) insularity is far from easy to define. They argue that the idea of an island is simple enough (although Royle (2001) strongly opposes this in his book 'A geography of islands'), but that the idea of insularity is both more comprehensive and more problematic. The online English dictionary (Allwords 2002) gives a fairly easy definition of insularity as "the state or quality of being an island; insulation". In the field of geography insularity more often refers to the problems of isolation that come with being an island.

Biagini and Hoyle argue that there are different kinds of insularity as well as different degrees of insularity. One kind of insularity is morphological insularity, which implies the problems 'a land surface entirely surrounded by water and smaller than the smallest continent' (p. 6) faces. They also distinguish economic insularity, biological insularity and cultural insularity. It is argued that insular areas (islands in most cases but sometimes also a continental area, for example an oasis in the desert) have a less favourable, or at least a different economy, biology or culture as a result of their isolation and their peripheral geographical position.

These differences can also be interpreted as results of the before mentioned morphological insularity, not as different kinds of insularity in their own respect. A further distinction in different kinds of insularity therefore does not seem to be helpful in creating a better understanding of the different aspects and problems of insularity.

2.1.1   Insularity and economy

Royle (2001) states that the basic constraint of insularity is the fact that to get people or goods off or onto an island it is required that the body of water surrounding the island is crossed. This water crossing "is an inconvenience at the least. Usually it is also an expense; one has to pay for the journey either in terms of obtaining a place on a ferry or plane, or through taxes or by toll in paying off the capital investment that provided a fixed link" (p. 43). Cross and Nutley (1999) add that islands have to overcome a marine barrier, at a considerable cost. Hence the quality and frequency of transport services to the mainland is a major concern for island communities. Insularity combined with the often small size of islands "implies dependence on the mainland and therefore emphasizes the vital importance of external communications" (p. 318).

Insularity in almost all cases causes an expense to transport goods to or from the islands. This in turn causes island producers to be affected by insularity as well. If an island's economy is not distinctive (producing mainly the same goods as 'the mainland'); the island producers will have to compete with producers on the mainland who are creating similar goods. When the produced goods are of the same quality as the goods produced on the mainland the island producers will probably receive the same price for their goods as well. But from this standard price the island producers will have to pay a considerable number of additional costs, like hiring a boat, paying for space on a ferry or, in the case of St Helena, paying the considerable freight rates of the R.M.S. The result is that often it is economically less viable to produce certain goods on an island, as it can be produced cheaper on the mainland.

Production of a certain good can be very viable when an island is able to produce a niche product, something that is distinctive to/of the island. An example of this was the group of the Banda Islands. Nutmeg was originally grown on these six islands. They were therefore important islands heavily contested between the European powers until the British successfully planted nutmeg on larger islands, effectively destroying the economy of the Banda Islands (Royle 2001, p. 44). The exclusive coffee of St Helena is also a good example of a niche product that can be successfully exported, although production is far too small to be considered a great support to the island's economy.

2.1.2   Insularity and peripherality

The next problem caused by insularity is the peripherality that results from isolation. In the case of continental countries with islands, these are by definition on the edge of the country. Usually they are far from the major central places, such as the national capital, in absolute and social terms. Although most continental countries do have islands, only Denmark and Equatorial New Guinea have their capital on an offshore island. Capitals are always the centre of political power and often of economic activity and innovation as well. According to Royle: "Areas that are remote from the capital inevitably lose out. Being away from the capital and from other big cities can make places in truth or perception relatively backwards" (p. 46). Not only are islands often remote from the capital in distance, but as a result of their insularity the cost and time to reach the capital is even higher. This makes islands "isolated in every way from the heart of the nation" (p. 46). People from the capital often look down upon people from relatively peripheral regions. There can be much resentment between people from outlying regions and the capital, as is the case for instance in Ireland. As islands are almost always peripheral here too resentment is found, as Hintjens (1992, p. 64-5, in Royle 2001) shows in the case of the French islands: "there is widespread resentment of many islanders (....) at the day to day discrimination and prejudice from metropolitan French people, both in the islands and on the mainland".

In the case of the United Kingdom the Overseas Territories are islands belonging to the country but situated thousands of miles from the mainland. This does not only lead to prejudice against these islands, but often to a total disregard of their existence. As Harry Ritchie points out in his book 'The last pink bits' (1997) most British people can only name a few of Britain's overseas territories or don't know where they are situated: "[The list of Britain's dependencies] was a surprisingly long list – seventeen countries, counting Hong Kong and allowing for places that were uninhabited or dependencies of those dependencies. Whenever I mentioned this fact, friends would invariably nod thoughtfully and embark on an attempt to name them. 'Okay, there's the Falklands, right?', they would say. 'And Gibraltar, yes?'. After a long pause, they would then, with an air of no little triumph, come up with a third name. Puzzled though I am by the need to do so, I'd like to stress the fact that Belize became independent on 21 September 1981" (p. 2).

The Director of Tourism on St Helena Pamela Young illustrates that this is also the case for St Helena: "most people in the UK don't know [where St Helena is situated] either". If people know the island exists at all it is because of Napoleon and therefore it is often confused with Elba as well. "Is it not somewhere in the Mediterranean?"

Cross and Nutley (1999) observe that islands' "insular status automatically renders them 'peripheral' in the simple geographical sense", and this peripherality often translates into economic marginality and neglect by the central political power. They state that a number of generalizations about small insular islands are often heard: "they have small populations; they are rural in character, probably dependent on agriculture and/or fishing; they are 'poor in resources', by which is meant presumably that they lack the basis for industrialization and self-sustaining growth; they are dependent on subsidies from the central state; they suffer from 'isolation'; their people are disadvantaged in that they are out of touch with the cultural mainstream" (p. 317). They take a number of Irish Islands as an example that provides much evidence for the stereotype outlined above at a high level of generalization. Many islands have to cope with at least a couple of these stereotypes Cross and Nutley name. A lot of these can be seen in the case of St Helena as well. This syndrome of related problems, with perceived better opportunities elsewhere, leads to a loss of population over a long period in the case of these Irish Islands, but in the case of St Helena as well, as is explained further on in this thesis.

2.1.3   Insularity and social structure

Poirine and Moyrand explain in their article 'Insularity and Governance, the case of French Polynesia' (2001) that as a result of small scale and insularity vertical solidarities are more important on an island than horizontal solidarities. This contradicts the situation in western mainland countries where horizontal solidarities became more important after the industrialization period. Horizontal solidarity means that you identify with and are loyal to for example class, while vertical solidarity leads to identification and loyalty to the 'clan' or (extended) family.

Small islands also tend to foster the development of a certain type of social relationship engendered by the constraints circumscribing social interaction. As a result of the few social contacts and connections, the long-term familiarity between people ever since childhood, and the large amount of social control, privacy is very restricted on small isolated islands. In small island societies social networks are rarely replaced: people who leave invariably come back, while those who are not born islanders are never really assimilated into island society. Thus one ends up meeting the same old crowd - acquaintances or enemies throughout one's lifetime (Baldacchino 1997b: 77, in Poirine and Moyrand 2001)

The high level of social control and the great familiarity between people combined with the vertical solidarity cause a number of problems in governance in these insular social structures. Poirine and Moyrand (2001) identify four main problems:

1.   Personalised professional relationships within various organizations.

As a result of the social control and familiarity it seems that everyone knows everyone. As a result, subjective inference concerning others becomes the norm and judgments fluctuate in the light of information concerning past and present private, family, political and social lives, personalities, relationships with the community or with persons in authority, the predominance of a particular clan and the weight of the key person's influence. Objective criteria such as actual proficiency and impartial appraisal that come into play in societies where anonymity defines relationships hold little sway.

2. Difficulties in establishing non-partisan objective procedures.

Any attempt at putting impersonal and objective procedure into effect in government (such as competitive recruiting measures) comes up against extended personal networks on which professional networks are based. Civil servants who insist on the importance of impersonal measures may find themselves in a very difficult position, because they are expected to cater for clan members' needs. To refuse a 'short-cut' is seen as adverse behaviour where the clan is concerned and may lead to a future settling of scores.

3. The creation of pools of expertise due to small labour markets

An island's labour market is in general rather precarious. There are very few opportunities available for people looking for a position with responsibility. Career prospects are not very good and job experience is not varied. In public service, there are so few key jobs available that young executives find it difficult to build up all round expertise and skills through appropriate training in administration. Hence, rapidly rising to the top is frequent and, once at the top, stagnations sets in till retirement comes round. Executives rarely go on training courses abroad, for they may be seen as exiles. The restricted job market encourages people rapidly to consider themselves as experts in a given field where they will dominate as undisputed, qualified specialists for the rest of their lives, as competition is scant. The so-called expert need not keep up with recent developments, relying on previously acquired knowledge and benefiting from the fact that he or she alone has an overview of the problems in his or her domain.

4. The problem ridden running of democratic institutions

At first glance, establishing democracy in small-scale societies may seem fairly elementary. However, vertical solidarities in insular societies make democratic debate extremely difficult. In Tahiti, political choices have very little to do with actual ideology. They are more a result of strategic familial and political alliances. There is neither left-right confrontation nor conflict between parties that represent opposing group or class petitions, as vertical solidarities dominate horizontal ones.

It seems clear that as a result of insularity, islands are often challenged with economical problems as well as political and social ones. As St Helena is one of the most isolated islands in the world, the problems of insularity have a great impact on its economy, politics and social structure. The way in which St Helena is affected by insularity will be taken up again in chapter 6, when discussing the spatial identity and spatial behaviour of Saints. We now turn our attention to the concept of scale.

2.2   Scale

For many years scale has been an important issue in human geography as well as a matter of long debate. The reason to theorise scale in this thesis is that spatial identity is constructed and spatial behaviour performed on different spatial scales. The notion of scale has a significant impact on those two concepts and therefore needs to be clearly defined and understood.

Many different opinions and approaches have been used to construct a definition of scale, too many to be considered here. This paragraph will draw mainly from Richard Howitt's article "Scale and the Other: embodiment, emplacement and infinity" published in Geoforum in May 2000.

Early discussion focused on issues of scale as size - consideration of appropriate map scales for particular forms of analysis and presentation, and how to transfer conclusions drawn from analysis at one geographical scale to other scales or within a different spatial frame at the

same scale (Howitt 2000a). A lengthy discussion about the concept of scale started in the 1980s and continued in the 1990s especially within the field of political geography. In the discussion there seems to be a general consensus about the fact that scale is "a fundamental concept in (political) geography" (Howitt 2000b). But although the importance of scale is widely recognized there is much less clarity or agreement about just what sort of a thing scale might be. On the one hand this seems self-evident. Scale is a term that easily slips into a discussion because the scaled processes of 'globalisation'; 'national sovereignty' and 'local action' that are often the taken-for-granted focus of many geographical studies are so obvious. Similarly, it seems equally obvious that scales are socially and politically constructed. Yet, when one tries to offer a definition of just what is being constructed, most attempts are unsatisfactory. In the 4th edition of the *Dictionary of Human Geography*, N. Smith (2000 p. 727) takes 2½ pages to arrive at the statement that the "question of scale will become one of mounting theoretical and practical relevance", but does not provide a definition.

Although the importance of scale is widely recognized, it often remains poorly understood, carelessly applied and, given its importance in influential debates about globalisation, localism and regionalism, surprisingly chaotic (Howitt, 2000a).

Especially in the discussions about globalisation scale or a shift in scale is a widely used concept that is more often than not vague and not clearly defined.

2.2.1 Hierarchy of scales

One of the descriptions of scale often given is "the representation of reality at one particular level" (University of Washington 2002). These levels are not "officially" determined and can differ between geographical contexts, but in most cases a standard hierarchy of levels can be seen. The levels shown below are the ones most used in human geography:

- Global scale (the World)
- Macroregion (for example the EU)
- (State scale) (for example UK)
- National scale (for example England)
- Regional scale (for example Cornwall)
- Local scale (for example Falmouth)

Although these are the most common levels of scale, other levels are sometimes used as well, for example 'the body', 'home' and 'infinity'. In a particular context a new scale, for example 'tribal governance' (Howitt 2000a) can sometimes be created as well.

Although this hierarchy of scales seems logical and quite understandable, it is unclear what exactly distinguishes the different levels and how the different levels relate to each other. A more thorough description of scale and a more precise definition therefore seems to be in order.

One of the problems with scale is that it is a concept that exists mostly in relation to other concepts like space, place and time and is not something existing in itself. Delaney and Leitner (1997, p. 96-97) phrased this problem as follows: 'once scale is constructed or produced, where in the world is it? Scale is not as easily objectified as two-dimensional territorial space, such as state borders. We cannot touch it or take a picture of it'.

Howitt suggests that scale is better grasped as an event, a process, a relationship of movement and interaction rather than a discrete thing. Despite its importance in the construction of influential things such as power, gender, being, identity and wealth (inter alia), it is unhelpful to think of scale as the sort of thing that has causal power in its own right. Scale can be used and looked upon from different perspectives, as will be shown below.

2.2.2   Scale as size, level and relation

The concept of scale can be explained by the distinction Howitt makes between scale as size, scale as level and scale as relation.

1.   Scale as size is the oldest and easiest way of looking at scale. In for instance GIS scale issues are predominantly treated as issues of size. Haggett's approach to scale as size (1975, p. 16, in Howitt 2000a) suggests that concepts of scale imply a hierarchy of "orders of magnitude". Although he is speaking about scale in maps, this at first seems like a workable definition of scale. There are different scales in existence, the local scale often being seen as the smallest scale, followed by for example the regional, national and the global scale. Going to a larger or smaller scale in this definition simply means looking at a bigger or smaller area.

2.   In many geographical disciplines, scale is more often treated as a level. The idea of scale as level is often conflated with scale as size though, with a common implication of nested hierarchical ordering of space.

In this concept of scale, wider scales are understood to encompass greater amounts of complexity (divisions of labour, administrative reach, cultural diversity etc) and to achieve greater geographical scope. In some discussions, this idea of levels has been presented as layers, with each succeeding scale layer subsuming those below it.

By adding the idea of scale as level to the notion of scale as size, it becomes clear that upscaling from 'local' to 'national' or 'international' implies not just larger areas, but a domain in which more complexity is encompassed by specified relations (in society, space and time).

The emphasis on scale as level often reflects acceptance of an "indisputable hierarchy of scales - global, national, regional, and local". Although this hierarchy is mostly accepted within the field of geography, some geographers reject the necessity for this hierarchical foundation for the notion of scale. It is often useful and widely used, but the "widespread commitment to hierarchical representations of scale as level" (Howitt 2000a) can sometimes lead to simplistic representations of globalization as imposing a developmental trajectory on people and places, and to a separation of fields of study as various scales (identity studies as local, industry studies as global etc).

A good illustration of the difference between scale as size and scale as level can be given by looking at the construction of 'nation' as a scale label. If we take for instance the cases of Singapore and the Russian Federation, the scale label refers to areas of entirely different size. While equivalence of administrative structure and complexity between all 'national' entities could not be supported, the scale distinction between the national scale of Singapore and the 'urban' scale of Brisbane or Chicago has more to do with 'level' than size.

3.   When scale is used in geographical research it is mostly limited to scale as size and scale as level. In recent years a growing literature discussing relational aspects of scale has come into being. Starting from an acknowledgment of the fundamentally metaphorical nature of scale labels, this literature considers that scale boundaries are better represented as interfaces, and that it is not only larger scale entities (global or national) that contain smaller scale entities, but that the larger scale entities are at the same time contained within smaller scale entities. If one constitutes scale as size, this observation would be at best paradoxical, even nonsensical.

But according to for instance Howitt it is clear that there is an inescapable dialectical link between, for example, national culture and individual values. The latter clearly contain, respond to, encapsulate, and are constructed from the former. So the national scale is made up of several local or regional scales and is being influenced by these smaller scales while at the

same time the national scale is influencing the smaller scales. This influence can also be non-hierarchical, when for instance global forces skip the national scale but make an impact on a regional or local scale.

So the scales of different size do influence each other both ways and can be different not only in size but also in character, or as Howitt puts it: "a shift in scale produces consideration not just of more (or less) but also different".

Scale is an abstract concept. It reflects facets of space, time, culture and environment. It has dimensions of size, level and relation, and can be paradoxically simultaneously hierarchical and non-hierarchical. If social relations are always spatial, if we are always both 'in place' and 'in culture' (Entrikin 1991 in Howitt 2000a), then social and environmental relations are also always scaled. It is implicated in, and simultaneously implicates other core concepts in geography such as space, place and time. It is also deeply implicated in core cultural concepts such as identity.

A definition of scale that is suitable in all circumstances might not be found and might always be dependent on its geographical context. We will try to reach a definition here that is suitable for the geographical context of Saint Helena

Suitable for the studying the spatial identity and behaviour of the citizens of Saint Helena seems to be the definition of scale of Delaney and Leitner: "the nested hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing size, such as the local, regional, national and global" (Delaney and Leitner 1997: 93).

Spatial identity also seems to be related to particular bounded spaces. But what exactly is spatial identity?

2.3   Spatial identity

Geographers tend to go straight to the "spatiality" of things, but to get a full grip on the concept we need to go back to identity in general first. The concept of identity has been used in different social sciences and its definitions are many. Psychology, anthropology, sociology and geography each assign a slightly different meaning: identity is a polysemic concept. On a simple level, identity can be seen as how a person sees himself and evaluates himself in relation to other persons. Identity is thus a process: you constantly re-evaluate yourself and your position as a consequence of ever-changing circumstances.

2.3.1   Social identity

Social identity theory in psychology explains the needs of (social) identity: it fulfils certain self-esteem needs. "People categorize the world in in-groups and out-groups, and evaluate the position of the in-group they belong to in relation to others. If we evaluate our in-group as superior, we are likely to have a higher self-esteem, if we evaluate it as inferior we are likely to have lower self-esteem. Insecurity about your status in the in-group makes in-group favouritisms and out-group derogation more likely. But it is threats to collective self-esteem, rather than private self-esteem, that may be responsible for prejudice against out-groups" (Tajfel 1982, in Taylor et al 1997, p. 190-191).

Geographers recognise the importance of social identity theory. Regional geographer Paasi for examples states that: " 'Regions' are only one element in social identity formation and their importance varies contextually. Gender, class, religion and 'race' have for a long time been crucial elements in the identification of social groupings, and many other identities, e.g. ones based on sexual orientation or ethnicity, claim a space in public discourse even if they do

not always have specific, bounded territorial claims. Thus people normally position themselves simultaneously on many 'axes'" (Paasi 2002, p. 139)

There are many different aspects to identity: it is partly objective and party subjective; it is partly individual and partly collective (figure 2.1). As collective identities are (perceived to be) more stable, people tend to join these. Claval (1998) explains this: "we feel the need to identify ourselves with collectives that will outlive us. We only exist if we belong to groups which accord us a place; this gives us a sense of security and accomplishment" (p. 152).

Figure 2.1 Aspects of identity

	Individual	Collective
Objective	Personal patterns of reaction	Language, customs and traditions
Subjective	Individual self-image	Collective self-image

Collective identities are more stable, but not static. Societal changes and changes within and among the individuals who are members of the collective lead to changes in identity. But through the use of symbols and narratives, identities are lent a certain degree of stability as well as tangibility.

2.3.2   Territorialisation of identity

Another element that makes identity more stable and tangible is its association with territory. People belong to a number of groups with collective self-images, and, according to Villeneuve: "the identity of a group is built up in relation to others, and […] is always materialized in a territory" (Villeneuve 1992, op. cit. Métral 2001, p. 7). Although it is questioned if this territorialisation is *always* necessary (e.g. Parkin 1998); even critics agree that it is often the case. This territorialisation "spatialises" a person's identity. Spatial identity can be defined as "feeling of attachment to territory at a certain geographical scale, perceived as unique to and by an individual or group".

It is interesting to note what other disciplines have to say about the territoriality of identity. Anthropologist Lovell, in the introduction to her book "Locality and belonging", states that "belonging to a place is instrumental in creating collective identities". Sociologist Salazar (1998), commenting on national identity, suggests that "the territorial referent is more evident in the regionalism variant of national loyalty. Given geographical variability within countries, it is logical that the role of territory and all that is connected to it should be more marked in more restricted loyalties" (p. 117). He defines regionalism as "the positive affect towards a regional group within an existing state" (p. 116).

Salazar in this statement also agrees that identity varies at different spatial scales. Spatial identity at higher spatial scales is less and less based on personal knowledge, experience and interaction, but more and more on images from outside. These images are usually translated into symbols, which can be seen as the markers of identity at a certain spatial scale. The "feeling of attachment" is often reinforced by the use of these symbols, which are perceived to be unique to a territory. This uniqueness means that it is possible to divide the world into in-groups and out-groups on the basis of having the same level of attachment to a territory and its symbols and narratives (which in order to qualify as a member you might need to prove in some way).

2.3.3   Scale and spatial identities

The definition of spatial identity mentioned above covers only one geographical scale. However, the total spatial identity of an individual is multi-layered, multi-scale; and consists of different spatial *identities* (note the plural). The lower the scale, the smaller the group of people that has this spatial identity in common, while at the lowest scale spatial identity is

totally individual. Usually one or two levels of a person's spatial identity take prominence and become a very important part of a person's overall social identity. This process is influenced by the interactions and identifications with the various spatial scales. The scales of spatial identity can often be visualised in concentric circles. You belong to a village, a town area, a province, a country. Children often visualise this when writing their address:

> First Name
> Family Name
> Street
> Neighbourhood / village
> Town
> Province / County
> Country
> Continent
> World
> Universe

Salazar (1998) presents the image of "a matryoshka of identities, one inside the other" (p. 121). While a useful image, not every spatial identity is as important or as well defined as the other, and the effect on actual spatial behaviour also varies. Neither is the image of concentric circles always valid. This is especially the case when national identity crosses state borders, for example in the Kurdish or Basque cases. Often territorial conflict is then the result. The relative importance of different spatial identities for a person can also vary over time.

Still, each of the layers has a certain meaning to a person, and can be used for identifying yourself to others. Identifying yourself at a particular layer is very much dependent on both your location and your assessment of the other person. If someone presumably from the same country asks you where you are from, you might answer with the province's or the town's name. If you are in another country and someone asks you the same question, you usually identify with your country name. You assess what seems to be the most appropriate scale of identification and answer accordingly.

Certain layers or scales are more important than others, either because they have a greater impact on day-to-day life, or because they contain elements that make the group very distinct from other groups at the same scale. If you never meet anyone from outside your village, you will not be required to identify to others, as everyone you meet knows you anyway. The visibility of a certain scale of identity, therefore seems very much dependent upon interaction. On Saint Helena, people hardly ever have the need to self-identify verbally to others. As everyone knows everyone, usually no direct questions are asked. At spatial scales up to that of the island, spatial identity is therefore relatively invisible.

But beyond the level of the island there is a sudden and huge gap towards the next level. From a spatial identity that is almost totally experience-based, you move to an almost totally "imagined community", to use Anderson's term (1983): a spatial identity that is not based on personal interaction. To a person, these "imagined communities" or higher levels of spatial identity seem more stable. If you are born in the Netherlands, chances are you will identify yourself as Dutch all your life. But most people move a few times during their life, and *local* territorial attachment may or may not move with you.

Geographers tend not to try to list all the different spatial identities a person can have. Yet there seems to be a fairly general agreement that the following ones can be identified (note the similarity to the hierarchy in paragraph 2.2.2 relating to scale):

- Supra-national identity (for example EU)
- (State identity) (for example UK)
- National identity (for example English)
- Regional identity (for example Cornish)
- Local identity (for example Falmouth)
- Personal identity

State identity is the most problematic in this list: the state identity cannot be self-defined but is forced on you. The state "enjoys a monopoly of powers within its borders and is endowed with the singular ability – through education, media, propaganda and "infrastructural power" – to inculcate a sense of collective identity among its residents" (Kaplan 1998, p. 33). At the same time, this is why certain theorists do not regard it as part of a person's identity: it is not the result of *self*-identification. If the forced state identity fits the national or supra-national identity reasonably, this need not be a problem. But ideal nation-states or multi-nation-states are rare.

The generally accepted view in geography is that national identity is the most important spatial identity, "overriding claims of lesser communities and larger allegiances" (Herb & Kaplan 1998, p. 2). When surveying scales of spatial identity, usually national identity will be used as a starting point and reference throughout. We will therefore quickly survey the concept of national identity, before attempting to apply it to Saint Helena.

2.3.4   National identity

The concept of the nation has been scientifically explored from many angles, which has led to a multitude of definitions. On one aspect there seems to be general agreement however: it is a quintessential means to distinguish one's group from other groups. The word itself is derived from the Latin noun *nationem*, meaning breed or race (Connor 1978). Often it refers to a blood-related group of people, but the word is also used to describe the inhabitants of a state. This has led to great confusion.

The first step out of this confusion is to properly distinguish between nation and state. The state is the territorial juridical unit, the major political subdivision of the globe. A state needs to have certain attributes to function: it needs a particular defined territory, a permanent resident population, a constituted effective government, formal and real independence, sovereignty, recognition by other states in the international system of states, etcetera (Knight 1994, p. 72). The United Kingdom is a state, as it fulfils all these criteria. But the *state* of the United Kingdom is also a member of the United *Nations*. While the name of this organisation implies a meeting place for nations, only states can join, even if they have multiple nations inside them, while nations without a homeland (such as the Kurds) cannot join. "The United Nations in fact has proved to be little more than the meeting place for representatives of disunited states" (Seton-Watson 1977, in Taylor and Flint 2000, p. 197). We also continue to speak of international relations while we actually mean interstate relations.

If nation is so often mistaken for state, what then is a nation? To use the definition in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, a nation is a "large community of people associated with a particular territory usually speaking a single language and usually having a political character or political aspirations". Although the nation in this definition is recognised as a territorially based community, it is still unclear how this community is defined: when are you a nation, when are you not? Taylor and Flint offer a political-

geographical definition: "a group of persons who believe that they consist of a single 'people' based upon historical and cultural criteria and therefore should have their own sovereign state" (p. 373). The element of self-definition that Taylor and Flint introduce is important, and agreed on by Connor (1978). He states simply that "a nation is a self-aware ethnic group" (p. 45). The second part of Taylor and Flint's definition refers to the ambition of a nation: they should have their own sovereign state. Not all scholars would agree with them on this, as a case can be made for instances in which different national groups can coexist peacefully in the same state. In the case of Saint Helena, there is no ambition for independence, so the people of Saint Helena would not qualify as a nation using Taylor and Flint's definition.

This definition brings the concepts of nation and state dangerously close together and offers no explanation as to why it is necessary that a nation has an ambition to become a state (note that although the definition does not exclude current nations that have a state, it is very much focussed on *becoming* a state) . The Oxford's definition is more cautious and merely states that this group *usually* has political character *or* political aspirations. This implies that there can be a status quo (if you are happy with the current political make-up, you don't need to have aspirations), and it does not set separate statehood as the ultimate goal of all nations. But stating that there is merely *usually* a political element involved seems weak. At the very least, a group needs to have political awareness to start to self-identify as a nation.

Sociologist Castells defines nations as follows: "cultural communes constructed in people's minds and collective memory by the sharing of history and political projects" (1997, p. 51). This is a useful definition, although it lacks territoriality. Neither can it be translated to the singular without implying that a nation is something individual. While each individual might attach a slightly different meaning to the nation, a communal definition seems more useful for analytical purposes. Trying to combine the "the best of both worlds", the following working definition of a nation will be used: "a politically self-aware community of persons who associate themselves with a particular territory on the basis of historical and cultural criteria".

What then is the national identity of the people of Saint Helena? Is it purely English, or distinctly Saint Helenian? Or, to phrase it differently: are Saint Helenians politically self-aware to such a degree that it can be regarded as national identity, or is it merely a regional or local identity? On the one hand, one can look at Saint Helena as an example where national identity and state identity, while not encompassing the same territory, still coexist peacefully, because the state identity is so much part of the national identity. On the other hand, if to such an extent defined by state identity; is Saint Helenian identity then worth being called a national identity? But if not, what national identity do Saint Helenians have? Is it British, or English, or something different still?

Talking about Saint Helenian identity in relation to national identity soon leads to the involvement of other concepts. Caution should be exercised when bringing into play other "nation-related" terms. Three of these terms will shortly be considered in relation to Saint Helena: nationalism, nationality and transnationalism.

Nationalism is a powerful term: it traditionally implies the struggle for territory. On Saint Helena this is not the case however. If you want to recognise Saint Helenian nationalism, it should then probably be seen as a harmless form of sub-state nationalism. Or, to follow Castells, a contemporary meaning should be applied to nationalism: "Contemporary nationalism may or may not be oriented toward the construction of a sovereign nation-state, and thus nations are, historically and analytically, entities independent from the state….Because contemporary nationalism is more reactive than proactive, it tends to be more cultural than political, and thus more oriented towards the defence of an already institutionalised culture than towards the construction or defence of a state" (Castells 1997, p.

30-31). Following this "reactive" approach to nationalism, the concept can be applied to Saint Helena without implying a change in the status quo.

A second "nation-related" term is nationality. Nationality is often confused with citizenship, which on Saint Helena is a complicated issue that has brought a lot of turmoil to the island in recent years. But, again quoting Castells: "Citizenship does not equate nationality, at least exclusive nationality, as Catalans feel Catalan first of all, yet, at the same time, most declare them Spanish and even 'European' as well"(Castells 1997, p. 51). In the case of Saint Helena, while deprived of British citizenship, people could still feel they were of British nationality, as they felt a connection to British nationhood.

A final concept that needs to be explained is that of transnationalism. A very large proportion of Saints is overseas, either on temporary contracts or on a more permanent basis. Generally they keep some ties with the island, through remittances, through contacts with family or otherwise. This seems to fit the definition of transnationalism as put forward by Portes et al. (1999): "Occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation" (p. 219). The maintenance of regular and sustained social contacts is a problem in the case of remote Saint Helena, although the situation has improved greatly with the introduction of telephone, fax and internet services. Physical contact is still limited however. A second problem for the application of the concept to the case of Saint Helena is the part "across national borders'. This implies that there have to be two distinct nationalities involved, and indeed, as Portes et al. recognise: "This field is composed of a growing number of persons who live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders" (p. 217). Saint Helenians do hardly ever migrate to countries with a different language and most of them stay within what may be termed "the British empire": either the UK "mainland", or Ascension Island or the Falkland Islands. In the latter two cases, questions may even be raised if a home is really made on these "work islands": Saints are basically only there to work on short-term contracts, often without their families. Finally, because Saint Helenian national identity is such a problematic concept, it is questionable if there is actual movement across "national borders" involved.

The conclusion drawn from this short review of national identity is simple: the concept of national identity does not fit the specific context of Saint Helena. It seems to fall somewhere in the "gap" between the level of the island and the level of the United Kingdom as a whole.

How then to define Saint Helenian identity? For the time being we might call it "island identity".

What role does Saint Helena then perform in identity formation? Anthropology offers another concept, which might have explanatory value in this case. While Saint Helena does not fit the concentric circle-idea of spatial identities, it does seem to perform the traditional role of "home". Or, as Rapport and Dawson put it: "In a situation where traditional classifications of identity often fail to provide adequate understandings of proximate behaviours –adequate appreciations of individual actors' world views and their drives to new (often multiple and paradoxical) sites and levels of association, of incorporation and exclusion – 'home' may be of use" (1998, p. 8).

2.3.5   Home

Traditionally, home is "the stable physical centre of one's universe – a safe and still place to leave and return to (whether house, village, region or nation), and a principal focus of concern and control" (Rapport & Dawson 1998, p. 6). The concept is thus not bound to a certain layer of spatial identity, but points to a particular function. It is linked to fixity, to stableness and it

opposes movement. While movement away from home is possible (and indeed may serve to strengthen feelings for home), identity derived from home is fixed, and home is a place to physically return to.

Another approach to home sees it as "something to be taken along whenever one decamps" (Rapport and Dawson 1998, p. 7). Home is a fluid concept, as people are on the move all the time through a world of globalisation, and their home is represented by a habitual set of practices and interactions. This approach does not consider territoriality of home as essential, it exists mainly in people's minds and is translated into narratives, which not only tell of home, but even become home.

In the case of Saint Helena, the traditional approach to home seems the most appropriate in first instance. Almost the whole population is either working overseas themselves; has worked overseas or has a direct family member working overseas. People are either longing for home or know what that is like by experience; or represent home for others. This "away-experience" can serve to strengthen the feeling for home: "it is perhaps only by way of transience and displacement that one achieves an ultimate sense of belonging" (Rapport and Dawson 1998, p. 9). One of the case studies in their book affirms this: while you can be in another place than home for a long time, this does not necessarily need to lead to a new form of imagined community, as you don't necessarily attach yourself to the new place. Amit-Talai studied this phenomenon on the Cayman Islands, another British overseas territory in the Caribbean. The situation of "institutionalised transience" there, with a bureaucratic system preventing permanent settlement of non-Caymanians, makes expatriates regard their time on the island as time in-between, and return to their homeland as a "return to reality". (Amit-Talai 1998, p. 51). In the cases of Saint Helenians on Ascension and the Falklands in particular, this notion of "institutionalised transience" seems very applicable. They are away from the island to earn money to build their home, but they build their home on Saint Helena. At the same time, people back on Saint Helena are missing the overseas workers, but know they will be coming back. They are the "home community", and very aware of that.

Saint Helena can thus be relied on as the stable centre of one's universe, something which almost becomes physical as you see the lonely rock emerging when approaching the island on the RMS. This is a very emotional moment for Saints who have been away from home for a long time. One Saint told us about a song he wrote which features Saint Helena as home. On the melody of "Country road" he sings:

> *Ocean Road*
> *Take me home*
> *To the place*
> Where I was born
> *Saint Helena*
> *Few have seen her*
> *As she stands*
> *All alone*

The concept of Saint Helena as home seems useful in a further discussion of spatial identities of Saints. It will therefore serve as background while discussing Saints' spatial identity in chapter 6. This discussion will hopefully also lead to some more clarity on the placing of Saint Helena within the scales of spatial identity, and finally with regard to national identity.

21

PART I: SAINT HELENA NOW

Chapter 3   Saint Helena in the wider world

First we take a look at Saint Helena from an outside point of view. What is its place in the wider world? And how has it come to occupy that place?

As Saint Helena did not have an indigenous population at first settlement in 1659, its fate was determined by the role it had to play in the outside world. It is therefore fitting to discuss the island's historical position in this chapter. Afterwards, the present political and economic place of the island within the wider world will be examined.

3.1   The historical position of Saint Helena

At the time of writing, the human history of the island of Saint Helena spans exactly half a millennium. The island was discovered in the year 1502 by Portuguese sailors, and consequently celebrates its quincentenary in 2002.

The history of Saint Helena has been well documented and recorded, especially considering the size of the island and its population. This of course has a lot to do with the years that Napoleon Bonaparte spent on the island, a period about which hundreds of books have been written. However, this account of the historical position of Saint Helena will draw mainly from the book "St. Helena: 1502-1938", as written by Philip Gosse in 1938 and reprinted (with extended introduction by Trevor W. Hearl) in 1990. A "new" history of Saint Helena, by Alexander Schulenburg, is due for 2003.

The development of Saint Helena and its place in the wider world since its discovery can be divided into three periods:

- 1502-1659   Discovery and early exploration
- 1659-1834   Property of East India Company
- 1834-present Colony under the crown

In the first period, the island was discovered by explorers from different countries and used as a revictualling base, or a base from which to launch attacks on other ships. Critically, no permanent settlement was established on the island. In 1659 the (English) East India Company formally took possession of the island and turned it into an important half-way house for ships on the way from England to India. In 1834 the island was handed over to the British crown, a move referred to as "the fall to second class status" (Turner 1996). The island lost its importance and became more and more dependent upon Britain, a situation which continues to the present.

3.1.1   Discovery and early exploration

On the 21st of May 1502, three Portuguese ships were on their way back to Portugal from India. The commander, Joao da Nova Castella, had helped the Portuguese governor in India to defend his forts against Indian attackers. Victorious, he was now on his way home. Suddenly and unexpectedly the lookout called out that land was seen in the distance. It being the anniversary of Saint Helena, the mother of emperor Constantine, da Nova decided to call the newly discovered island Santa Helena. He landed on the island at the site of the present capital of Jamestown, and in this valley he built a small chapel. The valley is sometimes still referred to as Chapel Valley. After taking in water and other refreshments, the ships sailed again after a few days. Da Nova knew that he had made a useful discovery. This island could well serve as a "half-way-house" for Portuguese ships on their way to the Portuguese possessions in Asia; the African coast being much more dangerous. The discovery of the island, with an abundance of fresh water and a mild climate suitable for growing vegetables

and fruits, was therefore kept secret. Only Portuguese captains were told of the island's existence, it was not shown on maps until much later.

For unknown reasons the Portuguese decided not to settle the island permanently. No attempts were made to take formal possession of the island, nor did any permanent settlers come to the island. For some time the Portuguese managed to keep the island's existence secret, but at the end of the 16th century others discovered it as well.

The English explorer Thomas Cavendish found the island in 1588, and soon afterwards the Dutch also found out about the island. These three great maritime powers of the time all visited the island regularly, and also used the island as a base to attack the other. "The island belonged to no one; those who called there took what they would or could, water, fruit, vegetables, fresh meat and sailed away" (Gosse, p. 37). As each of the major powers was thinking about their own short-term gain, and about leaving as little useful as possible for the others, the island was ravaged in the early years. The Dutch were especially infamous for burning down the Portuguese-built chapel several times. Often they also destroyed the fruit trees. This led to the Portuguese cutting down the fruit trees before sailing off, on the pretext that this was better than leaving them for the Dutch or English. Often cattle was left behind, so that on return the meat could be eaten. The numbers of goats in particular exploded and this also led to the destruction of much of the vegetation.

Little is known with certainty about the history of Saint Helena in the first half of the 17th century. It is said that the Dutch took formal possession of the island in 1633.

In the State Archives in The Hague a document can be found, that appears to be a proclamation of annexation of Saint Helena. The claim seemed to be meant to pre-empt claims by either the Portuguese or the English. There is no evidence that the Dutch permanently occupied the island. Neither did they pursue their claim in any way afterwards. They probably left again after taking in fresh supplies for their ships.

3.1.2   East India Company

So the English East India Company did not feel bothered by (or did not even know about) the Dutch claim when they sent Captain John Dutton out to the island in 1659. His task was to settle there and fortify the island. Practically, the island was now in the hands of the English East India Company, which was to rule the island from then on until 1834.

Figure 3.1 Plaque on the Castle in Jamestown commemorating Dutton's arrival in 1659[i]
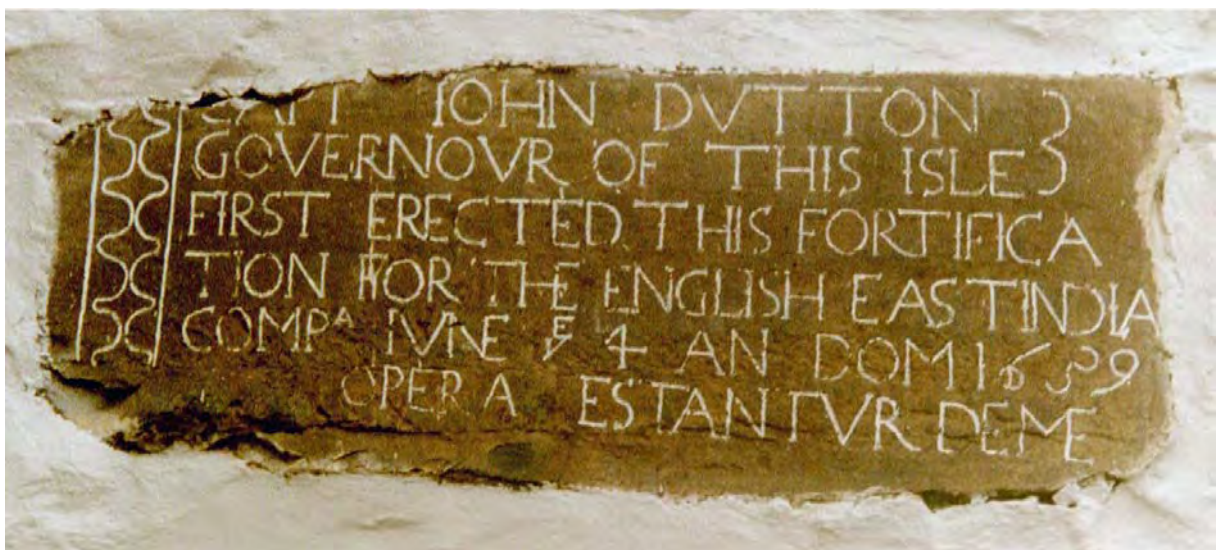
"The Company", as it was usually referred to, acted as a state of its own, having its own courts of appeal, and the Board of Directors as the highest authority. The decision to settle on Saint Helena was taken because of its potential importance on the trade route between England and India. A safe "half-way house" could very well be used for this long passage, especially in these times. The Dutch became more and more aggressive and it was impossible to land at the Cape. A plantation should be established, so that the ships calling could be supplied with fresh produce. Dutton, formally appointed Governor, and the 150 men accompanying him, set to work and started building a fort in "Chapel valley". The fortification was called James fort, in honour of the Duke of York, later King James II. The little town which was built in Chapel Valley became Jamestown, and the valley itself was renamed James Valley.

The East India Company was now formally the owner of Saint Helena. The English East India Company, like the Dutch VOC (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie), had exclusive trading rights for the routes to the East. The company was founded in the year 1600, after it had become apparent that "a voyage to the East was too great a feature for any individual"(Sutton 1981, p. 9). The example of the VOC was followed, and so a charter was issued, giving "the Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies" a monopoly of all trade from England to the East. Significantly for Saint Helena, "enacting clauses in the charter ensured that the company would be a restricted trading concern whose focus lay entirely on trade and profit, not conquest and colonization"(Lawson 1993, p. 20). So Saint Helena was not intended as a colony by the Company, but merely as a fortification on the way to India. The Company's great age of expansion was between 1660 and 1688, and the settlement on Saint Helena played an important role in this period.

Saint Helena was a port of call for all company ships on the homeward passage. In wartime the island was used as a place where ships would wait for each other's company, or for a convoy of war ships to bring them back to England.

At first it was hoped that the colony could reach self-sufficiency in agriculture, but soon it became apparent that due to a lack of natural resources this would not be the case. The Company's ships would carry supplies for Saint Helena at half freight, for which special provisions were made in the company's charters (Sutton 1981, p. 118).

The first settlers set about building a fort on the site of the present-day Castle in Jamestown, and at other strategic sites on the island fortifications were built as well. Small plantations were started, but although considerable quantities of fruit and vegetables were grown, settlers complained about a lack of food and clothing. There was a threat of mutiny, and a new, tough governor was sent out.

The first and only outside threat to Saint Helena came in December 1672, when England declared war on Holland. The Dutch decided to attack the island from the Cape and were able to capture it by landing in one of the less defended valleys, marching on to Ladder Hill and capturing the fort in Jamestown from there. The English were driven out and fled to Brazil, where they regrouped and were joined by more forces. In May 1673 they returned to the island and recaptured it. Thus ended the only period of non-British rule in the history of Saint Helena.

After this unhappy experience for the English special precautions were made when approaching the island, in order to make sure that it hadn't fallen into enemy hands before actually landing there. So even in 1758 the commander of a ship was given instructions to wave flags in a certain way, and only to approach the island further if the right reply was shown (Sutton, p. 118). More fortifications were built as well. The island became virtually impregnable, and no attempts were made to capture the island from the English ever again.

The status of the island was also settled in 1673 by a Royal Charter, issued by King Charles II. This document is still very relevant today, as it guarantees the islanders full British citizenship (see chapter 7). The Charter also included very detailed instructions on how the island should be run, which before was mainly left to the discretion of the governor. The Company learned from its mistakes and did not want their prized possession to fall into enemy hands again.

Trouble was not over yet, however, as in 1674 a mutiny broke out among the settlers. This was settled with the arrival of an English fleet and the governor was restored in his position. Subsequently the Castle was reinforced, and in Jamestown a regular street of houses was built: Main Street which is still there today. However, "the majority of the settlers, both men and women, kept plantations in the country, while the island's port, Jamestown, was only busy when there was shipping to be attended" (Schulenburg and Schulenburg, p. 7). Around the island forts were built, and colonists were encouraged to settle in more remote parts of the island, where they could serve as lookouts as well.

The system of government was very feudal, with the governor holding executive authority and reporting to the Company. The colonists holding land were required to maintain at least one person capable of bearing arms in the general defence, and every person was required to work on the public highways for one day in each year.

Slaves came to the island first in the latter half of the 17th century, although the numbers were restricted, as the governor became aware of the possibility of a rising. They were recruited at different points along the African coast, or came to the island by English ships. From 1676 a provision was made that every vessel calling at Saint Helena on the way to Madagascar had to leave one slave behind, "male or female, as the Governor chose"(p. 81). But the Saint Helenians also went looking for slaves themselves: in 1684 a voyage was made to Madagascar. A number of slaves was bought and brought to the island.

Unfortunately exact population numbers are scarce for this period. Some more information can be found in chapter 4.2.

A succession of governors came to the island, some good, some bad. As mutiny or a slave uprising continued to be a threat, a lot of the governors were very harsh and dealt out severe punishments to any law-breakers. Often the slaves were used as examples. A slave accused of trying to poison his master was sentenced to be burned to death. And "a proclamation was issued that all the blacks (except young children) were to be present at the execution and that every one of them should bring a piece of wood for the fire" (p. 93).

Some governors were just interested in holding power, others tried to develop the island. Governor Byfield (1727-1731) for example tried to stop the erosion by ordering fencing and the planting of new trees for every tree cut. He intended to destruct all the goats on the island, but allowed the owners 10 years in which to reduce their flock. By the end of this period Byfield had been replaced by the "evil" governor Pyke (1731-1738) and the scheme came to nothing.

In 1740 Captain Jenkins was appointed governor, and he made a thorough clean-up of the island's affairs. The fortifications were in such a bad shape that "when the guns were fired from the Castle, part of the walls fell down"(p. 178). He repaired these and built other forts around the island. Improvements were made to agriculture as well, for example the introduction of fencing.

Figure 3.2 An 18th century cannon overlooking Turks Cap Bay[i]

In the second half of the 18th century more and more ships started to call at Jamestown and the island steadily gained importance. The island was governed by the governor and a council appointed by the governor, usually consisting of two military and two senior civil servants. The security of the island was further increased by organising the whole of the male population into disciplined militia. A period of calm came to Saint Helena with governor Brooke, who stayed for 14 years (1787-1801). Agriculture prospered and the forts were well-kept.

New settlers, soldiers and slaves came all the time, adding to the mix of population which inhabited the island. But less pleasant things were also brought to the island. In 1807 the measles were brought to the island, killing 58 whites and 102 blacks within two months.

This was one of the reasons for the shortage of labourers the island experienced in the early 19th century. Therefore the then governor Beatson (1808-1813) ordered Chinese labourers to be brought in, the first consignment of which arrived in 1810. Soon the Chinese colony amounted to 650 persons, but afterwards it was reduced to some 400 (p. 246).

In the same period complaints were heard from travellers about the exorbitant prices the Saint Helenians charged for the few goods they had to sell. Much of the land was destroyed by the goats, who still wandered freely, eating "crops, shrubs, plantations of trees and vegetation of any description" (p. 258).

The island was busy trying to solve its agricultural problems when it suddenly got a wake-up-call on the 11th of October 1815. A ship arrived with "the astounding piece of news that the greatest man in the world was on his way and would reach Jamestown in a few days' time, to become a resident on the island"(p. 264).

3.1.3   Napoleon Bonaparte

If there is one thing which immediately springs to people's minds when talking about Saint Helena, it is the exile of Napoleon Bonaparte. A great amount of literature has been written on this period, meticulously recording even the smallest events in the former Emperor's life. An account of Napoleon's stay on the island can for example be found in Julia Blackburn's "The emperor's last island" (1991). Here we will only discuss this period briefly. Although the Napoleonic sites are still there as a (possible) tourist attraction, the Napoleonic era is not central to the current situation regarding spatial identity of the Saints.

The former Emperor had been exiled before to the island of Elba, but managed to escape before suffering his final defeat at Waterloo in 1815 against the Duke of Wellington. It was

decided then that he should be exiled once and for all to a place far away and impregnable, and Saint Helena seemed perfect for it.

So the greatest man of his time was sent to Saint Helena on the ship H.M.S. Northumberland, which was under the command of Admiral Cockburn. On the 15th of October 1815 he arrived, and the Saints had hardly had time to prepare for his arrival. A suitable spot for Napoleon's residence still had to be found, and the Governor and Admiral immediately set about to inspect various houses. Longwood House, in the higher interior part of the island, was selected, but repairs had to be made and the house had to be expanded before Napoleon and his fellow exiles could go and stay there. So the former Emperor first had to be housed somewhere else. On the 17th October he came ashore, at night, to avoid the crowds who were still there to gape at him anyway. He stayed for one night in the house of Mr. Porteous in Jamestown, and the next morning went up to inspect his intended place of residence. He decided not to go back to the town again, but instead stayed at the Briars, where Mr. And Mrs. Balcombe and their children lived. Napoleon was to occupy a small summer house in the garden for as long as the works at Longwood were still in progress. After two months he moved to Longwood, where he stayed until his death in 1821. Presently Longwood House is the residence of the French consul on the island, and among Saints it is known as "the Frenchman's house". Napoleon's remains were buried at a site selected by himself in Sane Valley. This site, along with the estates of Longwood and the Briars, is French property and a French consul is present on the island to watch over the sites. They are maintained with French money, charged on the account of "maintenance of overseas consular post".

In 1840 Napoleon's remains were removed from their grave, and brought back to France. On Saint Helena only an empty grave, locally referred to as "The Tomb", remains. The tomb bears no inscription as the English and French could not agree on what it should say. For tourists visiting the island, the tomb as well as Longwood House are usually included in their itinerary.

Figure 3.3 Sign to the tomb, and the tomb itself at Sane Valley[i]

Napoleon's stay changed the island completely. Before it was a port of call for every ship on the way to the Cape or further, but now visitors were discouraged. "No ship, other than a Company's or a man-of-war was allowed to anchor in the road nor to approach the island, unless in urgent need of fresh water" (p. 271). The population was doubled, because of all the troops that accompanied Napoleon. This caused a shortage of food and accommodation at first, but brought great prosperity afterwards. A new Governor, Sir Hudson Lowe, was sent out. The islands of Ascension and Tristan da Cunha were also settled to prevent any attempts

to free Bonaparte being staged from there. These islands are Saint Helena's dependencies today (see chapter 7.5).

After the death of Napoleon the troops left again, and suddenly the inhabitants were deprived of their main source of livelihood. The new governor, Walker (1823-1828), encouraged agriculture and education, but still living standards dropped. Governor Dallas (1828-1836) constructed the ladder and inclined plane between Jamestown and Ladder Hill. Another remarkable event during his time was the abolition of slavery. In 1832 the Company bought the freedom of the 614 remaining slaves on the island, for the sum of 28,062 pounds and 17 shillings (p. 300).

3.1.4 Crown dependency

In 1833 news reached Saint Helena that from 22nd April 1834 the island was no longer to be ruled by the Honourable East India Company, but transferred to His Majesty's Government. Radical changes took place at once: "The garrison was dispersed, some being pensioned and some taking office under the new Government, while most of the civil servants of the Company were summarily dismissed" (p. 301). A new governor was sent out, whose task was to reduce spending as fast and far as possible. This led to poverty and emigration of hundreds of persons to the Cape, which had been in English hands since 1806.

Figure 3.4 Plaque commemorating transfer to the Crown at the Castle, Jamestown

With the slave trade now abolished, another function was found for the island. The British government tried to prevent slave trading along the west African coast, and if a slave ship was captured, it was brought to Saint Helena. The liberated slaves were usually accommodated in the so-called "Liberated African Depot" in Rupert's Valley, and later on also at Lemon Valley. From there the slaves were usually forwarded to the British West Indies, where they were in demand as labourers, although some of them also remained on the island.

In 1840 a slave ship was brought to the island and was broken up. Its wood was used for housing. It took about 25 years, but then it became apparent that this ship had been infested with white ants. The white ants ate almost the whole of Jamestown: books, furniture, papers, clothes, but also beams in buildings.

By the mid-19th century Saint Helena received over 1,000 ships per year. The Anglican church recognised the importance of the place and St Helena became its own diocese in 1859 and Jamestown was designated a city (Schulenburg & Schulenburg p. 11). From then on however, the island went downhill. The Liberated African Depot at Rupert's was finally closed in 1874. Less ships travelled to the island: to India the Red Sea route was preferred, especially after the opening of the Suez canal in 1869. But: "The Canal was not entirely to blame, ships were becoming faster and there was consequently less need to revictual en route" (Simpson 1982, p. 67). The larger steamships could make the voyage from India to England without stopping.

The declining importance of the island can also be seen in the number of soldiers on Saint Helena. In Napoleon's time there were well over 1,000. In 1848 there were 394 soldiers; 0.3 % of the total British army, while by 1881 this number was reduced to 210; 0.1 % of the total British army (Porter 1991, pp. 119-120). In 1937 this was reduced to one captain and twelve privates of the Royal Marine (p. 348). By now there are no soldiers on the island.

The island was still useful as a prison however. In 1890 the Zulu chief Dinizulu, along with two uncles and several wives, was brought to the island. While on the island, he converted to Christianity and brought some prosperity: the Zulu exiles spent about 1,000 pounds annually. In 1897 he was released, but soon he was replaced by even more prisoners of war. The South African War (also known as Boer war) broke out in 1899, and in 1900 the first Boer prisoners were brought to the island. In 1902 the last batch arrived, making a total of six thousand, most of whom were kept in two big camps at Broad Bottom and Deadwood plain (p. 340). A number of prisoners died of various diseases while on the island and they were buried at a cemetery at Knollcombes. A few South African travellers visit this site even now, and it is looked after with South African money.

Figure 3.5 The Boer cemetery at Knollcombes[i]

The Boer prisoners contributed to the highest enumerated population Saint Helena ever had (almost 10,000 in 1901), and brought a certain degree of prosperity. Again, "the repatriation of the prisoners and their guards was followed by acute unemployment and distress" (p. 343).

In 1907 an industry was established on the island. An attempt was made to grow New Zealand flax, from which rope could be made. From its introduction this industry grew steadily to become the "staple industry of the island" (p. 346). In 1937, when historian Gosse

visited the island, the flax mills employed 220 persons. The island did not prosper, however, as the cost of living was very high. Because labour was concentrated on producing flax, agriculture was neglected and imports rose. The Union Castle line, the only regular shipping service to call at Saint Helena, charged exorbitant freight rates. Then customs duties were levied, and shopkeepers had to make a profit, making life hard for the ill-paid flax labourers.

Let us now step out of the chronological recount of affairs and consider historian Gosse for a moment. He wrote his book on Saint Helena in 1938, and concluded it with a review of the state of the island at that time and a number of thoughts about its future. "St Helena is the Cinderella, or shall we say the poor forgotten orphan of the British Empire. Once upon a time she was the pampered darling of the Honourable East India Company. Given just a little help, a little encouragement and a fair share of their own land to cultivate, and a voice in the government of their native island, the St. Helenians would be the happiest and most contented race in the world" (p. 373). He proposes three possibilities for future development: "It may be agriculture, or perhaps St. Helena is destined to become a health and holiday-resort, or, once again an important stepping stone between England and the East" (p. 373). Explaining this last possibility, he remarks that "the island may be an important place of call for aeroplanes… the new ships of the air will stop to take in petrol and oil, instead of water and beef" (p. 374). He might have been wrong on that, but he recognises the possibilities of tourism: "the country itself is exquisite. Steep hills, green valleys, winding roads and shady bridle paths to walk or ride along….. All that is needed are houses or hotels where visitors might stay. Given these and also a reasonable charge for the passage to and from St. Helena, and people who can be happy without what are styled "organized amusements" would flock there"(p. 374). On agriculture, he remarks on the high quality of coffee grown, but he also recognises the problem of high freight rates. "The salvation for St. Helena lies in growing for export small, select crops of special produce" (p. 375). Despite these remarks from Gosse, producing coffee for export was not started until the late 1990s. It is now the most exclusive coffee in the world.

Gosse might have seen other possibilities for development, but the island continued to rely on flax, and from the 1920s on, the export of labour. In 1921 Ascension Island was made a dependency of Saint Helena, and in 1922 the first labourers left Saint Helena to work there for the Eastern Telegraph Company. Since then the importance of work on Ascension Island has steadily increased, and since the collapse of the flax industry, remittances from overseas workers have been the mainstay of the Saint Helena economy.

But the flax industry went through a flourishing period first. Just after World War II the demand for rope was high, and prices rose. In fact 1951 was the one and only year in its entire history when, thanks to a flourishing flax industry, the island's exports (just) exceeded its imports. The flax covered over 3000 acres at its highest point. According to the display about flax in the Saint Helena museum: "three families owned the land and almost all the industry's profits went to them. The flax industry directly employed 300 to 400 people who worked 50 hours per week for low wages. Work in the fields and mill was hard, repetitive, noisy and dirty".

The flax industry did bring some prosperity to the island, but it did not provide for a stable economic base: the price fluctuation of the flax was too high. To bring some stability, it was agreed after the Second World War that the government would help. Winchester describes how this worked: "If the market price fell below a certain level, the millers would receive a subsidy. If it rose above the level, however, the government would charge export duty. The net result was that more duty was paid in than subsidy was paid out – so the government's "support" was carried out at no effective cost" (Winchester 1983, p. 144).

Figure 3.6 The former flax mill at Woody Ridge, (a) entrance[i], (b) the equipment still inside[i]
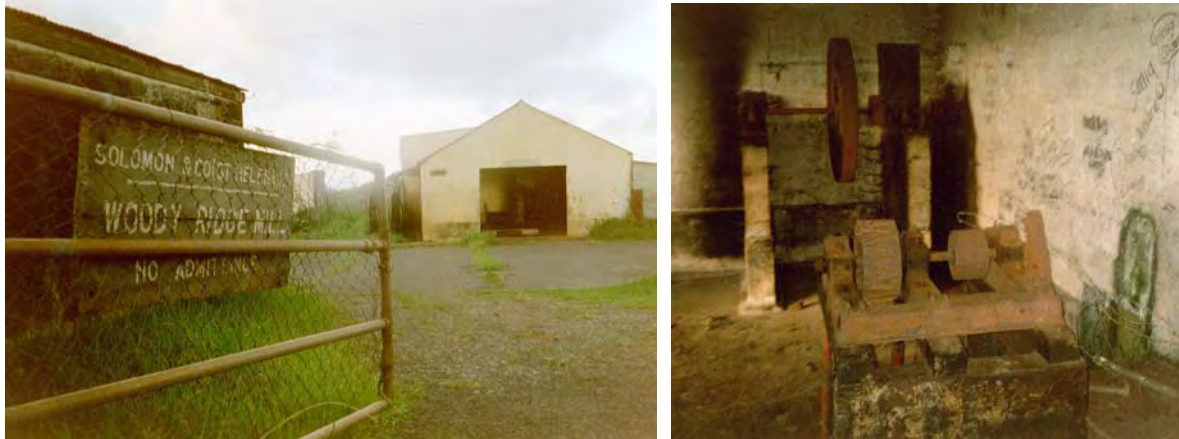
The prices of flax went further and further down in the early 1960s, and many mills were closed. The vulnerability of the island's economy was demonstrated in 1966, when a simple bureaucratic decision in Britain destroyed the flax industry. "Until then, St Helena had been the main supplier of flax to the British Post Office, which used the natural fibre for bundling piles of letters. Then one bureaucratic committee, which had probably never heard of St Helena, ordered that henceforth synthetic nylon twine would be used for the job. This coupled with the Government of that time imposing a minimum wage for flax workers, caused mills to lose money and close. Overnight, St Helena went from a modestly prosperous island to a place with a struggling economy"(Weaver 2002b, p. 12).

Since the collapse of the flax industry the island has been looking for other economic activities, but has failed to develop a sizable industry in anything. It was once again used as a prison, for three Bahraini princes who were sent to the island as political prisoners in the early 1960s. At the end of the 1970s the island was dealt two more blows.

First was the decision by the Union Castle Line, the sole provider of a regular shipping link to the island, to stop servicing Saint Helena. Its number of visits to the island on the way from the UK to Cape Town had steadily decreased for years, but now the service ceased altogether. This left the island in a situation with no regular access. This made the British government decide to buy a ship with the sole purpose of servicing Saint Helena. The first RMS Saint Helena started running a schedule between a UK port, Ascension Island and Cape Town in 1977, and was replaced by the second, purpose-built RMS in 1990. The RMS Saint Helena remains the island's sole link with the outside world even today. The ship visits the island approximately 30 times per year. Compared to the 1,000 or more ships that visited the island in the mid-19th century this means that Saint Helena is probably the only place in the world that has worse access than 150 years ago.

A second blow came to the island in 1980, with the introduction of the British Nationality Act. This decision (which will be discussed extensively in chapter 7) meant that the islanders lost the right of abode in Britain, thereby severely curtailing their possibilities for overseas employment. Up until May 2002, they could only go and work in the UK, or on the Falklands or Ascension Island, on contracts for a fixed period of time, usually two years.

Recent developments have changed this situation again. The development of the citizenship issue, leading to the restoration of British citizenship on 21 May 2002, will be discussed in chapter 7. The plans to dramatically improve access through the building of an airport will be the subject of chapter 8.

3.1.5   Conclusion

Saint Helena's most prosperous period was under the East India Company's rule, from 1659 to 1834. Before this time, the island was used and abused by anyone passing along, while for the Company it became a valuable asset. However, nobody ever thought of Saint Helena as a colony, it was merely a fortress, a maritime base on an important trading route. So when this strategic importance declined, the island became a forgotten and forlorn place.

The rise and decline of Saint Helena throughout the second half of its 500 years of its history can be illustrated by charting the number of ships' visits to the island (figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7 Total ship visits by year
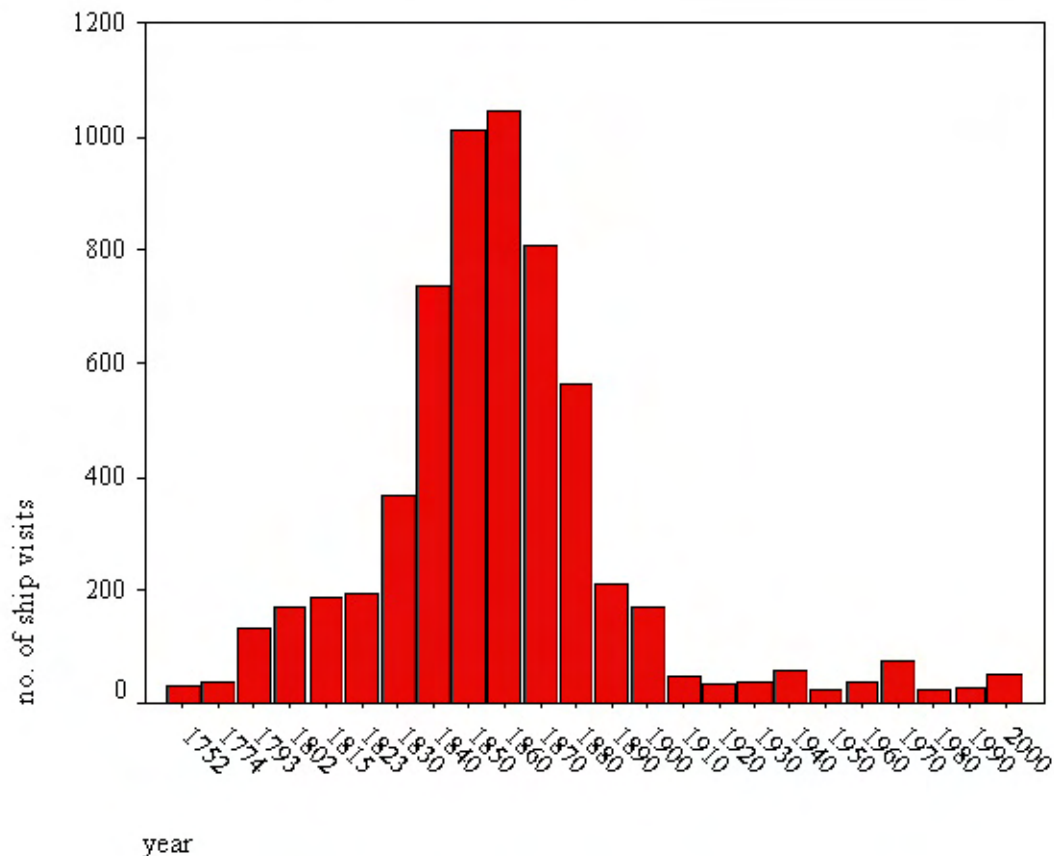
Saint Helena, in the present age, is harder to reach than 150, or even 200 years ago. After 500 years, the island still does not have a harbour. And it is one of the few places in the world that cannot be reached by plane.

Saint Helena has always been dependent upon the outside world for its existence. Since it has lost its relevance to the outside world, it has been mostly forgotten. However, the budgetary aid it requires is something Britain would love to get rid of. The government, throughout the history of the island, has been run on short-term thoughts. However: Saint Helena reaching financial independence, for the first time in its history, requires long-term planning and a greater sense of political responsibility on the government's behalf.

3.2   Saint Helena's current political position

Officially, the dependency of "Saint Helena and its dependencies" is one of Britain's Overseas Territories. Executive authority is in the hands of a British-appointed Governor, who has to consult a mostly-elected Legislative Council on some matters. As the island is

heavily aid-dependent, this is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. Britain will probably not leave control over the money it supplies to the islanders themselves. Besides, there is nobody on the island seeking independence. Saint Helena will probably remain one of the world's last colonies.

3.2.1   The last colonies

The age of colonialism came to an end from the 1960s on, and the classic form of colonialism has now almost disappeared from the face of the earth. A few colonies remain however. These territories are spread around the world, but mostly they are concentrated in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Most of the last colonies are small islands or island groups, although there are also mainland colonies (such as French Guyana and Gibraltar).

But what is a colony? There is some agreement that colonies are territories which are distant and politically linked to an independent state elsewhere. In order to make that definition more workable, Connell and Aldrich (1998) have worked these principles out as follows. The concept of "distant" is specified as "sufficiently distant from metropolitan states for there to be no obvious geographical basis for their attachment". The "politically linked" is specified in two ways: they must be constitutionally different from the mainland, and they must be politically dependent to the extent that they are ineligible for membership of the United Nations. This definition is still open to interpretation in some cases, but it is clear that Saint Helena fulfils these criteria and can be classified as a colony, along with a number of other territories around the globe.

There are 8 states in the world today that still maintain colonies; Britain has the greatest number, while France has the largest colonial population.

Australia possesses three populated territories: Norfolk Island in the Pacific, and Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean. It also possesses several uninhabited areas, including a rather large portion of Antarctica. *New Zealand* possesses the dependency of Tokelau in the Pacific, while they have treaties of free association with Niue and the Cook Islands. There are large populations from these territories living in New Zealand, more than in the territories themselves. *Denmark* is the colonial ruler over Greenland and the Faeroe Islands. Both these territories have been granted "Home Rule", and are highly independent in their decision-making, although foreign policy and military affairs are still a matter of the central Danish government. *The Netherlands* maintains the colonies of Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, both in the Caribbean. They are autonomous parts of the Netherlands, with their own administrations. The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore consists of three parts. Aruba was part of the Netherlands Antilles before it broke away in 1986 and got a status aparte. It was destined for independence in 1996, but the inhabitants got second thoughts and decided against it. *Portugal* administers Madeira and the Azores, while *Spain* holds the city enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, and the Canary Islands (whose colonial status is doubtful).

Then there is *France*. They possess the DOM-TOMs, Départements and Territoires d'Outre Mer. These are areas which are highly integrated into metropolitan France. They elect members of the French parliament and vote in presidential and other elections. The Départements d'Outre Mer (Guadeloupe, Guyane, Martinique and Réunion) have exactly the same rights as the départements in metropolitan France, while rights for the Territoires d'Outre Mer (French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna) are slightly different. They have a greater degree of administrative autonomy.

Besides, France also holds two territories which are administered as "territorial collectivities", and which have less self-government. These are the territories of Saint Pierre and Miquelon

(islands off the Canadian coast of Newfoundland, mainly involved in fishing) and Mayotte, an island which did not join the Comoros into independence. Citizens of all these territories are full French citizens, including the right of abode in metropolitan France.

The way the French treat their colonies has served as an example to people on Saint Helena, particularly the Citizenship Commission. They saw the constitutional relationship between Saint Pierre and Miquelon as an example for Saint Helena's relations with Britain. In their first report (Turner 1996, see chapter 7.2.1 for a full discussion) a whole chapter is dedicated to the case: "What lessons can Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon offer St Helena?" Lessons include the importance of full democracy and full national rights. Saint Pierre and Miquelon is represented in France and citizens have the right of abode. Concluding, the Commission writes: "Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon and St Helena may both be anachronisms, but what glorious triumphs they are of our two nations – to maintain such sophisticated and distinctive communities, cut off in the middle of the South Atlantic or overshadowed by the vastness of North America. Both islands are communities of which to be proud!" (Turner 1996, p. 71). In the next report the Commission takes back most of these statements, admitting that this "introduced foreign constitutional options that were distracting" (Turner 1997, p. 2). But the French consul on Saint Helena thinks the French system at least provides clarity. He told us in an interview: "The Reunion Island people; they have social benefits just like in France, so fine. Because it's French. There is no halfway French. You're French or you're not".

The *British* Overseas Territories are Britain's last colonies, the remnants of empire or "the last pink bits", as Harry Ritchie (1997) called them, referring to the colour the British empire usually had on maps of the world. They are Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos islands and Montserrat (in the Caribbean), the Falkland Islands, St Helena and its dependencies, and South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (in the South Atlantic Ocean), Pitcairn Islands (in the Pacific), Gibraltar, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Antarctic Territory; and finally the Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus.

These territories are very diverse, and each of them has its own opportunities, and problems. Some are inhabited, others not, some have predominately white settler populations, others mainly indigenous populations, some have a strong economy, others rely on budgetary aid from Britain. Together, all these territories have almost 200,000 inhabitants. Bermuda has the largest population (over 60,000), while Pitcairn has only around 50 inhabitants. An overview of the British Overseas territories is presented in table 3.1 below.

Some of these territories do not possess a "true" British identity. Bermuda is virtually independent, while most other Caribbean territories enjoy close relations with the United States. But representatives from the Overseas Territories meet each other annually and sometimes close relationships develop. The Saint Helena Herald (the local newspaper) regularly features articles on events and developments in other Overseas Territories.

Table 3.1 An overview of the British Overseas Territories

Territory	Date*	Status	Location	Area (km²)	Population (year***)
Anguilla	1650	Dependency	Caribbean	96	12,132 (2001)
Bermuda	1684	Dependency	North Atlantic	53	63,503 (2001)
British Antarctic Territory	1908	Dependency	Antarctica	1,710,000	No perm. Pop.
British Indian Ocean Territory	1800s	Dependency	Indian Ocean	60	No perm. Pop.

Territory	Date*	Status	Location	Area (km²)	Population (year***)
British Virgin Islands	1672	Dependency	Caribbean	153	20,812 (2001)
Cayman Islands	1670	Dependency	Caribbean	259	35,527 (2001)
Falkland Islands	1765	Crown colony	South Atlantic	12,173	2,895 (2001)
Gibraltar	1713	Crown colony	Europe	6	27,649 (2001)
Montserrat	1632	Crown colony	Caribbean	102	7,574 (2001)
St Helena	1834**	Dependency	South Atlantic	122	5,157 (1998)
Ascension	1815	Dep. Of St Helena		88	712 (1998)
Tristan da Cunha	1815	Dep. Of St Helena		98	300 (1993)
South Georgia and South Sandwich islands	1775	Dependency	South Atlantic	3,903	No perm. Pop.
Turks and Caicos islands	1766	Dependency	Caribbean	430	18,122 (2001)
Pitcairn Islands	1790	Dependency	Pacific	5	47(2001)

*date at which settlement or political sovereignty was established

**St Helena was settled in 1659, but became a colony only in 1834

***2001 figures are estimates from CIA World Fact Book

Sources: Connell and Aldrich 1997, pp. 14-15, St Helena Statistical Yearbook 2000, CIA World Fact Book

3.2.2   Colonial Saint Helena

Figure 3.8 Governor Hollamby in full uniformi

Saint Helena is not a typical colony, as there were no people there to be colonised. And until 1834 it was never regarded as a colony, merely a fortress far away in the sea. Since that time, features of colonialism have been impressed upon the island however. To quote the yellow book (the Citizenship Commission's first report) at some length on this issue:

"St Helena is unusual in that it is a community that still reveals some of the effects of colonialism, but where 'colonisers' and 'colonised' are both of the *same* nationality. It is this fact that has been overlooked by visiting sociologists. The most influential was Professor Robin Cohen who visited the Island in the 1970s. Seeing evidence of colonialism, he assumed Saint Helenians must be of a different nationality to the 'rulers' from mainland Britain" (p. 56).

Professor Cohen's research was clearly based in a thinking of dependency and colonialism. He published two papers on the island, both in 1983, although his actual visit to the island took place in 1975. The first paper is called "St. Helena: welfare colonialism in practice" and it appeared in the book 'African islands and enclaves', edited by himself. It describes the political culture of dependency and the top-down thinking on

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the government's behalf. The second paper appeared in a reader on small island economics and was titled "Education for dependence: aspirations, expectations and identity on the island of Saint Helena". Cohen further explored the causes for dependency thinking and linked it to two things. First the educational system, which educated for dependence, and second, an existence in colonialism, with expectations among island youth not rising too high. Cohen's underlying thinking must have been that eventually the people of Saint Helena would want to break away from this system. They should feel some sort of link to "independent Black Africa", as many ancestors came from there and there was a link through "the expansion of Portuguese mercantilism"(p. 12). Although his analysis of dependency thinking on the island is useful, Cohen underestimates the Britishness of the Saints.

That said, many political features of colonialism are still present on Saint Helena. The Governor holds executive authority, although he has to consult a mostly elected Legislative Council (the political system on Saint Helena will be extensively discussed in chapter 4) on a number of issues. His colonial status is symbolized in the traditional Governor's suit he wears at official occasions, including a hat with swan's feathers. The current Governor, David Hollamby, sees no problem in wearing it, as the people want to see him in it.

Most other top positions in government are also held by expatriates, usually coming from the UK on short-term contracts. At the time of our visit, the Governor, Chief Secretary, Financial Secretary, Attorney-General, Chief Auditor, Deputy Chief of Police, Government Economist and Social Work Manager were all expatriates. Localization of these jobs might reduce the dependency mentality among Saints. The Governor does not want to localize them all: "The two that I would not be keen on is first of all the financial secretary, I need that comfort that that side of the house is being carefully looked after, and the other one is the attorney-general, because I need independent legal advice.… But I think the other ones, as we train and improve our public service, most jobs can be taken over by Saint Helenians". Unlike other remaining colonies, Saint Helena does not have a chief islander, or chief minister. This is hard to achieve: partly due to the small size of the island, but mainly because of the aid dependency. Britain wants to have ultimate control of the money spent on Saint Helena through people they trust: expatriates. Breaking out of the cycle of dependency is therefore very difficult.

The resulting mentality has been named a slave mentality by islander Stedson George, who wrote an essay in the local newspaper: "Slavery was abolished 170 years ago, but the slave mentality is still prevalent. Almost half-a-century after the introduction of a Legislative Council, we still have not yet gained enough confidence in ourselves to elect an all-native council. There is a distinct lack of visionary leadership amongst the native population, and a cultural dependency exists. Today the island is as far from self-sufficiency as it ever was" (George 2002, p. 10).

Political self-determination could be regarded as a prerequisite for economic self-sufficiency. But it also works the other way round: Saint Helena will need to raise its own budget before it will be allowed to self-determine its political fate. Ultimately the island is therefore subject to the goodwill of the British government, in helping them towards economic self-sufficiency, and granting them political autonomy. This has caused a dependency thinking in which risks will be left with the British. Is there an economic way to break out of this cycle? And how to reach this from the island's current economic position?

3.3   Saint Helena's economic place in the wider world

A description of the economy of Saint Helena can be very brief, according to councillor Eric George: "There is no economy here, there is no economic base either". That might be

overstating the case, but the state of Saint Helena's economy is undoubtedly not a desirable one. Its main features are a high dependency upon offshore employment, and an unusually high proportion of the workforce in government service. Exports are virtually absent, while everything except for some basic foodstuff is imported. But this position of economic dependency upon the outside world has been Saint Helena's fate throughout its history.

3.3.1   Historical legacy

"It is important to remember that St Helena has never in its history had a sound economic base. It had a strategic importance that is now gone. It therefore needs, and will continue to need (…) economic support from the mainland government that created it in the first place" (Turner 1997, p. 98).

When discussing the economy of the island, one should keep in mind that historically the political rather than the economic significance of the island decided its fate. Its settlement was a result of its strategic location, and in the East India Company time the island was geared towards the provision of water and some fresh produce to passing ships. "St Helena was originally intended as a maritime base, rather than as a colony, and its economy was never geared towards self-sufficiency" (Schulenburg and Schulenburg p. 11). Throughout the Company period the island was dependent upon imports and had to be subsidised. After the transfer to the British crown, attempts were made to run the island more efficiently, but it still required a subsidy. In the latter part of the 19th century, after the decline in the number of ships visiting the island, real hardship was felt.

It is telling that the periods of greatest prosperity for the island are linked to political causes. During the East India Company's time "this small, rocky, rather insignificant island had strategic value out of all proportion to its size. [The East India Company] valued the island even though it demanded a constant subsidy for the defence to protect their investment" (Turner 1997, p. 31).

Another political factor causing "investment" in the island was the presence of prisoners. The period of greatest prosperity for the island was the time that Napoleon was exiled there. At the end of the 19th century, the presence of Dinizulu, and later on the Boer prisoners led to a significant injection of money into the island, if only through the money spent by the prisoners themselves and their guards.

The decline of its strategic importance and the fact that it was no longer used as a prison has resulted in Saint Helena being politically insignificant. Therefore the economic cost to keep the island "afloat" is felt harder at the side of the British government. As Simpson puts it in his review of the economic geography of the island: "External control over the internal affairs of St. Helena has been a key feature of the island ever since its discovery" (Simpson 1982, p. 67). External interest in the island has been declining since the middle of the 19th century and that has not helped in the building up of an indigenous economy.

Many attempts were made to move the island towards self-sufficiency, at least in financial terms, but most of them failed miserably. The flax industry had some sort of success: it gave the island an economic base from 1907 to 1966. It was a weak base however, which was recognised in a school book from the early 1960s: "the only large industry on the island is the flax industry. At first sight this might appear to be a reasonably good industry for the island, but it does have its disadvantages". After explaining the dangers of price fluctuation, the authors go on: "A more stable industry would be better, but perhaps best of all would be the establishment of two or three different industries on the island"(Hall & Jeffs, n.d., p. 11). Half-hearted or genuine attempts at the establishment of other industries failed miserably.

Figure 3.9 Flax still growing in the central part of the island[i]

Neither were the revenues from the flax industry reinvested in the island. With these revenues the amount of British aid could be reduced, which was what the governor of the time would be judged by at the Colonial Office. Winchester therefore concludes "No one disputes that the Colonial Office must take the responsibility for the lamentable decision to turn St. Helena into a one-crop island; but its sorry management of the finances of that crop contributed also to the economic disaster that followed" (Winchester 1983, p. 143).

"The bottom fell out of the St Helenian economy in 1966" (Weaver 2002b, p. 12), and no new 'bottom' has been found since. The fact that extensive areas on the island are still covered with flax, although it has not been in commercial use for more than 35 years, is telling. In 1989, an aerial survey found 335 hectares covered with flax, and 77 hectares of "cleared flax" (UNDP 1999, p. 59). The positive side of this is that the presence of the flax prevents soil erosion.

In 1981 a group of researchers from the London University College visited the island, and they made an overview of the economic geography of the island. In conclusion, they wrote: "The underlying themes of a poor agricultural sector unable to support the population resulting in the import of basic commodities, inadequate external communications and few local industries able to provide employment and support the economy indicate the reasons behind UK grants taking up a large proportion of the island's revenue"(Simpson 1982, p. 69). This comment is basically still valid, as access has not improved and financial aid has risen. Winchester also sketches a gloomy picture of the job opportunities for Saints: "There is no work for them, barring a few jobs in the vestigial fishing industry. Almost all capable males, aside from those who go to Ascension, or crew ships away at sea, are employed by the Government – digging holes and filing them in again, in effect" (Winchester 1985, p. 148).

Development on Saint Helena is linked to the amount of British aid available.

3.3.2   Aid recipient

Saint Helena thus relies heavily on aid from Britain. Many products need to be imported, while export is small and fraught with problems. Everything has to come and go on the RMS, except for fuel, which is brought in by chartered tanker once in a while.

Saint Helena's GNP per capita is unknown. This is due to a lack of data, but even if these data were known, the numbers would not say that much, as a lot of the money on the island is not locally earned. The latest figure is available for 1994/95, when the provisional figure was just over 2,000 pounds per capita.

The government's recurrent budget was about 11 million pounds in the year 2000. The revenue raised by the government amounted to about 6.8 million pounds; its main sources of revenue being customs duties and indirect taxes. The budget is balanced by direct budgetary aid from the UK. This amounted to 4.3 million pounds in the financial year 2000/2001.

The budgetary aid is not the only money coming from the UK to support the island. UK aid to Saint Helena falls into 4 categories:

1. budgetary aid
2. development aid
3. technical co-operation
4. shipping subsidy

The total of these 4 categories in the financial year 2000/01 amounted to just over 10 million pounds. This money is coming from the Department for International Development (DfID) at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Most of DfID's budget goes towards developing countries, which leads to strange situations when making budget decisions. As someone explained to us: "At DfID they decide: who shall we give money? Ethiopia, because the people are hungry, Sierra Leone, because the people are hungry, and then Saint Helena, because… ehmm…. they are British". A breakdown of UK aid by category can be found in table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 UK aid to Saint Helena in selected financial years* (thousands of pounds)

Financial year	Budgetary aid	Shipping subsidy	Development aid	Technical co-operation	Total
1980/81	1631	1300	396	536	3863
1985/86	3664	2064	2836	1467	10031
1990/91	3477	2760	1407	2008	9653
1995/96	4726	1245	694	1798	8463
1998/99	3244	1602	1545	2356	8747
1999/00	2388	3070	1082	2347	8887
2000/01	4301	1931	1621	2171	10024

*the financial year on Saint Helena is 1st April –31st March
Source: Statistical Yearbook 2000

The budgetary aid is paid in quarterly instalments to the Saint Helena Government (SHG). Development aid is subject to approval of specific development projects, and the money is looked after by the island's Chief Development Officer. At the end of the financial year SHG's Finance Department has to produce accounts, which are then checked by DfID.

The other two categories of UK aid never reach SHG. Technical cooperation finances expatriate contract officers, consultants and overseas training for Saint Helenians. The

shipping subsidy is negotiated with the responsible shipping company, and covers the loss on the sole shipping service serving St Helena.

Saint Helena, along with Montserrat, is the only British Overseas Territory still requiring budgetary aid. It is interesting to note that both Saint Helena's "dependencies" are actually independent in financial terms. Tristan da Cunha makes enough money with the sale of crayfish, while the recently introduced tax covers the costs of government and the provision of services on Ascension Island. Even the administrator's salary is locally raised.

The budgetary aid used to be subject to yearly negotiations. Chief Finance Officer Desmond Wade tells why this has changed: "For the third time now, we have moved from a single year of budgetary aid to a three-year aid package….. It's better, because you know for those three years what you've got. You don't have to each year put up a case and negotiate".

The latest national accounts date from 1994/95, but show a large trade deficit. For 1999/00 import and export data are available. These show imports worth almost 4.5 million pounds, while export only amounts to 109,000 pounds. This means imports are about 40 times the size of exports. Although exports have been somewhat higher in other years for which data are available, imports have always been at least 20 times its size. Throughout the 1980s and early 90s the UK accounted for about 60% of the imports, South Africa being the country of origin of the remainder (barring a very small percentage from Ascension and other countries). In the 1999/00 statistics this has changed: South Africa was the country of origin of 57.8% of the imports (by value), while the UK was down to 41.1 %. A rescheduling of the RMS, now making only 4 visits to the UK annually instead of the 6 it made before, is an important cause for this change.

There is nothing much that the SHG can do about inflation, as UK and South African inflation rates and the pound to rand exchange rate, as well as the freight rates on the RMS are the deciding factors in this case. Inflation is not high however.

Although far from it now, Saint Helena's ultimate goal is financial independence. The vision of the Saint Helena Strategic Review is "A prosperous, peaceful and democratic society for all achieved through sustainable economic, environmental and social development leading to a healthy and eventually a financially independent St Helena".

3.3.3   Contributions to the global economy

Tom Crowards, SHG's economist, puts it simply: "St Helena is not exactly the cutting edge of the global economy". But still the island contributes to the global economy in four ways: through the export of its people, the export products of fish and coffee and as a tourist destination.

In the present situation Saint Helena's main export product is formed by its people. The Saint Helena economy is heavily dependent upon the remittances sent to the island by Saints working overseas. Exact amounts are unavailable, but according to Chief Finance Officer Desmond Wade: "the last time we checked, a couple of years ago, it was something like 2 million pounds. That includes the Falklands as well, Falklands and Ascension". Sending remittances to Saint Helena is not easy due to the lack of a commercial bank on the island. From Ascension "that will be through our arrangements with the administrator. They just send us a message and we pay it to the people and then we collect the money from them afterwards".

Saint Helenians go to work mainly on Ascension Island, but also on the Falklands, in the UK or South Africa and very recently also in Germany. Numbers of overseas workers have steadily risen over the last couple of years, as is shown in figure 3.10 below. The difference in

pay is very substantial: often three times as much as on Saint Helena. Besides, overseas workers usually make long hours and other bonuses are thrown in. Frequently housing is subsidised and sometimes even a food allowance is paid out. Up until very recently on Ascension Island no tax needed to be paid. From April 1st, 2002 income tax has been introduced on Ascension Island. Besides, it is now possible to buy property on Ascension, whereas before you could only live there for as long as the duration of your contract. These changes are capable of making a significant impact on Saint Helena. The relation between Saint Helena and Ascension Island will be further explored in chapter 7.5.

Figure 3.10 St. Helenian contract workers overseas, by destination 1995-2000
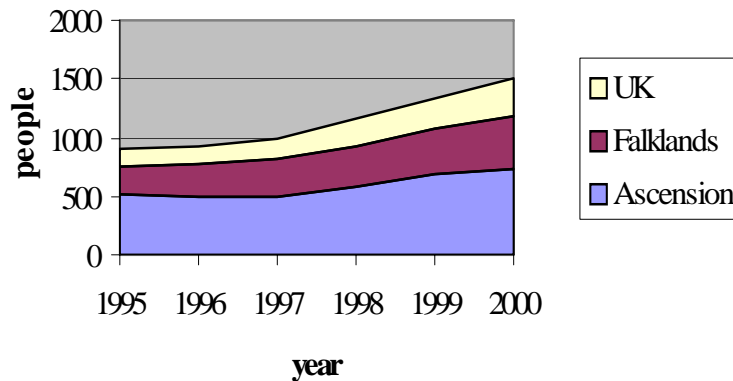
numbers are averages for 4th quarter of each year
Source: St Helena Statistical yearbook 2000

The number of Saints working overseas is rising and is likely to continue to rise, as opportunities have enlarged due to the restoration of British citizenship. The important questions are if and when these overseas workers will return to their island, and if they will continue sending money back home. In the current situation the island is heavily dependent upon remittances and could not do without.

Apart from its people, Saint Helena exports small quantities of coffee and fish. In both products Saint Helena has a niche quality to offer.

Coffee was brought to Saint Helena in 1733 and has grown there ever since. Only recently has it been turned into an export product, despite the fact that Saint Helenian coffee won a first prize at the London Exhibition as early as 1851 (Gosse 1990, p. 375). Two individuals have largely been responsible for the start of the export: Reginald Yon and David Henry. Yon sells his coffee mainly to tourists visiting the island, while Henry exports his to the UK, and sells it online as well.

Prices are high: £3.50 for a 125 gram packet in one of the Jamestown supermarkets, or $22 for a half pound ordered online. Quality is excellent however. Yon is currently fighting for organic status: "I've got these grown organically from day one, and never used no pest control or different sprays, so that is why I can say I am organically grown. But until I get the certificate, the proof…". Labour costs are high, and finding labour is very hard: "Not everybody wants to pick coffee, it's not an easy job, it's a hard job. I pay top wages, but still they don't want to work. Rather stay on social services". Possibilities for expansion are limited, but Yon still sees chances: "it is unique for the world. And that is why we got to keep that niche quality. If we can get the outside market with that niche quality, we can play a very important role for the island". Still, the number of people working in the coffee industry is very limited: Yon employs 1 or 2 people throughout the year, rising to a maximum of 8 in

pruning and picking season. Last year he produced almost a ton of coffee, a neglectable amount in world market terms. However, the economic impact for Saint Helena is quite significant. Not just for the income, but also for putting the island on the map.

Figure 3.11 Saint Helena coffee (a) on the tree and (b) on display for tourists[i]

In the last decade Saint Helena was found on the map by only one outside investor: Argos. This company realised a fish processing plant at Rupert's Bay in April 2000. Argos is a UK consortium of companies, which is involved in fishing in the South Atlantic. It has an office on the Falklands, and the activities on Saint Helena fall under the name Argos Atlantic Cold Storage Ltd. The plant at Rupert's employs 15 people and produces blast frozen fish which is exported on the RMS to Vigo in north-west Spain. From there it is marketed through another Argos company.

The 1 million pound investment in the plant has not yet paid off, as it is operating at a loss. Office manager Fiona Duncan is confident that the company can reach break-even in two years' time. The 500 tonnes freezer has not reached full capacity by far: last year saw about 84 tonnes brought in.

The opening of the Argos plant was supported by the Saint Helena Development Agency, and has meant the abolition of quota for the local fishermen. The 15 full-time fishing vessels that provide fish for the plant can now catch whatever they can. Fiona Duncan: "Before the company became operational, in the skipjack season, the first two or three days you could catch any amount you wanted to, but from then on, they would set quota so that you could only catch 500 kilos per day. Those quotas are gone now. If you are going to catch 3 tonnes on a day, we'll take it".

As in coffee, Saint Helena has a niche quality in tuna. The island's tuna was the first in the world to be organically certified. Marketing of this as an "island product" is not optimal however; labelling it as Saint Helenian seems to happen only out of necessity: "We need to have certificates to prove that it is from the European Union. So yes, there is a label on it saying it is from Saint Helena".

Figure 3.12 Fish processing in the ARGOS plant[i]

While there is certainly some potential for further development of the fishing industry on Saint Helena, the main hopes for the future are for tourism.

Many people consider St Helena to have a good potential for development of the tourist industry. The lack of beaches is considered to be a problem by some, but others argue it is beneficial that the tranquil St Helena will never become a crowded beach resort full of tourists the governor described as "beer lads". But what else does an island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean have to offer if it does not have beaches?

The Director of Tourism Pamela Young feels that the lack of beaches is not a problem, because St Helena will attract people who are interested in other things beside a beach:

"Lots of islands attract tourists with sand and sun, but not everybody wants a beach. I wouldn't. We will have tourists here who come here for the nature, heritage and walks, rather than hang on the beach and having parties in the evening".

In this quote she also points out a couple of attractions St Helena does have. Heritage is an obvious one. St Helena is most known as the island Napoleon has been imprisoned on in the last years of his life and Longwood House and Napoleon's Tomb are the places almost every visitor of the island surely visits. When a cruise ship is in many passengers go up to Longwood with a cab where they are offered a guided tour through the former residence of the emperor. It seems surprising that only very few French people visit Napoleon's tomb and residence, but according to the French Consul this is due to a lack of tourist infrastructure for non-English speaking tourists: "To promote [tourism] you have to put aside your linguistic nationality. You have to accept that other people speak other languages. But that is still not here, they didn't get that. If you go to the tourism office, not a single one speaks a foreign language."

Beside the two famous Napoleonic sites some more sites of historic interest can be found on the island. Many fortifications can be visited along the coast of the island, built mainly at the end of the 17th century to prevent another invasion like the Dutch one in 1673. Especially when walking along the cliffs from Jamestown to Sugar Loaf a couple of interesting, but badly maintained, fortifications can be found. Two forts can also be visited. Ladder Hill fort

can be found at the top of Jacob's Ladder, while the large High Knoll Fort towers over Half Tree Hollow. Around the island various cannons, or remains of cannons, are also present.

Figure 3.13 The ground floor of the Museum

Tourists could and can still visit the Museum to find out about the history of St Helena. The museum was significantly improved when it moved from its cramped location in 2 small rooms on the ground floor of Broadway House to a brand new building at the base of Jacob's Ladder. It was opened on the day of the island's quincentenary by Governor Hollamby and is managed by the St Helena Heritage Society.

Source: http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/tourism/museum.html

Another possible attraction for tourists on the island is its nature. The island has a number of endemic plants and trees as well as animals, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Walking on the island is a possible activity for tourists. The island has lush vegetation in large parts of its interior, while walks can be undertaken to various cliffs and valleys as well. Large rocky and eroded areas with landmarks like Lot and Lot's Wife are also sights worth visiting. One recent initiative is the putting together of a booklet detailing twenty walks around the island. At the end of each of these walks stands a so-called post box, in which a unique stamp is placed. In a special booklet that can be obtained at the tourist office you can collect these stamps. Once you have a number of walks completed (10, 15 or all 20), a prize can be collected at the tourist office. This idea was initiated by the Saint Helena Nature Conservation Group (SNCG) to promote walking around the island, but also environmental awareness among the locals.

Other activities for tourists like Scuba diving or dolphin watching are also relatively popular with those tourists staying for a longer period. They can be organised by the tourist office.

Figure 3.14 The Postbox at Great Stone Top[i]

Another attraction of the island many visitors from cruise ships remark upon is the friendliness of the St Helenian people and the relaxed pace of life on the island. Visitors are often surprised by the fact that people always greet each other when meeting in the street and there is often time for some small talk as well.

One of the reasons why people go on a holiday can be to 'get away from it all'. For these people an island can be particularly interesting to visit, because it is isolated from the rest of the world and distinctively different. Baum (in Royle 2001) states that the attraction of islands therefore is the 'fact of difference'. Due to its extreme isolation St Helena is indeed very different compared to other possible holiday destinations and this might very well be one of the greatest attractions for those tourists visiting the island. As a resident, Michel Martineau feels the attraction of the island is its

remoteness: "the reason why I love this place is actually for its remoteness, which gives it a charm you cannot find anywhere else. If an airport comes this will depart, and this place will just be another place…there is no more mystery. Why Saint Helena plays on the imagination of people is mainly because of its inaccessibility".

It is argued by some that reducing the isolation of the island will take away its only real attraction, which would make the creation of an airport in order to stimulate the tourist industry useless. This will be further discussed in chapter 8.

According to Director of Tourism Pamela Young there is a potential for 'a very select tourism', meaning that the island can attract people who are interested either in ecology, walking or history and who like to get away from their busy life for a while in the quietness of St Helena. But if there is a potential tourism market: why do so little tourists visit the island?

The amount of people visiting the island is actually quite respectable. A fairly large amount of cruise ships and yachts visit the island each year from November to April. The yachties visit for only a couple of days at the most, taking a rest and getting new supplies, often with a quick visit to the Tomb and Longwood House thrown in. Especially since the 11th of September cruise ships bring a lot of people to the island. Although this does of course stimulate the tourist industry, the effects are limited as the ships stay for only a few hours. This leaves little time for the passengers to see much of the island, or spend much money. Cruise passengers spend an average of only 20 pounds per person according to Pamela Young. For these reasons yachties as well as cruise ship passengers are not officially counted as tourists.

The reason for the small number of tourists staying for one or more nights on the island is that it is both very difficult and very expensive to reach the island, as governor Hollamby explains: "The ship can carry 128 passengers maximum, it's never full, half of those people are Saints travelling back and forth and the other half are tourists. 1600 tourists a year is not sustainable tourism". The amount of places available for tourists thus strongly limits the possibilities for tourism. An extra constraint are the high prices tourists have to pay to travel on board the R.M.S. as well as the large amount of time it takes to travel to and from the island.

A further restraint is the lack of infrastructure on the island. There is only one hotel, with x beds, and two or three guesthouses with small capacities. This leaves total capacity for short-visit tourists at under 100. For longer stays it is possible to rent self-catering accommodation through the tourist office. The accessibility of the island and the implications for tourism will be extensively discussed in chapter 8.

3.3.4   MIRAB

The economic position of Saint Helena in the wider world can be summarised in the words of Royle (2001): it is "An Atlantic MIRAB".

The so-called MIRAB economies came into existence over the last 30 to 40 years, from colonial export economies in the Post World War II period. It is often used to explain the evolution and operation of some tiny Pacific island economies and was first introduced by Bertram and Watters (1985, quoted in Treadgold 1999). It can also offer an insight in the economies of some continental states or, as has been shown by Royle (2001), in the case of St Helena.

A MIRAB economy is heavily reliant on four major components, of which the name MIRAB is derived: MIgration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy.

- MIgration

In a MIRAB economy a large part of the workforce is working outside the own economy in another country or area. This is often triggered by the fact that wages in the other economies are significantly higher than in the own economy (Treadgold 1999). In the case of St Helena this seems to be clearly the case. In 1999 there were about 600 people working on Ascension island, about 400 on the Falkland islands, 300 in the UK and another 90 Saints were working on the RMS St Helena. This accounts to about 40% of the total workforce. The MI of MIRAB thus seems to apply to St Helena.

- Remittances

The second component of MIRAB is bound up intimately with migration. Remittances are payments sent by migrants working overseas to people (commonly relatives) back home. These remittances can be used to finance local development, for local constructions and for educational and other expenses (McCall 1997).

On St Helena remittances contribute between 2 and 3 million pounds a year to the local economy, a significant amount of money in an economy as small as that of the island, which means we can also apply the R to St Helena.

- Aid

The third component of the MIRAB model is Aid, officially called ODA, or "Official Development Assistance", and the consequent creation of a system which has to be supplied from abroad. St. Helena has a large annual budget deficit and therefore receives budgetary aid from the British government (see table 3.2). Beside the budgetary aid the island receives technical co-operation funds, development aid and a subsidy for the RMS St Helena. In total about 30 per cent of the annual recurrent budget is funded by the UK, as is almost all capital investment (Royle 2001).

McCall (1997) notices that it is often ignored that much of the aid received by countries with a MIRAB economy is used to purchase products and services from that same donor, in this way providing an indirect subsidy to the donor's economy. This also seems to be the case in the situation of St Helena, with the bulk of imports coming from Britain and technical cooperation being provided by Britain. The shipping subsidy flows back to an English company (Andrew Weir) as well, although there are rumours that this company will be bought by the German shipping line Hamburg Sud. In any case it seems clear that the A from MIRAB is applicable to the economy of the island.

- Bureaucracy

The fourth component of the MIRAB model is Bureaucracy. The government sector is both the largest sector and the largest employer of labour in a MIRAB economy. The government sector becomes so large in order to "administer the complexities of aid" (McCall 1997). This large government sector does little to boost productive investment and stifles local entrepreneurial spirit because many people will make a living in the government sector.

The lack of entrepreneurialism under young people has long been a problem on St Helena, researched already in 1975 by Cohen and more recently by Royle in 1990. The surveys carried out among schoolchildren showed that almost all expected to have to work for the government. Government employs about 84 per cent of the total workforce, either directly or through the largely government owned company Solomon's (see chapter 4.4.2). According to Aldrich and Connell (1998, p. 91) this is quite usual for small dependent islands. In this way an employment pattern is created that "creates or maintains jobs and activities that have value in sustaining households rather than contributing to economic development".

This shows that the B from MIRAB also applies to St Helena. St Helena therefore seems to possess a classic case of a MIRAB economy and can rightly be called "An Atlantic MIRAB" (Royle 2001).

Examples from other MIRAB economies will be used when discussing the economic future of Saint Helena in the next part of this thesis.

3.4   Conclusion

Saint Helena's development throughout its 500 years of history has been decided by its political and strategic importance to the outside world. The island has never been able to reach economic self-sufficiency and has always relied on outside powers for support. It had a strategic importance for the East India Company and in the period of its rule investments in the island were considerable. In contrast, the British government always sought to minimise the expenses needed to run the island. From its transfer to the crown in 1834, Saint Helena has been governed on a short-term vision.

When St Helena was taken into use by the East India Company it became a fortress and was not meant to be self sufficient. The transfer to the British government has often been regarded as 'a fall to second class status' as support declined. From 1834 on St Helena was considered a colony and therefore had its goal set to reach self-sufficiency. When the Suez Canal was opened and ships became steam powered the strategic importance of the island declined and the island became a forgotten place. Saint Helena, in the present age, is harder to reach than 150, or even 200 years ago. After 500 years, the island still does not have a harbour and is one of the few places in the world that cannot be reached by plane.

Features of colonialism have been pressed upon the island from 1834 and many of these features are still present. The Governor holds executive authority, although he has to consult a mostly elected Legislative Council. Most other top positions in government are also held by expatriates, usually coming from the UK on short-term contracts. Unlike other remaining colonies, Saint Helena does not have a chief islander, or chief minister. This is hard to achieve: partly due to the small size of the island, but mainly because of the aid dependency. Britain wants to have ultimate control of the money spent on Saint Helena through people they trust: expatriates. Breaking out of the cycle of dependency is therefore very difficult.

Political self-determination could be regarded as a prerequisite for economic self-sufficiency, but it is highly unlikely that Britain will grant this before a higher degree of economic independence is reached. It will be hard to find a way out of this cycle.

Economic self-sufficiency is still far away. In the financial year 2000/2001 the aid coming from Britain through DfID amounted to just over 10 million pounds. Saint Helena's role in the global economy is very small, with exports being limited to relatively small amounts of coffee and fish and imports about 40 times the size of exports.

While hopes for the economic future are mainly on tourism the biggest export product at the moment seems to be the people of St Helena. The economy is heavily dependent upon the remittances sent to the island by Saints working overseas, amounting to around 2 million pounds a year. As a result of the restoration of citizenship the amount of Saint working abroad will probably rise even more, although remittances might not rise likewise.

The government sector is both the largest sector and the largest employer of labour on the island, employing about 84 per cent of the total workforce, either directly or through the largely government owned company Solomon's. This large government sector does little to boost productive investment and stifles local entrepreneurial spirit because many people expect to make a living in the government sector anyway.

As the economy of St Helena is characterised by migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy it seems clear that it possesses a typical MIRAB economy and can rightly be called "An Atlantic MIRAB".

St Helena is still heavily dependent on the outside world for its existence. Britain would love to see St Helena become self-sufficient, but this is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future. To reach financial independence long-term planning and a greater sense of political responsibility on the government's behalf are required. But political responsibility alone will not revive the island's moribund economy. Better physical access to the outside world is a prerequisite for any solution to St Helena's problems.

Chapter 4 Saint Helena Island

In this chapter we will take a closer look at Saint Helena Island. Although Saint Helena is an isolated island, it is impossible to look at it in isolation. As even man is an introduced species on Saint Helena, it is mainly outside influences that shaped the island's surface to its present form. But in this chapter we will look at the indigenous development that has come about and the island's own politics. We will consider the island's resources and its social structure. And importantly, we will look at the island's population: how has it developed, who are the people of Saint Helena? But first we will take a closer look at the solid rock that Saint Helena is, by considering the island's landscape.

4.1 Landscape

In this section we will consider the landscape of St Helena. Geology, physical geography, climate and flora and fauna of course have all been and still are important for the shaping of this landscape. Beside these topics we will also discuss the human influence on the Saint Helenian landscape and the way this landscape is being used as a resource.

4.1.1 Geology

Saint Helena is a product of the Mid-Atlantic ridge and owes its origin to the outpouring of igneous material from between the diverging African and Latin American plates. St. Helena is an isolated, broadly conical volcanic edifice that rises more than 3,000 metres above the ocean floor. The island itself is just the top of the volcano and only a small amount of it is exposed above water. The base of the volcanic pile measures some 130 km in diameter and the volume of the cone is estimated to be twenty times that of the largest European volcano, Mount Etna.

St. Helena is actually the result of two volcanic eruptions. The northeast part of the island is the oldest; it was near Flagstaff Hill and Knotty Ridge that the first volcano erupted about 15 million years ago. A second series of eruptions, following a more complicated pattern, occurred to the southwest around Sandy Bay between 10 and 7 million years ago and partially covered the old volcano (Turner & Hopkins 1994) (see figure 4.1).

St. Helena thus has a volcanic origin, but unlike for Tristan da Cunha and Ascension volcanic activity will never be a threat to the island. Long ago tectonic movement carried the island along and it is now some way from the ridge on the African side (Royle 2001, p. 210).

In geological terms St. Helena is a very young island; it is believed that it broke the surface of the waters about 15-20 million years ago and that volcanism ceased only 7 million years ago.

The lavas of the island are indisputably of mantle origin; they tend to contain no quartz, unusually high concentrations of sodium and potassium, and have characteristic patterns of radioactive and trace element abundance. The chemistry of these lavas suggests that they are the result of selective partial melting of the most easily mobilised components of the original mantle (Steiner 2002, p. 7).

St. Helena has a great range of structural complexities, such that geologists are frequently at variance in determining the exact cause of a particular formation.

The island's geology provides little in the way of mineral resources for its inhabitants. There are fairly widespread occurrences of manganese and phosphate deposits, but there is insufficient tonnage for commercial extraction (Nicholson 1982, p. 15).

Figure 4.1 Geological map of St Helena
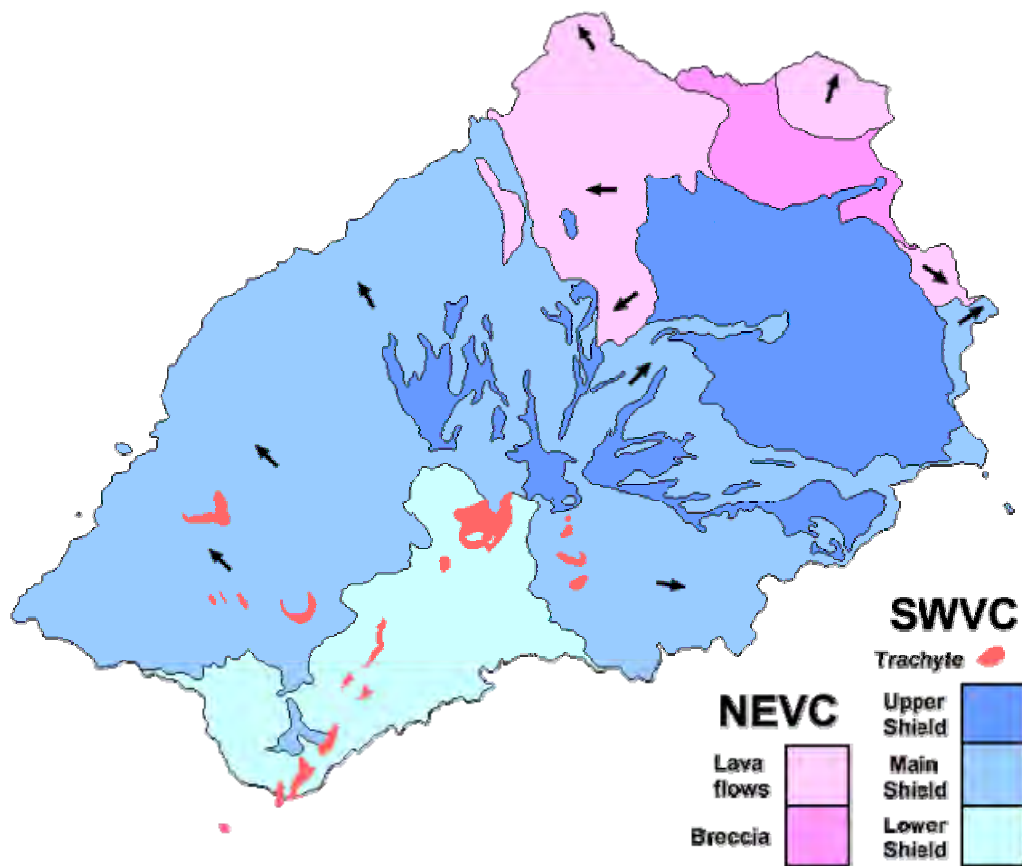
Notes: NEVC = NorthEastern Volcanic Centre
       SWVC = Southwestern Volcanic Centre
       Arrows show local direction of dip of lava flows
Source: Baker 1968, in Weaver 2002a

4.1.2 Physical Geography

St. Helena is a mountainous subtropical island, located at 15 degrees 55' South, 5 degrees 44' West. The island is relatively small at 122 km^2. The highest point of the island is Diana's Peak at 820 metres. The nearest land is Ascension Island, located 1200 km to the northwest. The nearest mainland is the west coast of Angola, about 1950 km away. At 2900 km lies the east coast of Brazil. The territorial waters measure almost 22 km (12 nautical miles) and the exclusive fishing zone is 360 km (200 nautical miles).

As a result of the island's geology, its landscape is rugged, with steep and forbidding looking coastal margins. The present balance between the upward thrust of volcanic activity and the downward thrust of erosion has created what is being called "an isolated natural fortress". There is relatively great diversity between the different soils, despite their mostly uniform origin. The basic rock is essentially basalt, but the end products vary from black mould to a pale brown, from deep acid soils at the tops to thin alkalines near the shore. Nearly all are highly weatherable, some are overloaded with sodium salts and few are well structured (Turner & Hopkins 1994, p. 53). Much of the soil is on very steep slope and therefore constantly subject to erosion. Since the volcanic activity ceased, erosion has been a dominant force on the island. The forbidding looking cliffs are a direct result of the cutting away of lava and ash by marine erosion, while rain - and to some extent wind - have mainly shaped the inland areas. This erosion has caused the surface gullies and major gullies that are such a striking feature of St. Helena's inland. The advent of man has led to vastly accelerated rates of

erosion. The removal of the natural vegetation by overgrazing and exploitation has led - in many parts of the Crown Wastes - to the previously existing human clay topsoil being washed away, leaving surfaces that are difficult for plants to colonise (Ashmole & Ashmole 2000, p. 54-55).

Figure 4.2: Erosion after a day of heavy rainfall[i]

There are few flat areas of land to be found on the island. The relief flattens out mainly at a height of around 400 m. In this area there is mostly sufficient precipitation and depth of soil to allow for cultivation, and the cultivable area of St. Helena corresponds closely with that area enclosed by the 400 m contour (Royle 2001, p. 211) (see also the map of St Helena in appendix A). The soils are extremely variable from place to place, both in their chemical composition and their physical structure. However, they are in general heavy clays with poor structure, and a tendency to change rapidly from a sticky, unworkable state when wet to a hard and intractable state when dry; in most areas they are acid. There are serious salinity problems in the dry eastern parts of the island and in Sandy Bay (Ashmole & Ashmole 2000, p55).

4.1.3   Climate

St. Helena is on the west of the cold Benguela Current and lies at the heart of the South East Trade Wind belt. The resulting south easterly winds prevail over the island throughout the year and account for 71 percent of the mean annual wind direction (Nicholson 1982, p. 47). Mean temperatures reach a maximum between February and April, when they lie between 20 and 25 degrees Celsius. In the coolest months mean temperatures are reduced to around 17 degrees Celsius. This relatively small variation of mean temperatures throughout the year is caused by the prevailing frontal activity as a result of the South East Trade Winds.

Humidity varies around 65-75 percent throughout the year, with an average of 63-65 percent in January and February and a 75-76 percent average in August and September. March is usually the wettest month of the year, averaging 20 mm on the coast and 100-120 mm on the central peaks. June and July also have significant rainfall. Rain falls throughout the year for up to 200 days on the mountains, where it averages 800-1000 mm a year. The coastal areas however receive only 100-120 mm a year falling on about 40 days. January, February and May are the sunniest months, while October is the cloudiest month.

Weather conditions vary quite significantly within very short distances on the Island. The south eastern half of the island is cloudy and relatively damp, the north western half is relatively dry and with less cloud. Frequent low cloud or mist is a characteristic of the higher interior of the island (High Point Rendel 2001, p. 3-16). The annual average temperature also varies considerably from 22 degrees Celsius at Jamestown to 16 degrees Celsius at Hutt's Gate near Longwood.

Figure 4.3: Clouds overhanging Thompons's Valley[i]

4.1.4 Flora

Much of the island's surface nowadays consists of barren land, as figure 4.4b clearly shows. This was not the case at the time of the discovery of the island by men, now more than 500 years ago. Most of the written records of the early history of St. Helena remark on the "luxuriance of the vegetation and the abundance of fruit trees" (Cross 1980). Most of the native forests have been well cleared in the early 18th century, before naturalists started to take an interest in the island, so there are no scientific accounts of the flora as it was originally.

Human influence was baleful from the outset (Royle 2001, p. 212). When the Portuguese discovered the island in 1502 they decided to stack it with goats. The crews of passing ships could hunt these goats in later years in order to replenish food supplies for their ships. The goats however multiplied rapidly and soon large amounts of feral goats lived on the island, irreparably affecting the island's flora. At one time there were thousands of goats, and they were not controlled until the 1980s. They are one of the major causes of the great areas of barren land on the island.

When the East India Company annexed the island in 1659 the disappearance of the original forests was accelerated because trees were felled for fuel or tan bark, or cleared for pasture. This even resulted in a timber shortage by 1700, which was to be resolved only 50 years later by the introduction of the pine trees which can still be found on the island.

Figure 4.4: Land use on St Helena in (a) 1875 (b) 1989
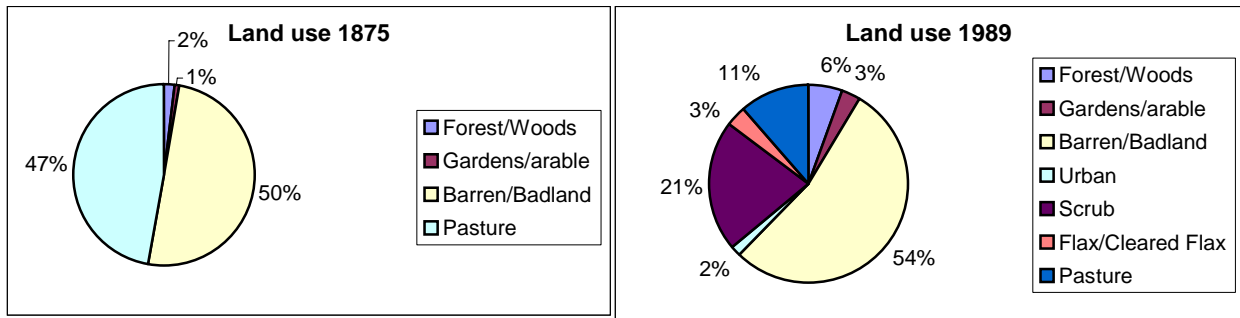
Source: Statistical Yearbook 2000

Figure 4.5 An endemic plant, St Helena rosemary, growing on top of Lot[i]

In the last 500 years a great variety of plants has been introduced to the island. As a result some 270 species are now firmly naturalised on the island. They have not only created new vegetation types on the lands previously cleared of the native forest, but they also seriously compete with what little remains of the native flora and further threaten its survival (Steiner 2001, p. 9). The remaining endemic flora has sometimes been reduced to only a few specimens per sort and in spite of a now active preservation policy and program the survival of many endemic plants will be at stake for many more years to come. At the moment 49 endemic species occur on St Helena (Steiner 2001, p. 8).

4.1.5 Fauna

It is said that the first Portuguese sailors who explored the island found an abundance of seabirds, sea lions, seals and turtles. Today the fauna of the island mainly comprises of introduced species. The Wirebird is the only bird indigenous to St Helena and only about 300 can be found on the island at the moment, "looking rather ungainly on what appear to be over long, spindly, red legs" (Royle 2001, p. 211) (figure 4.7). The Wirebird is the symbol of St Helena, adorning the gates at the entrance of Jamestown. All the other birds have been introduced to the island, of which the most eye-catching one is probably the white Mynah bird (figure 4.6).

The island does have a great number of endemic invertebrates though. The most famous one is the giant earwig, with 8 cm probably the biggest earwig in the world (Steiner 2001, p. 15).

It has not been seen since a group of Belgian biologists killed and took more than a hundred specimens to Belgium for research more than 30 years ago.

There is also a rich marine life around the island, tuna can be found in abundance and dolphins can be seen regularly. Two endemic fish species can be found in the waters of St Helena, the deepwater scorpion fish and the silver eel (Steiner 2001, p. 15-16).

Figure 4.6: The Mynah bird[i]   *Figure 4.7: The Wirebird*

Source: UK Overseas Conservation Forum (2002)

We have now taken a look at the landscape of the island; how it was created, its history and its current state. As soon as the island was discovered, humans made their imprint on the Saint Helenian landscape. The island was looked upon as a resource, which could be exploited for the use of man: its forests, its animals and its plants. The landscape of Saint Helena was fundamentally altered by this human influence. In the next section the island's landscape as a resource will be discussed.

4.1.6 Land(scape) as resource

The English explorer Thomas Cavendish visited the island in 1588 and commented on its beauty and its resources. After describing the Portuguese-built chapel and buildings, he remarks on Chapel Valley (journal quoted in Gosse 1990, pp. 16-18): "This valley is the fairest and largest low plot in all the island, and it is marvellously sweet and pleasant, and planted in every place with fruit trees or with herbs". The interior of the island is hard to explore because of the trees and "by reason of the height and steepness of the hills". Still, it is worth going up for the animals that can be hunted there: partridges, pheasants, "thousands of goats" and many swine.

The Dutchman Van Linschoten, who visited the island as pilot of the Portuguese East India fleet in 1589, offers another early description of the island. He describes Saint Helena as "a very high and hilly country, so that it commonly reacheth into the clouds", and continues to comment on its importance:

"It is an earthly Paradise for the Portuguese ships, and seemeth to have been miraculously discovered for the refreshing and service of the same, considering the smallness and highness of the land, lying in the middle of the Ocean seas .... For if this island were not, it were impossible for the ships to make any good or prosperous voyage".

In the 17th century the exploitation of the island started in earnest. At the end of the century the first complaints were heard about erosion, and regulations were introduced to restrict the felling of trees. However, the trees continued to be used for firewood and erosion got worse, in some places leaving "only a barren, rock-covered surface" (Gosse 1990, p. 83).

Goats ate much of the vegetation and different governors came up with plans to eradicate the goats once and for all. By the time the goat population was under control, the island was stripped of most of its forests. In the early 20th century large areas of flax were planted, but after the collapse of the flax industry some areas were cleared again.

Some flax remains, and forest is still scarce: it is mainly limited to Diana's Peak National Park. A large part of the land is dry and covered with cactuses. Only a small part of the land is arable, and self-sufficiency in agriculture has never been reached.

The natural resources the island offers are thus limited. It lacks "traditional" natural resources, such as coal and oil. But its landscape can be regarded as a resource for tourism. Besides that, the land is used for agricultural purposes. The sea surrounding the island is also a resource: different fishing activities provide the island with a source of income.

Visitors to Saint Helena often wonder why the island is not even near self-sufficiency for agricultural products. Is it that hard to grow some potatoes, or milk some cows? In the East India Company time the island provided ships with fresh produce, after all. Now even basic foodstuffs such as milk, fruit and potatoes are imported, usually from South Africa.

The reasons for this current situation are complex. A multitude of natural and human factors have led to the limited agricultural production. These reasons are related to the geographical conditions, the water supply and the prevalence of diseases.

First of all the area on which agriculture can be performed is very limited. Only 1,760 hectares (14.5 % of the total) fell into one of the three categories arable, gardens or pasture at the time of the aerial survey in 1989 (UNDP 1999, p. 59). Much of the land is useless because of climatic conditions (rainfall varies heavily around the island), inaccessibility or the high gradient of the slope. The only really flat piece of the island, Francis Plain, is in use as the island's sporting venue: it has a cricket and football pitch. Another relatively flat piece of land, Deadwood Plain, is so wind-swept that farming is very difficult. Instead some cattle is kept there.

The lack of a reliable water supply is also a problem for agricultural development. "The lack of irrigated land and security of water supplies is seen as the biggest constraint to agricultural development by farmers and many requests have been made for additional irrigation facilities.

It is highly unlikely that present agricultural methods could be sustained if farmers and small holders had to pay the true economic price for water" (UNDP 1999, p. 57).

The third "natural" problem is the prevalence of diseases. David Wyn-Rickets, managing director of Solomon's and Company, comments on these problems: "I found it is very easy for people like myself to say why can't we do this why can't we do that. Reality is something different. There is a high proportion of diseases, bugs, here; the like of which you don't get anywhere else. You don't have the natural enemies of some of these bugs. You've got to work exceptionally hard to achieve the growth of products and I have to admit we've looked at this now for over two years. We recognise there are certain things you can do and certain things you can't do. And I must say I have the utmost respect for the private farmers on Saint Helena, because I know from what we've done that it is very hard work to stay afloat in these businesses" (interview on Saint Helena radio, 18-4-2002). The bugs on the island include

the Mediterranean fruit fly: this bug "has resulted in the destruction of many fruit crops and the abandonment of citrus and other fruit production by growers" (UNDP 1999, p. 62). Bugs are fought through Integrated Pest Management schemes (i.e. introducing natural enemies), but these have not always worked. In some cases the introduced animals, after eating the bugs, went on to eat other crops.

Because of the problems with bugs, regulations for taking fresh produce onto the island are very strict. Honey, for example, cannot be imported. But this leads to other problems, as Lyn Thomas, managing director of the Saint Helena Development Agency, explains: "We banned honey imports, because otherwise you could import diseases that could kill off bees. We don't have any bee diseases here. At the same time there was a guy who exported honey which was sold in Kew Gardens. So how can you explain to the people on Saint Helena that it's better for his business to sell it overseas rather than selling it on the island? And then the people on the island don't have any honey available to them. So now he stopped his exports and supplies the local market".

The human geography of the island also poses problems for agricultural development. A lot of the land is in the hands of either the government or Solomon's and Co, which is majority government owned. Private farmers do not own their land, but usually lease it from the government. Therefore they are not free to decide what to do with it. Difficulties with accessibility (for example on the steep slopes) make farming very labour intensive, which means that prices go up. At the same time, the market is very small and easily saturated, while export is virtually impossible due to perishability and /or high freight charges. So there is a real chance of getting stuck with your products if you grow too much. That is why most people farm part-time and only grow a little; using farming as a supplement to another job. "This 'backyard' survival strategy makes up a large proportion of food production with over half of the island's output of meat, fruit and vegetables never reaching the central market but being traded informally" (UNDP 1999, p. 60). In the central market, local produce has to compete against imports, a battle often lost.

These problems are to a certain extent also valid for livestock. Producing meat locally is very expensive at the moment. Wyn-Rickets explains again: "we're looking currently at how to feed cattle on a much smaller portion of land availability. You may not know, but I think in the UK you require something like one head of cattle per acre of land, whereas on Saint Helena it is much higher, it is one head of cattle per five acres of land". The numbers of livestock on the island have decreased considerably over the last decade, as is shown in figure 4.8 below.

Figure 4.8 Livestock numbers, 1988-2000
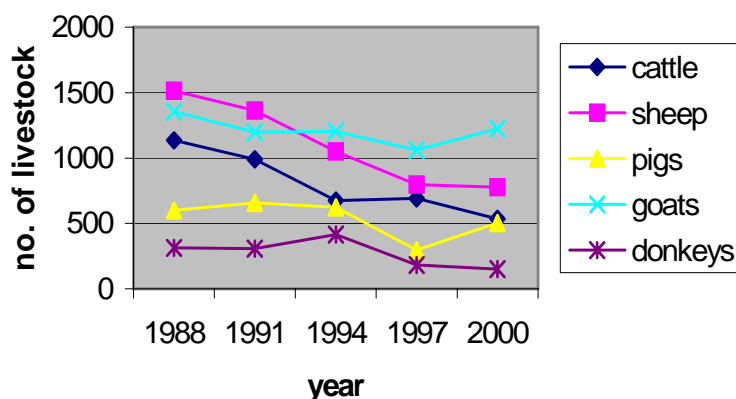
Source: Statistical Yearbook 2000

Producing for the local market may remain a problem, but in the Human Development Report opportunities for agriculture are identified: "Agriculture tends to be at subsistence level and moves away from this are dependent on encouraging, larger and more efficient farms developing niche high value export products and successfully tackling pest control" (UNDP

1999, p. 59). One area in which a niche high value export product has successfully been developed is coffee (as was discussed in paragraph 3.3.3). Production is still limited, although there are possibilities for expansion.

One other problem lies in the attitude of the people, as already recognised in 1982: "The attitude of mind that imported commodities are of better quality is one that must be eliminated if basic foodstuffs grown on St. Helena are to be accepted" (Simpson 1982, p. 70). During our visit to the island, we recognised that imported agricultural products are still perceived as superior. They often sell out quickly in the shops.

Besides the land, the landscape is also a resource for the island, as it can attract tourists. This potential has been recognised by the UNDP, who have financed a number of projects. With this money paths have been cleared and signposts erected in Diana's Peak National Park. This park is home to a number of plant species that are unique to Saint Helena.

The human history of the island has also left a number of elements in the landscape that can be used for tourism purposes. Old batteries, forts and cannons are found all over the island. Most of these require considerable investment to make them accessible to the average tourist however. UNDP funding has resulted in them being signposted, so that at least the sites can be found. The exploitation of the landscape as a resource for tourism purposes has a lot of potential, but it also requires a considerable investment.

The second natural resource Saint Helena possesses is the sea. There is lots of it around the island, so it is no surprise that fishing is of some importance to the local economy. Money is earned both through the sale of fishing licenses and fishing itself. However, in both areas there are problems: the island has not got any boats that can go offshore.

The fishing licenses provided Saint Helena with a valuable source of income for a number of years. These licenses to fish in the territorial waters of Saint Helena and its dependencies were sold mainly to Japanese trawlers fishing for tuna in the waters around Ascension Island. But over the last few years, according to chief finance officer Desmond Wade: "they didn't pick up their licence as they expected. They get caught elsewhere, they won't come here". The drop in fishing licence revenue is shown in figure 4.9 below. The problem could be related to the fact that Saint Helena has no means whatsoever to monitor the actions of fishing vessels. According to Argos office manager Fiona Duncan: "we can't lock up our ocean. So if they want to come and get it and don't pay the licence, they can still come and get it for free. And we wouldn't know anything about it".

Figure 4.9 Fish licence revenue, 1988-2000
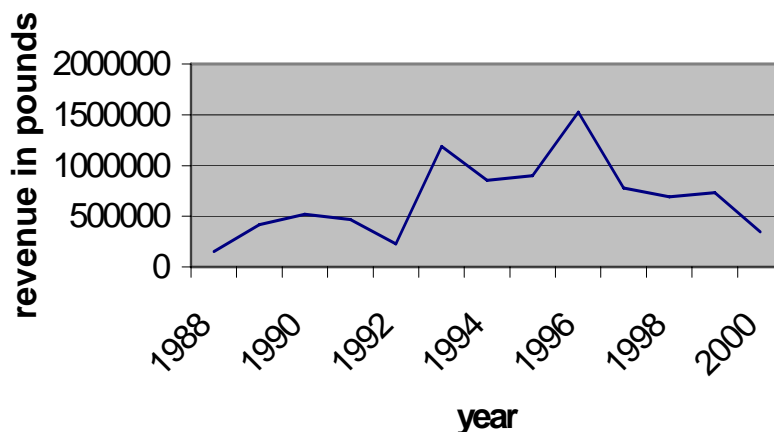
Source: Statistical Yearbook 2002

Bishop John sees a task for the British government in this respect: "Give us some means of patrolling our fishing grounds, so that the Japanese can't just come in and suck all the fish out of the sea. It is those sort of areas where I think Britain should help a bit more. I think the potential is here to develop a fishing industry. But the thing is, it is haunted by the fact that we have illegal fishing going on, but at the same time our people don't have the right sort of boats to go out any distance away from the island. With those kind of boats you probably wouldn't see them ever again if they went too far".

The local fishermen are obliged to sell their fish to the Saint Helena Fisheries Corporation (SHFC). These in turn sell the fish in a fish shop in town, and a fish van which goes around the country. In addition, tuna is canned at the Saint Helena Canning Co, and fish is blast frozen at the Argos plant. The latter two are both located in Rupert's valley, as is the headquarters of the SHFC. Most fish is also landed at Rupert's. The landed weight varies heavily per year: from 561 tonnes in 1998, it went sharply down to 199 tonnes in 1999, and up again to 318 tonnes in 2000 (Statistical Yearbook 2000). The most important species of fish by far is tuna (just over 200 tonnes in 2000), followed by skipjack, grouper and Wahoo, which is commonly known as barracuda.

Many people see possibilities for the island in the development of offshore fishing. But according to Fiona Duncan: "There was an ARGOS vessel here about a year ago and it was unsuccessful. What ARGOS is saying is, this boat didn't find anything in the trial, so it is highly unlikely that another boat would catch anything".

There is only so much to be had from your natural resources. The natural circumstances of Saint Helena set limits to development. The exploiters of the island's resources of land, landscape and sea should be aware of these limits. But who are these people who have shaped the Saint Helenian landscape to it current form?

4.2   Population

Figure 4.10 Miss Saint Helena[i]

Although the island was discovered in 1502 it was permanently settled only in 1659 by the English East India Company. The "original population" of 400 men that accompanied the first governor Dutton slowly grew in the years afterwards as a result of new people arriving to settle on the island. After building fortifications, quite a few left again, and attracting colonists to St Helena was not an easy task. Slaves were imported, but not too many to make a slave insurrection improbable. After the Dutch invasion more settlers were set out.

Unfortunately exact population numbers are rare for the East India Company period. Data for 1723 and 1813 are shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Population of Saint Helena, 1723 and 1813

Year	Whites	Officers and soldiers	Free Blacks	Slaves	Total
1723	380	120	18	610	1128
1813	700	975	450	1400	3525

Source: Gosse 1990

From about 1850 the population has been fairly stable and has mostly been between 4000 and 6000 people, as can be seen in table 4.2. The inflated total of 1901 reflects the island's use as a prisoner-of-war camp for Boers captured in the South African War (Royle 2001, p. 213). Today's Saint Helena could be called a "true melting pot". According to local historian Basil George the Saints are descended from European settlers, African slaves, Chinese labourers and passing soldiers and sailors.

Table 4.2 St. Helena enumerated population totals

Year	Population
1851	6914
1881	5059
1891	4116
1901	9850
1911	3520
1921	3747
1931	3995
1946	4748
1956	4642
1966	4649
1976	5147
1987	5644
1998	5157

Sources: Royle 2001, p. 213 and Population Census 1998

At census night in 1998 there were 5,157 people on the island. The number of men and women is almost at a par, as can be seen in table 4.3. The number shown in this table is the enumerated population, which means this includes people who are living on the island for less than 3 years (mostly expatriate workers and visitors). There were only 4,858 St Helenian residents living on the island in 1998 (Population Census 1998).

Table 4.3 Total enumerated population of the island of St Helena (1998 census)

Total	Women	Men
5157	2545	2612

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2000

The enumerated population has seen a decline of 636 people compared to the 1987 Census. This negative population growth (see table 4.4) is a result of a fall in the birth rate as well as a significant out migration.
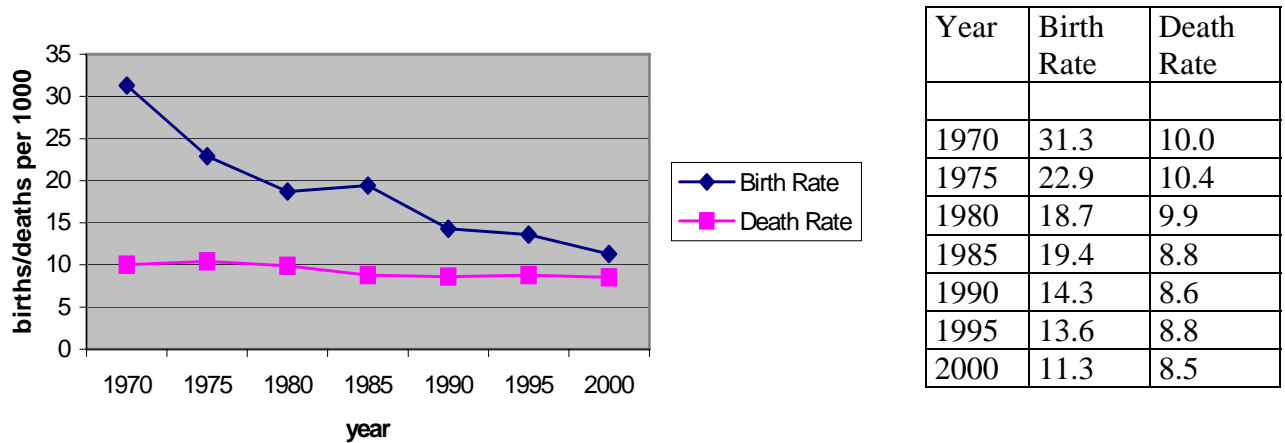
Table 4.4: Average Annual Population Growth Rate St Helena (in percentage per year)

1976-87	0.64
1987-98	-1.01

Source: Population Census 1998

As can be seen in figure 4.11, the birth rate has dropped sharply, from 31.3 in 1970 to 11.3 in 2000. This means 20 births per 1000 residents less in 30 years. The death rate has dropped only 1.5 deaths per 1000 residents in 30 years. This means that natural population growth is still positive, but now very small in comparison to 30 years ago. St Helena seems to follow the same pattern that has also been seen in the United Kingdom and other European countries earlier in the twentieth century.

Figure 4.11 Birth and Death rates St. Helena 1970-2000

Year	Birth Rate	Death Rate
1970	31.3	10.0
1975	22.9	10.4
1980	18.7	9.9
1985	19.4	8.8
1990	14.3	8.6
1995	13.6	8.8
2000	11.3	8.5

Sources: Population Census 1998, Statistical Yearbook 2000

It has been argued that on St Helena the fall in the birth rate has been sharper because of the amount of overseas working. Young people are reluctant to have children if they know there is a strong possibility that they will have to leave them in the care of relatives if they go overseas for work. (UNDP 1999, p. 37)

The decline in the birth rate is continuing, with only 36 babies born in 2001 (meaning a birth rate between 7 and 8). An often-heard remark on the island is that the birth control program has been too successful and that the result will be an ageing population.

The low birth rate in itself could cause an ageing population, but is not the only cause for this. An important factor is also the large out-migration. This is something St Helena has known for a long time, as local historian Basil George points out: "After the transfer from the East India Company the island became quite poor, and people started to leave. And actually in the 1870s a third of the population left to go to South Africa. It is not new, if you look at it from a historical context. However the only thing that is dangerous, is worrying, is the very low annual birth rate. That is the real worry".

Emigration has been a "safety valve" throughout most of the island's history. Groups of people left, mostly in times of economic hardship. In 1871 and 1872 for instance a total of 380 people left in search for a better life on the Cape (George, n.d.).

But there have also been periods when barriers were erected preventing the Saints to emigrate. Many islanders wanted to emigrate to the Cape in the early 20th century, in the times of hardship following the removal of the Boer prisoners. They were unable to do so, because it was required of emigrants that they could read and write. Education on the island at that time was of low standard, with secondary education completely absent.

In more recent history emigration to the Cape again became unattractive during the period of apartheid, because Saints were regarded as coloureds. This has resulted in anti-sympathetic feelings from some Saints towards South Africa and South African goods. According to social

work manager Doug Paterson "this antipathy towards South Africa will take generations to change".

From 1966 immigration legislation also made it harder to move to the UK, as a work permit was required from that year on. This was made worse by the 1981 Nationality Act, which took away British citizenship and thus severely limited the number of St Helenians allowed to seek employment in Britain. But this did not halt the emigration from the island. People now went mainly to Ascension and the Falklands, where wages are still considerably higher than on St Helena. As a result the total Saint Helenian resident population in the 1998 census was divided over three islands:

- Saint Helena   4,858
- Ascension Island   719
- Falklands   314

The emigration has serious consequences, both demographically and economically. According to the Human Development Report on St Helena (UNDP 1999, p. 10) arguably the most serious consequence of offshore employment is the so-called brain drain. The most entrepreneurial and most educated leave the island in search for a job with a better wage overseas, thus leaving the island without its economically most promising people. These problems will be extensively discussed in paragraph 4.4.1.

The large emigration and the birth rate can have serious consequences for the age profile of the population in the future. According to the Human Development report "the demographic trend shows an ageing population" (UNDP 1999, p. 10) and "…if the island's immigration policy is not relaxed and access improved then there is every reason to believe that St Helena will become an island of the old, poor and unemployable" (UNDP 1999, p. 18)

The population pyramids of St Helena as well as the Saints population on the Falklands and Ascension are shown in Appendix F. These pyramids seem fairly 'normal', but a lower number of 'young adults' can be observed. Especially the age group 20-24 is unusually short, and as can be seen in figure 4.13 a significant portion of St Helena's workforce is overseas. This will be further discussed in paragraph 4.4.2. A declining number of young children on St Helena can be observed in these figures. This will probably be even more visible in future population pyramids.

Population numbers and dynamics of the island have now been extensively discussed above. But how do these Saints relate to each other? To get a good insight in this, the social structure of St Helena will be discussed below.

4.3   Social structure

'St Helena could be described as at the adolescent stage in society. This is not a value judgment or poor reflection on things here. Rather, St Helena is at the crossroads in its development - it wants more independence but is remains reliant on others holding the responsibility. It may be time to encourage more independence by encouraging more local responsibility.

Doug Paterson, social work manager

4.3.1   Personal experience

We have only been on the island for 2 ½ months, and we do not pretend we can explain the social structure of Saint Helena in full (if that is at all possible). But now that we have returned from the island we can analyse our "place" in Saint Helenian society. This will be the starting point for analysis of the community.

Our first experience with Saint Helenian society came in Cardiff, while waiting to board the RMS. Obviously this was a time for Saints in the UK to meet up: to see each other and to wave friends goodbye. There were far more people than would be travelling on the ship. We were mostly left alone, but at a certain point a lady from the shipping company came up to have a friendly chat. Afterwards we could see the news about who we were spreading around.

On the ship we got to meet many Saints travelling back to the island, some after a very long time. They would invariably ask why we were going to Saint Helena, but all of them would also ask where we would be staying. Upper Jamestown was not enough as an answer: they wanted to know in whose house we would be staying, and almost everyone seemed to know who the owner was. They would then assure us that we'll like the laid back atmosphere and the friendliness of the people on Saint Helena.

On the island, we would meet the people we had travelled with on the ship all the time. Through them, the whole island knew about our presence in no time. Quickly we were known as "the Dutchies". Everyone knew where to find us. This was illustrated by a phone call on the first afternoon on the island. The police called us, to ask us to come by the next day, as they had forgotten to ask us for our proof of insurance. We had never given them our address or telephone number, but they knew where to find us.

We explained what we had come to the island for in a radio interview as well as in an interview with the local newspaper (see appendix G). We thought it important to stress we were students, and we did not belong to the army of experts sent out by the British government. Many people asked us how we had funded our trip. They seemed to want to make sure we were really just students and thus "harmless". After some time people seemed to view us as harmless, although a bit crazy maybe.

Saints would invariably be very friendly to us, but it was hard to make more than a superficial contact. It seemed we were expected to join the group of ex-pats on the island for our social contacts, which we did to a certain extent.

The general attitude towards us seemed to be one of anticipation: let's see what they do. Our doings would not be commented upon to us, but they would be known to everyone. We had quite a large freedom of movement socially (nobody told us what to do or not to do), but we were judged by our actions.

The information going round about us was sometimes wrong as well. When we visited the bar in Sandy Bay one afternoon, we got to talk to a couple of locals. They told us that it was a pity that we had just missed the Dutch students, who had left on the RMS. We could assure them they had not. When we asked them how they knew about us, they said: "You are friends of Felicity". Felicity was a lady we had met on the ship.

Our experience was that Saint Helenians are very friendly towards outsiders, although it is hard to really get to know them. As you are an outsider and thus a temporary phenomenon in their society, you are a perfect subject for gossip. This means you are also under constant observation, which can sometimes be felt physically: the eyes peering at you from the back. On the other hand: you are free to do whatever you want, and everybody is genuinely interested in showing you the best of the island and making sure you are enjoying yourself.

Of course, this is based on very limited experience. It might also have been a totally different picture socially if one of us had come alone.

What does this experience say about the social structure of Saint Helena? To quote the Human Development Report on the people of Saint Helena: "the population strikes all visitors as one that is friendly, welcoming and accommodating. The people have a capacity for

resourcefulness and personal strength and an ability to bear hardship. They have a basic charity of spirit and sympathy for others. They would never see anyone go hungry and there is a willingness to share produce grown at home. All these attributes are evident in their community life" (UNDP 1999, p. 36).

Within the community of Saints, solidarity is strong. One example is the fact that there is hardly any difference visible between rich and poor people. "It is worth highlighting that there are no real indications of poverty, as internationally defined. There are of course poor people who struggle to make ends meet but there is no starvation and every one who wants it has adequate shelter and clothing. In effect the safety net provided via the social service department ensures everyone has access to these basic necessities" (UNDP 1999, p. 39).

As an outsider you will never completely be part of the "Saint" community, as was repeatedly stressed to us by expatriate workers and Saints alike. We personally observed that people returning from working overseas after many years sometimes struggled to become part of Saint Helenian society once again. This is confirmed by social work manager Doug Paterson (himself expatriate): "You will never be accepted as a Saint here, unless you are born and brought up here. And you probably have to look like a Saint as well. Even Saints that have lived on Ascension for a long time might have been away for too long to be seen as from here anymore".

The social structure on Saint Helena is to a certain extent influenced by regional differences (as will be extensively discussed in chapter 5), but societal structures seem mainly to evolve around the family.

4.3.2   Family life

The family is what holds Saint Helenian society together. Relatives help each other with odd jobs or goods all the time, and the flow of remittances is through family relations. Family is a favourite topic of conversation and an important source of identity. What family you are from determines to a large extent what place you will occupy in society. It is the first source of identification, as French consul Michel Martineau stresses: "You will hear that if you ask someone who is he or who is she, they will always classify the person by which family he or she belongs to. The first son of, you know. Or, he belongs to this branch. I mean just ask around, who is that, and they will tell family. (…) The individual identity only comes through that. It never works from friendship. They will never tell he is a friend of".

The importance of family life is stressed in many ways. Many people spend Sundays with family. If you go out on Saint Helena, it will often be with the whole family. At Donny's Club for example, there is always a children's disco before the adult disco starts on Friday or Saturday nights (figure 4.13). A "Family day out" is often organised. Families go out picnicking on Horse Pasture or at Lemon Valley in weekends. As an outsider, you are very lucky to get invited to such occasions. Bishop John comments: "I am lucky, because at Christmas I get invited to family celebrations and it's not just mother-father-children, but it is more what I would call an extended family. It's far more close-knit here that it would be say in the UK. Where the nucleus tends to be just father, mother children. Whereas here, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters all tend to live in the same area".

Figure 4.13: Donny's advertisement in the Herald for a family night out

Donny's

Tonight

DUE TO A SHORTAGE OF FISH SUPPLIES
THE FISH FRY
ORGANSIED FOR TONIGHT IS CANCELLED

THE KITCHEN WILL STILL OPEN
SERVING THE NORMAL MENU

DONNY WILL PLAY A MIXED SELECTION OF MUSIC
ON THE PROMENADE DECK
FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT

CLOSING TIME TONIGHT WILL BE 23.30 HRS

Easter- Saturday Night
Family Night Out

Commencing @ 8.30 pm
Dj - Sidonio

Plus Music Videos
And Old Gold Music Played By Donny
On The Promenade Deck

THE MANAGEMENT & STAFF
WILL BE ON HOLIDAY DURING
EASTER SUNDAY & MONDAY

WE WISH ALL OUR CUSTOMERS
A HAPPY & PEACEFUL EASTER PERIOD

Source: Saint Helena Herald 28-03-2002

A comment that is often heard informally is that "everyone is related to everyone else". This is especially true in outlying districts like Blue Hill or Levelwood, where people tended to marry within their districts. But even in total the number of families on the island is not that great. The phone book listed 153 different family names. But six family names together accounted for a third of the total number of entries (Table 4.5).

Family networks are important, and not only for rosy things like Sunday dinners. "Perhaps the most striking feature of family life in St Helena is the fact that so many households are missing significant individuals because they have left to take jobs overseas" (UNDP 1999, p. 37). It can be safely assumed that virtually every family is missing one or members, who are working overseas. Many of these are on Ascension Island: "Speaking to a year group of 80 students in Prince Andrew School (…), when asked, all but two had relatives working on Ascension Island" (George 1999, p. 32).

Table 4.5: Family names in the Saint Helena phonebook 2002

Name	No. of entries
1. Thomas	110
2. Henry	83
3. Yon	77
4. Williams	71
5. Peters	70
6. Benjamin	68
Total top 6	479
Total	1459

Source: Saint Helena Telephone Directory 2001

Most contracts to work overseas were (and many still are) on an "unaccompanied" basis. The family thus has to be left behind on Saint Helena. Children are often left in the care of grandparents or other family members. This poses problems, according to Doug Paterson: "It is questionable if a 60 or 70 year old can provide the right care for a 3 year old. It is not a huge problem, but it creates a different family set up by necessity. Often there is no male role model, and even the mother may be absent". Several people stressed in interviews that this situation is getting more and more serious, and could even result in a breakdown of the Saint Helenian society. Two people who are confronted with the resulting problems are Chief Education Officer Pamela Lawrence and Governor Hollamby. They are both worth quoting at some length:

 "In years past at least granny was home. I grew up with my mother working. But granny was always there. And there was an aunt always there so you were still in the family unit, or at least two blocks down the road there was granny. But what's happening now is that mum and dad are offshore, auntie has gone off, and in some cases the granny is still quite young and has gone off as well. So the whole family unit has broken up and kids then sometimes move school, go to a school in another district where perhaps another family member lives. So they are going to a different home, a different school, having to make different friends and some of them display at least a restlessness and there are worse cases where it actually causes problems. We see in school signs of emotional disturbance of the kids. (…) The teachers in the schools are really caring, it's not as if we have loads of kids who are like this, but because you have a small community you also know the kids who are affected. You know that their mum is going off on the boat, and they become extra protective towards these kids, so we look after them. So really it is due credit to them" (Pamela Lawrence).

"Through losing of so many people to overseas we are getting a breakdown of the nuclear family. You have situations where the husband goes off working on Ascension or the Falkland islands, and the wife sits here until she's fed up and decides to get a job too. And there are plenty of jobs on those two islands. So the children are left behind. Now children are safe on the island, generally speaking. But at 11 o'clock at night occasionally I get reports of two 10-year-olds fighting at Donny's. There is no parental control. It has been delegated to a guardian, it has been delegated to a grandparent. But there is the generation gap: what is little Johnny doing out at Donny's at 11 o'clock at night when he's got school next morning? I'm not saying Donny's giving up, it is usually at the sea front. But you are having this social breakdown, because of the absence of both parents working overseas. And you can't stop them doing it, because they are going overseas trying to increase the economic life for their family. So it is a bit of a conundrum, really. We can't have too much of that, otherwise there will be a quite serious breakdown of society" (Governor Hollamby).

The effect of overseas working on family life is also reflected in statistics. Marriage is not a popular institution on Saint Helena (see table 4.6) and children born out of wedlock are the norm rather than the exception. "The amount of overseas working does put a strain on marriages and there tends to be a fairly high incidence of relationships outside marriage. There are, for example, many examples of children within a family being born of different parents" (UNDP 1999, p. 38).

Table 4.6 Marital Status Breakdown for ages 20-59

	Saint Helena	United Kingdom
Single	44%	27%
Married	48%	64%
Divorced	6%	8%
Widowed	2%	1%

Source: UNDP 1999, p 38

Bishop John points to the history of Saint Helena to put these numbers into perspective. "I don't think [marriage] has been popular here ever in its history. I mean some of these bishops here, I've got their little comments and notebooks in my safe, saying things like: "what a degenerate population this is", referring to Jamestown. What happened in those days I don't know, but I suppose if you had a thousand ships a year calling, it would have something to do with… Sailors always have a girlfriend in every port". But he hastens to add that this does not mean there is no commitment in relationships between Saints. "They don't go floating around

someone for 3 years and then go move in with someone else. It's just as great a commitment as it would be if they were actually legally married in church or whatever".

Saints seem to adapt to the circumstances they find themselves in: if marriage is not a practical option, then they don't marry. This same practical approach is shown in the religious life of Saints.

4.3.3   Religion

The main religion on the island is Christianity; 96.8 percent of the population regarded itself as Christian in 1998. Only 1.4 percent of the population stated that they had no religion or were agnostic (Population Census 1998, p18). With 4,121 members the Anglican church is by far the biggest church on the island with 850 people (or 17.5 percent of the total population) belonging either to another Christian church or to the Bahai faith. Beside the Anglican Church the churches of the Seventh Day Adventists, the Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Roman Catholic church, the Salvation Army and the New Apostolics all have their followers on the island.

Figure 4.14: The Anglican cathedral in St Pauls[i]

The Bahai faith is not a Christian faith, but they believe that there is one God Who progressively reveals His will to humanity. Each of the great religions brought by the Messengers of God - Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, Muhammad - represents a successive stage in the spiritual development of civilization. Bahá'u'lláh, the most recent Messenger in this line, has brought teachings that address the moral and spiritual challenges of the modern world.

In general there is tolerance between the people of different churches and religions and there is good cooperation between a number of churches. This is the case between the Catholics, the Salvation Army, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Baptists and the Anglicans, who meet regularly. According to the Bishop the Catholic priest has even been known to help out in the Anglican Church in Jamestown when an Anglican priest could not be found on short notice.

Members of the Anglican church are strongly represented all over the island, but some of the other churches do have strongholds in certain areas of St Helena. The Jehovah's Witnesses are very strongly represented in Levelwood, while the Baptists have 'strongholds' in Sandy Bay as well as in Blue Hill. But as the Baptists have only 114 followers on the island the majority of people in these areas is still Anglican.

Bishop John feels that the church plays a major role on the island, even though attendance in the churches is falling, similar to the situation in Britain: "There is a sort of tendency for the church to dwindle a bit as the years have gone by….but I think there has been a drop in church attendance all over the world really….But I think the average person on this island is a religious person. And I think everyone will still use the church for baptisms and marriage, but certainly funerals. People turn out in large numbers for that. And they'll turn out for things like Good Friday….I think in the lives of people it is important."

According to the Bishop the Anglican church is part of the heritage of the island for many Saints: "I think the average Saint here…when the previous bishop, my predecessor sold the previous Bishop house, the whole island was very upset about that. There is a lot of concern that the church is a part of the heritage of people's lives on the island".

The services on the island are somewhat old-fashioned, which might be a partial explanation for the lower church attendance under younger Saints according to the Bishop:

"And I think we have got to reach out to the young people…sometimes it's boring for the youngsters…But like anyone else the church has to try to get into the 21st century, but some are still stuck in the 16th century. And not only in the type of worship, but in everything."

4.3.4   Education

One thing that has been promoted through the church is education. Education has been actively encouraged on the island from 1678, when parents were exhorted to be 'friends to their children' by sending them to school. By 1850 there were 8 schools on the island, but according to Gosse (1990, p. 319) standards were low and secondary education was still not present on the island in 1938.

In 1988 the three tier system was introduced on St Helena. This comprises first, middle and secondary sectors. These sectors are each responsible to a sector education officer, who in turn are responsible to the chief education officer on the island. The new school system consisted of 7 first, 3 middle and one secondary school.

By adopting this system the island introduced the same education system as Britain, which made the qualifications acquired on the island more internationally accepted. Pupils are studying for GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education), after which they can continue to do A-levels.

The new system also caused the disappearance of the separate secondary schools that were found in different places on the island. They all merged into the Prince Andrew School (PAS), now the only secondary school on the island. This school was built on Francis plain and for the first time in the history of the island all the children of 12 years and older were attending school in the same location.

Figure 4.15 Prince Andrew School and Francis Plain[i]

As a result of the falling birth rate the continuation of some first schools was a problem right from the start of the new system. Blue Hill First School opened in September 1988 with 10 pupils of compulsory school age and 4 pre school children. From the beginning the big question was how long it would survive. In June 1990 the school was closed and the children were sent to St Paul's First School onwards. By now Sandy Bay and Levelwood first schools have also had to close their doors as a result of falling school rolls. Chief Education Officer Pamela Lawrence states that the closing of the three schools was inevitable, as in one case they were down to seven children in one school. The first schools that are left now are in key areas and according to her they should not be closed down: "Rather than closing schools if our population continues to go down, what we might see is a shift of the younger people at PAS possibly back into the

districts. Then PAS becomes more of a community college, catering for your public examination you have to do and beyond, you know. There would be every reason then not to have to close the district schools if numbers drop, so you would retain that community link".

The middle schools have to deal with a drop in the number of schoolchildren as well. Particularly Pilling Middle School in Jamestown has problems, as there is a relatively small presence of young people here. Elaine Benjamin, headmistress of Pilling Middle, tells how they try to cope with this problem: "There are only a few children in Jamestown, so we have widened the catchment areas. Children from Rupert's, Alarm Forest and quite a few from Half Tree Hollow all come here".

This did not prevent a drop in numbers though: "Numbers have also dropped tremendously over the last years. The average class size is now 20. We now have 76 children here. When I first came here we were teaching over 100. We have one year group with only five children in it".

On an island like Saint Helena the consequences of a birth rate of 36 are very clear. It means that in 5 years' time there will be only 36 children to be divided over 4 first schools. This trend will probably threaten the continuing existence of some schools in the future, even with a possible shift of children from PAS back to the lower schools.

The official literacy rate of St Helena is quite high: 98 percent of the population can read and write according to the 1998 population census. However, according to Susan O'Bey, headmistress of Prince Andrew School, St Helenian children have very low literacy levels. She thinks one of the reasons behind this is "that many houses in which the children grow up are very sterile in terms of reading material". This line of reasoning is supported also in the Human Development Report, which states that most homes have few or no books, partly because they cannot afford them and partly because there is no culture of reading.

The high official literacy rate can probably be explained by the way literacy was measured in the population census. As soon as you could read and write your name, you were literate according to Susan O'Bey. The functional literacy rate is way lower than 98% and is probably closer to 65% (UNDP 1999, p. 45).

The literacy rate among girls is higher than among boys. This appears to be due principally to two cultural reasons. "First, males have traditionally entered manual employment such as farming or fishing in which, in the past, literacy has not tended to be important. (….) Secondly there is a negative attitude to learning and reading, within which there is some evidence that it is still considered "soft" for boys to study". (UNDP 1999, p. 45)

The problem of the diminishing number of school going children goes hand in hand with the staff attrition problem in the educational system, which will be extensively discussed in section 4.4.1.

People on Saint Helena are staying in schools longer. Education on the island is compulsory until the age of 15, but many pupils now stay on afterwards. At the time of the 1998 census 85.3 per cent of the whole population who had finished education completed at 15 years or under. In the 1987 census this was 92.9 per cent. This shows there is an increase of people following education when 16 years or older. Probably education will be made compulsory until the age of 16 in the not too distant future.

A small number of students goes on to follow tertiary education in the United Kingdom, for which a limited amount of funding is available each year. The government, in conjunction with DfID, offers between 1 and 5 scholarships each year. Often these students do not return

to the island to seek employment there and those that do return seldom stay long and instead try to seek employment offshore (UNDP 1999, p. 53)

Bearing in mind the two problems the education system is facing at the moment, it is hardly surprising that according to the Human Development Report "achievement levels are well below those in the United Kingdom" (UNDP 1999, p. 49). The report states that the main reason for this is the lack of a qualified teaching force. In secondary education the low literacy levels of children coming to P.A.S. is also seen as a major problem.

The report states that another reason for the low achievement levels could be that "the design and content of many external examination courses make them unsuitable for St Helenian students. Many concepts such as commercial banking, air and railway travel, factory systems, mass production, taken for granted in larger communities are alien to island children most of whom have never been offshore. The arrival of satellite television has helped to address only some of these problems" (p. 50).

Chief Education Officer of St Helena, Pamela Lawrence, does not agree: "Sometimes reports such as these are not totally accurate or they are generalisations. We don't follow the UK national curriculum per sé. In the core subjects of maths, English and science we follow the programs of study. With the other areas, such as geography, history and so on, we develop a structure based on the national curriculum. But we've adapted the programs of study, the content, to local need".

PAS Headmistress Susan O'Bey agrees it can be a problem that students don't come into contact with certain phenomena. But she feels the problem is generally dealt with in an effective way. People are often invited in to talk and share experiences and TV and certainly the internet go a long way to compensate in this matter. But as students may be confronted with these matters in the future when for example they leave the island it is important that these subjects are being taught to the students.

Education is not meant only for life on the island. Through the education system pupils are also being prepared for life offshore. Motivation is a problem however. The High Point Rendell Report (2001) also recognises the fact that performance levels are lower than in the UK, with less than 12 percent of students achieving 5 GCSE passes at A to C grades. One explanation for this could be that "students are aware of the limited career opportunities on the island and see little utility in academic qualifications. They know that overseas unskilled contract work is the only real employment option, and that salary levels are well in excess of any which they could earn on St Helena. (p. 5-3)".

The perception of students that not too much can be achieved through education will probably not change if the current economic situation on the island prevails. For this change to happen a real career structure and access to rewarding jobs are quintessential. The restoration of British citizenship may restore some motivation as children see that good examination results are a prerequisite to obtaining jobs in the wider world. This might increase the motivation of St Helenian students but will unfortunately also contribute to the ongoing "brain drain" of the island.

The Human Development Report sums up four options for education on St Helena in the future (p. 54-55):

1. Let the government withdraw from providing secondary education and attract a private operator to come in and take over. … Allowing the school to take on private pupils from outside the island would offset part of the cost. However, whether this is a feasible option depends on improving access and the social impact that an influx of wealthy foreign school children would have on local children.

2. Education to be provided on-island only till 14 with children above this age being sent to the United Kingdom to complete their education. … there would be major social implications and it is likely that even fewer children would return to the island after completing their studies.

3. Utilise far more expatriate teachers. Again this is not a sustainable option and the cost would be significant – say 750,000 pounds a year.

4. Offer substantial pay increases to existing qualified teaching staff in an attempt to attract back teachers who have moved either offshore or to other non-teaching jobs within Government. This could be coupled with a move towards putting teachers back into the classroom rather than them undertaking administrative jobs within the education department.

The first option seems to be highly unlikely and very risky. If secondary education is offered only by a private operator the cost for following education might well be too high for many Saints. And if the operator opts out after a couple of years the island is left with no secondary education at all. The reasons for wealthy foreign school children to follow education on St Helena are hard to imagine as well. The second and third options are also not very desirable ones, as the report itself recognises.

The fourth option seems to be the best way to improve or at least maintain the current level of education in the future. The main problem seems to be that currently the only way to realise a substantial pay increase is by increasing the DfID subsidy to St Helena. As the trend goes more towards a reduction in aid this does not seem very likely to happen in the near future.

One area in which the education department feels the system can improve is internet.

According to Susan O'Bey internet is having more of an impact than even television does. Pamela Lawrence feels that in the future internet could help out with A-level programmes:

"I think the internet is going to play a major role if we can really get cheaper communications.... It's very expensive providing A-levels on the island. Out of a school population at PAS of say 300 kids, you have relatively few kids who go on to an A-level program. And it's very expensive time for teachers and resources for that, but with flexible learning approaches you could actually have on-line tuition".

The authors of the Human Development Report agree that the advantages of internet for the island could be large: "The advantages for education afforded by easy access to the internet are tremendous especially given the island's isolation and limited access to the wider world" (UNDP 1999, p51).

4.3.5   Other social issues

We have now looked at the family, religion and education. There are a number of other social issues worth studying as well.

Saint Helena is a small society where everyone knows everyone and therefore social control is very high, and it is hard to be different. Social problems are mostly kept within the family and hardly ever communicated to outsiders. But one problem that is very visible is alcoholism.

In the words of Governor Hollamby: "the biggest social ill on the island of course is alcohol. And much of it, local crime, crime against each other, is alcohol based". The amount of alcohol that is consumed can be quite unbelievable at times. As there is no local brewery, all alcohol has to be imported. This leads to large rubbish heaps of cans or bottles of Castle lager, which is the most popular beer. Import duties make the beer quite expensive (1.10 to 1.20 pounds for a bottle), but this does not seem to affect the amount that is consumed. The Governor was also surprised: "We don't know what the elasticity of the price of alcohol is,

because a bottle of beer at the moment is probably at least 50% tax. Now that is a very high amount of tax. (…) There are occasions when the island runs out of beer altogether. And the amount of drinking that goes on is phenomenal".

Alcohol abuse is often the trigger for other social problems. "Domestic violence especially against female partners is still regarded in some quarters as acceptable behaviour although attitudes are beginning to change. Most domestic violence revolves around alcohol abuse" (UNDP 1999, p. 38). This is not something you will read in the newspaper however. Nor will the victims usually contact the police or the social services department, according to Doug Paterson. "Women find it often find it hard to leave destructive relationships because there can be nowhere else to go. There is a hidden expectation (often from within the family) that women should tolerate these relationships and the repercussions for leaving can be considerable".

This problem of domestic violence is influenced by the curious set-up of gender relations on the island. Many males are gone, and many top positions in government are held by females. Men do not compete as well in education either. This might be due to the fact that most (male) labour required for Ascension or the Falklands is unskilled. Elaine Benjamin, headmistress of Pilling Middle School has problems keeping boys interested. "In the teaching profession, there are not many males, so there are not many role models for them. And a lot of jobs are in plumbing, electricity, building. I am not sure if they really understand how important education is. On the island as a whole the incentives are not really there".

Doug Paterson links this to the problem of domestic violence: "Women tend to do better in education with men taking the more unskilled jobs. This can create tension within relationships as the women are likely to earn more. Some men find this difficult to reconcile given societies expectations that men should be the head of the family. People have told me that wives /partners should look good, dress good and be the care giver in the home. The role of men in society is curious. Men don't compete as well in education but perhaps use their male power to assert themselves behind closed doors".

Another social problem for the island is underage sexual activity. Again, Doug Paterson explains: "There is a culture of early sexual activity on St Helena but this is difficult to quantify. I'm not that concerned with teenagers of a similar age indulging in sexual activity- this happens in most societies. But I am concerned about older men taking advantage of younger girls. A 14 year girl having sex with 30 year old man is sexual abuse, not underage sex. Sentencing policy has been described as lenient in this regard, with most offenders given court fines. Protecting children from such abuse has to be given the highest priority by everyone".

The island seems still to be free from the disease that is such a problem in South Africa: AIDS. But this is not certain, because it is hard to take a test on the island. An AIDS test in the local hospital will be taken by another Saint. As nothing remains confidential on the island, everyone will know in no time that you have taken an AIDS-test. So to take a test, a Saint will have to travel to Cape Town under some other pretext. The same problems with confidentiality were apparent in the failure of the confidential "alcohol abuse help line". Because within the community people doubted the confidentiality (rightly or not), nobody called.

Social control is so total that criminal offences are reported weekly in the newspaper with the name of the person who committed the crime written in full. This is to stop the gossip which will otherwise certainly start. Social work manager Doug Paterson is confronted with the problems of the lack of confidentiality on a daily basis. "If people are involved with Social Services, they can feel labelled as a 'problem' family or individual. People are less likely to

use some of our services because of this. Also, people will remain involved for as long as they have to so it can be difficult to undertake longer term interventions that can give more lasting outcomes".

There is no escape from this social control. In the Netherlands you always have the possibility of going to some other town where nobody knows you to "go wild" for an evening if you feel like that. You can't leave Saint Helena, at least not on short notice. Someone who has lived on the island for many years but who wasn't born there commented to us that "life is more complicated here than on the mainland. You can never really let yourself go, you have to be very discrete". People never forget, as Doug Paterson explains: "People here rarely forget a person's mistake made in the past. I've often met people and then been told by others of the mistakes that this person made many years ago. That judgement and perception can undermine people and it can be difficult for them to feel they have left their mistakes behind. Saints can be very critical and judgemental of other Saints".

As everyone knows everything about everybody else, it is very hard to be different. The island has an image of social homogeneity: there are hardly any "subcultures" or "minority groups" you can become part of. There are simply not enough people for a sizeable minority. But as small communities often are, Saint Helenian society is also rather conservative. This may cause problems, according to French consul Michel Martineau: "if you are different from most of the local people, I'm thinking of the few ones who are gay, or others who are slightly different, you have to go. There is no place for them. They have to go because they are too different from the community and they have to go, unfortunately. (…) But you have no choice, here you cannot be yourself".

4.3.6 Resourcefulness vs. dependency

If your personal identity falls outside the social boundaries that come with being a Saint on Saint Helena, you leave. People are often quite pragmatic about leaving. If there is a divorce, one of the former partners will usually leave the island, because otherwise you will keep running into each other. If you want to build a house, you go work overseas to earn the money. Basil George, former Chief Education Officer and current Chairman of the Citizenship Commission, explains this attitude with the concept of resourcefulness.

"In the relatively short history of the island, because of its isolation and poor communications, the people on St Helena have had to be resourceful. Resourcefulness, although it may not be apparent, is at the centre of St Helenian identity and culture. This is why today the Saint Helenian values practical skill above academic knowledge. Resourcefulness is an island way of life: people on a small isolated island do things for themselves, they have to be resourceful. Historic evidence of resourcefulness is apparent all over the island. Most impressive are the fortifications and roads. Ladder Hill Barracks is a good example, particularly the stone masonry. The buildings are made from local material, cut stone and lime and sand mortar." (George 1994, p4)

Figure 4.16: Ladder Hill Road out of Jamestown[i]

If you see the roads leading out of Jamestown (figure 4.16), you wonder how they were ever built. In fact, local materials were used. Basil George has another example:

"One of the most well known examples of local resourcefulness was when a ship called with a broken prop shaft bearing and would have to wait for a tug to tow it to Walvis Bay on the west coast of Africa. A local mechanic made a bearing from local hardwood and within a few days the ship was able to set sail for Cape Town." (George 1994, p. 4).

This explanation of resourcefulness comes down to a practical, inventive way of dealing with the circumstances that are set. In this same line of thinking, one can regard the overseas working of many Saints as an expression of resourcefulness: the money needed cannot be made on the island, so we must think of something else: let's get it somewhere else.

The concept of resourcefulness seems contradictory to the concept of dependency that was shown as being central to Saint Helena's position throughout the last and most of this chapter. But this is not necessarily the case. Through the economic and political dependency upon Britain Saint Helenians find themselves in a certain position. In dealing with the circumstances arising from this dependency, they indeed show great resourcefulness. But this resourcefulness does not go beyond *responding* to circumstances; the *cause* of the circumstances (i.e. the position of dependency) is not addressed. Put differently: Saints come up with resourceful strategies to *deal with* their *personal* circumstances, but they do not *address* these circumstances *collectively*. Resourcefulness and dependency thinking are very different things, but they are both part of what makes a Saint, something which will be further explored in chapter 6. We will first turn to the island's economy.

4.4   Local economic structure

Here we will consider Saint Helena's economic structure. Of course the Saint Helenian economy is influenced to a great extent by the possibilities for access to the island. This will be discussed in detail in chapter 8. Leaving the topic of access aside, at the moment the most important characteristics of this structure are the following:

- High imports, low exports
- Large percentage of the workforce offshore, staff attrition
- Large public sector, small private sector
- Small market
- Lack of commercial bank
- *Lack of entrepreneurship*

The problem of high imports and low exports has already been discussed in chapter 3.3.3. The others will be discussed below.

4.4.1 Large percentage of the workforce offshore

An often heard comment on the island is that half the working population is working overseas. It is clear from figure 4.17 that not quite half, but indeed a very large percentage of the working population is offshore. According to government economist Tom Crowards the official statistics still underestimate the amount of people working overseas: "it is a big problem, even more than we get through the statistics. Because the statistics only pick up the people that go through the employment department, who go through official schemes. But there's people who just get up and go. So the statistics even underestimate."

Figure 4.17 Workforce distribution 1999-2000

Figure 4.17: Workforce distribution, 1999/00
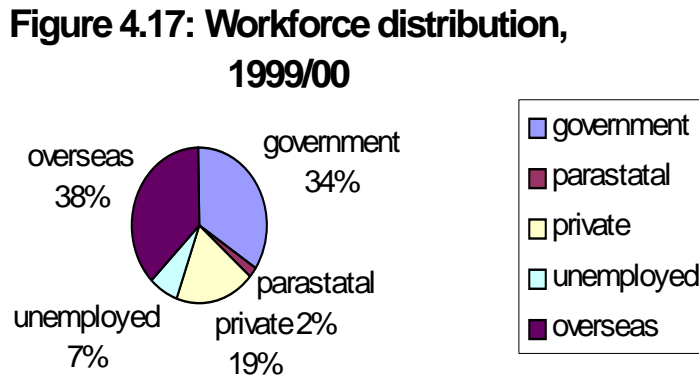
source: Statistical Yearbook 2000

Figure 4.18 St. Helenian contract workers employed overseas by country, 2000

source: Statistical Yearbook 2000

Saints are mainly dependent on Britain and its overseas territories for work overseas (figure 4.18), because until the restoration of citizenship rights they did not automatically have the right to work or live in the European Union (see chapter 7). Working and living in the UK was limited and Saints mainly end up in either domestic jobs or in the nursing or teaching profession. Since the sixties Ascension has been the main source of offshore employment for Saint Helenians. The American and British military bases as well as companies like the BBC mainly recruit Saints for domestic and maintenance jobs. After the war, the Falkland Islands experienced a strong economic growth, which resulted in a demand for labour higher than the fairly limited population of these islands could provide. As a result many Saints ended up working here as well. They mainly work in the service industry: for example in catering jobs at the military base. At the moment Saints form over 10% of the population of the Falklands, and almost two thirds of the population on Ascension.

There are several reasons why so many Saints choose to work abroad, but the main reason is formed by the substantially higher salaries that can be earned in offshore employment. The

average wage on St Helena is only around 60 pounds a week. Twice or more this amount can be made when one takes up employment on for example Ascension or the Falklands. According to the Human Development Report (1999) there is also a demand for Saints to come work abroad, especially trained people from the health and education departments: "Salaries are low compared with those offered for a wide range of jobs on Ascension and the Falkland Islands. In addition there is a steady demand for trained nurses to work in nursing and old people's homes in the United Kingdom" (p29).

Surprisingly SHG still cooperates with companies that are actively recruiting people on the island. As one person commented: "What I can't understand is why government continues to ship people offshore. Let's make it harder for people. Tell companies to come and get them, instead of recruiting them through the personnel department".

Many Saints with good qualifications work abroad in jobs for which no or less qualifications are needed. Taking a less skilled job in for instance Ascension or the UK results in a substantially higher pay check. Daphne Greentree for instance, teaches geography at P.A.S., but has been working in the UK as a nanny for a couple of years, where she earned in one week what she had to work one month for on St Helena. Because of the money, she is planning to return to the UK in due time.

A problem that comes with the large number of people working offshore is the so-called 'brain drain', which is explained by managing director of SHDA Carolyn Thomas: "People with the most skills are the ones that leave. The brightest ones are snapped off by overseas employers. And they go, because these employers pay higher salaries." According to the Government Economist the lack of experienced and qualified people that is created as a result of this brain drain is one of the gravest problems St Helena faces: "They just don't have the personnel and the skills. And the trouble is of course that they take the experienced ones. So even if you can replace a teacher that goes, it takes about 10, 20 years to replace an experienced teacher, and 5 years to replace a trained teacher. The teachers we do have now are not of the same calibre as say 20 years ago. The lack of numbers is only half the story. Of those numbers you've still got, you don't have the skills and experience the people before had. I think this is the biggest problem the island faces right now".

But according to Chief Development Officer Corinda Essex wages are not the sole reason why people leave the island in search for another job: "it is not just money that makes the difference as to whether people stay or go. It's related to terms and conditions of service, the extent to which they feel valued, the extent to which they are experiencing job satisfaction with regard to actual on the job factors as well as their pay package at the end of the month. It is things like that that are relatively cost neutral which I think would increase job satisfaction and reduce stress levels and make people feel less pressurized."

Doug Paterson, the Government's Social Work Manager, agrees and stresses the importance of the lack of a good pension scheme and safety net on St Helena: "A gentleman just died, and his woman gets a few thousand pounds. That's it, no pension. How can you expect people to stay if no security is given? There is no comprehensive safety net, if something happens you fall right through to the bottom, you go on benefits". Pension schemes have only come into existence recently and employment benefits are very low.

Chief Finance Officer Desmond Wade feels young people in particular leave the island because they want to see 'the outside world': "You ask staff why they go, and it's not the money, they just like to see something different, do something different. They like to try new things, they don't have any commitments, so.."

The Editor of the St Helena Herald, Johnny Drummond, feels that the value of education has been highlighted in recent years. However, "as people get more qualifications, they have fewer opportunities on the island. There are fewer posts and people end up in the Spar or as a clerk in the government. So a lot of people leave to go and work overseas". Once qualified, people want to make better money than can be made on Saint Helena. Besides, there are very few career opportunities on the island. People in 'high' jobs often stay there for decades.

French Consul Michel Martineau stresses that some young people seek to live and work overseas because they want to be 'different': "I think for the young people to assume a different identity is very difficult." Leaving the island to work abroad is one way to escape from the tight social control on the island.

The large percentage of the workforce offshore poses a couple of problems to St Helena. According to former chief education officer Basil George the high divorce rate is strongly connected with the offshore employment: "…the contract says that a married man often cannot bring his family…They only see their children growing up about once a year. That has to put a terrible strain on some relationships…Yes we are feeling the effects, it is noticeable in the divorce rate, since Ascension and the Falklands started".

According to many people on the island the shortage of (qualified) staff, or 'staff attrition' is one of the gravest problems St Helena faces. Many people are not qualified to fill in the job vacancies. Those Saints that would be qualified have left the island to make money elsewhere.

Problems of staff attrition are being felt in almost all government departments, and shortage of staff can be significant, as Desmond Wade illustrates when explaining the problems in the financial department: "In this department by next week we will have seven vacancies, and that is by people taking up other jobs in other departments, because those people have gone overseas. We've got two going to Ascension, in two weeks… Most departments suffer the same thing."

Beside government departments, big companies like Solomon's also suffer from staff attrition: "There is no doubt we have staff attrition. I can't give you an exact figure but I estimate that our staff attrition is running at about 20, 25 percent. Of those 60 to 65 percent leave to take up employment offshore." (David Wyn-Rickets, Managing Director Solomon's). A shortage in skilled labour, like electricians, masons and carpenters is also becoming evident on the island.

The situation is worst in the health and education departments however, with staff attrition reaching very high levels in both fields. According to the Human Development report in 1998 "12 trained nurses left the service…..it represented 23 per cent of the trained workforce and approaches total losses for the previous four years combined." As a result a growing proportion of the nursing staff is untrained. Untrained staff accounted to 65 per cent in 1998 and will probably have increased in the years after. The Human Development Report further states that "the scale of staff shortages can be gauged by the fact that the service is being delivered with 50 per cent of the nursing establishment missing. Morale is correspondingly low and as workloads and stress increases more staff resign" (p. 29-30). Susan O'Bey, headmistress of PAS agrees that the problems in the health department are grave and harder to solve than in the education department: "other departments such as the medical profession, I think they are bare to the bone as it is now, they are in very critical situation with regard to their staffing. With us, we can always double up, but you can't do that with the nurses".

The education department has more abilities to cope with the problem of staff attrition, like streamlining the curriculum, increasing the class size and educating teachers so they can offer multiple subjects. From 1988 onwards however staff attrition has been very high. From 1988

to 1998, 79 teachers (representing over 80 percent of the teaching force) have left the profession. As a result almost 50 percent of the current teaching force have less than five years' teaching experience, including their two-year initial teacher-training period. A sizeable number of secondary teachers do not have a qualification in the subjects they are teaching (UNDP 1999, p. 53). Chief Education Officer Pamela Lawrence agrees there is a big problem in education: "Somehow I feel we are going to suffer really badly before we're set up again. We're running 22, 23% of attrition rate across the public service. Now I believe that in theoretical terms, once you run above 7% in a given institution, you've got a problem. So we don't have a problem, we've got a crisis. It's reaching the 25% mark, and it's really crunch time for us."

Of course the shortage and rapid turnover of staff in the education departments has implications for the provision of education, as Susan O'Bey explains: "we have had situations in the past years, where a group of students studying towards GCSE in English language would have had 5 different teachers over the course of 2 years. And that is bound to have a negative impact on their result at the end of the day." According to the Human Development report pupils at junior levels can sometimes have up to three different teachers "some of whom are little more than 'babysitters' as they do not have the appropriate training" (p. 53).

Although the concentration on providing a core curriculum ensures that a decent education can be given to the students, this also means that some subjects are dropped and that for instance foreign languages have never been taught at secondary level.

Part of the staff attrition problem is being solved by attracting more expensive expatriate teachers who can fill in the gaps. The underlying problem of retaining qualified local teachers does not seem to be addressed at the moment though. This might simply be a result of the fact that the most effective way of addressing the problem would be a significant increase in the wages of teachers.

As the main motivation of people seeking work elsewhere seems to be the low level of salaries, a substantial pay-increase will be needed to take at least part of this problem away. According to the Human Development Report "pay increases of the order of 50 per cent may be necessary to retain staff in addition to golden handcuffs for staff who stay 2-3 years after completing their training" (p. 30). They also stated that a substantial pay increase would not be on offer in the foreseeable future. "Also all options….have a large, in local terms, price tag attached to them which can only be met in present circumstances by increasing the level of aid monies" (1999, p. 53). A pay increase of 12-18 per cent has been accomplished in 2002 however. Although this is definitely a step in the right direction, it is not enough to close the substantial gap between wages on St Helena and wages overseas.

An improved economy might also cause wages to rise, but Basil George feels this is "a catch 22". If you can't have a good economic base to raise money you can't pay your people and if your people are leaving you can't have a good economic base.

Pamela Lawrence thinks the departments will have to look at their budgets, even if this means cutting on the quality of for instance educational equipment: "we're looking at our budgets to see whether or not we can once again trim. But what we are looking at now definitely in education, it's not trimming fat, but it will hit the pattern of provision of education on the island now, if we are having to use money from our recurrent budget to pay our people. But this is the option we've got: either we put money into people and at least make a serious attempt to hold the people, or we continue to allow the brain drain and we will have the things but no people to provide the service."

If nothing happens problems might get worse according to headmistress of Pilling Middle School Elaine Benjamin: "[the future] can be rather frightening. You could end up as head teacher with children but no teachers".

Pamela Lawrence agrees that if the problem of staff attrition gets worse changes will have to be made which might not improve the quality of education but are necessary to keep the system alive: "You know, we just won't be able to have our kids in all the districts, spread around. We will have to move the kids or move the teachers, compress the system, so we can continue to teach those kids. That's the basic plan, and as I said, it won't be pleasant, it won't necessarily be agreeable to everybody, but the option is classes without teachers".

On the other hand the problem of staff attrition is something that might be solved by the other big issue in education. As Susan O'Bey puts it: "Fortunately, going alongside with teacher attrition, is a reduction in pupil numbers, so it hasn't become a desperate situation". According to former Chief Education Officer Basil George the falling birth rate is a bigger problem than the staff retention. He thinks this problem might sort itself out, with the birth rate dropping quicker than teachers are leaving.

Although some people feel that the problem in education might solve itself due to the low birth rate, it seems clear that staff attrition continues to be a problem for St Helena. As the representative of the St Helena Transhipment Corporation Bob Conrich puts it, it might prove very difficult to prevent "the children of the island to become the gypsies of the South Atlantic".

4.4.2   Large public sector, small private sector

A second issue is the proportion of the workforce in the public sector. On Saint Helena itself, government is by far the largest employer. Only just over half of the workforce of Saint Helena is employed on-island. Of this group, over 65 % is in government service or works at parastatals. Government is organised into 14 departments, each of which has a head of department as highest responsible person. The running of the departments is overseen by committees, which report to the Executive Council and has one of the ExCo members as its chairman (see paragraph 4.5).

The high number of people working in public service is explained by Chief Education Officer Pamela Lawrence: "On an island of 5000 people you have a public service running employing about 1400. I mean you are talking about 1 person in public service on 2 other people on the island? It is a pretty high percentage, but then it is an intensive labour driven economy as well you know. So you have the ladder and three men holding it, but if you don't have the three men employed by government holding the ladder you'll get one man but two will be in social benefit. So again it's a vicious circle, isn't it, one way or the other the public service will have to pay to maintain the livelihood".

Another problem is the lack of career opportunities. In government service, a head of department position is the highest you can reach as a Saint Helenian at the moment. The Financial Secretary, the Chief Secretary, the Attorney General and the Governor are always ex-pats coming to the island on short-term contracts. As there is such a small number of top jobs available, making a career is quite hard for young people. There is a "log jam" at the top. In the words of one Saint: "I am not going to wait 15 years until the person before me retires".

The public sector drives the Saint Helenian economy to a great extent, and has always done so. In fact, the private sector "effectively functions as a servicing vehicle for the spending power created through government employment".

It is hard to say if a company like Solomon's and Co, which is 80 % government-owned, can actually be called a private sector company, but if you don't count Solomon's as private sector you hardly have anything left. Solomon's and Co are involved in a wide range of activities. They own and farm land, own shops, own the hotel and handle shipping as the local agent for Andrew Weir. The company is very old and was founded by Saul Solomon in the early 19th century. At a certain point it was bought completely by the government, but since then a percentage of shares has been sold back to other shareholders.

Other private sector employers include the Argos plant, and different shops. W.A. Thorpe and Sons operate a number of stores on the island. Reginald Yon is also a self-employed person involved in many activities. He sees the advantages of this: "I'm in taxis, a garage, in coffee, in farming …With me being in all these different businesses, I rob the one to pay for the other one and that's what keeps my head above water. It's like with the taxis, the taxis can pay for the workshops, the workshops help to pick with the coffee, the coffee can help with the bananas".

It is hard to get any numbers on the activities of the private sector. According to statistical officer Tracy Thomas: "Trade and private sector statistics are missing. The island's small businesses are not readily sharing information".

The development of the private sector is problematic, due to a number of reasons: "The private sector remains heavily dependent on the public sector due to its make up, that is retail sales and basic services provision. Its development is hindered by a lack of: management and especially financial management skills, entrepreneurial spirit, exposure to outside ideas and support for the privatisation of government services. These are in addition to the small size of the market, the difficulty in exporting products and intense competition from imports due to their significant economy of scale advantages." (HDR 1999, p. 14). The structure of the private sector has resulted in a dependence upon the public sector: "a smaller public sector will, other factors remaining unchanged, result in a smaller 'servicing' private sector"(George 1999, p. 22).

To help foster the development of the private sector, the Saint Helena Development Agency (SHDA) was set up in 1995. Although not part of government, it is closely linked, as Managing Director Lyn Thomas explains: "We are a so called QANGO, a Quasi Autonomous Non Governmental Organisation. We have a board of directors which is appointed by the government and we are funded by the SHG through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The board of directors employs the staff". The mission of the SHDA is "to champion the private sector and move the island from dependency to self-sufficiency". Its means are giving out loans and grants. "Our fund is 500,000 pounds a year. 75% of this is spent on loans. We get about 30-50 project proposals a year on average, of which about 90% is supported. This is a high percentage, but this is because most people know the criteria". There are certain priority areas, for which the terms on which a loan is provided are more favourable than in other areas. "DfID says which sectors are high priority. It mainly depends on the risks in the sector. We always encourage people to diversify their businesses and to make them better. Diversity is needed in order to prevent the all eggs in one basket scenario".

A project which was successful was the ARGOS plant. SHDA provided the shell of the building, while the contents were provided by ARGOS. Reg Yon got a grant for his coffee business as well. A coffee tree takes 4 years to grow, and this is the period a subsidy is given for. Lyn Thomas: "After these periods the grants are stopped, because the company has to be competitive. So grants are given in the development phase". Not all projects work, however. "One of the projects that didn't work was the meat processing. It just wasn't as cheap as the South African imports, so it had to close down again".

Figure 4.19: The failed meat processing plant[i]

Despite the efforts of the SHDA, the private sector is still small. The public sector is of such an overwhelming importance that Saint Helena could be called communist. French consul Michel Martineau thinks that "Saint Helena, along with Cuba, is one of the last communist areas in the world". When confronted with this comment, the Governor agreed: "In a sense it is, it is true. But much more was under government control 5 years ago, 10 years ago, and certainly under the East India Company. We are moving towards the private sector, in the right direction, but because of the small population….. You know, one of the advantages of privatisation elsewhere is you get competition. With these tiny businesses we can't build competition into the process".

Competition is indeed very difficult to achieve with such a small market.

4.4.3   Small market

It seems logical that with a population of around 5,000 people the internal market is very limited. But these people also have only limited purchasing power. This is affirmed by Lyn Thomas, director of SHDA: "The project is diminishing in size because the population is slowly diminishing, and the people living here don't have very much money"

The small internal market limits the amount of business that can be conducted on the island. This was explained by the managing director of Solomon's David Wyn-Rickets on Radio St Helena when he was asked why Solomon's chose to expand on Ascension instead of on St Helena: "There's only so much growth to be had here on the island. We have hit a glass roof, and we must consolidate. Of course there are tourist ships, but we are basically providing materials for 5,000 people, and the growth has to come from somewhere else".

The small market does not only stop entrepreneurs already on the island from expanding their businesses, it is also one of the reasons outward investors are not interested to come to the island according to the government economist Tom Crowards: "The other thing is that there is no internal market. No one comes here. You wouldn't get any investor to come. (….) You know, other small markets where they have 2 or 300,000 people, it's still very small, but they might attract something to sell local. But there's just no way that anyone will come to St Helena". Alan Savery, who has been advising SHG about revising the banking system, gives a good example of this when explaining why it's nearly impossible to get a branch of a commercial bank on the island: "If you rule out offshore banking here, then the volume of banking here is just not enough to interest a commercial branch".

A problem already mentioned is the lack of competition on the island. Often there is only just enough demand for one company to make a profit in a certain business. In many cases therefore it is impossible to have two companies providing the same service, as the market does not allow both to be profitable.

The result is that on many services on the island there is a monopoly. According to chief finance officer Desmond Wade this can lead to situations where people misuse their monopoly to make high profits: "You can't have competition. And if you've got a monopoly.. someone could want to make a huge profit and you've got no other place to go to, you know. They couldn't open up another quarry down the road."

The most important company that has been regularly accused of misusing its monopoly is Cable and Wireless. The French Consul Michel Martineau feels that this company drives up their prices as far as possible: "…it is a scary thing. So they cannot go as far as they want because now they reach a stage where you almost pay less to make a direct satellite call, the prices are just below that".

Although there's no denying that the prices of Cable and Wireless are fairly high, Hensil O'Bey, the managing director of C&W denies that those high prices are due to the monopoly of the company. The biggest reasons for the high prices are the isolation of the island and again the small market. Profits for C&W are small and fairly recent, as the managing director explains: "We have at first been operating at considerable losses. Now we are making small profits, but we also get taxed by government now on those….. our long-term investments were initially very high, but now we are finally seeing the returns."

Figure 4.20: Cable and Wireless headquarters at the Briars[i]

Hensil O'Bey feels that it is unlikely that any competition will come to the island in the near future: "Well, we hear from time to time that there is interest. We have an exclusive licence to certain things, but that will not stop them. However, I think the economy is not big enough, and the other companies may not want to wait so long for a return on their investment, they will find a better place to go."

4.4.4 Lack of commercial bank

The small market is a problem for setting up a bank on Saint Helena. But the fact that there are hardly any banking services on the island and the possibilities for getting loans are severely restrained, form a major problem in their own right. This problem was already recognised 20 years ago: "A much greater problem is the total lack of credit on the island – a vital requirement for the revival of any economy. People cannot be expected to expand if they cannot borrow" (Simpson 1982, p. 70). The current Government Savings Bank only offers the option of depositing money, and withdrawing it again. Besides, a system for doing overseas transactions is in place through the crown agents, but this is usually a long and expensive process.

Our visit to the island coincided with the visit of banking consultant Alan Savery, who was recruited by SHG to look at the issue of banking. Employed by the British volunteer organisation BESO (British Executive Services Overseas), he is not attached to anyone. He recognises a number of problems with the current savings bank. One is related to cash: "there is a huge amount of cash in circulation. Primarily because there is no other system. A good example of this is… most of the residents here have accounts with the stores or the traders. At the end of the month they come to the store, get the bill from the store, go to the savings bank, collect the cash and pay the cash at the shop. And at the end of the day the store brings the cash back to the bank. So virtually everybody is paying cash, you have huge amounts in circulation. Which means that people in businesses spend huge amounts of time counting and transporting cash around. And in the bank they spend a huge amount of time counting the cash that's going in and out". But at the same time: "If you bring cash to the bank here there is nowhere for it to go. In the UK or anywhere else, you can put it somewhere else, employ it usefully. Here there is nothing you can do until the next boat comes in. And then it takes 2 days to Ascension or 5 days to Cape town before you can actually start to employ the funds".

The cash is reinvested overseas, which takes potential productive money away from the island. And the limited range of services offered in the bank means that personal loans are not available. Desmond Wade, Chief Finance Officer, explains: "The banking law don't allow them to lend directly to individuals, but government do borrow money from the bank, and lend it to people for house-building. That's the only thing for which they are allowed to lend money". Small businesses can go to SHDA for loans, but individuals wishing to borrow money, for example to buy a car, have nowhere to go. This could change with the new banking system. Other changes can be of benefit to tourists: an ATM linked to the international network, or an online system of checking credit cards.

Most of the problems with banking are practical and can be solved in the short term, if money is available. It is actually getting the legislation in place which is going to be the longest process. The current Banking ordinance is very detailed and does not leave much room for change. Change will have to come though, because a new bank offering a wider range of services is needed to bring the island forward.

4.4.5   Lack of entrepreneurship

A new bank might bring new business. At the moment the start of a new business is a rare phenomenon on Saint Helena. That may be due to the restraining factors mentioned above, but another reason often mentioned is the lack of an entrepreneurial spirit among the population. People do not think about starting a new business. Both the Education Department and SHDA are trying to instil a more entrepreneurial spirit among the local population, especially young people. In the words of SHDA Director Lyn Thomas: "The single largest employer on the island has always been the government. This has caused a dependency thinking routine. There is always somebody telling you what to do. We're trying to develop that entrepreneurial culture, but that is not easy. In the government jobs you are only responsible for the small part you work on. Do your job, go home, collect your pay, spend your money. There's little saving and no risk. Our school kids think: 'I want to get a job and build a house'. We're trying to encourage them and are saying: Why don't you build a business?".

Many young people seek their challenges off the island however. Leaving the island is the easiest option and probably the cleverest at the moment. The economic opportunities on Saint Helena will have to be improved drastically to convince these young people to seek their future on-island.

4.4.6   Conclusion

There are many factors influencing the lack of development so far. Saint Helena's economic problems are huge.

"It is self evident that considerable progress has been made in raising people's standard of living over the last decade. However, over the same period it is also pertinent to note that real wages in the public sector have fallen by around 16 per cent (given the dominance of the public sector it is presumed that private sector wages have moved broadly in line with those of the public sector) while the number of St Helenians working offshore has roughly doubled. It is therefore clear that the island's increased standard of living is principally due to offshore employment and the subsequent remittances." (UNDP 1999, p. 8)

One thing worth mentioning is that many economic activities on Saint Helena never reach the statistics. Basil George explains: "on the surface you look and see nothing is happening, but that is not the way I see it from the inside. All sorts of things happen what you don't pay for. My son now is building a house, and I go help him on Saturdays because he works. So that saves a labourer. I'm not a skilled person but I can hold up a piece of wood, you know. And he knows a friend who knows how to scaffold, if he wants some concrete, he is going to give up a day and you've got some free labour on that. All this I call it economic subculture, that's what really makes the island work".

While an informal economy may keep St Helena going, it is the political structure that organises society.

4.5   Political structure

Democracy is a recent phenomenon on Saint Helena, as an elected legislative council was only put in place through the 1966 constitution. Democracy is also a limited phenomenon, as the Governor still holds executive authority and has the power to be the absolute ruler of Saint Helena and its dependencies.

In practice, he is not. The day-to-day running of the island is in the hands of an executive council, which is made up mostly of members of the legislative council. The Governor is obliged by the constitution to consult the mostly-elected legislative council on many matters, and follow their advice. A number of very important matters are excepted however: he has a veto in these cases. These are called "Governor's special responsibilities" in the constitution, and they are the following:

   (a) The appointment (etc.) of any person to any public office,
   (b) Defence,
   (c) External affairs,
   (d) Internal security, including the police,
   (e) The administration of justice,
   (f) Finance, and
   (g) Shipping.

(St. Helena Constitution Order 1988, section 12 (1))

Through this provision it is guaranteed that Britain (through the Governor) ultimately decides what happens on Saint Helena. If the Governor overrides a decision of the Legislative Council, he will have to explain to his superiors in London (not to the people of Saint Helena) why he has done so. The current Governor has never used this power.

Governor Hollamby thinks Saint Helena is a democracy. In our interview with him, he extensively defended this statement, en passant explaining the political system of Saint Helena.

"I think there is, unusually, a very large level of democracy, because we have this system of councils. The councils start with the executive council. And that's made up… Well, first about the election process itself. You've got 12 members of legislative council. They represent 8 constituencies, the larger have two, the smaller have one. Now those twelve get together without any influence from the governor or anybody ex-officio, and they elect five of their own members to chair 5 of the committees that have the biggest spending, the biggest budgets in government: Agriculture and natural resources, Employment and social security, Education, Public health and social services and Public works. Now those five council committee chairmen are also simultaneously members of the executive council. Add to them three ex-officio members, which are the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney general. They advise, the eight of them together, the governor. You already got an in-built majority of 5 elected members, as against three appointed members, and one of these three ex-officio members does not have a vote in either executive council or legislative council. So if there is a dispute, the elected members always have a majority in executive council. In legislative council; if you say that the five members who are in ExCo are in government, so they should vote with the government; you still got seven who can vote against. You've got three ex-officios, but the attorney general again does not have a vote. So you've got balance there. And then in the five committees themselves, you've got a politician who is chairman, he probably has two or three other politicians on the same committee, and then two or three officials. So again, people elected have majority views. And they do want to share responsibility. They don't want to have responsibility because they are chairman of the committee. They want to share responsibility with the members of that committee. So in a strange way it is quite a democratic system".

A strange way indeed: the executive authorities are at the same time also the legislative authorities, and even the judicial authorities are not completely independent, as the Attorney-General is on both councils. This may be mainly in an advisory capacity, but he still knows everything that is going on.

The meetings of executive council are conducted in secret, although the main outcomes are published in the Saint Helena Herald. The elected councillors who are heading a committee are paid by the government and therefore can be regarded as part of government. Although they are elected, they cannot talk to their constituents about what they exactly do in executive council. At the same time, they are to control the government in legislative council. These conflicting interests are hard to explain to the voters. In practice, the elected members of the legislative council who are not in the executive council act as opposition to the "government".

It is unclear what or who exactly you are talking about when talking about government. Is it the Governor? Is it the Executive Council? Is it the heads of department, who do the day to day running of the island? Basil George recognises this problem, but adds: "I think legally when you look at the government, it would be the sort of cabinet, which would be the executive council".

There are no political parties on Saint Helena. In the 1970s the Saint Helena Labour Party was founded by an expatriate, Mr. Thornton from South Africa. He had taken over the company of Solomon's and was involved in a power struggle with the government. This he lost, he was subsequently expelled from the island, and the party disappeared.

Although elected in a district system, the councillors do not always live in the district they represent. Eric George is councillor for Sandy Bay, but has always been a Jamestown

resident. "I know quite a lot of people who asked me to stand, one of them from Sandy Bay and I considered it and did it. I was never from Sandy Bay. I'm from Jamestown. One of the reasons is that it is only a one councillor constituency. And I felt that I could do better in that area than I could do in other areas. That is my sole reason. Lovely people, the people know me very well, and a smaller number of people to deal with".

In the last elections in 2001, a number of seats were not contested, especially for the outlying one-councillor-districts. As the population is very small, all voters know their councillor personally. In the system of social control that is in place it is therefore very hard to challenge a sitting councillor.

One idea to overcome this problem is to have island-wide elections, to the example of Tristan da Cunha. The person who gets the most votes becomes "Chief Islander', and then the next person gets in until all the seats are filled. Chief Education Officer Pamela Lawrence explains the problems of the district system and stresses the need for education: "I would like to see island wide elections for a start, so the island can choose. Because what happens now you have a small district where a person comes in and is not voted in at all with elections. Or now you have elections in a district and one good candidate loses out to another good candidate but in another district a terrible person gets in. So I think island wide elections would help. I also feel, but again there are also arguments against, that there should be minimum qualifications for becoming politician. And by that I mean at least having a reasonable level of literacy, so they can read and write"

In the current political set-up responsibilities are unclear, according to councillor Eric George: "The governor has no need to listen to us if he don't feel that it is in the interest of the island or whoever". At the same time, the governor argues that he wants to share responsibility, but the politicians don't want it. "One of my special responsibilities is for the RMS Saint Helena, shipping. I would like to devolve that to the Executive Council, but it is an intricate and difficult subject and they don't want that. They would sooner have me make mistakes and criticise than taking responsibility for that ship (…) The majority of councillors are against having a ministerial system of government, because they would then have to accept full responsibility for their own affairs. It's amazing how the island is backward-thinking in that respect".

The political system on Saint Helena is in need of some restructuring. This could be facilitated by the knowledge and expertise of an independent constitutional adviser, who will be visiting the island in October 2002, and who has written an extensive 'issues paper' on constitutional development (Quentin-Baxter 2002). Her proposals will be fully discussed in chapter 7.

4.6   Conclusion

In this chapter we have looked at St Helena itself: its landscape, its people, its local economy and its politics. In terms of the 'scales of spatial identity' discussed in chapter 2 we discussed the island level in this chapter.

The island was once almost totally covered with vegetation, but human influence caused the destruction of much of the islands' original vegetation. A large part of the island has now been turned into 'badlands' and erosion is a major problem on the island. The endemic species that are still in existence are threatened, although preservation became more important in recent years.

Agricultural development on the island is limited and the island is not even near self-sufficiency in this aspect. A multitude of natural and human factors have led to a limited

agricultural production. Not surprisingly, fishing is of some importance to the local economy. But the lack of offshore fishing boats restricts the exploitation of the sea. Another problem is posed by the fact that foreign vessels cannot be monitored in any way, which mean they can come in and fish without paying a license fee.

The island was settled only in 1659, 157 years after its discovery. Population has been fairly stable since about 1850 and the total enumerated population of the island in 1998 was 5,157.

From 1987 to 1998 however population of the island has seen a decline of 636 people. This is caused by two factors, of which the first is the fall in the birth rate. The decline is still continuing, with only 36 babies being born in 2001. The second factor is the large out-migration. Although this is not a new phenomenon, combined with the low birth rate it causes concern under the Saints. Emigration is caused by the better job opportunities abroad. Saints work mainly in the UK, Ascension and the Falklands.

In the social structure on the island, family life plays a very important role. Family is what holds the Saint Helenian society together. On an individual level, family is the first source of identification. The number of families on the island is fairly limited and it is an often heard remark that "everyone is related to everyone else". The family unit is under some pressure from the fact that every family has some members working overseas, sometimes causing problems for young children whose parents are working overseas.

St Helena is a very small society where everyone knows everyone, and therefore social control is very high and it is hard to be different. You have to either adapt or leave the island to be different. Social problems are mostly kept within the family, but one problem that is very visible is alcoholism. Alcohol abuse is often the trigger for other social problems like domestic violence as well.

Religion is an important element in the social structure and for many Saints it is also part of the heritage of the island. More than 80% of the population regards itself as member of the Anglican Church, with other Christian faiths and the Bahai faith also present on the island.

The educational system faces the problem of staff attrition as well as dropping numbers of school children. Because of dropping pupil numbers a number of first schools in the outlying areas had to close down shortly after the introduction of the three tier system in 1988. The consequences of the low birth rate will be very clear: In 5 years time there will be only 36 children to be divided over 4 first schools. Achievement levels are well below those in the United Kingdom, the main reason for this being the shortage of a qualified teaching force.

Saints are known for their 'resourcefulness': practical skill is highly valued and most buildings and roads have been built using local materials and local skills. This resourcefulness does not however change the dependent position of St Helena but deals with the circumstances arising from this dependency.

When taking a look at the local economic structure of the island it becomes clear that St Helena's economic problems are huge. The increased standard of living on the island is due to remittances created by offshore employment, while the St Helenian economy does not develop much. Problems associated with the economy are high imports and low exports, staff attrition, a large public sector, a small market and a lack of entrepreneurship.

In chapter 3 we have taken a look at St Helena in the wider world, while in this chapter we have taken a look at the island at the 'level' of the island. St Helena is however not homogenous, but differences between various parts of the island are present. Therefore we will take a look at the regional differentiation of St Helena in the next chapter.

Chapter 5   Regional differentiation

Saint Helena is such a small, lonely rock in the middle of the South Atlantic that you expect it to form a single community. While for many purposes it does form one community, there are still significant differences on the island. We were surprised by the diversity and so was Bishop John: "it's amazing that on such a small island they even speak English with a different accent and they have entirely different attitudes and very rarely do they marry outside their own community". Indeed, diversity is an important component of Saint Helenian identity. Some regional differences are obvious at first sight or hearing, especially those that are connected to the physical environment or the language. But the people can be different as well, something which is not immediately obvious.

Surprisingly, very little has been written about regional differentiation on Saint Helena. For outside researchers like us it is very hard to find these differences below the level of the island, as these are taken for granted and mostly in the private sphere. In this chapter we will attempt to describe the regional differentiation on Saint Helena on the basis of our own explorations of the island and the interviews we have held. We do not pretend this to be a full description. That would require much more research time than the 2 ½ months we spent on the island.

5.1   Town and country

The most basic level of 'regional differentiation' on the island is the division between town and country. Jamestown, including Ladder Hill, is town and the rest of the island is country. This division is clear in everyday speech. In town you will hear people say things like "I got this from my sister who lives up country", while walking around Longwood you will hear people ask you "Can I take you down into town?". Jamestown is definitely considered to be more urban by many islanders. One resident even remarked that he disliked going to Jamestown because of the pollution caused by the traffic. This separation of town and country has also been remarked upon by the members of the 1981 geographical expedition: "The inhabitants of Jamestown consider themselves metropolitan whilst they consider those of the outlying regions to be distinctly rural" (Simpson 1982, p. 74).

The only exception to the town-country division is Half Tree Hollow (HTH), which has a somewhat ambiguous position. As a Saint declared: "Not town, it is the outskirts of town, but not really country either". For functional purposes it can be regarded as a town suburb, but it is distinct from town: "It's a kind of half-way house, isn't it". According to some it is not country either, but others can draw a strict border: from Three Tanks up (just above Ladder Hill) it is country, below there is town (see figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Three Tanks[i]

The physical geography influences the lifestyle of town and country people, reinforcing the differences. Town is in a narrow valley, which is one of the hottest places on the island with little rainfall. Besides, it is crowded, not leaving room for substantial gardens. The same goes for the crowded and rocky area of HTH. In the country, people usually live further from each other, with more room for small-scale farming and gardening. A HTH resident explains: "in HTH, I can't have a garden, it's only rock up there, but people at Levelwood, Longwood, Sandy Bay & Blue Hill can have their own little kitchen garden. So I have to buy vegetables".

Another difference is in language. People can easily understand each other, but the town dialect is different from the country dialects. For example, townspeople are known for saying "te" instead of "the". According to Susan O'Bey "there is rivalry as well. You know when I went to school I used to laugh at my country friends about the way they spoke. And just the same they would laugh at us".

Differences between town and country seem to have significantly decreased since more and more people got cars, and especially since the opening of Prince Andrew School. Before discussing these developments further, the different districts will be introduced.

5.2   Districts

Saint Helena is divided into 8 electoral areas, which are generally called districts. The people of the 4 largest districts elect two members to the Legislative Council, while in the smaller districts only one is elected. Not all the districts are relevant as a source for spatial identity.

The 8 districts differ enormously in population density (see table 5.1). While Blue Hill has a population of 4.6 persons per square kilometre, in Half Tree Hollow this is 725. The average for Saint Helena as a whole is 40 persons per km², which is rather low compared to the population densities of the United Kingdom (about 250) and the Netherlands (about 470).

Unfortunately figures for population change are not available, as there have been border changes to the electoral areas. The electoral area of Alarm Forest was created between the 1987 and 1998 censuses. The changes to the Longwood and Jamestown districts due to the creation of Alarm Forest are too great to make any comparison possible (and the exact changes could not be retraced as these were not recorded by the statistical office). In the other districts, border changes, if any, were minor. According to the Statistical Officer "For these areas it will only be like 5 or 10 people". As the numbers are small, this still can make a comparison rather useless. A map including district borders can be found in appendix A, and population figures can be found in table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Population distribution and density by district, 1998

	Total Population	% Distribution	Area (km²)	Pop. Density (km²)
Jamestown	864	16.1	3.6	240
Half Tree Hollow	1,126	23.1	1.6	704
St Paul's	893	18.6	11.4	78
Blue Hill	176	3.6	36.5	5
Sandy Bay	254	5.2	15.3	17
Levelwood	373	7.7	14.0	27
Longwood	951	19.5	33.4	29
Alarm Forest	279	5.9	5.9	47
Total	4,891	100.0	121.7	40

Source: 1998 Population Census, p. 13 (and calculation)

Surprisingly, not the capital of Jamestown, but the "suburb" of Half Tree Hollow has the largest population. This situation has come up only recently. Over the last 40 years or so Half

Tree Hollow has seen a strong growth pattern. Until the sixties HTH was just a small community with only a few houses, as resident Desmond Wade illustrates: "When I was a boy there were about half a dozen homes......But it really took off in the '60s and '70s, right up to now".

According to Desmond Wade the Half Tree Hollow area was ideal to meet the demand for land needed for the building of new homes in the past: "I think what happened was that the location for services was easy in HTH. Water was there and electricity was there. So it was a matter of making roads. And it's close by the quarry and the town, so that was easy. Because people in town didn't want to live in Longwood or Sandy Bay, but they don't mind living in HTH, it's closer to the town".

Obviously there was a demand for land that could be used to build new houses. The story of Desmond Wade shows that people wanted to build as close as possible to Jamestown, the economic and social centre of the island.

5.2.1   Jamestown

"Town" is the original place of landing and settlement on Saint Helena. Opposite the narrow James Valley is the best, if not the only place for ships to anchor. The narrowness of the valley means that possibilities for expansion of Jamestown have long been exhausted, leaving the Jamestown population at under 1,000. This makes it one of the smallest "Cities" and capitals in the world. The centre of town is basically only one street, Main Street, which splits into the road to Longwood (Side Path) and Market Street.

Every person coming to Saint Helena arrives at the steps at the end of the wharf area. From here you have to pass the container handling area and a number of sheds which are used by customs. Then you are at the seafront, which is a few hundred metres long. On the sea side are parking places, while on the land side you will find the swimming pool and the mule yard area, which is a favourite place to have lunch, as there is a snack bar. At the end of the sea front is Donny's club, opened in 1998 and a popular venue to go out on weekends, or have a drink on Friday after work.

Figure 5.2 Jamestown wharf and container handling area[i]

Before reaching Donny's you turn left however, and you pass over a moat and through an archway to enter Jamestown proper. You are now on the Grand Parade, usually a parking place but for festivities like Saint Helena Day it is used for large gatherings. Immediately on the left hand side is the Castle: the place the Governor works from and where a number of important government offices are located. The Police headquarters, the Court House and the Public Library can also be found at the Grand Parade's left hand side. On the right hand side of Grand Parade you'll find a number of warehouses, and in a small alley to the right the new Saint Helena Museum is located. This is also the bottom of Jacob's Ladder, a stairway of 699 steps leading up to Ladder Hill Fort. The north end of the Grand parade is marked by St. James's Church on the right and the Castle Gardens on the left. Here Main Street starts, which has most other

government- and other important offices. The Post office, the shipping office, the tourist office, the Saint Helena Development Agency, as well as the Consulate Hotel and two guesthouses, and a number of relatively large shops are all on Main Street. It is a wide two lane road with parking in the middle, which ends in a small roundabout in front of the Canister building. In this building the Department of Education and the Tourist Office are located.

Figure 5.3 Lower Jamestown from Ladder Hill[i]

Passing the Canister to the left you enter Napoleon Street. This street climbs slowly to become Side Path (the main road up to Longwood) after about 200 metres. A little way behind the Canister the Jamestown Community Centre is located. Passing the Canister to the right, the road takes a sharp right turn in front of the market. Just before the market you can go into a small alley, along which the fuel station and garage can be found and which ends at the bottom of Jacob's Ladder. But passing the market, the main road then turns left again to become Market Street. This area is a favourite place to hang out, as the town's two pubs are located here, as well as a number of shops. Going up Market Street from the Market more shops can be found on both sides of the road. Some are quite large (such as Thorpe's Grocery store), and some are hardly recognisable as a shop, but the locals obviously know where to find them. The Seventh Day Adventists have their church in this area. After a few hundred metres the Saint Helena Fire Service is on the right, followed by the Teacher Education Centre and the Baptist Church. On the left hand side Jamestown First School and Pilling Middle School are facing each other, with a large fenced-off playing area in between.

Past the school you enter Upper Jamestown, although there is no clear border. Turning left at Seales's corner you can cross the Run (a canalised stream through the valley towards the sea) to find the Haven, the old people's home. A bit further up on Market Street on the left hand side you find Barracks Square, which used to be a square for the military to parade on, their barracks surrounding it. It is now a residential area. Market Street still continues until you see China Lane, where you come down from Ladder Hill road (from HTH). If you want to enter Ladder Hill Road you will have to continue a bit further, passing the Catholic Church before turning right. By then you are almost at the hospital, which is the end of Market Street. A small road continues to the left of the hospital to a bridge over the Run and is therefore called New Bridge Road. This small road continues up Constitution Hill to the Briars, but although this connects to the main Jamestown-Longwood road it is usually not used for through traffic due to its steepness.

Figure 5.4 View of Upper Jamestown and Side Path from Ladder Hill[i]

Just before the hospital you can also turn left into a small alley to reach the former quarry. This is now in use as a football ground and is a popular place for the local youth to gather in the early evening. From here you can also walk alongside the Run all the way into the centre of town.

Jamestown is obviously the capital, and it is the place where people come to shop and do business. Friday is the time to do a lot of shopping, as well as Saturday evening. Then shops open from about 6.30 to 9 pm and people come in from the country to do their shopping and go out afterwards. The main shops for groceries are the Spar (owned by Solomon's), and Thorpe's Grocery shop. The third large grocery shop, C&M's store, has closed recently. For other supplies the Emporium (owned by Thorpe's) and Solomon's DIY are available. A number of small shops selling groceries, clothing or gifts are present, as well as a video library.

Because of the presence of the shops and government services town is also the place most people work. But many workers do not live in town. They are transported back and forth by a system of minibuses that operates in the morning and late afternoon. This is not public transport however. It is not possible to just board one of these buses and buy a ticket, the transport has to be organised through your work.

On weekdays after 5.30 pm and on Sundays Jamestown can be described as dead. From the steps of the Consulate Hotel you can "watch the world not go by". Later in the evenings small groups of people might gather in the two pubs and the Consulate hotel bar.

*Figure 5.5 Rupert's Valley, seen from Munden's Hill[i]*

The electoral area of Jamestown also includes Rupert's Valley, a valley just east of Jamestown but separated from it by Munden's Hill. This is the main industrial area of the island, geared towards fishing. Rupert's can be reached by following Side Path, and turning left at the top on to Field Road which then steeply descends. Just before hitting the bottom of the valley the island's power station

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(which runs on diesel) can be heard and seen on the right. Further towards the seafront you pass the building of the Saint Helena Fisheries Corporation (SHFC) and the St. Helena Canning Co.. At the sea front are the fish handling area and the Argos fish processing plant. Rupert's Valley also includes some 20 houses.

5.2.2   Half Tree Hollow

The district of Half Tree Hollow is the smallest of the districts, but also the most populous with 1,126 inhabitants on 1.6 square kilometres. It is located on a piece of land about 800 metres wide, which gently slopes up from Ladder Hill to the bottom of High Knoll. Steep valleys to the east (James Valley) and west (Breakneck Valley) form natural borders for the district (see figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6 Half Tree Hollow district[ii]
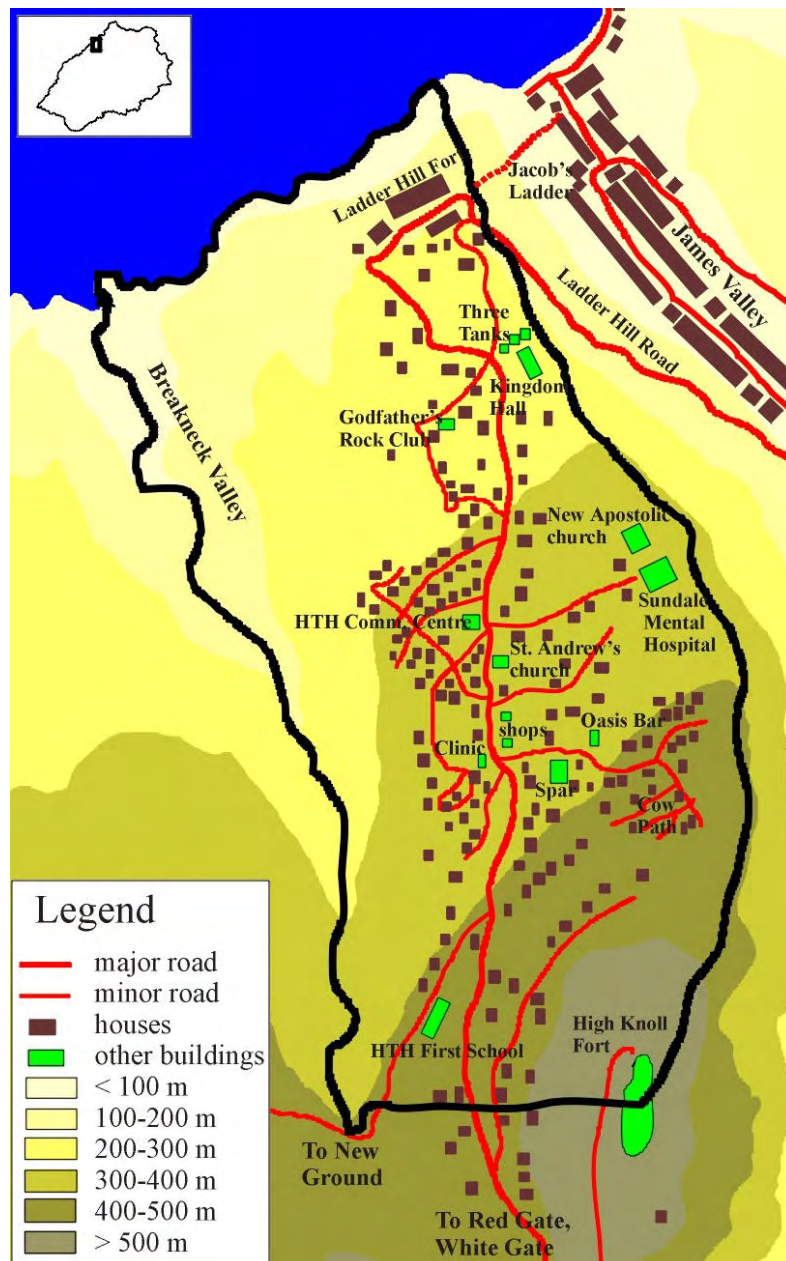
It is usually regarded as a Jamestown suburb, "neither town nor country". The electoral area includes Ladder Hill, which is generally regarded as part of town. Here Ladder Hill Road and Jacob's Ladder meet at the entrance to the Ladder Hill fort, which is no longer in use as fort, but in areas of which people live. Cannons still point out to sea, although they are rusty.

Driving up from Ladder Hill, you pass Three Tanks and then the large Kingdom Hall for the Jehovah's Witnesses on the left. This road is called Commonwealth Avenue, one of the few roads with a name outside of Jamestown. Up from here there are small roads to the left and right leading to more houses, and small shops. To the right is the community centre, while a road to the left leads to another large church: the recently-built New Apostolic church. In what could be regarded as the centre of the settlement, the Spar supermarket, fuel station and Solomon's bakery are located. Very close by are a number of other shops and the HTH

Clinic. Other services in HTH include two places to go out: the Oasis Bar and the Godfather's Rock club. Both are only open on weekends.

The main road from Jamestown cuts right through the settlement before continuing on to White Gate in the district of St. Paul's. A smaller road turns right towards the HTH First School and the New Ground area in the St. Paul's district.

The whole of HTH is towered over by High Knoll Fort (figure 5.7), built on the highest peak in the area. The closest area to this fort is called Cow Path. This place has a bad image, as it is quite frequently named in the weekly police activity reports.

Figure 5.7 Half Tree Hollow seen from High Knoll Fort[i]

The Half Tree Hollow population grew by 4.5 % between the 1987 and 1998 censuses and it was thereby the only district (for which comparable data were available) to grow in this period. This growth might not continue for very long though, as space for new houses is running out and people are building more in areas such as New Ground.

There are not many job opportunities in HTH, so most people commute to work elsewhere, mainly in town. Although Half Tree Hollow now exists for a number of years, for most residents it is still only the place where they live, not the place they are from. "I am a town girl, but I now live up in HTH".

5.2.3   Saint Paul's

While Half Tree Hollow is known as a suburb and a place to live, Saint Paul's is more known as a place where important buildings and services are located. When talking about Saint Paul's, people might not even think about the district in the first place, but rather about the Cathedral. The Cathedral is in the White Gate area, which can be regarded as the centre of Saint Paul's district. Besides the cathedral, Plantation House (the Governor's residence) and the Kingshurst community centre are located here. There are only a few houses in this area. Larger population concentrations can be found near Rosemary Plain and at New Ground.

From Jamestown you enter the Saint Paul's district just before Red Gate House. Just past Red Gate House, you can turn left towards Francis Plain. The road descends steeply to a small valley, in which a factory site is located. Here a number of businesses were tried out, including the St. Helena Brewery and the Meat Processing factory. They all failed and the site is now abandoned. From this valley a short climb brings you to Francis Plain, the site of Prince Andrew School. This is the only secondary school on the island. It opened in 1988. Francis Plain itself is the only level piece of land on the island and is therefore in use as football, athletics and cricket pitch.

Continuing straight on from Red Gate House brings you to White Gate: the entrance of Plantation House. In front of the entrance you'll find the only piece of road on the island which is divided into two lanes by middle stripes.

Figure 5.8 Plantation House and its resident tortoises[i]

Turning right here, the road leads to Scotland, where the Agricultural and Natural Resources Department is located. It then continues to Rosemary Plain. This is the site of Farm Lodge, the only guesthouse for tourists located "up country". The road then loops back to New Ground, passing the largely unused Guinea Grass community centre. New Ground is mainly a continuation of HTH, and quite a bit of building activity is going on there. It is also the site of the island's refuse dump and a quarry, but these are protected from view from most angles.

From Rosemary Plain a dead-end road continues towards St. Martin in the Fields' church and the top of Lemon Valley. Lemon Valley is a nice valley with opportunities for swimming and other recreational activities. Saints often go there on weekends or in holidays to have barbecues. It is usually reached from Jamestown by boat, although it can also be reached by descending along a footpath from near Rosemary Plain.

Back to the centre of the settlement. Continuing straight on at White Gate you are on the main road towards Sandy Bay and Blue Hill. Soon you can take a turn to the right and after a short steep climb you are at the site of both the island's radio station and Saint Paul's first and middle schools, the largest primary school on the island. Its "catchment area" includes Saint Paul's, Blue Hill, Sandy Bay and part of HTH districts (figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9 Saint Paul's first and middle school[i]

5.2.4   Blue Hill

Coming from Saint Paul's the main road soon forks. Taking the right fork, you find yourself on the only road to the island's remotest and largest district. The Blue Hill district covers 30%

of the island's area, but has only 3.6% of its population. The road towards Blue Hill goes along a ridge and is often covered in clouds. On a clear day there are magnificent views to both sides of the island however. You pass just below High Peak (798 m) and have to take a lot of sharp bends, so that the 7 miles from Jamestown will take you at least 20 minutes by car. The road forks once again, with the possibility of turning right to descend to Head O'Wain and Horse Pasture, a picnic area. Close to here is Broad Bottom, the site SHELCO proposes to build a hotel to go with the airport (see chapter 8).

Continuing left along the ridge, the road passes the church of St. Helena and the Cross, and then finally descends into a valley, which is the area of Blue Hill village. There are just a few houses here, but there is a thriving community centre and a pub: the Moon Tavern. Blue Hill's first school was closed in 1990. The community has coped quite well with that loss, according to Pamela Lawrence: "in Blue Hill the school was placed right next to the community centre anyway. And life goes on in the community centre, that is where people get together".

Other services that remain in Blue Hill include a small shop located along a gravel road just east of the village. The end of this road is the starting point for a number of walks, for example towards Thompson's Valley where old fortifications can be found. Blue Hill is generally regarded as the periphery of Saint Helena, and in recent years it has had to cope with a loss of population, which at the latest census stood at 176. This was 15 people (8 %) less than at the 1987 census.

Blue Hill residents tend to be very proud of, and attached to their district, as is expressed by resident Ralph Peters: "[I was born] on the western side, at a place called Woodlands. I still live there, and probably die there". Among other Saints Blue Hill residents have a conservative image: "Blue Hill people tend to think in the old-fashioned way". When asked to describe the district, Saints often comment on its green looks, and the importance of cattle farming. Pamela Young for example states: "you will find more cows in Blue Hill. And you won't find bananas in Blue Hill. You will find loads of bananas in Sandy Bay. The terrain is similar although Blue Hill has got more of a greener look".

Figure 5.10 Blue Hill store (a) entrance[i] (b) inside[i]

Services to this "remote" district have greatly improved in recent years: especially in water provision. In 1987 only 9 people (5 % of the population) had access to piped water inside the house. By 1998 this was up to 78%. A similar development was recorded in the provision of flush toilets, and electricity provision was greatly improved as well.

5.2.5   Sandy Bay

There are 3 ways to enter the district of Sandy Bay. The most obvious way is by the road from Jamestown, but there is also a small road from the Alarm Forest area and Longwood. Along both these roads you will find a lot of flax. Shortly after these two roads have joined, and near the start of the Sandy Bay settlement it is joined by the third road: around the Peaks to Levelwood and Hutt's Gate.

This intersection is also where the Sandy Bay first school was located, before it was closed down due to falling pupil numbers in the early 1990s. The building is now in use as an environmental centre. Nearby the clinic and the community centre can also be found, as well as Thorpe's grocery shop. Along with Colin's Bar this is the place to meet people in Sandy Bay. For the bar you have to drive a bit further down, through a farming area with mainly bananas and coffee. From here the road continues down to the sea, descending very steeply and meeting a few houses on the way. At the sea side remains of fortifications can be found, but no beach, in spite of the name Sandy Bay. A good place to swim is reached by an hour's walk and a descent with ropes: Lot's wife's ponds. Lot and Lot's wife are both impressive rocks and landmarks for Sandy Bay. Near the end of the valley is also the Baptist Chapel, which although in a remote location is still in use.

Figure 5.11 Sandy Bay as seen from Lot[i]

On the road to Levelwood, you will pass through the area of Green Hill, where a few houses can be found as well.

The population of Sandy Bay was 254 in 1998, down by 50 (16%) since the census before. Services to the area were improved greatly, although Sandy Bay remains the district with the greatest percentage of people not having access to certain services (see figure 5.12).

Figure 5.12 Access to services, Sandy Bay and Saint Helena 1998
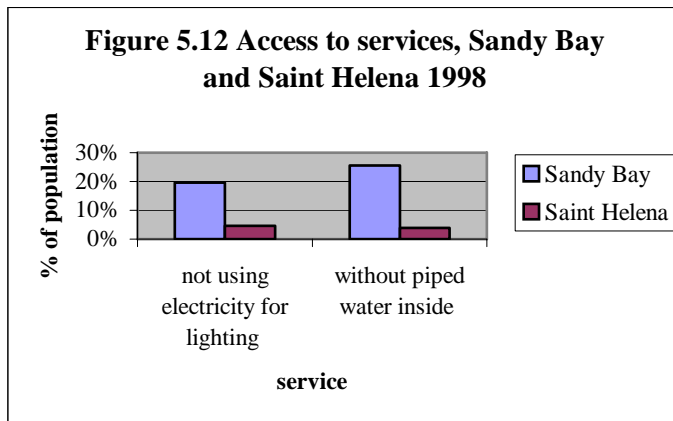
Source: Population Census 1998, p. 133, 136

Sandy Bay is also the district where car ownership was lowest at the 1998 census, with just over 40% of the households owning one or more (51% for the island as a whole). In the case of Sandy Bay, this can be a real problem, as it is too far to walk to Jamestown and its facilities.

The first thing that springs to Saints' minds when talking about Sandy Bay is often the banana farming. The people are distinct as well, as expressed by P.A.S. head teacher Susan O'Bey: "I can look at a child and say right you are a Sandy Bay child. And that is because of their physical characteristics. The shape of their eyes, their nose, their colouring"

5.2.6   Levelwood

There are two ways to reach Levelwood: from Sandy Bay or from Hutt's gate (at the main Jamestown-Longwood road). Levelwood is on the southwest side of the central peaks of the island, and the road passing through it is the road which zigzags all around the peaks, and which also serves as the border of Diana's Peak National Park. This is the only national park on the island, and also its wettest and greenest area. The island's highest peaks are often covered in clouds, but on a clear day views from Diana's Peak (820 m) are magnificent.

Coming from Hutt's Gate, you enter Levelwood district at Woody Ridge, where an old flax mill is located. Continuing on, the first sign of Levelwood's main settlement is the building of

the first school, which was closed in the early 1990s. Then you will pass the clinic, before reaching the Silver Hill turn-off. This is where both the Levelwood shop and the Silver Hill bar are located: the centre of the settlement. Taking the turn-off, you pass through an area with quite a few houses before the road turns into gravel at the place which gave the district its name. Continuing on the road to Sandy Bay, scattered houses can be found and the start of a number of walks, for example to Great Stone Top which is a landmark of the area.

The population of Levelwood was 373 in 1998, down by 41 (10%) since the last census. Services reached Levelwood later than most other parts of the island. In 1987, there was hardly any electricity in the district, as can be seen in figures 5.13 and 5.14. Levelwood has by now almost come up to Saint Helena's average.

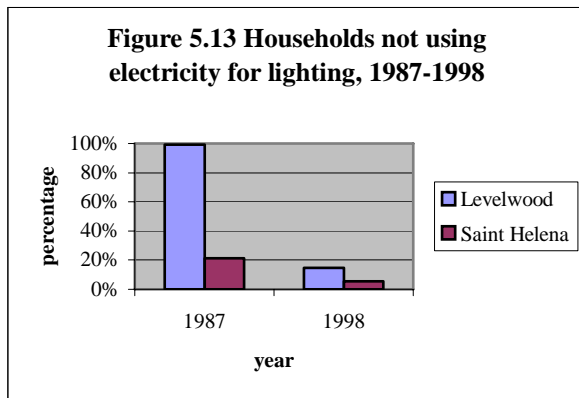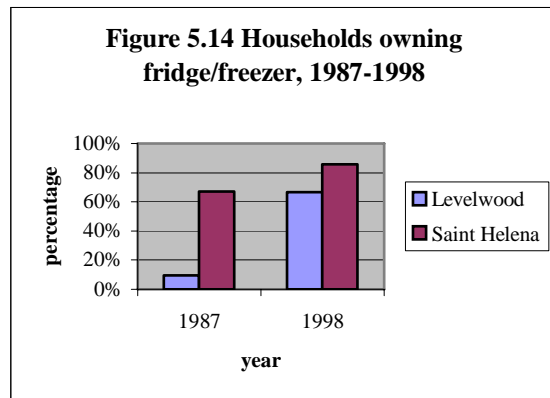*Figure 5.13 Households not using electricity for lighting, 1987-1998*

Figure 5.14 Households owning fridge/freezer, 1987-1998

Source: Population census 1998, p. 136, 141

Levelwood people are easily recognised as such by other Saints, because of their dress and their particular accent. This is explained by Susan O'Bey: "A nice example is the long standing joke that we know people from Levelwood because of the way they dress. But having said that that is no longer true for today. But say 10, 15 years ago you would be able to tell because they tended to wear colours, they tended to wear more home-made clothes, knitted garments which you could spot. And they also tended to stay within their district quite a lot and they married within their district, so they had a look about them, you know in terms of characteristics, eyes were very similar, same shaped nose, hair colour and texture".

They are also known as quiet people. Hensil O'Bey explains; "Levelwood people, you can see by their physique that they work hard. They are more quiet people, they only look, do not interfere". Religion is also different: the district is a stronghold of Jehovah's witnesses.

5.2.7   Longwood

Longwood is the district which is known for having had Napoleon as a resident, but it is also the most important settlement outside the Jamestown/HTH area. You enter the district at Hutt's gate, where a shop is located, often with people sitting outside drinking beer and listening to country music. This is a major intersection for the island: the main road from Jamestown to Longwood meets the road around the peaks to Levelwood and Sandy Bay, as well as a road to Saint Paul's. Going in the direction of Longwood, you then pass through an area known as Longwood Hangings, where the Longwood clinic is located, before entering the settlement proper through Longwood gate. You find yourself on a long straight avenue with houses on either side. Immediately on the right is Pub Paradise (known as KJ's, after its owner), while on the left you find Harford Middle School and Community Centre. Then a

spacious residential area with houses to the left and right leads up to the Longwood Green, a large field in the middle of the settlement. On the left hand side of the field is the Solomon's supermarket with the church close by, while straight ahead is Longwood House, former residence of Napoleon and now residence of the French consul. In front of Longwood House, which faces north, is Longwood Farm House, a large house which was used by the commander of the English forces watching Napoleon. It is now SHG property and usually occupied by one of the ex-pat government employees. Here you find a turn-off towards Mulberry Gut, a valley with small houses and small-scale farming.

Figure 5.15 Longwood House[i]

The main road continues in between the two Houses and on the left you'll find Barn View, a place where people with a handicap are looked after. On the right is Longwood First school, and then on the left the area of Piccolo Hill comes up. This area, with its own gate, was built for expatriate workers from a communications company in the 1960s, but is no longer used by them. Instead, SHG rents it out to temporary workers, usually from overseas. It is still known as the place where the ex-pats live. Opposite Piccolo Hill is the island's golf course, and continuing along the road for a few hundred metres brings you to Bottom Woods, a residential area. On reaching the end of the settlement , but still continuing on the road you come up to a desolate area where the weather station is located, and a forest is being planted: Millennium Forest. The road finally ends at Bradley's garage, from where you can walk on to Prosperous Bay plain, the place the airport is planned to be built. To the other side the Barn dominates the skyline, an impressive rock which towers up over 600 metres, almost straight from the sea.

At Longwood Gate there is also the possibility of turning off towards Deadwood. You then pass a number of houses, the Salvation Army building and a small shop before entering an enormous plain covered with grass. Some cattle is kept here, and in the early 20th century Boer prisoners of war camped here on Deadwood Plain. The plain slowly slopes up to Flagstaff Hill: the landmark of this area, which can be seen from lots of places around the island. The island's three wind turbines are also located here, the windiest place on the island.

Longwood residents are often practising small-scale farming. At the same time Longwood has a reputation as the place for "roughies". People from Longwood have a bad reputation, they are said to be noisy and troublesome. Someone told us this might be due to the climate. Longwood is often covered in clouds, and compared to the rest of the island it is cold and wet. This is something Napoleon already complained about. These days the clouds may affect the development of an airport.

Figure 5.16 Map fragment of Longwood, Deadwood and Bottom Woods settlements[ii]
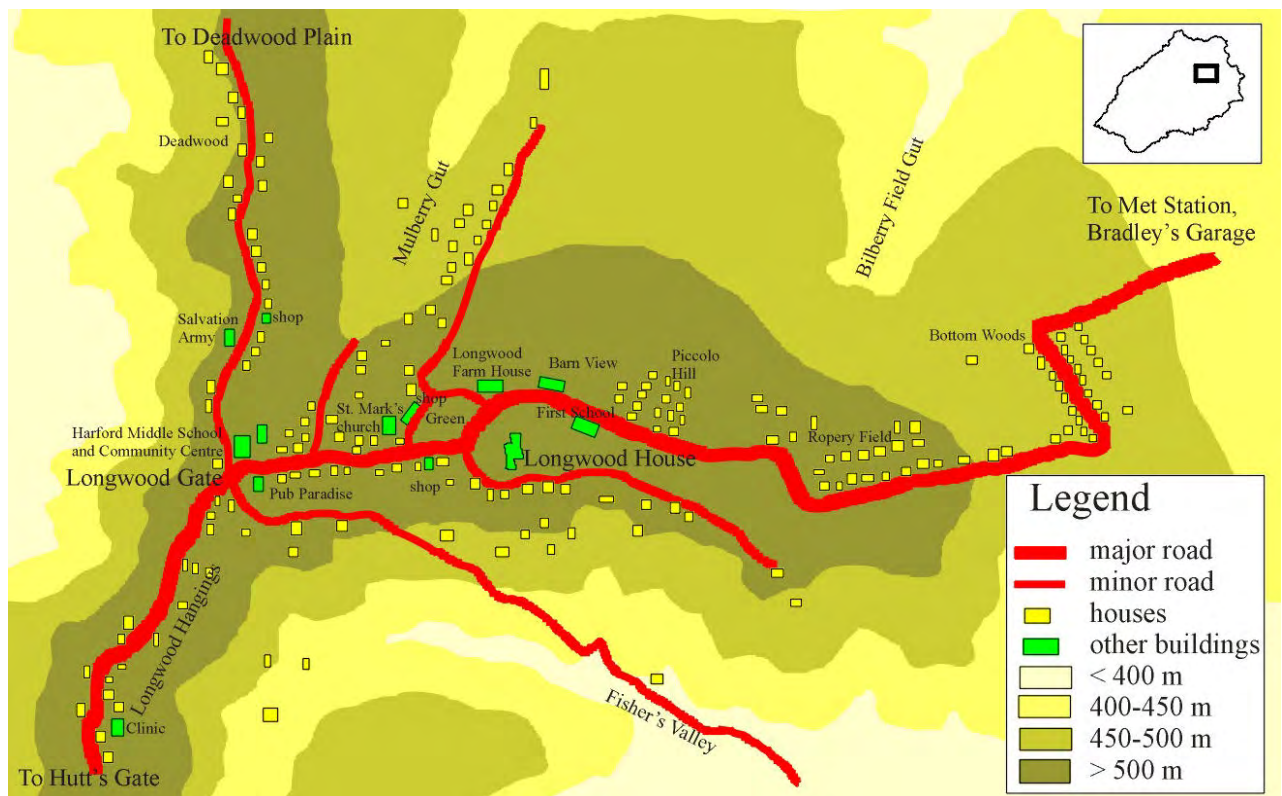
5.2.8   Alarm Forest

The district of Alarm Forest is a recent creation: parts of the districts of Jamestown and Longwood were cut off to create this new district in between. It includes the settlements at the Briars and Alarm Hill, but it does not have a clear centre. It lacks a community centre or a school, and has only a few small shops. It is mainly "on the way from Jamestown to Longwood". The upper part of the Briars includes quite a few newly-built houses, where a number of relatively rich people live. Cable and Wireless' headquarters, including the satellite dishes that are the island's link to the outside world, are at the Briars. Next to these symbols for the island's future is a memory from the past: the house where Napoleon lived before moving on to Longwood House. It has a well-kept garden and a nice view. Napoleon's tomb at Sane Valley is also within the Alarm Forest district. This means that a substantial part of the district is in fact French property.

If asked where people are from, the Briars is a community which is named. It has its own church. We never heard anyone on the island referring to Alarm Forest other than as an electoral area.

Figure 5.17 The road from Jamestown to Longwood through Alarm Forest[i]

5.2.9   Differences

The 8 districts of Saint Helena are very diverse and they each have a different importance in terms of economy and relevance for identity.

Economically it is clear that Jamestown is most important. This is where the government is, employing the largest part of the workforce, as well as most shops. In the words of government economist Tom Crowards: "Jamestown is clearly the economic hub of the island. You've got Half Tree Hollow but that's really more a commuter town, it has very limited production. Longwood… has more agriculture, more of a productive base itself. And then you have pockets around the island of isolated farms really more than anything else. You've got a little bit of activity in Rupert's, but it's really quite spread once you leave these three centres".

The country districts of Blue Hill and Sandy Bay are associated with particular economic activities: cattle farming and bananas respectively.

These two districts, along with Levelwood, are regarded by town people as "the outlying areas". These are the remotest districts, and also the districts whose people can be most easily recognised. The accents of people are distinct, although differences seem to be slowly fading away. Still, people tend to be proud of their district and use it as a source of identity.

The same goes for Longwood on a somewhat larger scale. This is not a remote area: it is the largest settlement on the island outside Jamestown/HTH. People are proud to be from Longwood, but might refer to the small settlement they live (such as Bottom Woods or Deadwood) instead of Longwood if asked where they are from. This is even stronger for Saint Paul's, where an overall district identity is mostly lacking. People are from Rosemary Plain or New Ground rather than from Saint Paul's.

While you can live in HTH, this is usually not where you are from. In HTH there is not a great community sense, except maybe in an area such as Cow Path. It is mainly a place to live. Alarm Forest is also a place to live, but even then people will not refer to this new district name: instead they are from the Briars.

Finally, town people are the proud urbanites of Saint Helena. They are different from country people in language and way of life, and even if they move from town they are still "from town". As Pamela Young says: "A lot of people who were born in Jamestown now live up in the country. That's since 10 or 20 years. I live in St Paul's now. But I still consider myself as from Jamestown".

5.3   Decline of differences

In many interviews we heard that people perceive the differences between the districts on the island to be declining. In the words of P.A.S. Headmistress Susan O'Bey: "Children from Blue Hill, Sandy Bay and Levelwood could always be identified in the past, because of the way they pronounced words. And even perhaps because of the way they dressed. But now the island is more one big melting pot, so it isn't that easy to tell where a child has come from".

As Saints see other Saints more often, subtle differences in for example language seem to disappear. In recent years interaction opportunities have greatly improved. This is mainly due to two factors: the expansion of car ownership and the revision of the school system.

While the first car was brought to Saint Helena in the 1920s, mass car ownership did not take off immediately. Getting around was mainly by foot, and even in the time of the flax growing (up until 1966) most flax was transported by donkeys. People tended to visit other districts only occasionally. Even in the report on the 1981 expedition to Saint Helena the following description could be found: "Some people living in the mountains, especially the older generations, had not visited Jamestown since they had last done their Christmas shopping (8 months past when we were there)" (Simpson 1982, p. 74). Things have changed. The number of vehicle registrations increased from 1,311 in 1985 to 2,066 in 2000. People are more mobile nowadays as well. They are not stuck out in their districts as would have been before, as they've got cars available. A favourite way to celebrate a birthday or other festive occasion is to hire a bus or van with driver, fill it up with friends and do a pub crawl, visiting all the island's pubs. In weekends young people phone each other to decide where it will be happening: one night everyone goes to Blue Hill, while another night everyone gathers at KJ's in Longwood or down at Donny's in town. Usually the Consulate Hotel bar is the place to meet up in the early evening, and then everyone sets off to elsewhere. Before these young people would mostly have remained in their own districts.

It's easy to arrange these sort of things, because all the island's teenagers know each other. They all attend Prince Andrew School. With its opening in 1988 for the first time in the history of the island all the children of 12 years and older were attending school in the same location. As Dorothy Evans puts it in her book schooling in the South Atlantic Islands: "This would undoubtedly have a significant effect on the island as a whole, not only academically, but also sociologically by mixing this age group from the various communities in different parts of the island" (p. 183-184). Whereas children aged 12 or over followed secondary education in their "own" community and mainly socialised with the children from this community before 1988, now children from all the different regions were mixed up in one school. According to headmistress Susan O' Bey the island has become smaller as a result of P.A.S.: "In the past, and you might think this is weird given the fact that the island is very small in any case, in the past we have had situations where children might not necessarily know other children from another district. So if you lived in Sandy Bay you would not necessarily know the teenagers in Longwood. Whereas now, they all know each other. In the past it was easier to tell from which community a child was coming from, but it is more like a melting pot nowadays, so it is not easy to tell anymore".

While some differences between districts may slowly disappear, the opening of P.A.S. has also had many benefits: "Friendships cross the districts now as well. And you have Jamestown, where very little young people live, becoming a sort of meeting place for young people from all areas. So on Saturday night teenagers meet up in town. Whereas in the past you would have had town children together, HTH children together, Longwood children together. It's much more amalgamation now, outside of school". Chief Education Officer Pamela Lawrence adds: "I taught in one of the old senior schools in Longwood at the time, and there were kids I taught there who had not even been into Jamestown, much less interactive with children from other places on the island. Whereas now, there are equal opportunities for every child, regardless of how far-flung their house might be on the island".

A negative side is that a sense of competition between districts and their schools is lacking now. P.A.S. has tried to organise sports competitions by district, but this failed due to a lack of children from certain districts. The traditional sports day at the 1st of January has also disappeared. This used to be an occasion where the whole island would gather at Francis Plain to either compete or cheer for their district. By now 4 different "houses" compete at Sports day at P.A.S., but this attracts much less public attention.

District competition remains in the lower age groups: football matches between the island's 3 middle schools are important events. Due to the closure of the first schools in their communities, children from the outlying districts of Sandy Bay, Blue Hill and Levelwood are "exposed' to other kids at an earlier age. While it may affect district identity, positive effects are significant, as again expressed by Susan O'Bey: "I think whenever a school closes in a community it is a sad thing for that community. Schools tend to be meeting places within the community, they tend to bring communities together. But on the other hand, given the fact that these communities were very isolated communities, and did not integrate very well, it has been a good thing in that those children are… you are not going to school necessarily with the person you are going to marry in 15 years' time".

In spite of all this, some of the district identity remains. Islander Basil George sums up three things: "…they tend to play cricket by district. And you get councillors by districts. So that is the identity hey, political identity is one, second is sports, can't think of the third… lifestyle I think. You tend to find people in Longwood more involved with agriculture. In Jamestown, obviously you are not very much engaged in keeping animals".

These differences are likely to remain. While people may interact more, differences in physical characteristics of the districts necessitate different lifestyles. And a lot of people remain proud of their district and treasure its particularities.

Chapter 6   Saints' spatial identities

Over the last three chapters we have looked at Saint Helena from three different 'levels'. Out of the knowledge thus gained emerges a picture of what the spatial identity of a person on Saint Helena might look like. This concludes our discussion of Saint Helenian society in 2002.

It is impossible to look at Saints' spatial identity without relating to overall identity. Following our approach to identity in chapter 2, we will first look at the broader *social* identity of the citizens of Saint Helena before 'zooming in' on their *spatial* identity.

6.1   What makes a Saint?

Looking at the issue of social identity in less scientific terms leads to the question: what makes a Saint? This was exactly the question of an essay competition held in Prince Andrew School in July 2002. It is interesting to first hear what young Saints themselves see as core elements of being a Saint.

A number of key elements were stressed throughout the essays, some of which were published in the Saint Helena Herald of 19th July 2002 (p. 5). In a general review of the essays, a teacher wrote: "Saint Helenians are proud of their island, their reputation for courtesy and friendliness, lack of colour prejudice, acceptance of other religious denominations and their loyalty". Other typicalities of Saints that were apparent throughout the essays included:

- resourcefulness
- local dialect
- local food
- sense of freedom

The first prize winner of the competition was Lesley Constantine. It is worth quoting his essay at some length:

"St. Helena is an isolated island in the South Atlantic Ocean. The only access is by ship. Perhaps this is why Saints are renowned for improvising. The island develops slowly at times, and this can be seen as being for the better. It has been said that Saints don't like change. In my opinion, it is only natural for islanders to greet change with mixed feelings because change can threaten the culture of our island".

(…) "Many visitors will notice how everyone greets them and St. Helenians are known as some of the friendliest people in the world. Our island has shaped the way we approach life. There is little crime and we have almost nothing to fear. That is why we welcome others and hope that they will feel as we do about our home".

(…) "Saints are made by the island which we live on; the ground which we tread upon has our culture embedded in it".

Second prize winner Jackie Williams stressed other aspects of being a Saint:

"If you are born here or have parents from St. Helena you are born into an island wide family. One of the unique and wonderful things about St. Helena is that everyone knows everyone else. St. Helena is also proud to say that people here can let their guards down and just have fun, because we have no major crimes committed".

In our interviews, many of the same issues came up. Comments on the identity of Saints can be grouped under the following headings:

- Ethnic background
- Britishness and dependency
- Insularity
- Family life and social control
- Uniqueness

These will be discussed in turn.

6.1.1 Ethnic background

"When I talk to Saints they seem almost embarrassed about their origins. There is a mixture of Chinese, black and white influences - but I find people here have very attractive features, especially in the beautiful children. But Saints often say 'We're such a mixed bunch' and rarely see the beauty in their uniqueness. The impression is that they remain slightly embarrassed about their racial origins" *(Doug Paterson, social work manager)*

Saints descend from many different ancestors: British settlers, African slaves, Chinese labourers and others. The uncomfortable feeling is related to the legacy of slavery and the subsequent mixture. But racial origins do not play a significant role in the stratification of society. The groups have mixed in one big 'melting pot'. According to local historian Basil George this happened in the 19th century: "From the abolition of slavery in 1832 before the end of that century, the 19th century, islanders were almost fully integrated. Now what were the forces that allowed that to happen on Saint Helena? It doesn't happen in a lot of other places, you know. People tend to keep to their class groups, their racial groups". He offers a partial explanation himself, in a paper called "a history of remoteness": "Over the centuries the remoteness of a small island pioneer settlement brought recognition of the capabilities and skills to survive over individuality, ethnic identity and social status. The large number of single men of the permanent garrison and a large population of slaves meant there grew up an increasing number of the inhabitants who were mixed race and eventually became the dominant group" (George n.d., p. 6)

The history of slavery is not often mentioned on the island. Now and then the words 'slave mentality' will come up, when talking about the dependency culture on the island. This is not a popular way of referring to the history of the island. But the history is no longer denied. At the celebrations of the quincentenary of discovery of the island (Q5), its whole history was visualised on a number of floats. Slaves were also a part of this (figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 "Slaves" marching past in the Q5 parade[i]

While a reference to the history of slavery was present in the parade, Union Jacks were ubiquitous. Saints and outsiders alike will often refer to the Britishness of the island and its people.

6.1.2   Britishness

"Yes, I'm British, I've always been British. I have been brought up in a way to see HM the Queen as the mother of the whole Commonwealth" (Hensil O'Bey, islander)

The Britishness of their island is something Saint Helenians are staunchly proud of. Geographer Stephen Royle has visited the island a number of times and has written many articles on the subject. He remarks: "Their identity is very strong. They are Saints, but they are also strongly British in a way that is not really seen except by men over 70 in the UK". Bishop John agrees: "this island is still very British, but old-fashionedly British. We're beginning to get away from colonial things, but there is still a lot of it".

Feelings towards Britain are diverse: loyalty is apparent in most people, but by some Britain is seen as "the master" as well. Others sometimes see Britain as "oppressor".

In the Saint Helena Museum a showcase is dedicated to the Britishness on the island. Its title is '"loyal and unshakable": Saints national identity is British'. In the explanatory text below it is stated that "The cultural relationship with Britain is evident in the Georgian architecture of Jamestown, cricket leagues, organisations like the Scouts and the excitement caused by royal visits".

This excitement was last expressed in 1984, when Prince Andrew visited the island. The sign welcoming him was still visible from lower Jamestown during our visit. To mark the quincentenary celebrations, the Princess Royal will visit the island in November 2002.

Figure 6.2 Sign welcoming Prince Andrew[i]

The house we rented for the duration of our visit was adorned with a photograph of Lady Diana. In many houses a portrait of the royal family can still be found.

The Governor is HM the Queen's official representative on Saint Helena and thus normally 'the closest you get'. The Q5 celebrations started with the Governor making a speech and reading the messages that were received from the Queen, the British Government and others on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of Saint Helena. After an ecumenical service a parade was held, in which all the uniformed groups from the island (and some visiting navy ships) marched past the Governor. Now what is more British than the Governor saluting to a Union Jack held by a group of Girl Guides marching past? In the audience the Britishness was expressed even more explicitly. (figure 6.3)

Figure 6.3 Q5 (a) parade[i], (b) 2 onlookers[i]

Despite this outburst of Britishness that was apparent during the festive occasion of Q5, in general feelings of Britishness seem to be decreasing. The editor of the Saint Helena Herald, Johnny Drummond, comments: "The British connection used to be very strong. It is less evident in recent years though. For example the photograph of the Queen in the houses was very common until a few years ago, now it is less. People are put off by the treatment of Saint Helena by the UK government, with the citizenship, and they give money but it is getting less. The British connection is less prevalent in the younger people. This filters down from Ascension, where everything that is from America is automatically better than anything British. There is definitely not the same degree of Britishness as before".

The removal of British citizenship under the 1981 British Nationality Act was a blow to the feelings of Britishness on the island. It is hard to reconcile the feeling of Britishness with the fact that you can't migrate to Britain (i.e. "Britain doesn't want you"). It left some people confused about their identity. Asked about his Britishness, one islander commented: "I regard myself as British, but I don't regard myself as being a resident of British. A British citizen, yes, I regard myself as that even if I don't have this passport". The restoration of citizenship means something was put right, according to radio presenter Ralph Peters: "The place where you were born is very dear to you. I am proud to be Saint Helenian, but Saint Helena on its own will never reach financial independence, we need Britain there. Britain is the mother hen, we are the chickens. The links with Britain should never have been severed, and now we are bonded again".

Feelings of Britishness can be a bit double-edged as well. To some, Britain has the ring of "oppressor" to it, and this can sometimes be felt in the way expatriates are treated. Social work manager Doug Paterson (himself from Scotland) explains: "To me the 1981 nationality act was blatant discrimination. Now they can celebrate, but they have something back what they rightfully had in the first place. They are Saints first, and British second, and they mean English. They follow English football teams, they all have their team. That was even so before the TV was introduced I am told".

(…) "There can be at times a certain contempt towards England/UK. Although not openly hostile, this can extend towards ex-pats too. Perhaps some Saints feel resentment on the

reliance upon the UK as development aid can have strings attached. With more income form overseas, perhaps people feel this should change as some moves towards greater independence become more popular. (...) Some Saints have felt that ex-pats or 'experts' coming her for a short time is unhelpful. On the one hand, their expertise is needed but on the other hand, short term solutions to long established problems can be counter productive

A story that was told to us informally is interesting in this respect. At the time of the World Cup 1998, a group of Saints was watching the match England vs. Argentina. They supported Argentina, apparently because they played better football. An expatriate who was watching with them then remarked that they should all apply for Argentinean passports. Needless to say he wasn't very popular afterwards.

Another expatriate, Governor Hollamby, thinks Saint Helenian culture is a version of British culture: "I don't really see a separate Saint Helenian culture out there. It's very British, or it's a version of British. The language is a dialect of British, the food, the national foods are not different from what they believe in Britain. For instance plo is pilav, chicken pilau in Britain. There is nothing very distinct about Saints and their culture. If you go to the Caribbean, you will find Caribbean culture all right, if you go to the Arab world, you've got Middle Eastern culture. You don't see a separate Saint Helenian culture so distinctly. I think they feel very British, and their habits remain very British, and that is probably why they have not developed their own cultural instincts".

The Citizenship Commission begs to differ. The fact that Saint Helenians are still proud of themselves and friendly towards Britain, shows the strength of their culture: "When Saint Helenians show themselves generous and reconciling to their 'oppressors' , this is not the result of a deficient, self-alienating, dependency culture, to cite the sociologists. That a people can retain their self-definition, even when others are taking it from them, and still others are encouraging them to let it go, is a sign of how strongly that self-definition is held"(Turner 1997, p. 57)

It is hard to specify how strong the feeling of Britishness on the island exactly is. But luckily there are also a number of physical aspects to the relationship between Britain and Saint Helena.

6.1.3   Physical aspects of British identity

"We want our links with Britain. And lots of us like British goods"

(Councillor Eric George)

Saint Helena is physically linked to Britain through the RMS, which travels to Cardiff 4 times a year. This used to be 6 times a year, but was reduced in order to improve the island's accessibility. Instead the RMS now travels to Cape Town more frequently. A trip to Cardiff by the RMS means that Saint Helena is cut off from the outside world for a month. A trip to Cape Town and back only takes about 12 days, meaning more frequent visits to the island. Purely seen from an 'access' point of view, it would therefore be a good idea to have the RMS in the South Atlantic, running a schedule between Ascension, Saint Helena and Cape Town. But there are strong forces working against that plan, according to Government economist Tom Crowards: "People have a strong link to the UK, a historical and a cultural link. People feel that with a cultural link, it's important to maintain a physical link in the form of a ship. I also have heard that in Cardiff, it's quite a big deal; lots of Saints go down to the Cardiff docks and meet the people from the ship".

Deputy Chief Secretary Ethel Yon thinks that the return of British citizenship might lead to a different opinion on this issue: "the main reason why people would not want the RMS only to

run Ascension-Saint Helena-Cape Town, or even Walvis Bay, would be that they think this would sever the relationship between Saint Helena and the mother country. Now with British citizenship back, this is not a concern anymore. Saint Helena is vastly loyal to the British Queen, as you will have noticed".

Basil George does not see the importance of a physical link through the RMS anyway. "I think it's a red herring, that. You've got physical link with email and telephone and modern communications. You don't need to have a ship going there twice a year or three times a year".

The RMS not only picks up passengers in Cardiff, it is also loaded with containers full of British goods. People on Saint Helena tend to prefer the goods from Britain to the South African products that are imported from Cape Town. Saints seem to think that if the RMS would not visit Britain anymore, supplying these goods might become a problem. Islander Hensil O'Bey comments: "For consumers the problem is that they have grown used to having products from the UK. I can't change my taste buds to be South African suddenly. It may be cheaper, but if you don't like the quality…". Many people perceive the quality of South African products as inferior.

The continuation of supplies from Britain will not be a problem were the RMS to reschedule, as calculations have shown that it is actually cheaper to transit goods from Britain through Cape Town or Walvis Bay (the closest port of any size to Saint Helena, on the Namibian coast) than to bring them all the way by the RMS.

Meanwhile British influences remain physically present on the island, in the form of ex-pats, British goods, Union Jacks, the UK national curriculum in schools and in many other ways. Feelings of Britishness are strong among the people of Saint Helena. But they also dearly love their island.

6.1.4   Saint Helenian identity

"Being a saint":

"This fusion of people has created a distinctive culture. Saints eat Saint food, speak a distinctive language, build their houses to face the sea and wave at passing cars. A typical Saint is friendly, fun loving, unhurried, resourceful, has a strong sense of family and a deep connection to his or her island"

(showcase in the Saint Helena museum)

It has become clear that Saints have a strong feeling of "Britishness". The example of the showcase above shows that the islanders also have a strong feeling of 'being a Saint'. Saint Helenians stress the advantages of living on the island and being a Saint to visitors. The friendliness and relaxed 'way of life' on the island are qualities often praised by Saints and visitors alike. Among Saints we found much worry about the fact that the 'way of life' on the island might change in the future as a result of better access. No-one doubted the fact that there is a specific way of life on the island, which is clearly different from the way of life in Britain or the rest of the world. But what exactly makes a Saint and could this 'way of life' be called a distinct St Helenian identity?

Bishop John feels that there is a distinctive identity, although it is often not acknowledged:

"I think they have an own identity, but I don't think they think they have. I think they think that they are… they have become too dependent, but it's only natural, because where does the money come from?"

He then adds his own thoughts: "Well, I think they have a very nice identity, what really keeps them together is living on a remote island actually. There is bound to be a bonding forced in a way. Even if they leave the island, they will still feel the pull. But that is natural, because they are so close together here. You can't actually get away from people and you know everybody".

Figure 6.4 The Consulate Hotel, where Saints often meet up[i]

A Saint Helenian identity will logically be strongly influenced by the insularity of the island. Because of this insularity there is a lack of exposure to 'the outside world', which can have an influence on identity. This is confirmed by Susan O'Bey, who explains that a Saint does not speak as much as people elsewhere: "You also find that St Helenians are not as articulate as people elsewhere. They don't like to express themselves. They say what they have to say with a minimum of words, so it's mm, yeh, mm. (...) There is also of course a lack of exposure. If you are living on a small island in the middle of the Atlantic you don't really need to talk that much I suppose. You see the same people everyday, so unless you want to have a great discussion on the potatoes or the catching of fish you have not an awful lot to stimulate you there."

Chief Education Officer Pamela Lawrence agrees: "You won't get everybody speaking to you and giving their opinion the way I am prepared to do. People are still a bit reluctant to speak. So we should encourage our children to form an opinion and express that opinion. We must be able to get to articulate a lot more and better. That is one of the problems with the Saint Helenians. And again because of exposure and opportunity."

Part of being a Saint can also be putting up with things instead of trying to change things. This is apparent in one of the essays about 'what makes a Saint' written at PAS. One comment said: "We are very tolerant people who don't like change and grumble among ourselves when something doesn't suit us, but we accept everything" According to PAS headmistress Susan O'Bey this should change: "If you educate children you get rid of this complacency, which in the past has been very much a feature of Saint Helena. Saints have been complacent, they stuck back, they don't necessarily want to say how they feel, because they might upset someone. Well I say to young people today, upset them. And be damned you know. That is the only way that St Helena can really move on".

The isolation of the island also leads to the resourcefulness as described in paragraph 4.3.6. Basil George feels that what makes a Saint is only partly the British way of life, because he feels the resourcefulness is "the core element of what makes a Saint".

Figure 6.5 Resourcefulness shown in the building of a house[i]

Michel Martineau observes that the Saints are very opportunistic when they get a chance to leave the island through education and training: "They are very opportunist, they will take advantage of the system. That is the problem with the proper training. As soon as they have the proper training, you won't see them again. Because they get the chance to leave."

Being opportunist in this way, to ensure yourself a better life or at least a better paycheck, can also be seen as a form of resourcefulness.

Social work manager Doug Paterson sees a distinctive St Helenian culture that is being preserved well. But he feels the conservativeness of this culture sometimes also poses problems: "There is rightly a sense of pride about being a Saint. They are proud of their island and culture. They are also strong at persevering which is good, but it can make it difficult to introduce new things. 'Dat won't work here' they say and when asked why they say 'Because we're Saints and this is St Helena'.

In informal conversations with people it has been stressed as well that Saints often don't like change. It is argued that change is stopped sometimes for the sole reason that 'it's always been like that'.

Social control also plays a major role in society, as is being illustrated by Ethel Yon, who refused to let us tape the interview we had with her at first: "I should have let you record that… But I've had it before, people taping me, and taking the worst parts out. That causes real problems in a close-knit community such as this one. But you're free to use all I've said." As has been argued in chapter 4, social control on the island is high, which makes it difficult to be different in the St Helenian society. Your actions are always known to the other Saints and you are being judged by that.

The family structure plays a very important part in who you are as well. But are families also important for the social structure of St Helena, and can a hierarchy in families be discerned?

Johnny Drummond, editor of the St Helena Herald, argues that there is indeed a hierarchy in families: "There is a hierarchy in families yes. It is not what you know, it's who you know. There is definitely a class structure on the island. There is an upper class and then a middle class which flocks beneath it"

But Basil George strongly disagrees with this and feels that the absence of a hierarchy in the St Helenian society is one of its greatest achievements: "There wouldn't be no hierarchy. And you know what, because the greatest social achievements of this island is how me moved from the sort of class, racial structure of slavery, which was only abolished in what, 1832? To come to this integrated group of people you got now. You haven't got rid of class structure in Britain, you know. That in itself is quite amazing, I find."

6.1.5   Putting things into perspective

It is often argued that because of its geographical position, St Helena is unique in the world.

As it is indeed one of the most isolated places in the world this is in a way true. Nevertheless, certain characteristics of life on the island can still be compared to situations elsewhere.

The distinct difference between town and country on the island for instance is not unique, but can be found in many places in the world, according to Governor Hollamby: "I think there is no difference between the rural and urban situation anywhere in the world. There is one town and that is Jamestown, and the rest are villages. So I don't think it is very different from London and the countryside or Amsterdam and the countryside. It is not that distinct. Naturally the people who live in the more rural areas are more rustic in their ways. Some people find coming up from Longwood or something, that Jamestown is too noisy, too full of traffic, that sort of thing. But that is not very different from the rest of the world".

Doug Paterson sees many similarities with the place he originally comes from, the Shetlands: "Saint Helena is quite unique and different, but what happens here, it is not the only place these things happen. Very similar things happen for example on the Shetlands. The smallness, the isolation, everyone is a second cousin, people who like to backstab and bring rumours. The difference with St Helena is that it is so isolated. It is not as diluted with people coming in as somewhere else".

Finally we put the sense of 'being a Saint' into perspective, for which purpose the French consul Michel Martineau will be quoted at some length: "And also what you may have noticed on the island, they have no nationalism, I hate that word but have no other word, they don't have the pride of the island. They are more pride of being UK than being St Helenian (...) take the way the Saints are spoiling the island by the bad set up of buildings, it's unbelievable. They have no conscience of the beauty of the island".

(…)"I know quite a lot of people who moved away and now live in for example Germany or Australia. There is no way they are coming back. No way. They will come back just to say hello and see their roots and that's it. And then they still say they are St. Helenian and they are very proud of being that, but in the fact they are cut off from here (…) It's your background, but definitely not your future".

It is now clear that there are many different aspects of 'being a Saint', and that there is a strong sense of Britishness as well as a general feeling that living on St Helena creates some difference with the rest of the world. But how does this fit into the theoretical context discussed in chapter 2?

6.2   Saints' identity in a theoretical context

Now that we have discussed the different aspects of 'being a Saint', and we have put them into perspective, it is time to look at Saints' identities from a theoretical point of view.

Following our discussion about spatial identity in chapter 2 the questions that can be raised are the following:

- Do Saints have clear 'scales' of spatial identity?
- Is one scale more important than others?
- Do Saint Helenians have a national identity?

Saints feel strongly attached to their island. They also feel they are British. Schulenburg & Schulenburg (1997) conclude: "Regardless of their apparently mixed ancestry, the islanders' views of their identity revolve primarily around the twin notions of a St Helenian local

identity and a British national identity" (p. 9). Before we will discuss their conclusion regarding national identity, we will first look at local identity.

When we arrived on Saint Helena, we were surprised that despite the smallness of the island, differences between districts were so apparent. We decided to look further into the regional differences, and this has resulted in chapter 5. But while differences between districts are considerable, they are not crucial to a Saint's identity. It is not something a Saint will immediately refer to. Nor will a Saint use it to identify him- or herself with. Some people will mention they are a "town girl" or a "country lad", but it is more important to communicate their proudness of being a Saint to outsiders. For people who don't know anything about Saint Helena the district of course does not have any meaning. But once outsiders become a bit more "insider", like we did during our stay, people will start referring to family, not to district. This is also how they identify themselves among each other. Asked if family or district was more important, islander Basil George answered promptly: "Family. You talk to any Saint Helenian, whenever they meet they always talk about family. Family is what holds the community together. It's a very extensive thing, because you are related to so many people. So I think family more than district".

The 'lowest' level of identity that seems to be important is thus family. From a geographical point of view, this is not necessarily a *spatial* identity. There are certainly spatial elements in the 'family identity' however. Families tend to be concentrated together: uncles, aunts, grandparents etc. often live close to each other in one district. Besides, the family identity is often connected to a certain piece of land, on which the 'family house' might be built. Often the whole family is supplied with fresh produce through the part-time farming of a family member on a particular piece of 'family land'. Even when away from the island, the family often retains its importance for identity. Remittances go through family lines, and more often than not Saints overseas end up in communities with other Saints, where identification through family continues.

Moving up the 'scales of spatial identity', we then get to the island level. The Saint Helenian identity is perceived by researchers (cf. Schulenburg and Schulenburg above) to be the local identity of the people of Saint Helena. This has also been argued by the Citizenship Commission: "A very clear local identity does not preclude a broader national identity. There is no moral basis whatsoever for denying the inhabitants of an island a nationality, just because they live on an island… British Saint Helenians have a local identity that is Saint Helenian, and a national identity that is British. Let no one be so foolish as to suppose that these two identities are mutually exclusive not, that is, until he can prove that a Yorkshireman cannot also be British, or a Corsican cannot be French" (Turner 1997, p. 57).

Saint Helenian identity does not exclude British identity. Sociologists have tried to let islanders choose between the two, which is not fair, according to the Commission: "….by forcing young Islanders to choose between considering themselves as British or as Saint Helenian, *but not both*, they [the sociologists] have managed to undermine the 'self-definition' they came to investigate" (Turner 1997, p. 58). The Commission is referring here to Cohen (1983a), who asked students at the Secondary Selective School at the time to write essays with the title "who am I?". It led to confusing statements about descent, nationality and citizenship. According to Cohen, "students over-emphasised their 'Britishness' – either in terms of their ancestry or their nationality" (p. 22). In this statement it is implicit that Cohen does regard Britishness as separate from Saint Helenian identity.

Obviously that did not clear things up. It has already been said that British identity and Saint Helenian identity *do not exclude* each other. We would like to go one step further than the Citizenship Commission. We think that being Saint Helenian *includes* Britishness. Elements

of Britishness are a part of everyday life on Saint Helena, and of course you can point at certain symbols of Britishness. But it is impossible to take out the British elements, in order to identify what is perceived to be truly Saint Helenian. Britishness in its physical and non-physical forms is an integral part of 'being a Saint'.

Now where does this leave us with regards to 'scales of spatial identity'? This description of a Saints' identity does not fit easily into the geographical hierarchy we have used in chapter 2. We defined spatial identity as "feeling of attachment to territory at a certain geographical scale, perceived as unique to and by an individual or group". Then we stated that "certain layers or scales are more important than others, either because they have a greater impact on day-to-day life, or because they contain elements that make the group very distinct from other groups at the same scale".

In the Netherlands, or the UK, you can meet people in many different settings. Sometimes you identify by saying in which street you live, sometimes by saying which town, which province (or region), or which country. A different 'layer' of your spatial identity is activated, according to your perception which layer contains the elements that make you distinct from the other(s). In your day-to-day life, family may be very important, or the neighbourhood you live in, or something else still.

On Saint Helena there are basically only two options possible. Either you talk to an 'insider', and then you will refer to family; or you talk to an 'outsider', and then you will refer to being a Saint. Your family impacts your day-to-day life, while being a Saint makes you distinct from others.

Does 'being a Saint' then include a national identity? Are Saints "a politically self-aware community of persons who associate themselves with a particular territory on the basis of historical and cultural criteria"? Yes, they are. But while in most cases the political self-awareness leads to political action, this is hardly the case on Saint Helena. While Saints are politically self-aware, most of the needs that come with "nationalism" are fulfilled by the Britishness that is incorporated in being a Saint.

Of course, there is also a case for calling Saints' national identity British. In the Falklands crisis it was last shown that "when the chips are down, Britain effectively commands Saints' loyalty". But why this Britishness should be seen as something separate from being a Saint remains unclear.

Figure 6.6 Saint Helena as home: (a) arriving at the steps[i] (b) saying farewell at the wharf[i]

In conclusion: family and 'being a Saint' shape the spatial identity of the citizens of Saint Helena. The national identity of Saints remains somewhat vague. Again, as in chapter 2, the concept of home seems more appropriate. Being a Saint means representing a home for others, or longing for the lonely rock that is home. Emotions run high on the days the RMS is

arriving or leaving. That is when you get a true feeling of what it means to be a Saint. In the words of Winchester: "For all the shortcomings of their isolation in mid-ocean, the Saints are a home-loving people. (….) Few places can feel with such intensity the unalloyed pleasure, after years away, of just coming home" (Winchester 1985, p. 131).

PART II: SAINT HELENA'S FUTURE

Chapter 7   Citizenship and constitutional development

Citizenship is an issue of great importance to the people of Saint Helena. Although the island has been British from 1659, full British citizenship was taken away from its inhabitants in the early 1980s. This was widely perceived as an injustice and Saints protested, mainly through the Citizenship Commission. Their work has paid off: citizenship was returned in 2002. The consequences of these developments might include a significant change in Saints' spatial behaviour through increased migration to Britain.

The citizenship issue was a reflection of the constitutional relationship between Britain and Saint Helena. Constitutional development is the wider context in which the citizenship discussion has taken place. While the citizenship issue has been resolved, debate over the constitutional relationship between Britain and Saint Helena is only just starting in earnest. The Citizenship Commission will continue its work towards constitutional development, and we will discuss the constitutional options at the end of this chapter. Part of this discussion involves the relationship with Ascension Island.

But first the history of the citizenship issue will be examined.

7.1   Early settlement and citizenship

Saint Helena has been British ever since first settlement in 1659, barring the short period of Dutch rule in 1673. After the recapture of the island from the Dutch, the status of the island was settled by a Royal Charter (of 1673) which played a key role in the citizenship discussion: "It is the principal remaining guarantor of the promise that created and sustained three centuries of our history" (Turner 1997, p. 71). The British citizenship of the inhabitants of the island is guaranteed in the following fragment:

"And our pleasure is, and We do, for us, our heirs and successors, declare by these presents, that all and every the persons being our subjects, which do or shall inhabit within the said Port and Island, and every their children and posterity which shall happen to be borne within the precincts and limits thereof, shall have and enjoy all liberties, franchises, immunities, capacities, and abilities, of free denizens and natural subjects within any of our dominions; to all intents and purposes, as if they had been abiding and borne within this our Kingdom of England, or in any of our dominions".

(Royal Charter 1673, reprinted in Turner 1997, p. 21)

This guarantee of citizenship was a result of the way the island was perceived in and used by Britain. During East India Company rule it was regarded as a fortress; a British outpost far in the sea, but still part of Britain. The status was changed through the Government of India Act of 1833, which came into force in 1834. Through this Act Saint Helena became a colony under the Crown. Still all the islanders had the right of abode in the United Kingdom or its overseas dominions. This allowed considerable migration from the island to the UK, and to the Cape (as shown in chapter 4.2). In this period the citizenship status enabled the islanders to use migration as a safety valve.

In 1966, following a change in UK legislation, these possibilities were severely constrained. "Whilst acknowledging their United Kingdom citizenship, the legislation denied the islanders the right of abode in this country. Immigration to the UK was restricted and work permits became difficult to obtain. In 1966 the numbers leaving for Britain were reduced to 16 and in 1967 to 5" (Simpson 1982, p. 68).

In 1981 even the British citizenship was removed from the people of Saint Helena, against their will and in violation of the Royal Charter. Under the British Nationality Act of 1981 the

citizens of Britain's remaining colonies were stripped from their UK citizenship. They were issued British Dependent Territories passports instead of British ones. This legislation was passed mainly with Hong Kong in mind. This territory would pass back into Chinese hands in 1997, after the expiration of the British 99-year lease. To prevent the citizens of Hong Kong from migrating to the UK en masse they were deprived of their citizenship (and thus their right of abode). To avoid singling out Hong Kong, and be accused of anti-Chinese sentiments, the other colonies were also included in the legislation. Exceptions were made for two territories: Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands (the latter in 1983, after the conflict with Argentina). These two colonies also happen to be the only ones with predominantly white "settler" populations. People on Saint Helena were very unhappy with the arrangements, and some even accused the British government of racism.

The British Nationality Act not only severely limited their possibilities for travel and migration; Saints were also deprived of part of their identity. Staunchly proud of their Britishness, they now had to accommodate these feelings of Britishness within the reality of a law that made them apply for a visa to enter their "home" country.

7.2   The Citizenship Commission

Resistance against this legislation was organised mainly through the Anglican Church on Saint Helena. In 1983 the Diocesan Synod sent a petition to Mrs Thatcher, but to no avail. At the next Synod, in 1992, a resolution was passed which called for the establishment of a special commission to address this issue. The Bishop of Saint Helena's Commission on Citizenship was founded. This commission prepared several documents, making a strong case against the legislation, and the illegality of it regarding the Royal Charter. Current chairman Basil George explains: "There were a number of people trying to do things. But I think what happened is… how can I put it. I don't know how much weight it carried because they were acting as individuals, whereas by the Bishop setting up this commission it gave more weight".

Commission members lobbied decision-makers on Saint Helena and in the UK, but most time and resources in this first period went into the preparation of a comprehensive report on the citizenship issue.

7.2.1   The Yellow book

In 1994 an interim report was published and discussed. There was still a lot of work to be done, so the commission worked for another two years preparing a full report. In 1996 this was published: "St Helena – the lost county of England" (Turner 1996, also known as "the Yellow book"). It sold out very quickly and was reprinted once, but unfortunately no funds were available for the preparation of a second edition, so the report is now very hard to find.

The main message of the report was that the removal of British citizenship from the citizens of Saint Helena was an illegal act.

The root of the problem, according to the commission, was not so much the 1981 British Nationality Act, but the transfer from the East India Company to the Crown. This led to the "misclassification" of Saint Helena as a colony, but crucially, according to the commission, this new 'contract' did not supersede the 1673 'promise' in the Royal Charter. "1673 represents a clear and deliberate policy of the British government: 1833 represents an absent-minded mistake" (Turner 1996, p. 47). A promise has a certain legal importance in Great Britain as well: "Unless and until there is a written constitution, the moral law, including the concept of Promise, is of crucial importance to the whole political life of Great Britain"(p. 11). According to the commission, at the heart of the matter is therefore still the 1673 Charter as a basis for a national identity. A ten-point checklist about what national identity constitutes

is then applied to Saint Helena, and is worth quoting at some length. It represents one of the few examples from the island itself to describe its identity, although the focus is very much on its Britishness.

The criteria of identity are the following, according to the Yellow Book:

1. *Origin*: "St Helena's origin is unequivocally from 17th century England: it has no other birth". "The origin of St Helena's population is exclusively English"

2. *Language*: "Saint Helenians have always spoken English and have never spoken anything else"

3. *Values*: "No one has, nor could ever doubt the British values of our Island"

4. *Lack of discontinuity*: "The one and only break in the Island's history, the few months of Dutch rule in 1673, had no effect at all in breaking the continuity. Instead, it served to underline and consolidate the utterly British character of the Island"

5. *Intention*: "We have found no evidence of any independence movement, nor any desire or intention to be linked with another country, no desire or intention to change the identity of this Island and its people"

(Turner 1996, pp. 13-15)

The Britishness of the island and its people is thus defined according to these criteria. The commission was aware of the fact that these five criteria are not the only ones used to define national identity. Therefore five other approaches to identity are discussed and dispelled. In the yellow book these are called the "invalid criteria":

6. *Geography*: "It is quite simply very far away: but that is no disqualification"

7. *Colour*: (meaning skin colour) "This is not a reason for denying national identity, and we can state categorically that it has never, nor will ever, be used as such by the British government"

8. *Poverty*: "The island was intended as a fortress, not a self-sustaining colony…. If later support from the Government has consistently been inadequate, that should not be held against the victims of that inadequacy"

9. *Third World views*: "St Helena, the exotic faraway island, the 'emerald set in bronze', can be made to look more like the popular (though unfair) images of the Third world than back home…. Familiarity of landscape is not however a criterion of identity"

10. *Slavery*: "freed slaves who stayed on St Helena were to become full citizens, without qualifications"

(Turner 1996, pp. 16-19)

The conclusion is clear: "Saint Helenians are few in number, but more important, they are not trying to become British. They are already, and always have been British" (p. 19). And therefore they should be entitled to full British citizenship.

In the last chapter of the report a number of options for Britain are identified. The only two realistic options are 4 and 5:

4. "Dual Nationality"... "It would both maintain the status quo and silence the government's detractors"

5. "Autonomous United Kingdom Overseas Territory"… "[Saint Helena] could be reintegrated into the United Kingdom, as distinct overseas territory of the UK, not part

of the European Economic Community, but sharing the full rights of all other British citizens" (pp. 96-97)

It had become clear to the commission that 4 was the preferred option in government, solving the issue with the least-cost option. The commission "is unequivocal in urging 5"(p. 98), because this would be a long-term solution, addressing the root of the island's problems.

"Option 4 is undoubtedly easier and cheaper. It is, however, only a temporary solution. The bestowal of a British passport, without a corresponding improvement in economic conditions, would increase the real prospects of depopulation. Saint Helenians do not want to leave their Island, but with no serious prospects of local employment, with no hope for their children, would they not one by one take the ship to England and a future? With further reductions in grant aid, might not the unemployed be 'encouraged' to emigrate to the mainland, and so reduce the local budgetary requirement? "(p. 98)

The commission thus sees British citizenship as not merely the right of abode in the UK. It implies the right to a standard of living comparable to that in the UK, and thus the right to budgetary aid as long as this is required. The final conclusion therefore is that "When we say that Saint Helenians are British, we mean not merely that they should have the right of abode in England, but the right to live (and not merely subsist) on St Helena as British citizens on British soil" (p. 99).

The Yellow Book raised some eyebrows, but did not lead to immediate action. It made a strong case on the basis of historical arguments, but was not very explicit on the way forward. This problem would be addressed in a new report. Meanwhile the commission continued its work and had some success in its lobbying among Britain's MPs. A Bill was introduced to return citizenship to Saint Helenians. But the government at the time did not want a solution for Saint Helena by itself, and the Bill intending to give British citizenship to St Helenians was therefore voted down in the House of Commons in early 1997.

7.2.2   The Red Book

After the yellow book was written the commission was renamed the Citizenship Commission (in order to widen the support, but with the Bishop remaining patron) and a lot of new members were introduced. The chairmanship, previously held by Canon Nicholas Turner in the UK and Cathy Hopkins on the island, was now transferred to Basil George, former Chief Education Officer on the island. The few funds that the Commission had available went to the preparation of another report, intended to take the discussion "a step further". This report, "St Helena – A British island" (Turner 1997, also known as "the Red book") focused mainly on the future, seeking "the most appropriate solution from within the circumstances and the history that exist". A permanent solution for the status of Saint Helena must be found, and this solution should result in the community "being given its own constitution as a British Island". The capital I in island is crucial in this respect; Saint Helena wants to be treated like the other British Islands, but with reference to the specific local circumstances. The existing British Islands are Guernsey and its dependencies, Jersey and the Isle of Man. These territories are de jure not part of the United Kingdom, but they do form part of the kingdoms of the crown and are for all practical purposes part of the United Kingdom (see inset after section 7.2.3).

The historic argument for British citizenship as set forth in the yellow book is only summarised in the red book. Attention is divided between the present and the future, as shown in its table of contents (figure 7.1). Proposals for a British Island constitution are put forward, and for the first time the Commission has sought to look at the argument from the other side: it includes a chapter on "How a British Island constitution on St Helena would benefit the rest of Britain". The argument is realistic: "Let us not exaggerate: St Helena is a very minor

irritant; it will never be front page news; but it will undoubtedly become (even more so than at present) a stick with which other countries can beat the UK, when a prime minister or foreign secretary presumes to lecture others on rights and justice. The establishment of a proper British Island constitution would remove that minor but persistent embarrassment once and for all" (p. 42-43).

Figure 7.1 Tables of contents of (a) the Yellow and (b) the Red book

St Helena: the lost county of England	St Helena: A British Island
1. The Simple case	PART ONE – INTRODUCTION
2. the Bishop's commission	1. The simple case
3. What is our argument?	2. A step further
4. Promise and contract	3. About the Commission
Part one – the heart of the matter	4. Is this a new issue?
Chapter 1 The roots of national identity	PART TWO – THE PRESENT
5. The ten point checklist	5. St Helena is a British Island
6. The Royal Charter	6. Saint Helenians are British
Chapter 2 The constraints of history	7. St Helena is not a colony
7. A fortress not a colony	8. The Royal Charter still stands
8. 1833 – the great mistake	PART THREE – THE FUTURE
Chapter 3 Getting it wrong	9. No other claims to the Island
9. 1981 – the final exclusion	10. No other options for the Island
10. The nationalism trap	11. What a British Island constitution would look like
Chapter 4 Getting it right	12. How a British Island constitution would benefit the rest of Britain
11. Overseas Europe	
12. Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon	PART FOUR – THE NEXT STAGE
Part Two – Background information	13. Review of other developments
13. Historical chronology	14. What might happen next
14. Some technical details	
Part Three – Proposals	
15. Suggestions for St Helena	
16. Options for Britain	

7.2.3   The Blue Book

In fact, the Commission went to work itself to be that persistent embarrassment. It took its case to the United Nations, with the help of two Canadian lawyers. Being able to find these lawyers had an element of luck in it, as Basil George explains: "What happened was, after I retired my wife started a small bookshop. She used to do historical walks around town, and with the shop she could not do that anymore so she asked me to do it. This is when I met some of the people who have been helping us. This chap, the lawyer, is a direct descendant of one of only two island-born governors. So he came on a visit. When we told him what we were doing on citizenship, we gave him our papers, he presented the case to his law faculty and they researched it for us". This research resulted in the Blue book, called "St Helena's rights under international law" (Janisch et al 2000). The case of Saint Helena and citizenship was presented to the UN special committee on decolonisation on 10th July 2000. This did not make the UK look too well: "I think that was an embarrassment, because there was a high level delegation having to go to Geneva to answer our case". No immediate action followed, but the citizenship issue was now on the international agenda.

Inset 1. England, Britain, UK and citizenship

Often there is a confusion of tongues about what is actually meant when speaking about England, Britain or the UK. Unfortunately the case is not even limited to those three terms. England is just one of three countries which together form Great Britain. Great Britain consists of England, Scotland and Wales. The United Kingdom encompasses even more territories, as officially it is called "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland". Then there is a number of territories which are not officially part of the United Kingdom, but which are called kingdoms of the crown (or "crown dependencies"): Guernsey and dependencies, Jersey and the Isle of Man. These islands are usually referred to as "British Islands"(with capital I).

In this respect, it was interesting to see that the yellow book called Saint Helena "the lost county of *England*", while the red book stressed the fact that Saint Helena was "a *British* Island". The explanation for this is quite simple however. Basil George explains: "calling it the lost county of England was only because our nationality took place in 1659, and that was before the United Kingdom, before Britain came into existence. And that is why the royal charter, if you read the royal charter, says 'belonging to our realm of England'". So historically Saint Helena is a lost county of England, because Britain only came into existence through the Act of Union with Scotland in 1707, and the Royal Charter dates from 1673. In the future however, Saint Helena would like to become part of Britain: hence a British Island.

Until the British Overseas Territories Act 2002 came in force, there were a number of different forms of citizenship as well. Full British citizenship (BC), including the right of abode in the UK, was available to citizens of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the kingdoms of the crown and two of Britain's (then called) Dependent Territories, namely Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands. Residents of the other Dependent Territories were only given British Dependent Territories Citizenship (BDTC), which did not include the right of abode in the "mainland UK". Finally there was also the category of British Overseas Citizenship, which applied to people who do not have sufficient connections with any of the Overseas Territories or the UK itself to enable them to qualify for BDTC or BC.

When the British Overseas Territories Act 2002 came into force, all those who were BDTC's automatically got full British citizenship (one exception was made: those people who derived their BDTC solely from a connection to the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus did not get the British citizenship). However, British Dependent Territories Citizenship was not abolished, but merely renamed British Overseas Territories Citizenship (BOTC). People can hold BC and BOTC at the same time. The category of British Overseas Citizenship is not changed (FCO 2001).

7.2.4   The White Paper

From 1997 the commission also started to have more success in the UK parliament. Finally, with the new Labour government in place, some attention was devoted to the British overseas territories. This resulted in a white paper on the relationship between Britain and its Overseas Territories, which was called "Partnership for Progress and Prosperity" (FCO 1999). Basil George comments: "the March 1999 UK government white paper on the overseas territories actually has got an inset about the commission. So it showed that even the British Government in a policy paper like the white paper were recognising our commission".

The reason the white paper was finally written was, according to Basil George, the change of government in the UK. "The White paper, as far as I can recall, is actually the first time a comprehensive policy document was produced for all the overseas territories". The

conservative government before did not have the sympathy of Basil George. "If one wants to be generous about the conservative government, you say they got caught up in the whole Hong Kong issue, which is what happened. But on the other hand at the same time the conservative government made an exception for the Falkland islanders and the Gibraltarians. They could easily have made an exception for us, especially because our ship at that time was commissioned to go into the war. So we went to the war in 1982, and the British Nationality Act came into force on the 1st of January 1983. We were reduced to second-class citizens, having gone into the war. So no, I don't excuse the conservative government". The thought given to Saint Helena from the conservatives can be illustrated by a cartoon which appeared in the Guardian newspaper on 17-4-1997, referring to the Falklands crisis (figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2 Cartoon from the Guardian, 17-4-1997

Source: Saint Helena Institute website, http://website.lineone.net/~sthelena/cartoonlibrary.htm

The role Saint Helenians played in the Falklands conflict is often referred to when discussing the citizenship issue. One islander summarised the issue by saying "we are allowed to die for the country but not allowed to live in it" (George 1999, p. 34).

The Labour government's white paper intends a modern partnership between Britain and its overseas territories. It states clearly that it is not Britain's wish to retain the overseas territories, but that it is the territories' own wish not to become independent. "Our overseas territories are British for as long as they wish to remain British. Britain has willingly granted independence where it has been requested; and we will continue to do so where this is an option" (p. 4).

The new partnership includes arrangements for encouraging good government and sustainable development, but for saint Helena the following passage is crucial: "We have decided that British citizenship – and so the right of abode – should be offered to those British Dependent Territories citizens who do not already enjoy it and who want to take it up…. In making this decision the Government has taken into account representations made by people in many territories – not least those made on behalf of the people of St Helena" (p. 17). The role of the citizenship commission in this respect is explored in an inset.

The overall feeling on Saint Helena about the white paper was one of happiness: finally the issues were being addressed. The overseas territories were taken a bit more serious: a junior

minister now looked after their affairs and was helped by a department for overseas territories in the FCO.

The elected members of the Legislative Council and the Citizenship Commission wrote an extensive response to the white paper (George 1999). It starts with an acknowledgement: "the people of St Helena and its Dependencies thank the British Government and the many people, especially British people and islanders living in the British Isles, for drawing public attention to these British Atlantic islands and the plight of their people". The promise of restoration of citizenship is very welcome, but "there should be no delay in legislation being passed for the policy to become law" (p. 6).

7.2.5   British Overseas Territories Bill

It still took a while. Following the white paper, a bill was introduced giving back the British citizenship to all British Dependent Territories citizens: the British Overseas Territories Bill. It took much time to get this bill through both houses, but early in 2002 Royal Assent was finally passed on it. The provisions of this bill included the change of names from British Dependent Territories to British Overseas Territories, but more importantly, also the following:

"Any person who, immediately before the commencement of this section, is a British Overseas Territories citizen, shall, on the commencement of this section, become a British citizen" (British Government 2001).

A number of provisions are then set forth, and importantly; British Overseas Territories Citizenship will continue to exist (so Saint Helenians do have double nationalities). Therefore the passport will also continue to exist. A minor irritant is the fact that from Saint Helena it takes two months and about £60 to get a British passport (issued in Liverpool as a local issuing facility was deemed too expensive). An overseas territories passport can be issued in Jamestown and almost while-you-wait, costing only £16.50. Councillor Eric George is not happy: "I think it's an insult". The difference between the two passports is that the British Overseas Territories one only gives the holder free access to Britain; a British one also gives access to the EU.

This irritant aside, the fact that citizenship was returned was reason enough for celebrating, and on the 11th of April 2002 a commemorative service was held in St. James' church. A plaque was unveiled at this service (figure 7.3) and statements were made outlining the importance of the bill and praising the role of the citizenship commission.

The commencement date for British citizenship was 21st May 2002, the day of the quincentenary of the discovery of Saint Helena. This meant that Britain could present it as a gift, "something they could give us for our quincentenary celebrations". The quincentenary celebrations have served as a sort of deadline for the British government, according to Basil George.

The role of the citizenship commission in the return of British citizenship is recognised by everyone. In review, Governor Hollamby says: "I think they have done a very good job. They focused initially on the citizenship issue, they wisely made contact with members of the British parliament and they got their support. I think they very quickly persuaded successive governors to assist as well, so there was a sort of three-legged stool approach of putting pressure on the British government". According to councillor Eric George "they did a marvellous job".

Figure 7.3 Commemorative plaque for British citizenship in St. James' church[i]

The work of the commission is not over yet. They continue with the second part of their mandate: "Constitutional development. But our role is more of a support role than the kind of leadership role we had with the citizenship", according to Basil George. The constitutional development will be discussed more extensively in paragraph 7.4. First we turn to the consequences of the return of citizenship.

7.3 The consequences of the return of British citizenship

The commencement date of British citizenship has only just passed, and it is not yet possible to be sure about the consequences. But a wrong has been righted after a long struggle, and that could have a positive effect on the self-esteem of Saints. The return of the right of abode will probably have consequences for migration.

7.3.1 Migration to Britain

Many Saint Helenians expect that quite a few people will leave to take up the right of abode in Britain. There are certain practical problems, as Governor Hollamby explains: "I don't think there will be a great leap in the numbers leaving the island, because for instance I've heard that the RMS is booked at sea deck level for virtually the rest of the year". On the long-term consequences his views are quite positive: "what it will mean is that people will come and go more easily. People who are already working in Britain are usually on work permits. They don't need work permits anymore so they can take a chance and come over here and try to resettle over here…. If it doesn't work they are free to go back and work in the UK without the hassle of work permits and everything else. So I think there will be a steadier flow back and forth". It remains quite vague what people in the UK might want to come back to Saint Helena for. Ethel Yon, Deputy Chief Secretary, is more negative, although she still formulates her views quite hopeful: "We have a serious attrition problem. We are losing the bright people in the service, the teachers and nurses. This has happened and will continue. Even more will

go. Now they know they won't have to come back in two years… they will probably come back in 10 or 15 years".

Not everyone wants to go. Governor Hollamby explains: "I have just been talking to someone in the finance department, who has 41 years of service, I think he retires next February. And we talked about the British passport; I asked him if he would apply, and he said no, no, I don't want a British passport. I said but you can come and go to Britain as you want to, and to the EU countries, and then he said: Governor, I have never been from this island, and at this age, I'm not going to start, I just don't want to know the rest of the world".

A reason why people might want to come back is that once confronted with life outside, people start to value Saint Helena more. This is a view expressed by Consulate Hotel manager Mandy Fowler: "I think many people who plan to leave are just waiting for citizenship. But maybe they go away, see what life is like, and then come back. Life in UK is not all rosy". Cable & Wireless' Managing director Hensil O'Bey agrees: "My own personal feeling is that generally for a while you will see people leaving. But seeing the outside world while working is very different from seeing it on a holiday. Settling in the UK people will see the awkwardness of the work there".

But he sees having the right of abode almost as a human rights issue: "It is having the freedom of movement which is important. Who you belong to doesn't have any bearing on that". Ralph Peters from Radio Saint Helena agrees on the benefits of freedom of movement, but also recognises the downside: "Good to be able to move to the EU to get jobs. But people leave the island now, with citizenship it might be even faster migration. …You have a bad effect to the point where you have people going, you lose people and skills, it has a detrimental effect on Saint Helena. If we have young people with degrees leave the island, we have a brain drain".

Both Basil George and government economist Tom Crowards think that Ascension Island plays an important role in this issue. Basil George: "I think changes on Ascension will have more of an impact, an immediate impact, than citizenship does. These people are away from the island anyway. They will have saved money so they will be in a economic position to move to England". The need for money to actually move might mean that people will not move directly from St Helena to the UK, but that a more subtle process, termed "replacement migration" by Tom Crowards, will occur. "There is some talk that people will go from the Falklands and Ascension, rather more than from here. Because those are the people who like to go overseas anyway, that have the education and personality that want to go overseas. It might be that you lose them in the Falklands or Ascension. It might then be that people from here go to the Falklands and Ascension. So it might not be a direct move…. Replacement migration might be the term, a new term for it".

As yet there is no proof that this process is actually happening. Passenger numbers on the RMS still include people travelling to and from the island because of the quincentenary celebrations. Passport applications in the first 6 weeks since 21 May amounted to 90 for British passports.

7.3.2   Britishness

The return of British citizenship has not only had practical effects in the enlargement of opportunities for migration to the UK and EU. It also returned to the Saints a proof of their Britishness, and increased the feeling that the Saints, who feel very British, are actually wanted by Britain. In the words of radio presenter Ralph Peters: "Rather than the bastard child, we are now a member of the family again".

To an outsider it might seem strange that Saints continued to see themselves as "True Brits" in spite of the fact that the British treated them as second-class citizens. But historically they have every right to it and practically there is little alternative for them. Saints like British products; they like the Royal family and are loyal to Britain. The Britishness of the Saints is seen in Britain itself only by men of 70 years and over (Royle 2001).

Feelings of Britishness vary between the different generations. Among older generations the restoration of British citizenship has certainly reinforced their sense of Britishness, which might have been somewhat hurt through the British Nationality Act. They can now be proud British citizens again, and maybe even raise their self-esteem through that.

The young people of Saint Helena are growing up with television and internet, and access to American influences through Ascension Island. Upon the death of Queen Elizabeth the Queen mother, many older people signed the register of condolences that was opened at the Castle. At the same time, younger people asked what the fuss was all about: "did you know her?".

That is not to say that feelings of Britishness are absent among the youth: they are raised feeling British, follow British football teams, play cricket and follow the UK curriculum in school. Quite a few of them join the British army and there is even a youth branch of the citizenship commission. To young people the new legislation offers the most chances: they can now pursue a career off-island more easily. This might raise expectations and aspirations among the island youth. No longer second-class citizens they can go where they like in the world, and return to Saint Helena when they want.

The future prospect of young people leaving is not desirable to the island. This is why the citizenship commission is continuing its work. Bishop John addressed this issue in his message on the occasion of the commemorative service for British citizenship:

"We have achieved the right to have a British passport. But this was only part of the Commission's work. From its inception the Commission's mandate has expanded to include the negotiation and development of a modern constitutional relationship between St Helena and the UK. In the words of Canon Nicholas Turner, 'When we consider the Island's young people who have not yet made their life and money and home, it is not an escape route to England that they need, but the political and economic basis to make a good life as British citizens on their own island'" (Saint Helena Herald 12 April 2002).

7.4   Constitutional development

The constitutional relationship between the UK and its overseas territories was another issue that was addressed in the White Paper. After consultation with its territories, Britain concluded that "Apart from some limited reference to Crown Dependency status similar to that of the Channel Islands, there was no widespread interest in a change in the current constitutional relationship" (FCO 1999, p. 9). Therefore "we concluded that neither integration into the UK, nor Crown Dependency status, offer more appropriate alternatives to the present arrangements. But these arrangements need to be revisited, reviewed and where necessary revised" (FCO 1999, p. 13). Effectively this statement means that Britain is not in favour of a change to the present status of her Overseas Territories. But they do not completely close the door.

In their response to the White paper, the elected Saint Helenian councillors and the Citizenship Commission stated that on this matter "from the outset the wishes of the people of St Helena through their elected councillors have not been properly represented" (George 1999, p. 28). There was not just 'limited interest' in becoming a crown dependency. Saint Helena actually made a formal proposal to become Crown Dependency (or British Island with

capital I). Besides, the Minister for Overseas Territories stated that "we recognise that constitutional status of each territory must be examined and reviewed separately". The Saint Helenian people want to be treated as a special case, and they applied for the services of a constitutional lawyer to address their plight. Finally in 2002 they were heard. Ms. Quentin-Baxter, barrister at the New Zealand High Court, came to the island in September and October 2002.

7.4.1 Constitutional Commission

Meanwhile the previous Governor of Saint Helena had set up a commission to look into the constitution and recommend changes. Deputy Chief Secretary Ethel Yon comments: "The last constitution has been in existence since 1989. So after having gathered experience with it, it was time to review it. The previous Governor, mister Smallman, set up a Commission of Enquiry into the Constitution. The Commission went to every district, and collected the views from all the people who attended. They collated these views and submitted it to the governor at that time. Now we have a new government, and the current governor has had several meetings where this was discussed. It is now with the FCO in London. So we have our constitution reviewed. I think the councillors did quite well in this, they put forward useful, helpful and beneficial ideas for the constitution".

The proposed changes seem to be limited, and they do not address the issue of the constitutional relationship with Britain fundamentally. Citizenship Commission chairman Basil George states that "We need a constitution that we can identify with, we can have ownership of. Especially with changes on Ascension. I mean you really need one scheme that is linking everything together. You would need to take in Tristan as well. Because there is only one constitution for Saint Helena and its dependencies as one territory. I can't see how you can make changes to bits of it".

But the constitutional commission was not blind to this criticism. In the introduction to their report they stated that: "changing the current Constitution should not be seen as indicative of the fact that St Helenians want to retain the present Constitutional relationship, which is that of a Dependent (Overseas) Territory. Many St Helenians desire a totally different relationship, but also wish the present Constitution to be revised for it to meet better the immediate needs of the island" (quoted in Quentin-Baxter 2002, p. 23).

The "local" changes now envisaged are not generally opposed, but of course a constitution is not revised on an annual basis, and that is why some people feel that the changes should be more comprehensive.

Ms. Quentin-Baxter, the independent constitutional adviser also looked into the proposed changes to the constitution in the issues paper she wrote before coming to the island (2002). But she goes further. She extensively explains the different options for Saint Helena, and discusses how these have worked in practice in other situations. Both a relationship of free association and a Crown dependency status could give Saint Helenians more say in their own affairs. However, her main point is that "neither Overseas Territory status, integration nor free association automatically establishes, except within very broad parameters, the detail of the relationship between the partners to it. Any relationship between Britain and one of its territories, however that relationship is described, needs to be built up like a mosaic" (p. 24).

7.4.2 Ministerial system

A key element in that new relationship is responsibility. There is a feeling on the island that the current system does not put responsibility into the hands of islanders. Eric George is head of the public works commission (and thus ExCo-member), but that does not give him overall

responsibility over the department's affairs: "Right now we are not responsible for the day to day running of that department. We are only responsible for allocating the funds by appropriating it you see. We like to see more autonomy. Instead of the head of department being responsible, we want to be responsible, because we will be accountable then for all the actions of that department. At the moment we are only accountable for, we get only responsibility if something goes wrong with the department, but there is no way council can be held responsible".

Moving on from the current committee system will probably lead to the introduction of either a member system or a ministerial system. A member system would mean that one individual unofficial member of Executive Council would be responsible for the work of a particular department (as opposed to a committee). A ministerial system is more far-reaching: ministers would be appointed on the recommendation of a political leader who has the support on issues of confidence of a majority of the members of the Legislative Council. In either case there would be a Chief Councillor, or Chief Minister: a leader of government business.

This is the natural course of things, according to Quentin-Baxter. The people of St Helena should understand the following: "while they are not under any pressure to abandon the present committee system in favour of a member or ministerial system, they need to understand that committee administration is seen as a stepping stone in the development of the Westminster system in an Overseas Territory" (p. 76).

There is debate over the question if Saint Helena is ready for this next step in the development of the Westminster system. Councillor Eric George is wholly in favour: "I think some people are afraid of the ministerial system. (…) Some people don't like that, they prefer the committee stage. But the committee stage is not doing us any good; it has been like this since 1981. That's as far as my knowledge goes. I don't know all that needs to be known either, except that I feel that I need more autonomy".

A problem for the ministerial system is the fact that power would have to be taken away from the governor, which is hard to do while the island is still grant-aided. Deputy Chief Secretary Ethel Yon explains: "In Anguilla for example they have a ministerial system, but they are not grant-aided. I do not think we are ready for that system here, because we are in the process of reviewing the constitution. We can actually only make recommendations here, it would have to be enacted by an act of parliament in the UK. If we were out of budgetary aid (which is a nicer term than grant aid), it would be nice to have a chief minister though".

Expatriate Government Economist Tom Crowards agrees: "In the long run I would hope that is the sort of thing they go towards here. It's difficult when you're so badly indebted to the UK though, to expect the UK to just give up authority to spend the money. Yeah sure, a locally-run government with 10 million pounds to spend as they wish. It could happen, but you can see the rationale for not. You can see why they hold on to an all-powerful governor to spend all that money".

7.4.3   The Governor

It is time to review the position of the "all-powerful" Governor of Saint Helena. The business card he gave us when we interviewed him listed two functions: Governor and Commander-in-Chief. As there are no forces to command, the last position is ceremonial. But as Governor he has many different tasks, of which Quentin-Baxter (2002, p. 51) names four:

1. *The Governor as the Queen's representative,* which involves largely ceremonial functions.

2. *The Governor as the representative of the United Kingdom Government*, which means he is the channel of communications between the UK Government (FCO and DfID) and SHG.

3. *The Governor as head of the St Helena administration*, which includes the executive powers of the governor, and his "special rights", as described in chapter 4.5. The situation in which the governor has to consult ExCo and/or LegCo, but can ignore their advice, is confusing.

4. *The Governor as facilitator and advocate*

This task includes "being a voice for the island" in London, bringing forward the points of view of SHG.

The position of the governor is thus quite complicated. His position is unclear: does he have to represent the island in London, or London on the island?

Now who is prepared to take such a task? While in earlier times the governorship of Saint Helena was a step in a military and /or colonial career, it is less obvious now what the selection criteria for becoming governor of saint Helena are. Winchester provides a rather cynical view of how a governor is selected: "A fellow works in some minor capacity in our embassy, in some remote country, pushing paper in disconsolate fashion, upsetting no one, inspiring even fewer. His fifty-fifth birthday comes up, and the Personnel Department in London decides he must be given his head-of-mission job before he leaves the Service. He can't go to Khartoum – too tricky, too potentially important; he can't go to Lima, or Ulan Bator, or even to Fernando Po. But how about, let's see – Ascension Island, or the British Virgins? No trouble there – parish pump stuff, really, a few cocktail parties in the evening sun. Very pleasant. Fellow ought to be very glad". (Winchester 1985, p. 302)

This description seems to be a bit unfair. Governor Hollamby told us he had to apply for the function. "Within our senior management structure nowadays, you can't be posted in without your consent. So you make a bid against other people and then the personnel board sits and decides who is the best candidate. So you have to ask for each of the jobs that you are interested in".

One possible solution to put more power in the hands of the Saint Helenians themselves could be the appointment of a locally born governor. Governor Hollamby does not think this is a likely option: "I think as long as the British Government is paying 10 million pounds a year and that will have to increase the next round we are negotiating, there has to be in the British government's mind, protection for that kind of funding and for good governance, which is to make sure that there is no corruption or nepotism or that sort of thing. So as long as Britain is responsible for the territory I think there won't be a locally born governor".

Another scenario would be a redefinition of the tasks of the governor and the establishment of the post of "head of government business" (or Chief Minister, or Chief Islander). The tasks of the governor would then be largely ceremonial, while the political power is in the hands of local people. But ultimately some control would remain in British hands, making this scenario more realistic. One argument against this scenario is its cost: a governor for 5,000 people is expensive, especially if his tasks are largely ceremonial. The control over British funds is another obstacle. But importantly, there must also be a willingness among Saint Helenians to take more power in their own hands. Bishop John explains: "I think actually it would help a lot if the people here were brave enough to take up a ministerial form of government. I think Britain would listen to them more. But I think also they would be better equipped to get on with the job and give them a bit more authority instead of this system where the governor can

overrule anything. He would not be able to do that in a ministerial system. That option was offered to them but they turned it down, they did not want it".

Figure 7.4 Entrance to The Castle: SHG Headquarters and Governor's office[i]

There is a lack of leadership among Saint Helenians. They have never had power in their own hands and seem to be reluctant to take it up. This is a major problem, according to the authors of the Human Development Report: "More controversially what St Helena needs most of all is leadership. Its system of independent councillors with no chief minister, expatriates in key positions of power and dependency on aid leads to an unhealthy situation among politicians of resentment, disillusionment, lack of ownership of policies and poor government. Visionary leadership, community involvement and support and the drive to progress policies and programmes that are sustainable and for the benefit of the island and not just the United Kingdom government are required if the island is to have a long term future" (UNDP 1999, p. 70). Social work manager Doug Paterson agrees, and adds that Saint Helena will only learn by trying. "To me, there should be a change in the relationship with the UK and how St Helena receives its funding. After all, DFID is primarily about reducing world poverty and St Helena does not really fit with that. Being directly funded by the FCO has been suggested as one way to do this. However, DFID's involvement has brought about many positive changes, not least in promoting human rights and greater attention to social problems. There will come a time when St Helena will need to go forward on it's own and this will bring some harsh lessons that will be hard to learn. It is up to everyone to foster independence and empowerment if and when more responsibility is given more local ownership".

In going forward Saint Helena's 'children' will have to be taken into account as well. Two territories are administered from Saint Helena: Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha. The relationship with Ascension Island is especially important, as Saint Helena depends on income from Ascension. Changes are occurring fast on Ascension at the time of writing. The relationship between Ascension and Saint Helena will certainly be on the agenda when defining the future constitutional relationship between Saint Helena and its dependencies on the one hand, and Britain on the other hand.

Inset 2 Tristan da Cunha

The island group of Tristan da Cunha, far in the South Atlantic is also a dependency of Saint Helena. The territory of Tristan da Cunha is composed of four islands: Gough, Inaccessible, Nightingale and Tristan itself. The latter three are grouped together while Gough lies some 230 nautical miles (426km) to the south. The main island, Tristan da Cunha, is the remotest inhabited island in the world. Its nearest neighbour is St. Helena 2,334 km to the North while Cape Town is 2,778 km to the East (source: Tristan da Cunha – the official website).

The island was settled in 1815 to prevent a plan to free Napoleon Bonaparte being staged from there. Afterwards some people stayed on and went into subsistence farming. Whalers also frequently used the island. In 1938 Tristan was declared a dependency of St. Helena. The start of a crayfish industry in 1950 brought about the transition from subsistence to a cash economy and in the same year the British Government sent its first Administrator to Tristan. In 1961 the whole population had to leave the island because the volcano erupted. They were resettled in the UK, but when it was safe to return, almost all islanders did so. The island has about 300 inhabitants today and is self-sufficient in the day-to-day running of its affairs. Only large projects require outside funding.

The Governor of Saint Helena is also Governor of Tristan, and is represented on Tristan by an administrator. Occasionally the governor visits the island, but he is not involved in the day-to-day running. There is democracy through an eleven-member Island council (of which 3 members are appointed), which is elected for three years. The person receiving the most votes in the election becomes chief islander. Governor Hollamby: "Island councils are very simple to operate and they usually advise the… I've got an administrator down there… on the course of action, so he doesn't sort of act in isolation. And certain issues he has to refer to me for advice in any case. We could have something very similar on Ascension island".

People from Tristan sometimes come to Saint Helena for a while, for example to attend Prince Andrew School. Compared to Tristan, life on Saint Helena is fast, as the following fragment from Simon Winchester's book "Outposts" (1985) illustrates: "She met a girl from Tristan once, who came to St. Helena and left in great confusion, unable to cope with the frantic pace of life in Jamestown – she was frightened by what she called the rush hour in the island capital, when perhaps ten cars leave for the hillside, and ten shops all shut at the same hour". (p. 289).

Fishing vessels bring most of the cargo and mail to the island, visiting the island six times a year. The RMS visits the island once a year, usually in January.

7.5   The relationship with Ascension Island

Developments on Ascension Island and Saint Helena have been linked from the very start of settlement on Ascension in 1815. Ascension was settled because Britain wanted to make sure that a plot to free Napoleon Bonaparte was not staged from there. Tristan da Cunha was settled for the same reason. The relationship between Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha will be discussed in an inset below.

Figure 7.5 Ascension Island[ii]
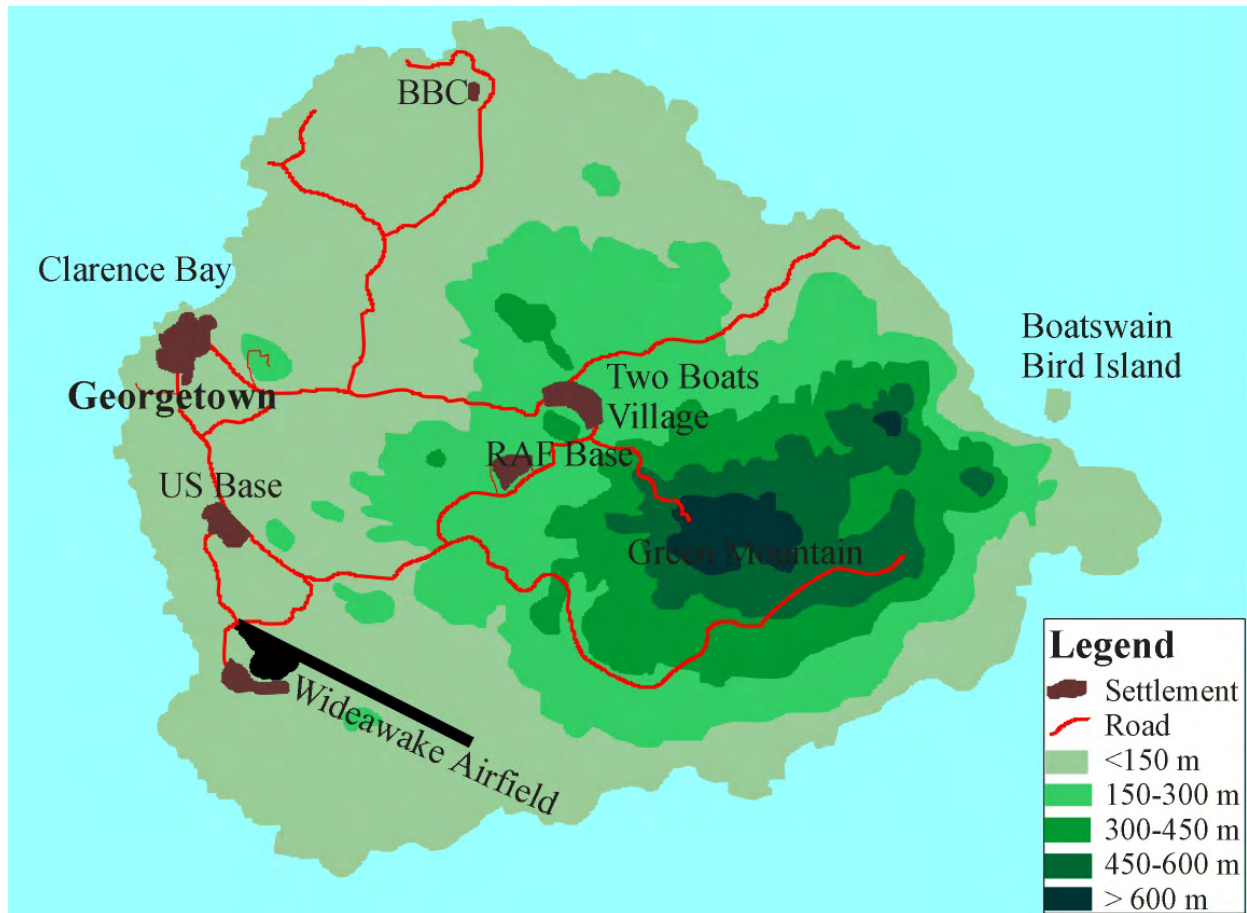
Ascension is a much younger island than Saint Helena, with volcanic activity still present. The last major volcanic eruption took place about 600 years ago. The island lies about 1120 kilometres to the northwest of Saint Helena, at 7º 56'S and 14º 22'W. It is somewhat smaller than Saint Helena at about 90 km². The surface of the island mostly resembles the moon: it is very barren. The one exception is Green Mountain, the highest point on the island at about 860 m. True to its name this mountain is covered with lush vegetation. Ascension's climate is subtropical. The island is renowned for the green turtles which nest on its beaches from January to May each year.

The island has two main settlements: the capital of Georgetown (at the coast) and Two Boats village (further inland). Georgetown is the site of the administrator's office, post office, hospital and shop, while Two Boats village has the school and another shop. The US military are based at Cat Hill, while the RAF personnel are at Traveller's Hill.

Figure 7.6 Georgetown as seen from the RMS[i]

Ascension is an important island for communications. The island is used by the US Air Force, who operate from the Wideawake Airfield which was built during World War II. It serves as refuelling stop for US military planes and is also the intermediate stop for British RAF flights to and from the Falklands. Both countries have military personnel stationed on the island. The military importance has resulted in the airport not being open to civilian traffic. Wideawake is the closest airfield to Saint Helena and a limited number of seats is available on the RAF flights to people travelling to and from Saint Helena. This is an expensive way to reach the island, and it may still involve several days' waiting on Ascension, as the schedules of the flights and the RMS are not geared to one another.

Figure 7.7 The US Base on Ascension Island[i]

Other "users" of the island include the BBC, Cable and Wireless and the Composite Signals Organisation. Certain activities on Ascension are surrounded by secrecy.

From 1921 on, Ascension has been a dependency of Saint Helena. It has been governed first by the managing director of Cable and Wireless, and from 1964 by an administrator, who reports to the governor of St Helena. It has always been a working island, and has never had a permanent population. People on short-term contracts came and went, but no one actually lived there. Many Saints have worked and are working on Ascension on short-term contracts, usually for 2 years. The number of Saints on Ascension has steadily increased until the 1970s, and has then remained more or less stable. More and more workers are now allowed to bring their spouse, which has led to a healthier division between males and females, although females are still only 36% of the Saint population on Ascension.

The Saints on Ascension have organised themselves, for example in the Saints' club (see figure 7.8).

Table 7.1 Saints on Ascension Island, 1966-1998

Year	Total	Male	Female
1966	476	428	48
1976	719	539	180
1987	722	508	214
1998	712	458	254

Sources: Population census 1987, 1998

The total population of Ascension Island also includes the British and American military and some other expatriate workers. This further increases the male domination in the population. In total the number of people on Ascension at the 1998 census was 1123, of which only 29% was female.

Figure 7.8 The Saints' club in Georgetown, Ascension Island[i]

Until recently, people working on Ascension did not have to pay tax. It was not possible to settle on the island: after expiration of your work contract, you had to leave. People on Ascension had no voting rights and there was no representative body on the island.

This was a situation that had to change, according to the White Paper: "We are planning… to consult the people of St Helena and its Dependencies about how to develop the democratic and civil rights of people living on Ascension Island" (FCO 1999, p. 13). A report was produced and changes were proposed.

From the 1st of April 2002 people and businesses on Ascension Island became subject to the payment of tax. From this date it was also possible to buy property on the island and to settle there. These major changes were not accompanied by a change in government: the residents of Ascension Island had no right to vote. People were furious, and complained loudly, claiming that there can be no taxation without representation.

Finally, in August 2002 they voted in a referendum. They could choose between two options: an island-only council or an island council with an inter-island council (with Saint Helena). An overwhelming majority of 95% voted for the island-only council.

An inter-island council would have given Saint Helena some say in Ascension's affairs. Given the fact that Ascension is Saint Helena's dependency this would not seem unreasonable. But if you look at the connections between the two islands, the dependency relation seems the other way round: Saint Helena is heavily dependent upon Ascension.

7.5.1 Dependency relations

There are a number of reasons for the dependency of Saint Helena upon Ascension. First of all there is the employment of many Saints on Ascension. About 20% of Saint Helena's workforce is employed on Ascension. These are people usually making quite a bit of money. They send this money back to Saint Helena in the form of remittances. These remittances are the bottom under the Saint Helena economy. In the words of Bishop John: "At the moment the economy on Ascension is supporting the one here, 2, 3 million pounds a year comes into the economy here for building houses, buying goods etcetera. It's not money generated here. It's the hidden economy. If you go around and look at the development you would think it is a very rich community here but in fact it is the hidden economy, the money from the Falklands and Ascension. Saint Helena wouldn't even exist without it. We wouldn't be able to maintain the shops that we have, the furniture, the building materials, because people do not have enough money to do it, it has to come in from offshore".

A second reason for Saint Helena's dependency upon Ascension is the airport. Wideawake airfield is the closest airfield to Saint Helena and its closest connection to the outside world. It is used by many people travelling to Saint Helena from the UK. Besides, it is the only way to and from home for the Saints working on the Falklands. Saint Helena's airmail goes through Ascension as well.

Then there is the fishing licence. The sale of fishing licenses provided Saint Helena with a valuable source of income for a number of years. These licenses to fish in the territorial waters of Saint Helena and its dependencies were sold mainly to Japanese trawlers. They used it to fish for tuna in the waters around Ascension Island. Still, the money flowed to the SHG and did not benefit Ascension.

Financially, economically and for communications Ascension is of tremendous importance to Saint Helena. But it is still Saint Helena's dependency. Some people we interviewed argued that it also works the other way round: Ascension is also dependent on Saint Helena.

Of course Ascension would have a problem if all Saint Helenian workers left. And the island is partly run by officers provided by SHG; for example a detachment of the Saint Helena police force is stationed on Ascension. Governor Hollamby cites more reasons: "First of all, it is too small to survive economically on its own. British ministers will not have a proliferation of small states that can never reach self-determination. So that will remain for that point. The other thing is, it makes good strategic sense for the two islands to work together in certain areas. For instance, if you are talking about tourism…. you can see a two-holiday centre developing between the two islands, once we've got the Americans to agree to open up Wideawake airport to civilian traffic". Negotiations about this issue were stalled after the 11th of September 2001. Recently they restarted, but the opening up of Wideawake airfield has become much more unlikely.

Figure 7.9 Wideawake airfield[i]

Certainly there are opportunities in working together, but for the moment the dependency relation works one way politically, and the other way economically. The argument is summarised by Bishop John: "There is a big fight going on now between here and Ascension Island, because Ascension does not want to be tied to this lot here and here they say you must be because you are our dependency. Ascension does not depend on Saint Helena, Saint Helena depends on them!"

7.5.2   The impact of changes on Ascension

Given the high economic dependence of Saint Helena upon Ascension, changes on Ascension will have a certain impact on Saint Helena as well. It is not yet perfectly clear what the consequences of the introduction of the tax regime on Ascension will be. The US base has had to close its facilities to non-base personnel, because they remain outside the taxation system. The shops on the island have been bought by Solomon's, Saint Helena's largest company.

Three questions are important to Saint Helena. First, there is the continuation of operations of all of Ascension's users. These employers were not too happy with the introduction of tax, and some have threatened to leave. If they do so, Saint Helena will lose an important source of jobs and income.

Second, there is the question how many people will start to live on Ascension and build or buy their own home there. This will affect the amount of remittances sent back to Saint Helena. If people build their home on Ascension instead of Saint Helena, investment on Saint Helena and the amount of remittances sent back will go down. In the words of chief finance officer Desmond Wade: "If Ascension goes on its own completely, and people start to live there, this island is going to suffer tremendously, because a lot of remittances come here".

Starting a community of permanent residents on Ascension involves more than you might think at first sight, according to councillor Eric George. "You can't set up a community unless you have all the facilities that go with it. Those people are going to get old sometime. You need social services. You need your own police force. They've got our police force at the moment. You need your own medical staff, assistance, education…". Right now there are no old people on Ascension, and hardly any sick people either. As everyone works, the hospital is only occupied after the odd accident at work.

Bishop John expects people to still come back to Saint Helena. Only they will come later, like they do from England: "people in England went through years and years and years, 47 years some, and then come back here to retire. This is what I mean. So that still could happen from Ascension, they are doing it from England".

The third question is connected to the constitutional relationship. Now that Ascension will get its own council, it is not at all improbable that this council will push for more autonomy. Many people on Ascension do not like the absolute power of the Governor of Saint Helena to run affairs on Ascension Island. If democratic development comes to Saint Helena, maybe in the form of a ministerial system, what will then be the position of Ascension? It is unlikely that a chief minister of Saint Helena will have powers over Ascension. The governor's role and office of the administrator will then have to be revised and maybe Ascension will get a Chief Islander or Chief Minister as well. This will mean less dependence upon Saint Helena politically.

In short, there are stark indications that the two islands are 'drifting away' from each other. This would not be of benefit to Saint Helena. There is a task for Saint Helena in making plans for development together. It would also be a wise move to consult the people of Ascension Island about any future constitutional development.

7.6   Conclusion

Developments in the citizenship issue have finally led to results in 2002: British citizenship was returned. Saints are no longer second-class citizens. Their Britishness is recognised and they see that their own hard work has ensured a better future for themselves. The work of the Citizenship Commission has been of crucial importance in this regard and they can rightly be proud of themselves.

Chances are quite a few people will take up the opportunities that are offered to them through the return of British citizenship. People can now move into the wider world with more freedom, but also with more uncertainty. You don't need a contract to leave the island, but to leave the island without a contract requires a lot of courage. It is uncertain how many people will actually migrate, and for how long.

Citizenship is only a small part of a wider picture, which involves the constitutional relationship between Saint Helena and the UK. Saint Helenians have expressed a wish to move on from the current status of Overseas Territory to one of Crown Dependency or British Island. Free association could also be an option.

Any change would require the revision of the constitution of Saint Helena. A process to review the constitution is already underway, and constitutional lawyer Quentin-Baxter has set developments in motion through the issues paper and her subsequent visit to the island.

This momentum should be put to use. The establishment of a new relationship with Britain should be founded on a common understanding about the way in which to move the island forward from its current state of financial dependence. One issue is of paramount importance for the future development of the island: the question of access. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 8   Access

St Helena is one of the most isolated places in the world. It is therefore not surprising that access is of the utmost importance to the island. The sole link with the outside world, the R.M.S. St Helena, is important to all Saints and anything that happens to the ship is subject to widespread discussion. The UNDP feels that "the fundamental question of access, therefore, affects every perspective of daily life and sustainable human development" (UNDP 2000, p. 19)

A trip to Saint Helena takes several days. It still takes at least 2 days by ship to reach St Helena even if you fly with the RAF to Ascension. Once on the island you are dependent upon the RMS schedule for leaving again. Either you leave again after 2 days (back to Ascension or for the 5-day journey to Cape Town); or you wait until the ship returns to the island for its next trip. This makes it very time-consuming to reach the island, and many people argue that this puts off tourists as well as potential investors. They would therefore like to see access improved by making this both quicker and more frequent.

With the possibility of an airport coming in the long term and a rescheduling of the RMS in the short term it seems likely that access to St Helena will change in the future. Because access is so important to Saints this in turn might be an important influence on their spatial identity. Therefore we will take a look at the future of access to St Helena in this chapter.

The High Point Rendel Report on access titled 'St. Helena - Comparative study of Air and Sea Access' will be frequently quoted in this chapter. This report was published in 2001 and the research was undertaken by High Point Rendel on behalf of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Government of St Helena (SHG). In the report aspects of both future sea and air access are discussed.

It is impossible though to get a clear picture of future access to St Helena without first describing the past and present situation of access to the island.

8.1   Access to St Helena in the past

Access to St Helena until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1867 has been incorporated in the history section (chapter 3.1) of this thesis. This section will look at shipping from the start of visits to St Helena by the ships of the Union Castle line in 1857 to the current shipping service by the RMS.

8.1.1   Union Castle Line

From 1857 the island was visited upon and supplied by the mail ships of the famous Union Castle lines. This was a prosperous company for most of its existence and it ran a service from Southampton to the Cape for 120 years. In quality of service to St Helena, "this period was characterized by frequent passenger service (28 calls pa), limited accommodation (12 only, plus 36 interisland) and infrequent and unreliable cargo service (3/4 calls pa)" (p. 2-1).

The service was destined to be abolished when mail service was containerised from 1977 onwards. The last visit of a Union Castle Ship was on the 30th of September 1977, outside the mail service and "mainly in order to keep the Islands of Ascension and St Helena supplied" (Union-Castle Mail Steamship Company Limited 2002).

8.1.2   The first R.M.S. St Helena

When service by the Union Castle line was stopped the island suddenly was without a regular link with the outside world. This obviously was a big problem for the islanders and in order

to solve this the Foreign and Commonwealth office called for tenders to provide a new service. Before the end of 1977 it was announced that a small Cornish company, named Curnow Shipping, would institute the new freight and passenger service. Managing Director of Curnow Andrew Bell had a vessel ready called the Northland Prince, which was renamed RMS St Helena. A separate company to operate the new ship, the St Helena Shipping Company, was formed as well. This company was fully operated by Curnow shipping without any special purpose intermediate entities being involved. The RMS made her first scheduled voyage to St Helena in 1978 under captain Martin Smith.

According to the High Point Rendel Report "The Northland Prince/RMS St Helena revolutionised performance, with a combined passenger/cargo service of 12 calls per year, combining 72 passengers and greatly improved reliability, particularly for cargo….and as a major innovation, employed only Saints as petty officers and ratings, at international wage rates." (p. 2-1)

This first RMS served the island until late 1990, with an interruption during the Falklands War, during which the ship became a 'Minesweeper Support Ship'. Meanwhile other ships were chartered to provide for the island.

8.2   Current access: The R.M.S. St Helena

In 1986 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office announced its intention to provide a new cargo-passenger liner to replace the RMS. Five shipbuilders tendered to build the new ship, twice the size of the old RMS, but the awarding of the contract was blighted with government ineptitude and political expediency. The final cost of construction was reported to be £32.42 million - against the original contract price of £19.5 million. (By comparison, the earlier RMS cost £940,000 and her conversion and overhaul £1.5 million.) (Getaway to Africa 2002). The new RMS St Helena was launched by Prince Andrew on 31 October 1989 and made her maiden voyage a little more than a year later. The present ship is a small combined cargo passenger vessel of 105 metres overall length. 132 passengers per voyage can be accommodated, while the cargo space can hold 54 containers. (p. 2-2).

The ship does suffer from the occasional breakdown and this often seems to be because of mechanical problems with the main engines (p. 2-2). But the RMS does conform and there is the expectation that it will continue to conform to highest standard of maintenance and safety until the planned end of its service in 2010.

Figure 8.1: The RMS St Helena, the islands "lifeline": (a) the ship, (b) the logo of the RMS, (c) the logo of Andrew Weir Shipping

The ship is the only British deep sea Royal Mail Ship that remains in service. The line exists to serve St Helena and is not profitable. Therefore it receives a yearly subsidy in order to keep it operating, which amounted to 1,931,000 pounds in the financial year 2000/2001. This is almost 20 percent of the total grant aid St Helena received in this year.

As the RMS is the only regular connection with 'the outside world', the ship is often considered to be the 'lifeline' of the island. As a result, many Saints feel a strong connection with the ship, as is illustrated by islander Reg Yon: "don't take our ship away from us. (…) if we got our own ship we know that it's going to be here 2 weeks at least every 5 weeks. How much cargo are they going to be able to put on an airplane? Not much. It can only take like a 100 passengers or so, tops. So logically thinking what is more important? Our ship! (…) I still say don't take my ship away."

The day when the RMS arrives on St Helena is also an important event and is often referred to as 'ship day'. Many people from 'the country' go to Jamestown this day to see the ship come in and talk to the newly arrived tourists and Saints. As a result this is always one of the more lively days in Jamestown.

The first and the current RMS were managed by Curnow Shipping on behalf of the St Helena Shipping Company. The contract for managing the St Helena line is given out by DfID and the duration of the contract is ten years. After serving out three contracts Curnow Shipping was not given a new contract in 2001. The managers of Curnow Shipping were charged with "conspiracy to defraud St Helena line" by the Serious Fraud Office in 2001. It is believed that the directors were receiving "sweetener" payments from suppliers in return for the award of lucrative contracts with the company and the RMS St Helena. At the time of writing the trial just commenced with the outcome still very much unclear.

The new contract was awarded instead to Andrew Weir shipping, which started exploiting the St Helena line in August of 2001. Although there where some initial problems during the first year especially in booking , Andrew Weir seems to have managed the takeover quite efficiently.

Reaching St Helena is quite expensive especially for tourists. A trip from Cardiff to Cape Town on the RMS costs between 1,990 and 4,780 British pounds.

There are special fares for Saints in order to make it possible for them to leave and return to the island. The fare on budget accommodation from the UK to St Helena is therefore 'only' 545 pounds. However this system of subsidised fares is not working perfectly. Tourists who have planned a longer stay on the island (they don't travel on in two days on the same voyage) can also apply for the budget fare, as government economist Tom Crowards explains: "There is of course a problem how we define tourists, how we implement the provision of cheap fares. Right now you pay the low fare if you are here for a long time, but we would like to charge those people "the full whack", because they are not Saints. Only the tourists that are here for a short time and can afford it pay the full price. We'd like to let all tourists pay the full price." As a result of the low wages on the island the trip can still be too expensive for some. Bishop John also has problems with the amount of money that he has to spent in order to travel: "It is also very expensive for me. I went up to Ascension Island on that cruise ship the Endeavour and they did not charge me for it. They said if you conduct a service and do a talk about the church life on both islands, we give you free passage. Coming back on the RMS cost me 335 pounds, but it would have been twice that if I'd had to pay both ways."

Travelling on the RMS is expensive for many, but the number of passengers has nonetheless grown over the years.

8.2.1 Passengers

From 1986 to 1999 the numbers of visitors to the island through the RMS has increased dramatically from 671 arrivals in 1986 to 2056 arrivals in 2000. The most recently published passenger numbers are shown in table 8.1 below.

Large fluctuations in the number of arrivals do sometimes occur. Of the different visitor categories as discerned by High Point Rendel, 'tourist' visitors (although somewhat unclearly defined) has seen the greatest percentual increase. The low starting level has to be taken into account here though: for instance only 78 passengers in the tourist category visited the island in 1990, growing to 639 in 1998 before falling back to 537 in 1999 (p. 2-9). Growth was high in 1996, which was "attributable in large part to the rescheduling of the RMS St Helena in May 1993. The rescheduling of the vessel improved access to St Helena from both Cape Town and Ascension Island." (p. 2-5). The improved access was accompanied by a more proactive marketing approach by Curnow Shipping both to the vessel and to St Helena as a destination, which raised awareness levels for the island and its maritime access amongst the travel trade and the travelling public.

The number of visiting tourists has probably been very high in 2002 as well as a result of the quincentenary celebrations, but official figures had not been published at the time of writing.

Table 8.1: RMS Passenger Arrivals to St Helena, 2000

Category	number	percentage
Business	132	6.4
Returning from overseas employment	490	23.8
Returning residents	438	21.3
Visiting Friends or Relatives	448	21.8
Tourists	548	26.7
Total	2056	100.0

Source: High Point Rendel 2001, p. 2-6

The growth of the number of passengers does clearly show one of the problems that comes with having the RMS as the sole regular link with the outside world. High Point Rendel concludes that "In addition (…) the ability of the RMS to carry many more passengers is constrained by the existing berth capacity, the assumption of maintenance of the existing pattern of voyages, and the seasonality of demand which already indicates that at certain times of the year the RMS currently operates at, or close to, full capacity." (p. 2-7)

The RMS only has a limited number of places available, and the possibilities for tourism are consequently limited to this number. This was clear especially during the quincentenary celebrations, as the coordinator of the Q5 celebrations Carolyn Thomas emphasizes: "Say for instance Q5. There are a lot of people, St. Helenians and non St Helenians who are very disappointed because either they couldn't get flights to Ascension Island or they couldn't get passage on the RMS. Because now when the ship is coming into St Helena every time it is full. It's unfortunate, I know that a lot of people are dissatisfied and they make complaints, but what can you do when you have only one ship you know?"

Table 8.1 also shows that there is a relatively low number of business passengers on the RMS. The main reason for this is the long travelling time on the RMS. A visit to St Helena will cost you at least a week, in which you can only stay for two days on the island. A longer stay will cost even more time, making a trip to check out investment possibilities very time consuming.

The long trip does not only put off potential investors, it can also be a problem for Saints working overseas. As a result of the long journey you have to get a long leave at work to be able to visit the island, which sometimes is not possible. Some Saints who have been working in the UK for many years only visit St Helena after they retired.

The RMS is not only used to get people to and from the island, it is also used for the transport of goods to St Helena.

8.2.2   Freight

There has been a very limited growth in freight volumes in recent years, with any increase being concentrated on the Cape Town route as a consequence of the "reorientation of the service since 1995 towards a greater presence in the southern Atlantic". (p. 2-18). The cost of the freight service is considered to be a problem by many on the island, for instance by the office manager of Argos Fiona Duncan who feels that "the problem [with export] is the RMS freight charges, which are quite high."

As a result of the monopoly on freight, rates are at the moment probably higher than they would be when freight service to St Helena would be provided on a commercial basis. Governor Hollamby explains: "it's a very expensive operation and it costs the island quite a

lot of money. Both in the subsidy, the maintenance and in the high freight rates. We could have goods on the shelf for 20% less than what they are now".

Taking freight on the RMS all the way from the UK is uneconomical if you look at it from world market perspective. Government economist Tom Crowards illustrates this with the fact that it is "cheaper to ship via Cape Town anyway nowadays, because we charge a lot for freight. So you can just send it to Cape Town and let the RMS take it from Cape Town to the island".

The High Point Rendel Report also studied alternative freight arrangements and concludes that "our conclusion with regard to the viability of commercial freight services (…) is that there would be little difficulty in concluding an arrangement to provide an acceptably frequent and timely freight service to the Island, almost certainly at lower cost than that now supplied by the RMS". (p. 2-29)

As the possible replacement RMS might very well be a passenger only ship it seems likely that freight service to St Helena will be commercialised by 2010.

8.2.3   Rescheduling the RMS

It has already been mentioned in chapter 6.1.3 that the RMS has been rescheduled and now travels less frequently to Cardiff in order to improve the island's accessibility. There are also arguments in favour of stopping the UK calls of the RMS altogether. But keeping the RMS wholly in the South Atlantic might increase the operating loss of the ship, as governor Hollamby explains: "Well, that's been looked at. But the problem that the economists tell me is that it's only profitable between Cardiff and Ascension Island. Once it goes up and down Ascension Island, Saint Helena and South Africa, you have to increase the subsidy. So it wouldn't necessarily work on that basis alone. The rates are so high that the passengers partly subsidise the freight rates. But the big passenger fares are from the UK to Ascension, that's where the profit is. So I don't think we are going to keep the RMS in the South Atlantic".

But government economist Tom Crowards disagrees and feels that if marketed correctly the ship could make a better profit if it stayed in the South Atlantic: "So studies in the past have shown that income will decrease, but access will be improved. But I'm not convinced about this. I have seen the numbers they use for alternative ports and I have many arguments with the shipping agents about their numbers. I think their previous numbers are suspect too. It's hard to believe that the ship would lose money if you could market trips from Cape Town".

Whether or not the ship would need more money if it stayed in the South Atlantic, access to the island would undoubtedly be improved if it happened. Access would be more regular, and the periods in which the island cannot be reached for a full month (when the RMS travels up and down to Cardiff) would disappear. According to the Strategic Review 2000-2010 this in turn would significantly improve the 'in-island economy', mainly as a result of more possibilities in tourism. The report will be quoted at some length here:

"the proposed rescheduling of the RMS to a zero UK call schedule provides the opportunity for considerable increases in tourist numbers by not only providing additional berths but also by offering a regular and reasonably frequent service. Economic analysis estimated that on-island benefits would be nearly £360,000 over the three year period. That is over £200,000 greater than that that would have been achieved without rescheduling. (…)

The benefits to tourism from rescheduling the RMS are even more pronounced over a ten year period with an estimated additional annual expenditure of £1m being achieved and thereby generating some 200 jobs." (Strategic review 2000-2010).

Although many Saints are strongly attached to 'their' ship, there is also the feeling that improved access is quintessential to the island's future. Editor of the St Helena Herald Johnny Drummond for instance is dissatisfied with the current arrangements: "The island needs more physical links. The RMS is inadequate, it has the habit of breaking down in the most inconvenient moments".

One way of improving these physical links could be the introduction of air access to St Helena. This will be extensively discussed in paragraph 8.4.

8.2.4   Cruise ships and Yachts

Beside the RMS there are two other ways in which tourists reach the island. The first is by large cruise ships that have included St Helena on their itinerary; some annually on trips to the south and others on their world cruise. The number of visiting cruise ships has risen significantly in recent years, and the island seems to be on its way to become a known cruise destination. Many cruise ships have stopped travelling through the Suez Canal after the 11th of September 2001 out of fear of terrorist actions there. Instead they round the Cape of Good Hope and as a result select St Helena as a port of call.

From November 2001 until April 2002 19 cruise ships visited the island. As this is the 'cruise ship season' other cruise ships are not expected until November again. Director of Tourism Pamela Young regarded this years season as "the busiest times we've ever had in living memory".

The number of passengers on these ships varies, but many can host up to one thousand, and some ships like the Queen Elizabeth 2,the Aurora or the Amsterdam can host even more. The QE2, one of the biggest cruise ships in the world, has a maximum passenger capacity of 1778 (figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2 The Queen Elizabeth 2 at anchor in James Bay[i]

The number of visitors by cruise ships thus exceeds the number of visitors that come to the island with the RMS. But in the official visitor statistics the cruise ship passengers are not even counted. The reason for this is that the cruise ships only stay at the island for a day maximum, which leaves the passengers with only a few hours to spend on the island. To be counted into the visitor statistics you at least have to stay overnight on the island.

As the passengers spend so little time on the island, the economic impact is limited. According to Director of Tourism Pamela Young they spend about 20 pounds per person on average: "the majority will spend about 10 pounds on a tour and another 10 pounds on souvenirs and some food. Some spend a bit more, some a bit less of course, but that's on average".

Beside the limited time the cruise ship passengers have, there is another factor that limits their spending on the island. The low level of tourism facilities on the island restricts the possibilities for spending money. Pamela Young agrees: "I think the influx of large cruise ships of last week makes us realise that there is still definitely room to improve services". Setting up of tourism services is hampered, among other things, by the seasonal variation in the number of visiting cruise ships.

The lack of a harbour is another factor that limits the impact cruise ships have on the economy of the island. The ships have to lie at anchor at sea, which causes problems when the weather is rough. Landing on 'the steps' (see figure 6.6a) is already difficult for the often elderly cruise ship passengers in normal weather. In rough weather therefore the captain can decide that a landing at St Helena is not responsible. Pamela Young illustrates this with the example of the Aurora visit in March 2002:

"for instance when the Aurora was in, for us locally it seemed that there wasn't much of a swell. But the captain felt there was too much of a swell to let his passengers come ashore (…) now only 400 passengers out of 1600 actually came ashore". She feels that a breakwater would largely solve this problem: "a breakwater would make a difference (…) if we had a breakwater we wouldn't have that swell. It wouldn't matter how much swell there is, the breakwater would basically keep it calm near the shore".

The last group of visitors to St Helena are the so-called "yachties": people travelling on their own yacht. Most of the yachtsmen are from South Africa, other yachtsmen are mainly Brits or Americans.

The number of visitors from yachts was estimated at 500 in 2002/2003 (Government of Saint Helena, Overseas development Administration 1993) but this estimation stems from 1993 and according to the SHG website "the number has increased significantly in recent times". The yachts mainly visit shortly to have a break from their voyage and to re-supply. The seasonal variation also applies to this category of visitors.

The Strategic Review agrees that the economic impact of cruise ships as well as yachts s not too great and gives some estimates to back this up:

"The maximum number of cruise visitors is unlikely to exceed 2500 a year with associated revenues of no more than 75,000 pounds.(…) Yacht numbers are likely to continue to increase but again expenditures are liable to remain low. For every 100 yachts that arrive at the island the resultant expenditure is probably going to be no more than 25,000 pounds" (Strategic Review 2000-2010, p. 51-52).

RMS tourists, cruise ship tourists and visiting yachties are the physical presence of the outside world on Saint Helena. But of course contact between St Helena and the outside world is also possible in other ways. Communication possibilities like telephone, internet and TV also connect the Saints with 'the outside world' and can be seen as a form of access as well.

8.3   Communications

Almost all electronic communications with the outside world are in the hands of one single company: Cable and Wireless. The company has been operating on the island since 1899.

Through telephone St Helena can be reached from almost anywhere in the world. For a price though, because for many Saints keeping in touch with their relatives through telephone is expensive. But due to the small market it is very hard to lower phone rates, Managing Director of C&W Hensil O' Bey explains: "Well, I don't really think we have high telephone rates here. The British Telecom to here rates are higher, I checked that on the internet. Mostly these rates are based on population and we have only few people here. Our rates are still quite low if you take that into account".

It is often argued that the high international telephone rates (in comparison for instance with a call from the UK to the USA) are prohibitive for attracting employers like call centers. Hensil O' Bey though feels that there are many more reasons why call centers will never come: "For call centres, well, quite realistically, with the job turnover you have in that sector you would never get it on Saint Helena. Turnover is high, it is a boring job. Still, it could have worked, but you can't just take the human resources out of another area. They were talking about bringing the teachers into the call centre, that was just ludicrous. Call centres do not carry the expertise, so the pay is not going to be high. There is a tendency to come here looking for cheap labour. This call centre that was interested to come here eventually went to India, you know. If you're looking for cheap labour, Saint Helena is not the place to come".

Lately there have been calls for the introduction of a mobile network on Saint Helena. "People here now are crying out for mobile phones. It's not impossible, but the topography restricts it, and there is the economic argument. I mean, with an economy where people find 3 pence a minute for a local call expensive, it is not going to work. It will cost us about 3 million euros to get it in, and we of course expect a return on that investment".

St Helena has long been without the merits and problems that can come with television: TV was introduced only in 1995. St Helena now only has a 'three channel output system' to keep the costs down. An expansion in the near future is not likely, as many Saint already feel the rates are quite high.

Although TV has only recently been introduced to the island, it has quickly become "part of people's lives", according to Chief Education Officer Pamela Young. But she feels it is not all positive: "There is a downside though, on community involvement. People stay home more often now, because everything you want is in the house. You don't need to go to the community centre, or to Donny's every night. It has taken away people coming out to see one another, and it might have put a strain on some businesses".

Headmistress of Pilling Middle School Elaine Benjamin feels that much depends on the parents: "Some mimic some things they see on TV, but there are pros and cons. There are also some very intelligent things on TV, as long as you monitor it it's fine I guess. It all depends on the parents in the home".

A positive effect of the introduction of TV is that it is easier for young Saints to gain knowledge about subjects in their curriculum that are derived from UK society rather than St Helenian society. Through television students gain knowledge about things like banking, credit cards or railway systems. However, the information and programs about the outside world also make children more inquisitive and they could therefore be more willing to leave the island and go and see this world for themselves.

The use of internet on the island has grown quickly since its introduction, both in the number of St Helenian webpages and in the number of people connected to 'the world wide web'. Through internet Saints can interact quickly with people from all over the world and can easily and relatively cheap keep in touch with friends and relatives overseas.

Headmistress of P.A.S. Susan O' Bey thinks the internet will make quite an impact on St Helena: "I think internet is having more of an impact than even television does (...) I like to think that the internet is really what is going to open St Helena up. Or what's going to open up the world for St Helena and to St Helena. So more and more will go online, the more they will become interactive with other people and the information that is available. And the possibilities of e-learning. I am really excited about the development of internet".

She claims that even more than TV, internet offers possibilities in education: "Also for Prince Andrew School it has been amazing to see what they can do, they can search the internet for anything. If you approach it from the education side, I think the internet is a school where everyone can go to and get learning".

At the moment internet is still expensive to use for Saints, although C&W did help in providing internet to P.A.S. Students can not yet regularly communicate with overseas students through the internet though, because there is no funding available for these kind of projects.

Chief Education Pamela Lawrence therefore is a bit more cautious about the future role of internet: "I think the internet is going to play a major role if we can really get cheaper communications. At the moment it is prohibited because it is so expensive. (...) Eventually if we get cheaper communications and internet that is going to open up a whole new avenue for us".

When internet is more easily available and there is adequate funding she does also see good educational possibilities. "We use the internet, Prince Andrew uses it, but it is like A-level provision, you know the flexible learning approach. It's very expensive providing A-levels on the island. Out of a school population at PAS of say 300 kids, you have relatively few kids who go on to an A-level program. And it's very expensive time for teachers and resources for that, but with flexible learning approaches you could actually have on-line tuition".

Another way for Saint Helena to profit from the internet is by selling the domain name '.sh'.

Due to the shortage of '.com' domain names, the use of alternative domain names have become quite popular. The island Tokelau has been very successful in marketing their domain name '.tk'. .The sale of Saint Helenian domain names is more or less actively marketed since 1997 (through the site www.nic.sh), but the domain name has until now not been very popular. The main reason for this is probably that it is one of the most expensive domains to register on the internet. 100 US$ for the first year and 50 US$ for the following years is considerably more expensive than registering for instance a '.com' domain name.

Communications through telephone, TV and internet are a way to interact with the outside world. As the physical barriers (i.e. the isolation of St Helena) hardly count, especially with the internet, this is a relative easy way to connect St Helena with the outside world. Susan O' Bey therefore feels that improved communications should be one of the top priorities of SHG: "...the priorities should be access and improved communications. Because without those we are not going to move towards the idea, the vision if you like of a financially independent community. Everything else will come along with it".

But although communications are important for interaction with the rest of the world, improved physical access to the island remains one of the most crucial factors for the future development of St Helena. One way to improve access is through air access.

8.4   Air Access

As said before, St Helena is one of the few places in the world that is not accessible by aeroplane. There have however been a number of technical studies in the past with regard to

the provision of air access to St Helena. During the Second World War the first 'preliminary survey' was undertaken by the South African Airforce. This report concluded that "meteorological conditions with regard to wind, low cloud and turbulence added to the difficult and expensive engineering works necessary, make such a facility impractical with the technology available at the time" (p. 1-2). British Government departments have undertaken more studies later, although with great intervals. But eventually all feasibility studies came up with two major problems for the introduction of air access:

1.   The absence of any suitable aeroplanes to meet the exceptional criteria for serving St Helena. The island's strong physical isolation requires flights to be undertaken by aircraft with three or more engines. Many solutions have been put forward in the past, like using four engined aircrafts, but the distances to be flown, particularly from mainland locations, were too great to have made these solutions feasible, especially because the only diversionary airfield available would be Ascension, over 700 miles away (Shelco 2002).

2.   The physical difficulty of creating a credible airfield. There are very few places of flat land on St Helena, thus making the construction of an airport extremely difficult. The only real flat piece of land is being occupied by the sports field and Prince Andrew School. Several sites on the island have been studied for construction, but the only site showing good possibilities for an airport seems to be Prosperous Bay Plain. Of the other areas that have been researched only at Deadwood plain it is considered to "be possible, at considerable cost, to provide an airport having a single runway of limited length that could not be extended, and of limited usability". (p. 1-3). Even though Prosperous Bay Plain is the most appropriate site for an airport, only a limited part of the plain can be used and a large amount of 'cut' and 'fill' will be necessary.

This won't be necessary of course when it would have turned out that Saints were not in favour of air access and would rather stick with the RMS service.

8.4.1   The referendum on access

In January 2002 a referendum was held regarding the question of access. Saints could vote for one of the following options for access by the year 2010:

1. Air access with alternative arrangements for shipping, or

2. A replacement RMS in 2010

It turned out that the majority of the Saints do want air access. In the referendum 71,6% of the total Saint population voted in favour of an air access. But there were many Saints who felt that the decision was made already beforehand by SHG and the turnout was consequently low at 44 percent on St Helena. In a letter to the Herald of 8th February the referendum was called 'a bit of a joke' on the basis of it having been prepared in haste and having unclear criteria. The 'alternative arrangements for shipping' in the air access option has been heavily criticised for being unclear. In spite of the positive result to his company, even Shelco director Joe Terry remarked that "The result is a general and broadly unremarkable endorsement by the public for air access without the main decision on finance methodology being aired first". (Terry, Joe 2002).

Figure 8.3 Advertisement urging people to vote at the referendum

Source: St Helena Herald, 11 January 2002.

It's interesting that among the total Saint population support for air access was lowest on St Helena itself (see table 8.2). Support under Saints working overseas was high, as was to be expected as air access will greatly facilitate visits to home. Surprisingly support under the Saints working on the RMS was also high.

Table 8.2 Referendum results by area

	Airport	Replacement RMS
St Helena	60.9%	39.1%
Ascension	93.0%	7.0%
The Falklands	96.0%	4.0%
RMS crew	87.8%	12.2%
Overall	71.6%	28.4%

Source: St Helena Herald, 8-2-2002

Although the Saints voted in favour of air access, it seems clear why previous studies did find great physical difficulties for providing this to St Helena. A study by the St Helena Leisure Corporation (Shelco) however, considered air access very well possible, mainly because of the development of new aeroplanes suitable to service the island.

8.5   Shelco

The St Helena Leisure Corporation Ltd (Shelco) is a British company that was founded by a group of UK business people who, according to their first pamphlet distributed on the island "unlike the British Government believe that transport to St Helena does not have to be a loss making activity" (Shelco, n.d.). The global consulting engineers and designers corporation Ove Arup backs up the company financially. Ove Arup had a turnover of over 300 million pounds in the financial year 2000/2001 and has been active in about 160 countries. According to High Point Rendel 'the principals of Shelco are clearly experienced businessmen with impressive CV's, and many have a close affinity with the Island of St Helena" (p. 4-3). Shelco itself states that it is an "ethical developer and its Directors will

ensure that their expressed principles are implemented unconditionally to the lasting benefit of the Island and people of St Helena".

The original goal of Shelco was the creation on St Helena of a privately funded airport and airline, but they are now aiming for a public private partnership between Shelco and SHG. In this partnership DFID would contribute the 26.4 million pounds that otherwise would be needed to replace the RMS, while Shelco would have to pay the rest of the construction costs. Shelco claims to be motivated both by "a genuine desire to assist the island and its people and also by a normal commercial objective to make a reasonable profit". They claim to have spent "over two years and £½million in research and design work, much of it concerned with overcoming the exceptional circumstances involved in opening St Helena to modern-day commercial air access" (Shelco 2002).

Access to St Helena has always been seen as unprofitable and it was therefore considered to be unsuited for commercialisation. Shelco however feels it can make a profit, based on their so-called 'three legged stool approach'. This approach consists of the creation on the island of not only an air service, but also of tourist and recreation facilities. This should be realized through the construction of an airport, a world-class international quality resort hotel and a superior quality 18-hole golf-complex (Shelco 2002, see figure 8.4). It has often been emphasised that that these plans are closely interdependent, but "Shelco also maintain that each will be financially self-sustaining, not cross subsidised by other components" (p. 4-1). With negotiations between Shelco and SHG being cut off recently (see section 8.5.4), an investment by Shelco seems a long way off. However Shelco still has the most complete plan for air access and until now remains the only interested private party for bringing air access to St Helena. Therefore the different components of the Shelco plan will be discussed in turn below.

Figure 8.4 Location of Shelco's proposed activities on Saint Helena

Source: Shelco 2002

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8.5.1 The airport

Both Shelco and High Point Rendel have written extensively about the location of an airfield and the problems that are associated with it. As we do not have the technological background to add anything to these discussions, the construction of an airport will be only briefly discussed here.

Shelco considers Prosperous Bay Plain to be "obviously self-selecting as an airfield site to anyone who knows the topography of the island" (Shelco 2002). The plain was also officially designated by SHG as site for a possible future airport in the strategic development and land use plan of 1998. However, the appearance of Prosperous Bay Plain as a flat piece of land is a deceptive one, as can be seen in figure 8.5.

Figure 8.5: Prosperous Bay plain (a) seen from Great Stone Top[i].

(b) the only sign on the plain that there might once be an airport there[i]

Although it certainly is flat compared to the surrounding land, it is still considered to be "barely adequate in terms of the runway length that can be created" (Shelco 2002). The originally proposed north-south orientated runway results in a useable runway length of about 1250 metres. It would be bounded at its northern end by a sheer drop of over 1000ft to the sea, while at the southern end there is an unfillable ravine running roughly east-west. Another problem with this runway is the prevailing and continuous south-easterly wind, which would affect the north-south runway with a permanent (though variable) crosswind component (Shelco 2002).

A solution was eventually found in the 'Single use twin runways' scheme designed by Shelco, and regarded by High Point Rendel as the best solution for the problems associated with the construction of a runway. It comprises of a 'take-off only' runway of 2200 metres running north-west to south-east and a separate 'landings only' runway in the north-south direction of 1500 metres (see figure 8.6). It is believed that St Helena's will become the only such airport design in the world (Shelco 2002).

Figure 8.6: Proposed airport site and twin runway at Prosperous Bay Plain
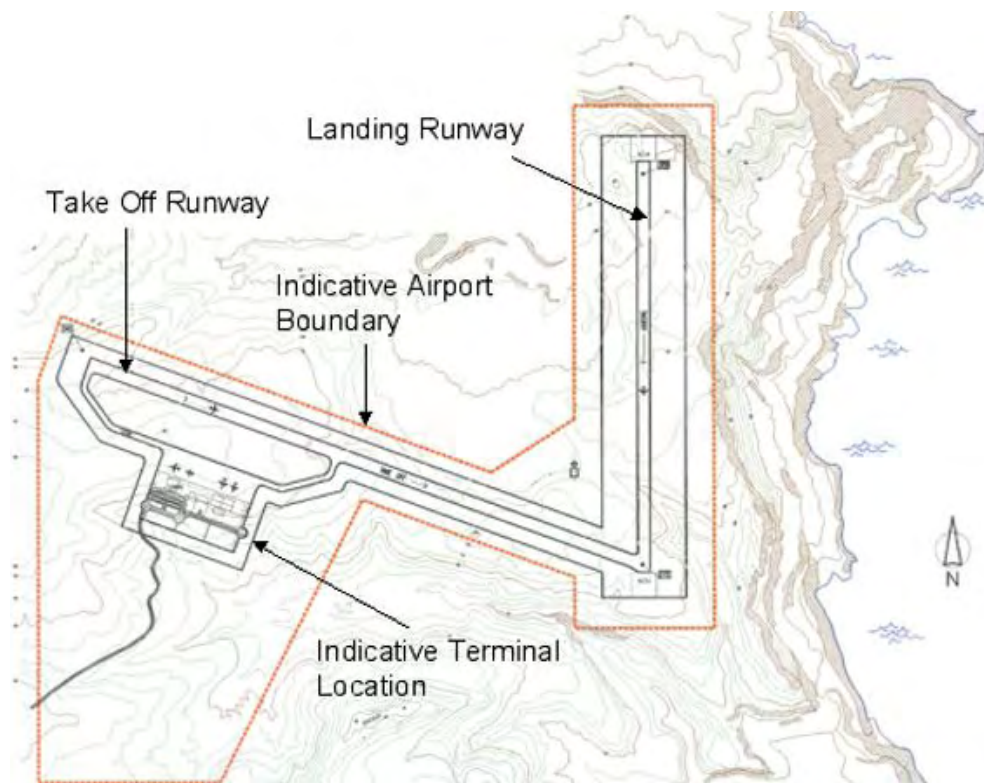
Source: Shelco 2002

A perceived problem on St Helena is that construction of an airport will cause a lot of disruption on the island in the form of noise pollution and road congestion. It is argued that the heavy equipment needed cannot be transported along the narrow roads to the site. A possible solution for this is the construction of a short, locally prepared dirt runway on Prosperous Bay Plain, which will allow Shelco to fly in heavy equipment needed during the construction period (p. 4-4). The airplane used during this period will operate from Windhoek.

Shelco estimated that the building of an airport will cost about 8.2 million pounds. This was far below the estimate of High Point Rendel of 33.6 million pounds. In the negotiations with SHG for a public/private partnership the High Point Rendel estimate has been used, although Shelco did stress that they thought this estimate to be overcautious.

Revenue of the airport has to be earned by the house airline (see next section). It will provide 98% of the revenue, with the balance being received from small private/corporate jet landings (p. 4-2). The airport will probably have the highest landing fees of any airport in the world. These high fees "will significantly reduce the possibility of competition and could not be called 'protective' as the Company's own aircraft would be paying such fees" (p. 4-4). With these landing fees it seems highly unlikely any other company than Shelco's will ever fly on St Helena.

8.5.2   St Helena Airways

Figure 8.7: Proposed destinations of St Helena Airways

Source: Shelco 2002
Shelco also wants to found and operate a new international flag-carrying civil airline: St Helena Airways. This airline will consist of two Shelco-owned airplanes. This will be new Boeing Business Jets (BBJ), which will be taken on lease. This plane was developed by Boeing as a vastly uprated 737 design corporate jet and offers a 'door-to-door' range of 6000 miles. According to Shelco (2002) "by happy co-incidence, an aircraft has been created which has the unique blend of characteristics which make it suitable for St Helena Airways' operations". In order to further overcome the afore mentioned problems with the long distances between airports, six additional long range fuel tanks will be installed in the airplane. As a result only 46 instead of 50 seats will be available on the plane.

The crew of the airline would be UK based. The airline would fly 4250 hours per annum and fares would be comparable with those of 'similar operations'. Special 'Islander' fares would be effective on certain routes for St Helenian passport holders visiting home (p. 4-6).

The airline will fly non-stop flights to 6 different destinations (see figure 8.7):

> Cape Town (twice weekly)
> London (weekly)
> Dubai (weekly)
> the Falklands (fortnightly)
> Ascension (fortnightly)
> Bermuda (fortnightly)
> (Source: Shelco 2002)

Ascension, London and Cape Town seem logical destinations, as these are the destinations of the present RMS service as well. Due to the high number of Saints working on the Falklands a flight to this destination also seems to be in order. It remains very unclear why Shelco wants to fly to Dubai and Bermuda and what the company hopes to achieve with this. The proposed fully detailed flight schemes and even landing times that have been published do seem a bit opportunistic as well.

According to High Point Rendel "the operation envisaged by Shelco is ambitious but by no means unworkable" (p. 4-6). They are mainly concerned about the monopolistic nature of the project. It is argued that demand will be limited after the third year of operation by the capacity of the aircraft seats available. Also because of the chosen policy to finance all airport

costs out of landing fee revenue, other operators will be severely discouraged. Such limitation on capacity is likely to constrain the travel of Saints firstly, as they will be occupying the 'special fare seats'. Such seats in an over demand situation are likely to be severely restricted if not withdrawn entirely. These reduced cost seats are only going to be offered on the flights to the Falklands, Ascension and Cape Town anyway and not to London and are still around 30% higher on average than present reduced fares on the RMS (p. 4-7). Travelling to the non-subsidised destinations will be expensive. Shelco suggests a one-way fare of 850 pounds to London, 900 pounds to Dubai and 1000 pounds to Bermuda. Government economist Tom Crowards feels that these prices are reasonable though: "They are not far of those of the RMS, except for the one to London. And you would lose huge amounts on that trip if you would have to provide for London. On the RMS now the fare to London if you think of it is very cheap. There are great costs to it, that part is heavily subsidised".

Figure 8.8: St Helena Airways

Source: Shelco 2002

Shelco estimates that setting up the airline would cost 5.4 million pounds. Annual net profit after interest is projected at 9 million pounds per annum in year 1 raising to 17 million pounds in year three (p. 4-6).

8.5.3   The hotel and leisure facilities

Shelco plans to build a 5-star world class international quality resort hotel on St Helena to cater for the well-off tourists that they hope will start visiting when the island is accessible by plane. Beside the hotel there will also be hotel amenities, which will consist of leisure pools, a hot-tub area, tennis courts, bowls lawn, a clay shooting gallery and opportunities for deep-sea sports fishing (Shelco 2002). Beside the amenities that will be part of the hotel complex, Shelco also wants to upgrade the current golf course at Longwood to "a golf complex featuring a superior-standard 6700-yard 18-hole course, a 9-hole Par-3, a driving range, putting practice greens and a suitable clubhouse" (Shelco 2002). Total construction cost of the hotel is estimated at 10.7 million, while the golf courses will approximately cost 2.5 million pounds

It seems logical that the success of the hotel is dependent on the number of passengers that will travel with the newly established St Helena Airways. It can be supplemented though by maritime visitors wishing to stay on the island as well as possible visitors from private jets. Shelco wants the hotel to be licensed to a well-known brand name for marketing and operational reasons (p. 4-7). Proposed prices are around 95 pounds a night for business people and around 120 pounds per double room for tourists, which according to High Point Rendel "appear reasonable for the type of facility envisaged".

Shelco has made a forecast of guest numbers, which they claim is being backed by marketing studies by a number of independent groups (see table 8.3). They claim visitors will stay an average of five days. From the fourth year onward the number of visitors will not grow anymore as a result of the limited aircraft seat capacity of St Helena Airways.

Table 8.3: Estimated visitor numbers of the hotel by year

Year	Shelco	High Point Rendel
1	7931	3013
2	9411	4086
3	10377	5163

Source: High Point Rendel 1999, p. 4-7

The Shelco calculations are more than double the projections of High Point Rendel. To explain this significant difference, the High Point Rendel report will be quoted at some length here:

"The principal reason for this is that Shelco include the very versatile BBJ aircraft which they propose to operate in a number of origins and destinations not included in our own figures. Their forecasts are based on a developed business plan looking at a potential market place that includes not only Europe, South Africa and Ascension Island, as did our own forecasts, but also Falklands, Bermuda and Dubai. It is possible that the addition of these extra market areas could increase demand to the figures quoted, but such markets could only generate the numbers concerned by performing as a hub for a wide hinterland, and such interchange traffic is unproven for this quality of product" (p. 4-7 and 4-8).

It can be argued that a hotel and a golf course are necessary components for the development of the tourism industry on St Helena. High Point Rendel even calls it "a necessary catalyst to initial tourism development on the island" (p. 4-7). Current overnight facilities on the island are not up to the standards that will be demanded by the type of tourists Shelco and SHG hope to attract with the development of an airport. There is a risk however when all tourist facilities as well as access to the island are in the hands of one single company. When this is the case, Shelco will effectively have a monopoly on tourism on the island. There is a particular worry that tourists will stay in their 'closed compound', only using the facilities of the hotel and the golf course, with only the occasional trip to Jamestown. The French consul Michel Martineau fears that the Saints will just become another tourist attraction themselves: "[the tourists] will go out on a bus visiting Jamestown from the compound at Broad Bottom and they will go oh, it's like a trip into a museum, and the Georgian houses (…) and then they will fly out again. They will visit the Saint Helenians like they visit a tribe in Papua New Guinea, you know."

Local hotels and restaurants would hardly benefit when all visitors stay in the Shelco hotel. Government economist Tom Crowards feels that SHG will have to make sure the local entrepreneurs will benefit as well: "We couldn't accept something which is going to put the local hotels out of business, or prevent some others of being set up"

High Point Rendel agrees with him and wants a phased development and a limitation to the size of the hotel to 100 rooms. Development of the hotel should be paralleled by development of smaller accommodation facilities developed by Saints (p. 4-7).

But not all Saints think that the hotel will be unbeneficial to the island, as Ralph Peters illustrates: "I have no problem with the hotel or golf course, I will be living next to it anyway. There will be 2 different classes of tourists, and 3 different types of passengers. The 1st class of tourists will stay in the 5 star hotel. They pay big bucks and will expect big service. The

middle guys will stay in the Consulate and Wellington. The 3rd class will be Saints, who will rent the self-let accommodation around the island. Everybody is going to make a buck".

8.5.4 Conclusion

Shelco has undertaken the most extensive study to the provision of air access to St Helena so far. This does not however mean that Shelco should automatically be involved in the building of an airport.

High Point Rendel felt that "the Shelco proposals are (…) well intended and put forward in the best interest in the future economy of the island. However, an "eggs in one basket" scenario has to be very carefully considered" (p. 4-3).

The main problem the report found with the Shelco proposal was the estimated cost of the construction of an airport, which made the air access plan unviable at the initial terms.

Shelco estimated total costs at 8.2 million pounds, while High Point Rendel made an estimate of 33.6 million pounds. They did feel however that "if SHG were to decide to devote Government funds to air access, then Shelco may well provide a suitable candidate for a Public/Private venture to develop both access and tourism" (p. 4-9).

After publication of the report Shelco stated that they thought the 33.6 million pounds estimate was too high, but as this was the official government estimate they would start using it in future negotiations and plans anyway.

This was not the only problem that High Point Rendel had with the Shelco proposal. They also found that "secondly, the provision of a dedicated, company owned airline to the exclusion of any competition is detrimental to the need to safeguard guaranteed access at all times, and finally the assumption of nearly all access and tourist activities by a private company is, we believe, alien to the interest of St Helena (…) To put the major livelihood of the community into the hands of one single independent company could possibly be seen as contrary to the long term interests of the island" (p. 4-6 and 4-8).

Again the problem of a private monopoly on tourism and a safeguard of continued access could be reached in a public/private partnership between Shelco and SHG. SHG could for instance make sure that ownership of the components of the plan is diversified. Even if these components are not viable without the other, this still does not mean they all have to be in the hands of a single company.

Finally High Point Rendel conclude that "if landing fees remain the 'highest in the world' such charges would have to be passed on to the passenger, and it is difficult to see how the airline could support six crews and the aircraft, with an annual aircraft utilisation of 4250 hours and the fares quoted" (p. 4-6).

Unease about putting access to St Helena and the development of tourism in the hands of outside investors is also widespread among the islanders themselves. Pamela Lawrence for instance feels that the island might suffer when a private investor gets too much influence: "And what we are going to see is much business people being involved and they are saying Oh, we will look after little Saint Helena and all that, I mean come on. Every big business like that must make money. They will have shareholders to pay out. (…) once they will have a foot in the door, it will be very difficult to say no. Because they will say like, now we've got this, but to support this we will need a little bit more. And gradually, you know, we will be taken over, yes. Stranglehold. You've seen it happen in so many other small countries".

Islander Basil George feels that it might be unwise to make investment in air access in the present hard times for the airline industry: "Yes, the other thing I am concerned about in the

time that when a lot of other airlines, like Swiss Air, the commercial airlines are propped up and subsidised and we here want to start our own national airline. With all infrastructure to go with it. You have to get quite a return on your investment and I can't see where that return is coming from".

Reg Yon feels that St Helenians will not earn higher wages when Shelco builds an airport, but that they instead will keep the wages as low as possible: "Yeah, are they going to exploit the St Helenians? By low price wages. (…) If the hotel comes here, are they going to pay the same wages as they are doing on the RMS now? No they won't, they will drop the wages, because now you're on Saint Helena".

Because there is some distrust about the Shelco proposal, many Saints feel that SHG should put limits to the involvement of private investment. Mandy Fowler, owner of the Consulate hotel, fears that the money will eventually give Shelco more power than SHG if no clear arrangements are made: "The question is, if Shelco puts more money in it, who will have the majority say? Nothing is certain about that"

Discussions about a joint venture partnership with Shelco have been in progress for many months in 2002, and indeed many people thought that an agreement between Shelco and SHG would eventually be reached. This proved not to be the case as "negotiations on a preliminary agreement between St Helena Government/DfID and Shelco broke down 31 July this year" (St Helena Herald 27-9-2002). The Herald further stated that "it [is] absolutely clear that Shelco's efforts have been in vain and that all negotiations between the parties have discontinued".

SHG and DFID did not rule out any future private investors for air access however. They announced their preference to seek further 'innovative proposals' from the international private sector. Before an invitation for new innovative proposals will be made a "framework including the areas of sensitivity for St Helena and the offered support from DfID, has to be carefully put together (…) no time frame has been indicated in respect of the creation of the framework and the "tender process" but it is clear that the decided process will further delay air access for St Helena." (St Helena Herald 27-9-2002).

Shelco will be encouraged to take part and submit a new 'innovative proposal' and chairman Nigel Thompson commented that "This decision is a disappointment, but our Board have resolved quite readily to remain involved. We are happy to demonstrate our continuing commitment to investing in St Helena" (St Helena Herald 4-10-2002).

SHG seeks further innovative proposals from the private sector, and the discontinued negotiations with Shelco means that the construction of an airport will be seriously delayed. However, there is still also the option of building a DfID-funded government airport.

8.6   A Government owned airport

There is another option for building an airport besides a public private partnership. DfID has offered to fully subsidise the construction of an airport, but there are some conditions attached to this option. Governor Hollamby explains: "We've got the commitment of the British government to pay the whole cost of an airport, but then after 2, 3 or 4 years they would cut back on our aid".

DfID already promised to contribute money to the public-private airport, which otherwise would be needed to replace the RMS. The RMS service will then be stopped, which means the island will not need the RMS subsidy of ca. 1 million pounds anymore.

When DfID wholly funds the roughly estimated 55 million pounds needed for an airport, the RMS service will also be stopped. But DfID argues that beside the stop of the RMS subsidy a

further reduction of aid must be realised when it fully pays the airport. They argue that the construction of an airport will eventually boost the economy of St Helena. Therefore a reduction of aid in the future is the price St Helena will have to pay in this scenario. How much the future subsidy will consist of was not known at the time of writing.

Government economist Tom Crowards feels that aid-reduction is a reasonable demand from DfID: "So what they are saying really is: We'll pay the full 50 million pounds for the airport, but you're telling us that the airport is going to improve your economy. So put your money where your mouth is and be prepared to take a cut in future aid because your economy is going to improve (…) it's not unreasonable from them. If you think it's going to happen, you have to be prepared to take a risk for it, we're not taking the whole risk."

There are a number of advantages of having an airport fully paid by the government. As there is no second party involvement, there is no discussion about ultimate control over the airport being in the hands of SHG, resulting in a more secure form of access to the island. Government will be able to say if the airport opens or shuts and possible financial problems of a private investor are not a threat to the continuation of access. It should be noted though that ultimate control over the airport could also be in hands of the government in the case of a public private partnership as this can be one of the conditions government sets when negotiating with private investors. Tom Crowards agrees: "Yes, ultimate control should be in the hands of the government (...) But in terms of actually running the flights I have no problems with a private sector company running the airlines and the planes in and out of the island."

Another advantage is that DFID is more concerned with providing access to the island and less with making a profit than a private investor. Tom Crowards therefore argues that DFID can more easily be trusted: "the question is: who do we trust? SHELCO, or another private scheme for the airport, or DFID? We know SHELCO are not doing it for us. They will expect to get profits, and take them away, where this money could also have been improving the economy. Sticking with DFID might be a good idea. If it goes wrong, SHELCO will just disappear. If it goes wrong with DFID, they won't disappear. They are obliged to provide access to the island.".

The funding of the airport by DFID however does not mean that the other services needed to create a successful tourism industry will be provided as well. Governor Hollamby explains the problems that go with attracting airline companies to fly to St Helena: "The problem is, there is no one else out there, nobody else is coming, except when they would come with a proposal. And secondly even if we build an airport with British government money there is no guarantee that anyone will fly into it. South African airways, British airways, KLM, whoever it is, you've got no guarantee".   As said before the airport will be one of the most expensive places to fly to and it will probably have the highest landing fees in the world. When a special airline is not constructed for St Helena, it is doubtful if big airline companies will be interested. Another drawback for these companies is that SHG will probably allow them to fly to the island only when special fares for Saints are agreed upon. The special planes needed to fly to St Helena cannot be paid by SHG, and it seems unlikely that DFID is willing to fund a special airline for St Helena.

The envisaged type of tourism is 'high-value low-impact tourism'. This means that the tourists that are going to visit the island will expect a high standard of services. The current level of services is not up to those standards and should improve quite drastically to cater for these tourists. A hotel, and complementary golf course, as proposed by Shelco would provide these standards, but the building of such a hotel is also not guaranteed when the government constructs the airport. This does provide a chance to let the St Helenians themselves profit

from the airport directly by trying to get a Saint to construct these facilities. There is however no company (or individual) with the expertise and money to construct such a high level hotel, so attracting an outside investor will be necessary.

It seems clear that many important issues regarding a government owned airport remain unclear. An airline and services for tourists are not guaranteed, there are no proposed fares as in the Shelco proposal and no real detailed plans about how tourism should be developed in this case have been published by SHG. But although the conditions attached remain unclear, it is still a real option to develop air access.

There are some arguments on the other hand from people who feel SHG should not be involved in the funding of an airport at all. Chief financial officer Desmond Wade is one. He will be quoted at some length here: "No I don't think government should get involved in building airport to be dead honest with you. I get your idea. But in a way, if the airport don't pay for itself, who's gonna pay for it? The people of the island, because it is government owned. If it's private owned and it don't pay for itself, it could be closed down or sold to another company or whatever, or handed back to government. If it's government owned, government is going to have to subside it or something like that. Because the running costs and whatever. And if DFID doesn't provide the money/subsidy, then the islanders will have to pay more tax. So the government should never get involved in building airports. They should encourage it and support it, give incentives to do it, but I really don't think government should build an airport. Because if it fails, or if it fails to make enough money to run itself, then they're going to have the ball on the people. In the same way as we do now, if we don't make enough money for maintaining roads or whatever, we put up the taxes. And this is not going to be any different".

SHG prefers the public private partnership option, which can be concluded from the fact that they will make a new 'framework' after which they are open for any future proposals from the private sector. For that reason it seems unlikely that a solely government funded airport will be constructed. The DFID proposal is nevertheless a back up which guarantees that there is always the possibility of introducing air access to St Helena. And not unimportantly it strengthens the negotiation position of SHG with regard to private investors, Governor Hollamby argues: "so we can go to Shelco and say we've got that one in the bag, British government will pay for the airport, now what can you offer that's better than that. So we keep changing around until we get the best deal for the island".

With the negotiations with Shelco being stopped now, the construction of an airport seems unlikely to happen before 2010. This poses a problem, because in 2010 the RMS will have to be replaced, and the offer from DFID might very well disappear after a new ship has been provided.

8.7   Continued sea-access only

It is very well possible that air access is not going to be realised, even though the referendum showed that this is the preferred option for most of the Saints.

The British government of course has a 'moral obligation' to provide access to St Helena (as one of her Overseas Territories) and has therefore guaranteed to provide the 26.3 million pounds needed to replace the RMS with a new ship in 2010. This is described in the High Point Rendel report as 'the least cost option'. According to Shelco it is 'curious' that the cost of building a new ship has been estimated at 26 million while the cost of the current RMS was around 33 million (Shelco 2002). But both DfID and SHG feel this is a reasonable estimation, as the building of the current RMS was estimated at 19 million, but as a result of the before

mentioned 'government ineptitude', costs turned out to be much higher. With the current market situation the RMS replacement cost is therefore deemed to be very reasonable.

The are two options on how to build the 'next RMS' in 2010: another combined cargo passenger vessel or a passenger only vessel. Starting point for High Point Rendel was a cargo/passenger vessel, and on this basis the 26.3 million estimate was made as well.

The new ship will have a larger passenger as well as cargo capacity. With a length of 123 metres it will be about 20 metres longer than the current vessel (see table 8.4). The extended passenger capacity will partly consist of 'budget accommodation' for Saints and partly of more expensive cabins for the cruise passengers.

Table 8.4: Characteristics of Present and Replacement RMS

	Present RMS	Replacement
Length overall	105.0m	123.0m
Breadth	19.2m	19.2m
Gross Tonnage	7326	8500
Total Passengers	128	180
Crew	53	60

Source: High Point Rendel, p. 2-14

A passenger only vessel was estimated to cost a little less than a cargo/passenger one: 24.7 million pounds. The ship would be somewhat smaller than the current RMS, but with a capacity of 192 passengers it would be able to transport more people than both the current ship and the replacement cargo/passenger vessel (p. 2-14).

As said before, High Point Rendel recommends a passenger only vessel, because they feel that "commercial cargo services would be perfectly adequately supplied by the market, as a normal response by the shipping industry to a perceived demand" (p. 2-26). To ensure a sense of security a contract structure could be set up, thus safeguarding transport of cargo to and from the island.

The passenger only option would be most beneficial to the island for improving access to the island over sea, with the potential amount of people travelling to and from St Helena increasing with 62 people. This means that there could be more people visiting the island as tourists. It would also mean booking a place on the RMS will become somewhat easier for Saints, as there are more budget berths available as well. With the current shipping arrangements it can sometimes be hard to get to the island, especially during a special event like the Q5 celebrations.

The increased capacity of the new ship, in either form, will probably not be enough to generate an increase in the number of tourists big enough to 'kickstart' St Helena's tourism industry. Access to the island will still be limited, especially when the ship is off to the UK.

The only way to achieve a considerably higher number of visitors by ship might therefore be the aforementioned rescheduling of the RMS to a zero UK call schedule.

8.8   Alternative ideas for Access

Beside direct air access to St Helena or continued sea access there have been many alternative ideas to improve access.

There are many aircraft that can land on a short dirt strip, thus preventing the need of having to build a full scale airport. It has been proposed to run a shuttle service to Ascension, but this would give very little flexibility as you are dependent on the RAF flights on Ascension.

Besides, Wideawake airfield is still not open for civilian use, and after September the 11th it does not seem likely that this military airport will be opened for civilian flights in the foreseeable future.

Many letters have been published in the St Helena Herald about planes able to land at sea or helicopters serving the island, but experts seem to agree that this planes are either not available for passenger use or have too short a flying range to service the island (Shelco 2002).

Alternative ideas for transport over sea have also been made several times. Ideas ranged from very fast boats doing shuttle services between Ascension and St Helena to hovercrafts servicing the island. No extensive study to these options has been done though and not much seems to be known about possibilities and costs of the alternative access options - be it over land or over sea. As SHG and DFID are clearly focusing on either a continued shipping service or direct air access the chances that any of these alternative ideas will be considered as a viable option are very small.

It is often argued that with better access more economic development could come to Saint Helena.

8.9   Economic impact of future access

The economic future of St Helena is seen as heavily dependent on the development of the tourism sector. Although there are some other possibilities through inward investment, tourism is seen as the future main engine of the economy, which will bring the island "the economic development the Island so conspicuously lacks" (p. 4-9).

But according to the St Helena strategic review "the sector is in a catch 22 situation". They argue that due to "the low numbers of visitors there is little incentive to invest in tourist facilities. The result is that visitors complain about the low standard of some accommodation and limited activities/facilities available. The situation is exacerbated by the unfavourable comparison between the high standards offered by the RMS (...) The opportunities are enormous but not economic with the present trickle of tourists arriving on the island".

So it is argued that improved access will increase the flow of tourists, which will lead to development in the tourism sector, which in turn will again lead to more tourists. In this way the tourism sector on the island could come in an upward spiral of development.

The kind of tourism that St Helena is going to aim for is the so called "high-value, low impact tourism". Government economist Tom Crowards explains: "Everyone always talks about low-volume high-value tourism, and I think we have to go for that, partly because of the expense of getting here, you're not getting your budget tourists". These rich tourists are hopefully going to contribute significantly to the island's economy in spending money both on the journey to St Helena and on the island itself. St Helena would then become a very exclusive holiday destination, something Governor Hollamby describes as "niche tourism".

To attract the kind of tourists at the top end of the market, St Helena will have to compete with some well established and popular top end holiday destinations. So what is there on St Helena that is going to attract these people? What is it that makes St Helena a unique holiday experience?

One of the attractions is the diverse landscape of St Helena. Heavily eroded hills and rock landscapes, sub-tropical looking hilltops and desert like slopes can all be found on the island. As this can all be found in a relatively small area, hiking is a popular pastime for the tourists visiting the island. The endemic plants as well as animals can also attract 'nature-orientated tourists'.

The built environment can also be counted as one of the attractions of the island. Jamestown has many old Georgian houses in excellent state. Outside Jamestown many old forts, fortifications and cannons can be found. Fortifications are mainly located along the coast (see figure 8.9). It should be noted though that many are in very bad condition and would need extensive repairs to make them places St Helena could market as major attractions for tourists.

Figure 8.9: Fortifications: (a) Old watch tower at Thompson's Valley[i] and (b) English cannon overlooking The Briars[i]

Some people feel that the major attraction of St Helena is its remoteness. Tourists can get the feeling they are 'away from it all' on an island with a relaxed way of life, far away from their daily lives. The long, relaxed trip on the RMS to the island might be a substantial part of this feeling of being in a remote place.

This poses a problem for the development of the tourism sector. When you increase access by building an airport, tourists will be able to reach the island easier and in greater numbers. But as the island loses its remoteness (at least in travelling time), will it then not also lose the interest of potential tourists? Bishop John thinks this is partly the case: "Of course once you get many people coming here it does lose some of its attraction. I don't know if you've noticed, but one of the greatest attractions of St Helena is its remoteness. That you have to battle to get here, it's all part of the build-up. If you take that away, what does Saint Helena have that is special? If you can fly up here in 3 hours from Cape Town…".

The French Consul Michel Martineau even feels that the island will almost completely lose its uniqueness: "The reason why I love this place is actually for its remoteness, which gives it a charm you cannot find anywhere else. If an airport comes this will depart, and this place will just be another place. So I would definitely not see an increase with an airport. (...) It will just become another place, there is no more mystery. Why St Helena plays on the imagination of people is mainly because of its inaccessibility. (...) for tourists this is the only thing the island really has to offer".

Governor Hollamby also feels that to some extent the uniqueness of the island will go away when it is opened up, but feels that "the alternative is that the island will die on its feet".

There are other ways in which St Helena might improve its economy aside from tourism. Economic development could also be reached by attracting more inward investors to the island.

High Point Rendel feels that "in present circumstances of inaccessibility, it is not easy for St Helena to attract inward investment" (p. 4-9). According to Governor Hollamby there is interest from investors, but the long travelling time to St Helena puts them off: "We have a lot of companies; in South Africa, in Britain, who are interested in investing here in terms of small businesses. They won't even contemplate travelling two weeks on the ship to come and

investigate, they haven't got the time, three or four weeks to look into the situation, whether it is worthwhile".

It could thus be argued that with better access those people who are now put off as a result of the isolation might invest. But this will still prove very difficult. When access is improved more potential investors could come and see what possibilities there are, but which possibilities are those?

The small market on St Helena limits the possibility of production for the island's needs. Therefore inward investors will be mainly interested in producing for export. However, the biggest problem for export-orientated inward investors will probably remain the isolation of the island. Anything that is produced in large amounts (bulk production) for export will still have to be transported off the island by ship. This will always be costly as a result of the long distance from any market, regardless of the question if the RMS or a commercial cargo transporter is going to provide this transport. The competitive disadvantages in comparison to other countries for almost all products will therefore remain. Like now, St Helena will probably mainly be interesting for those companies not exporting physical goods (like for instance a call centre) or for those companies wanting to produce a high quality expensive niche-product. The island would become more attractive for the production of niche products with the introduction of air access, as these could be exported by plane. The cost of air transport would be less decisive in small high-value products, thus making this kind of export a possibility. But in any case, it is not easy to get permission to invest on the island as a result of large amounts of red tape and bureaucracy.

Another way to St Helena for economic development might be the immigration of well-off pensioners. According to Governor Hollamby there has been quite a lot of interest recently: "there is quite a lot of interest from South Africans, who no longer feel safe there. There are a few on island, a few South Africans on island, who bought property, but they want a safe haven, for themselves, for their children, for their money".

This could generate a substantial flow of money to the island. These people would have to hire staff and buy goods on the island, and thus the Saint population of the island would benefit.

But caution is necessary with this kind of development, as the example of Montserrat shows. Many pensioners have settled on this British Overseas Territory, but this development also brought problems. As a result of higher demand (and buyers with considerable more capital) land values on Montserrat rose significantly and the original population of the island was consequently not able to buy land anymore.

Strict regulations on this kind of immigration should therefore be set out by SHG. A level of services higher than the current one will also be needed for the pensioners, especially in health care.

8.9.1   Economic impact of air access

"And with the construction of the airport itself, and perhaps some hotel or something else to go alongside, the economy will begin to increase and I think that's the only way to have sustainable economic development, because at the moment we are just treading water" (Governor Hollamby)

No extensive studies to the economic impact of the introduction of air access to St Helena have been published by either DFID or SHG. Former government economist John Siraut (2001a) however has done an economic impact assessment on behalf of Shelco. In this assessment detailed figures about the exact number of jobs created and earnings for the island

as a whole as well as for SHG in particular are given. It remains very unclear in this assessment though where the figures and supposed calculations are based upon, so some caution is in order here. Government economist Tom Crowards also said the figures were "incredibly broad (...) and there's nothing to justify these numbers. There's nothing to say how and why they are going to get these people, where they come from, what's involved".

The total envisaged operating benefits are given in table 8.5. This excludes the benefits the island will get as a result of the construction of the hotel.

Table 8.5:Total operating benefits as envisaged in economic impact assessment by Shelco

Direct jobs	167
Additional local jobs	57
Total jobs	224
Income tax (5%)	£75,000
Social Security Savings	£65,000
Additional Customs & Excise	£226,000
Total Benefit to Government	£336,000

Source: Siraut 2001a

Beside these benefits Shelco "envisages paying substantial amounts of corporate income tax to SHG rising from 1.7 million pounds in year 1 to 5.8 million pounds in year 5" (Siraut 2001a).

Shelco makes further assumptions on economic benefits, which include tourism expenditure, wider economic benefits (inward investors) and even 'time savings'. As these figures are very broad and not reliable in the way they are published on Shelco's website, these figures will not be dealt with here.

The conclusion of the assessment is that "over a 20 year period, on a very conservative estimate" the net present value of the project to the islands economy is 117.5 million pounds, and 69.5 million pounds to the St Helena government. Also "an average of 230 jobs a year will be created during the construction period, rising to 260 in the first year of operation and 480 by year 3, even allowing for the job losses on the RMS St Helena" (Siraut 2001a).

Extreme caution seems to be in order with regard to the Shelco-figures. Not only will Shelco benefit when people believe the airport to have large economic benefits, they also use a very optimistic scenario in this assessment. Construction of the airport will directly benefit the Saints and tourists will start coming in considerable numbers. As was concluded before this is not sure at all.

But regardless of figures, optimism about the economic future with an airport seems to prevail on St Helena. Government economist Tom Crowards thinks growth will come, but mainly in the tourism sector: "I think in tourism yes, and I think as a result of investment in tourism you might get other investment, the rest might just take off. Supplies to the tourist industry. You're looking there at things provided to supply the locals or the tourists. But the huge potential is in tourism. (...) as for other investment, our chances will improve dramatically".

One of the big private companies on the island, Cable and Wireless, also thinks they can expand their business when an airport is realised. Managing director Hensil O' Bey explains: "There are so many things happening, and C&W want to be involved. There will be the maintenance of telecommunications in that place, the airport. We will try to provide some equipment along with Marconi. Maybe we will have another 200 lines. If you stay in a 5 star hotel, of course you want a telephone in your room".

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St Helena Herald editor Johnny Drummond thinks that people are over cautious regarding the airport, and feels that there are even opportunities for attracting international events like United Nations conferences to St Helena in the future: "for instance international conferences could be held here. Just look at all the troubles that we have seen at the last big conferences. St Helena would be a safe, quiet and hard to reach place, so it would be ideal for these conferences. And with the big golf course, we might get a big tournament, why not organise the St Helena open, and make it famous so people like Tiger Woods come here. Then the TV would come in together with the mega-bucks".

An airport and economic growth do not necessarily mean Saints will benefit though. Chief finance officer Desmond Wade thinks that the low wages are not going to improve with an airport: "I mean jobs might increase if there is a hotel over here. But whether or not the level of wages will increase I cannot tell. I don't see a hotel coming in paying twice the wages, I doubt that really. Jobs might increase, but that will be partly just simple jobs. I doubt someone would pay twice as much as they are paying now".

At the moment St Helena suffers from staff attrition, as has been explained in section 4.4.1. Many people are working overseas, and between them are many of the best-qualified and most talented Saints. For the Saints it would undoubtedly be beneficial if the new jobs connected to air access will go to them. Many of those jobs however require good qualifications. Saints now working overseas could therefore be needed to fill in these jobs. Of course the Saints currently working on the island could also be schooled to fill in the new jobs. This will be further discussed in paragraph 8.10.

A return of overseas workers to St Helena would undoubtedly have a beneficial economic effect to the island, and many people hope the airport will trigger a flow of people back to the island. Desmond Wade however has his doubts: "I really doubt it. Unless there is increase in good jobs, good money. People on Ascension have got a real good life. They have to work, but it pays good. They get free housing, free electricity and water, their pay is good, on top of that they get allowances for food. So they get probably twice as much as they would get here. Now a lot of persons go for personal reasons. Unless somebody can come back to a decent rate I doubt very much that they will come back, because what is the point? You can fly here work for 100 pounds a week, but you can earn 200 pounds a week on Ascension. So they will probably come more frequently, but they won't come back to stay unless there is good jobs and decent wages".

Chief Education officer Pamela Young on the contrary thinks that some people might come back to work in the tourism sector when air access is introduced: "I think some of them will return. It did happen on other islands as well, especially in retaining the young people on the island".

Air access might prove to be the only way to 'kickstart' St Helena's moribund economy. But even when an airport is built, economic impact will probably not be felt immediately, as Doug Paterson warns: "I see air access as the only way forward. The perception is that with the airport everything will turn around. But that will take 10 or 20 years. To attract inward investors, that will take a long time. People's expectations should not be too high. You have to be critical about it".

8.9.2 Economic impact of continued sea access only

In the St Helena strategic review 2000-2010 it was doubted if it was wise to promote the island for tourists with the current type of access: In fact given present problems of access and the difficulty in obtaining berths on the RMS there has been some questioning of the wisdom

of promoting tourism to the island at all. The argument being "why market a location that potential tourists find they cannot get to?"

With current access it will be hard to improve the economy through tourism, as a result of the long travelling time as well as the limited passenger capacity of the RMS. Therefore Governor Hollamby thinks that with a shipping service like the current RMS the island its economy will not be improved: "Well, there is only one way in my view and that is to have better access. I really believed, when I came here I looked very carefully at the situation and I said from day one you cannot build an economy that is sustainable on the basis of one ship".

The replacement RMS will have greater capacity and could therefore partly take this problem away. If the new ship is combined with a rescheduling of the RMS this greatly increases the potential number of visitors to the island. But even in this scenario the number of visitors and the impact of the tourists on the economy will remain limited. The RMS trip itself is already a holiday-like experience, and many tourists might not feel the need to have an extensive holiday on the island itself. The problem of the extensive travelling time to and from St Helena will remain in this scenario as well. It will therefore still be very hard to market St Helena. For many people a holiday on St Helena will simply take too long.

A modest increase in tourist numbers might come to the island by sea access only, provided a new RMS and a zero UK call schedule will be realised. It seems very unlikely though that this increase will be large enough to create a thriving tourism sector on the island.

Governor Hollamby has a gloomy picture of the future of St Helena when the island will remain dependent on access by sea: "I fear that if there isn't an airport we will probably be much the same. We will be treading water quite more quickly than we are doing now, because if we've got this citizenship through, people will not send remittances, government cutting back in aid, which they have done historically for the last decade or so. I think life will start to decline. I think it can only improve through better access and that has to be air access. I don't think it is possible to stand still in this world. It's gotta go forward or it's got to decline. I see the airport as going forward and I see continuing with just the ship as a decline".

Inset: Transhipment ?

Transhipment might be another way for St Helena to reach financial independence. In 2001 Bob Conrich, Director of St Helena Transhipment Services Ltd. visited the island to try and reach an agreement for using St Helena as the port of duty for his transhipment plans. He claims that through this transhipment St Helena could earn as much as 34 million pounds a year. But what exactly is this transhipment?

On November 27th 2001 an agreement was reached between the EU and its so-called Overseas Territories. It covered 77 pages, of which Mr. Conrich is concerned with article 36 and 37, which allows Saint Helena to become a location for transhipment. Transhipment normally implies transfer of goods from one vessel to the other, but that will not happen at Saint Helena in this agreement. It will instead become a duty port of entry for the EU. Manufactured goods from third countries (non-EU and non-overseas territory) can clear the customs needed to enter the EU at St Helena and duties paid will go to the Saint Helena government.

Goods that qualify for this special EU-agreement are quite limited and are mainly aluminium products and motor vehicles. In motor vehicles Mr. Conrich sees possibilities for St Helena. 12 vessels a year would visit the island (of about 500 ships with motor vehicles from Japan and Korea to the EU annually), bringing SHG revenue of 34 million pounds a year through duty.

These motor vehicles will mostly come from Japan or Korea and could be cleared at St Helena. The vehicles will be inspected there, after which an export certificate will be issued and the ship can continue to the EU. With this action the goods will gain duty free entry into the EU, no matter which port is their entry. A percentage of the duties paid at Saint Helena would go to the transhipment company, who in turn use part of this money to pay companies to divert their ships to Saint Helena.

In this scenario the company owning the motor vehicles, the transhipment company and Saint Helena Government in theory all make money out of this construction.

According to Mr. Conrich this is for the EU "a clever way of providing for aid, while not using tax money". Limits will be set though to restrict the amount of money that can be made with transhipment and the period in which this will be allowed is also limited. The agreement came into effect on December 1st 2001 and expires in 10 years' time. When Saint Helena wants to become a port of call for the transhipment company this has to be approved by FCO and the EU transhipment commission.

St Helena Transhipment Company Ltd exists only of Mr Conrich and two other people, but claims to "have contacts in Japan on a ministerial level, and with Toyota. It deals only with this transhipment and has no other business or clients. If accepted [to St Helena], it is not planning to do it elsewhere".

They would like to conduct their business on St Helena because the island is said to be located in a good place for the transhipment plan, on the old trade route to the Indies.

34 million pounds a year for inspecting and collecting duty from only 12 (very big) ships a year sounds too good to be true for many people, and "it sounds like money for nothing" is therefore an often heard remark. There is also caution because Anguilla (an other British OT) has been in trouble for illegal transhipment in the past. Proceedings have therefore been very cautious until now. But still even if things will not work out and St Helena does not get permission to act as a port of call for transhipment, the island will lose nothing. Also when it turns out no companies are interested to travel via St Helena, there is no risk for the island itself, only for Mr. Conrich's transhipment company. SHG has therefore decided to go ahead with the plans for now and have asked for permission from FCO and the EU Transhipment commission. As especially the EU decision making process is often slow it will probably take a while before anything definite is heard about the transhipment issue.

Other ways of bringing money and development to St Helena have of course also been looked at, but they have mostly been proven to be either unworkable or impossible. St Helena as a tax haven for instance seems a possibility, but this will never be allowed by the UK. Other overseas territories like for instance Anguilla have been involved in money-laundering scandals. The UK therefore does not wish more OT's to become tax havens.

8.10   Social impact of future access

It has been concluded before that access is very important for virtually all aspects of life on St Helena and therefore it also has a strong influence on St Helenian society. It is inevitable therefore that a change in access will also have a significant social impact on this society. Managing director of C&W Hensil O' Bey describes the possible introduction of air access as "a wake up call".

But what will this social impact consist of and what will be the results? In this section the social impact of air access will first be discussed, after which the social impact of continuing sea access will be discussed.

8.10.1 Social impact of future air access

Headmistress of P.A.S. Susan O' Bey thinks that that air access is going to have a significant social impact, but is in favour of air access because the island is having social problems in its current situation already: "Yes I do [want an airport]. For economic reasons and social reasons. The place is declining in population. So the place has problems. But in my mind the biggest issue is social. Things will change here, if you bring in an airport. You should be careful about the change in society by air access".

An often heard remark on the island is that with air access the 'way of life' of the Saints will change. Chief Education Officer Pamela Lawrence agrees, but thinks the way of life is slowly changing already anyway. She will be quoted at some length here:

"In practical terms… maybe the way of life will change anyway, our pattern of life is slowly changing. I'm talking about the general factors which people (value) at the moment, it's quiet, it's peaceful, things like that. The general environmental factors, the friendliness of the people. In a sense, and this might sound very selfish or conservative, our very…. Naivety is not the word, but innocence lost then. This is part of what makes us the people we are (...) Once you become materialistic, once the money comes in, there is always the possibility that expectations will rise. Materialism comes in, and all the negative things that go with it. But then the other side of the argument is, who has got the right to deny this to people? I certainly don't".

One aspect of the way of life that is often mentioned is the relaxed atmosphere and laid back pace of life on St Helena. Most people think that mainly as a result of increased economic activity this is going to change. This is illustrated by Ethel Yon, who feels this could be a positive change: "I think the whole island will come to life, will hustle and bustle like when the RMS is in. Now it is otherwise very quiet. Have you walked around town on a Monday night?"

SHDA manager Carolyn Thomas also thinks the pace of life will change, but also for the good: "I think there will be higher aspirations. Now it is all very laid back, so this might be changed, but that would be positive".

Another aspect of their way of life the Saints are very proud of is the very low crime rate and the sense of security that comes with it. It is often feared that with air access more crime will come to the island, but Carolyn Thomas disagrees: "No, there will not be [an increase in crime], because it will be high value low impact. I actually hope that the crime will decrease instead of increase. As a result of the tourism and the economic development people will become less poor, so they don't need to steal".

Doug Paterson however fears that with the coming of tourists, the divide between rich and poor might grow, something that would undoubtedly trigger more criminal activities on the island: "When you get rich tourists offering land owners money, you might create a split in society. You can get a huge divide between rich and poor, I can see that changing completely. Those people with economic benefits will be included, others won't. That must be built deliberately into social policies, not to get the super rich and the very poor".

Bishop John thinks that crime will not change because of changing social structures and income on the island, but because of easier access to illegal commodities from 'the outside world': "I was thinking more about people being able to get stuff out and get commodities

like drugs in, which is not very easy to do at the moment. It will be easier on an aircraft. They have [already] brought stuff in, people do grow cannabis and whatever it is called on the island. Once you start opening it up, things change".

It is expected that the airport and the tourism industry will create a fair number of jobs. Of course it would be most beneficial to the island if Saints would fill in these jobs. But at the moment many Saints are not qualified to do this. Susan O' Bey thinks the education department has an important task in training people for the future: "We need to, as an education department, rethink and be focussed on what we are training people for. I mean, in terms of human resources development, this school will have a very major role to play, in terms of what we are turning out at the end of it".

Carolyn Thomas feels that beside the education department SHDA can also contribute to getting the Saints ready for the possibility of an airport: "SHDA would be into people development. They would have to be geared up and the services will have to be geared up in order to meet the new demands. We'll try to make people more entrepreneurial and try to make them work up their businesses. If you do not develop the people, migrants will take up the business opportunities and all the St Helenians will remain workers only".

Chief Education officer Pamela Lawrence agrees and feels that if Saints will not benefit, labour will be imported to the island, which will cause a struggle between the Saints and the 'imported developers': "if the island is going to benefit, islanders must get into it, they must actually benefit from the development. If they are not going to benefit they will be shunted further and further into the background and others will come in to the island and benefit.(...) I foresee a real struggle between the imported developers and what they bring and the Saint Helenian population that remain. I think along with the elderly population that will remain there could remain, and that is just being hopeful, a number of well-switched on St Helenians who will see that SH is not actually getting a reasonable cut out of the developments that are happening and there is going to be a struggle between them and what's coming on".

With an airport the ties with other territories aside from Britain will very probably get stronger as a result of improved physical connections with these territories. This could lead to a weakening of the strong ties between St Helena and Britain. Government economist Tom Crowards thinks ties will always remain strong, but might indeed change as a result of air access. He also thinks this will be beneficial: "the ties being lost will be beneficial, because they are the ties of dependency. I think the ties will always be strong, for the foreseeable future because it will always be an overseas territory. There's nothing saying that we will not be an overseas territory for another 50 years. There will always be a governor, whether it will be one like we have now or alongside a chief minister, like they have in other Overseas territories. I think there will always be strong links, they are too strong now. There is no freedom to make locally-made decisions here. So I think it will lessen the links, only for the good".

Former Economist John Siraut has also done a social impact study on behalf of Shelco, in which he studies two main issues, offshore employment and health care. This assessment is mainly focused on the positive social impact of a future airport and does not assess possible negative complications. The social impact is based upon the economic development as envisaged in the economic impact assessment of Mr. Siraut. The conclusion states that the island will benefit socially from (among others):

- Improved access to employment opportunities on the island, which will lead to a return of people working offshore, thereby creating a greater family stability and less breaking up of families.

- Improved access to specialist offshore healthcare

- Improved education and health services

Easier access to and from relatives presently living overseas, enabling families to participate more in key family events, which is presently denied to them

(Siraut 2001b)

It is clear that again many of these factors are dependent upon the success of the development of the airport and the tourism sector, and are therefore uncertain. It is true though that a better access to specialist offshore healthcare in the case of emergencies can be realised. Easier access to and from relatives will also be greatly improved, although the low wages and high fares will still be prohibitive, so many Saints might still have to miss these 'key family events'.

What the precise social impact of the introduction of air access will be cannot be said, as much still remains unclear about this issue. That air access will have a significant impact seems inevitable. St Helena's way of life is already changing, but this will be quickened by improved access. Doug Paterson explains why: "You can have lots of rules and regulations, but part of Saint Helena's culture is being isolated. TV has had an impact, the coming of more tourists will have an impact".

8.10.2 Social impact of future sea access only

It was already quoted that socially the island has problems. The largest problem seems to be connected with an economic problem and is caused by the large amount of offshore employment, the effects of which have been discussed before.

With continued sea access only economic development of St Helena seems unlikely. As a result the amount of people working offshore will probably grow even more and associated problems will also grow. Eventually the island might have lost most of its working population and will be left mostly with the very young and the very old.

As access to the outside world will not nearly change as drastically as with air access, the isolation of St Helena will remain more or less intact. The 'way of life' of the island will therefore also remain intact longer. But it will change nevertheless. It is already changing now as a result of more communication with the outside world, mainly through TV and the internet. People who have worked offshore and return to the island, be it permanently or temporarily, also bring with them different influences that might affect the way of life.

But the major social implications of a rapidly ageing population will not fail to have their impact on every aspect of St Helenian society. The Saint Helenian way of life will be near impossible to maintain when the structure and viability of the population are at stake because many or most of the young people are leaving.

8.11   Environmental impact of future access

St Helena has some unique environmental elements, which will also be influenced by future access. Environmental will be interpreted in a broad sense here, which means we will include the natural environment as well as the built environment in this paragraph.

When sea access will be maintained, the environmental status quo will largely remain as it is. Therefore this scenario will not be discussed in this section. Air access however can have an impact on the built as well as the natural environment. The paragraph on natural environment will be mainly based on the environmental impact assessment (2001) by Rebecca Cairns-

Wicks, Environment Coordinator of SHG. The assessment was published on the Shelco webpage together with Mr. Siraut's assessments.

8.11.1 The Built environment

It has already been said that many of the built attractions of St Helena are in a poor state and need extensive repairs. Some of the heritage sites in Jamestown could be repaired and used for tourism purposes with the development of a tourist sector (Strategic Review 2000-2010). Revenues from tourism could make the costly repairs possible.

Governor Hollamby thinks that tourism development will also benefit the fortifications around the island: "I think it [tourism] can actually improve the environment as well, because as you probably know around the island there are old forts and guns, and they need a lot of money put into them. And unless we can generate income from tourism we won't have the money to do it. So it's a cycle: You put money into the forts to a certain level, you get more visitors coming to see them. And then there will be put more money into the system again. So I think environment will improve as well".

8.11.2 The natural environment

Aside from the endemic wirebird there is a wide range of endemic invertebrates as well as endemic plants living on St Helena. Unfortunately many of these do live in the only place an airport can be built: Prosperous Bay Plain. Although it is not the most important habitat of the wirebird, there is still a fair number of this species living and nesting on the plain. A number of endemic scrubs, bushes and small plants are also growing there.

But the main problem is the large number of endemic invertebrates living on the plain. In 1965-67 a Belgian survey did find 55 endemic species. Of these, 22 were found only on the plain and several more occur only on the plain or in the direct vicinity of it. The most famous invertebrate of these 22 is the giant earwig, which was last seen during the survey, when the Belgian scientists took several specimens with them. If any giant earwigs are still in existence, chances are considerable that they have their only habitat on the plain.

Development on Prosperous Bay Plain has the potential to cause considerable and irreversible damage to the Island's biodiversity through the loss and disturbance of key habitats (Cairns-Wicks 2001).

After the Belgian survey no research has been done on the Plain, and Rebecca Cairns-Wicks therefore recommends that a full environmental impact assessment is undertaken, to research the endemic invertebrates present and the consequences of the construction of an airport to their habitat. When it turns out that Prosperous Bay Plain is indeed the only habitat of 22 endemic species this might very well stop the development of an airport in its tracks.

When an airport is constructed the development of tourism will also influence the environment. Due to the hoped for 'high-value low-impact' development damage by tourists to the environment will probably be limited. Visitor exclusivity is the best way to protect the island's environment from over-exposure.

In the Strategic Review it is even stated that "paradoxically tourism also offers an opportunity to enhance the island's environment. With additional monies flowing into the island more resources will be available to tackle a wide variety of environmental issues; more land could be switched from agricultural to amenity use including national parks devoted to conserving and promoting endemic fauna and flora".

As some of the visitors will be coming to St Helena wholly or partially for its environment it is in all parties interest to avoid "ruination by over-exposure and mass tourism" (Shelco 2002).

8.12   Conclusion

Until access to Saint Helena is radically improved, there can be no significant development of tourism or any other sustainable aspects of the economy (UNDP 2000)

At the moment St Helena's only regular link with the outside world is through the RMS. It is therefore one of the hardest to reach places in the world. Development of economic activities like tourism is seriously hampered by the poor access of the island and therefore we concluded before that actually the island doesn't really have an economy. Communication with the outside world through telephone, television and the internet has improved drastically in recent times, but these developments can not generate development needed to 'kickstart' the St Helenian economy.

It looks like there are two scenarios regarding future access to the island:

In the first scenario access will remain more or less as it is, with the current ship being replaced by a new, somewhat bigger RMS in 2010. In this scenario the islands' economy will remain in its current state. This in turn will lead to more people leaving the island, especially the young people. St Helena will become more and more an island of very old and very young people, causing an extra strain on the already tested medical facilities on the island. When the young Saints will continue to leave the island, the future of St Helena looks very grim indeed.

In the second scenario an airport is constructed, and the isolation of St Helena will be partially uplifted by means of an air service. There might be more economic possibilities, which will mainly lie in the tourism sector. This tourism sector could create more and better jobs, causing some of the younger Saints to stay and maybe even some of the overseas workers will return. The island will definitely change as a result of this improved access. St Helena is more connected not only to Britain, but also to other places in the world. More well-off visitors on the island will also not fail to have an impact on St Helenian society.

A successful kickstart of St Helena's economy is not guaranteed with air access however. Tourism might not catch on, as St Helena will be one of the most expensive holiday destinations in the world. Also with the uplifting of the isolation an important part of the charm of the island might disappear, making it less attractive to tourists.

Practically negotiations for the construction of an airport have stopped now, making air access before 2010 very unlikely. Air access might therefore come too late to bring an economic development and to retain the island's young people.

Air access is no guarantee for economic development, but it might well be the only chance St Helena is going to have in this aspect. Therefore islander Basil George feels that bringing air access to St Helena is important:

"I am not against the airport. I think we should really give it our best shot to try and have a viable economy. What hampers us is the grant aid. So I would take a chance with every kind of social and environmental impact in order to pay our own way, as simple as that".

Chapter 9 Changing spatial identities

In chapter 6 we concluded that family and 'being a Saint' shape the spatial identities of the citizens of Saint Helena. The national identity of Saints remains somewhat vague.

The future developments as described in chapter 7 and 8 will cause a change in these spatial identities. The return of British citizenship will have impact on both family life and the essence of 'being a Saint'. 'Being a Saint' implies a degree of Britishness and the Britishness of the citizens of Saint Helena is now again formally acknowledged by the return of full British citizenship. Saints can be "True Brits" again.

But at the same time the British citizenship might lead to a further breakdown of family life on Saint Helena. It allows people to leave the island more easily, thus splitting up families.

It can safely be assumed that British citizenship will always be there for Saints from now on. It offers them the possibility to leave the island and can be seen as the road to "escape" in the absence of economic development. But economic development might be brought about, if there is an improvement in access opportunities to Saint Helena.

Improved access does not automatically mean a better life for Saints however. They will need to grab the opportunities it offers them, mainly in tourism-related areas. The Saint Helena Government will need to safeguard the economic interests of its own population by working from a comprehensive framework, which does not permit outside companies to take over the whole island economy.

Unfortunately Saints themselves do not have a great deal of influence on the decision whether or not access to Saint Helena will be improved. While they can express their wishes to the British government through their councillors, it is ultimately up to people at desks in London to decide whether an airport will come to Saint Helena. The influence of SHG on negotiations about an airport must not be underestimated, but as the money comes from DfID the ultimate decision lies there.

Saints do not play a very active part in this decision, so they can do little more than sit and wait. If they do not want to sit and wait, they will have to leave the island. The question then is if they will ever come back, even with an airport.

There are basically two scenarios for the future of Saint Helena. In the first scenario Saint Helena will remain dependent upon shipping only for access. The RMS will be replaced, but there will not be air access. In the second scenario there will be air access.

Will either of these scenarios lead to the fulfilment of the vision for Saint Helena that was expressed in the Saint Helena Strategic Review 2000-2010? Will Saint Helena become financially independent? And how will the spatial identities of the Saints then change?

Different groups and individuals have different opinions on this issue. In the rest of this chapter we will present some of the results of our interviews on this subject and the opinion of young people in particular. We will then add our own opinion, before relating this all back to the theory from chapter 2 in the final section.

9.1 Saint Helena in 2020

In our interviews we asked what people think Saint Helena will look like in 2020. In 18 years from now it will be clear whether Saint Helena will have an airport or not. Besides, it is also a period long enough to see the results of the possible introduction of air access on economic and social development.

Some people are very optimistic about the future of the island. One of them is Ethel Yon, Deputy Chief Secretary. She thinks that "We will have an airport, a flourishing hotel, the golf course up and running. Ladder Hill fort will be turned into a nice restaurant. We will have an improved seafront, looking nice. There will be more money on the island. Less complaints, more contentment".

But many people agree with Governor Hollamby that change will not be drastic on St Helena and much will remain as it has been for a long time already: "I don't think it will be terminally different. I don't think 2020 is necessarily going to mean that there will be wholesale change. I see the number of people coming to the island will be very limited. We have no beaches, we have very little in terms of leisure, we have no culture. The museum is the first attempt to build up a sort of culture. There is not a great deal of incentive for sudden change. And as you mentioned the families are still relatively strong".

Director of Tourism Pamela Young also feels that especially Jamestown will not see too much change: "Jamestown will be the same. There will be a few more houses in the country side. Jamestown has more or less looked like this the last 300 years, so I don't think it will change much in 20 years. Probably it will have a few more restaurants, a few more houses".

Banking consultant Alan Savery feels however that when economic development and tourism come to the island, the relaxed atmosphere and security might gradually disappear:

"Particularly if they are successful as they want to be with attracting tourism it will make an impact on the atmosphere on the island. You see immediately here that it is a very friendly relaxed environment. If you impose on that say 300 people throughout most of the season, it will affect the environment... and the security of the place. It is very relaxed at the moment, because it doesn't need to be…. That will all change. Unfortunately I think it will make the islanders more competitive with each other, because there will be more competition. In some ways it's a shame….. I mean everyone will want to see development, but no-one wants to see a very relaxing comfortable society spoilt by it. But if you're realistic, that it what will happen".

Councillor Eric George thinks that economically and socially the island can get stronger in the future, but he feels many changes will have to occur on the island for this to happen: "I only hope that it will be stronger than it is now. I think some people will come back again, but the climate has got to be right. I like to work towards more people running our island rather than having to depend on expats. That would be my wish. And the only way to do that is to change the whole outlook on St Helena".

Islander Basil George also feels it depends on "whether Saints want to bite the bullet (…) and really grasp the whole thing in their own hands".

Chief education officer Pamela Lawrence thinks that many problems will occur between the outside investors and the Saint population: "It's difficult, because we're on a crossroads now. Let's just assume that the airport project has gone ahead. A lower Saint Helenian population, I can see the airport brings subsequent development, so possibly a hotel, supposedly the golf course. But I can see a lot of problems between, I foresee a real struggle between the imported developers and what they bring and the Saint Helenian population that remain".

She already mentioned the fact that young people might have left and that many older people will remain behind. An image of Saint Helena as a retirement home appears. The French Consul Michel Martineau also fears the young and especially the skilled people will leave in the future: "Much less labour, very expensive, and absolutely impossible to find somebody to do any work".

Governor Hollamby however does not fear that the island becomes a retirement home: "I think the politicians will make sure it doesn't. In as far as land prices and everything else which is in their view against the general interest of the people at large".

Banking consultant Alan Savery does fear that the island will be a retirement home, but mainly when the construction of an airport will not go ahead: "I think it is more likely to become a retirement community if they do not build the airport, because then they are certainly not going to retain the young people. And maybe there is a case, because it certainly is a very pleasant place to retire to". SHDA manager Carolyn Thomas agrees: "Without an airport or another way to really improve access St. Helena might be a retirement home, with few young people, a declining population and more aid to support the elderly".

Retaining young people on the island is hard in any case. Doug Paterson talks out of his own experience: "I still see young people leaving, that is inevitable. When they leave school, they leave the island. For myself, I'm from the Shetlands, it is 2 hours from Aberdeen, but people still go. Hopefully there will be more for people to come back to. And hopefully they come back sooner, then there is a real prospect".

In our interviews people usually came up with two different scenarios: one very positive, one negative. The positive one was usually connected to having air access. Lyn Thomas, director of SHDA, sees a future only with air access: "It all depends on air access. If we have air access, the place could be flooded with outside investors and the Saints will be just workers. On the other hand Saints could also be business owners, they could have more money, they could be more enthusiastic and have more fire".

Tom Crowards, as government economist, is the only person attaching a figure to the probability of Saint Helena having an airport by 2020: "If you've got no airport it will be very very similar. I think there might be more expatriates, because there might not be the local people to replace. I think virtually all heads of departments will be expatriates. Now many of them are not, many of them are locals. But if you look at these local people, in many cases, no-one can be seen to take over from them. You've got such a thin layer of people. Once one goes, there is no-one to replace them. I think without an airport I can see more expatriates and no improvement in the economy, none.

With an airport, I think you see that, with a bit of planning, the centre of Jamestown is a pedestrian area, because you've got these tourists who make it worthwhile. You might see a breakwater, you will definitely see more tourists around town. That may be a bad thing, all people in cafes, moaning a lot, it's not all good, but you will see more activity. You will see more local manufacturing of timber, electricians, you don't actually see them but they are there. And hopefully you will see more in the shops. Because tourists and local people demand it and will pay for it. That's what I think, roughly. The good way and the bad: I really don't know which way it will go. I think it will go towards the airport, there's a more than 50 percent chance, but we're still so much in the beginning it's hard to say".

It should be noted that the interview with Tom Crowards was held before the negotiations with Shelco broke down. The introduction of air access is now at least delayed, and development will be delayed as well.

9.2   Ideas from Prince Andrew School pupils

By 2020 a new generation will probably have taken over leadership of the island, and many of the current working population will have gone into retirement. Hopefully for the island Hensil O'Bey's worst case scenario does not come true: "In 2020 St. Helena has to be a place for

younger people, or it is going to die. You would come back and I would still sit here, because there would be no-one to replace me, they can't find anyone to do the job".

The young people now studying at Prince Andrew School will be in their early thirties in 2020. It is interesting to see what they now think Saint Helena will look like by then. Coincidentally, and fortunately for our research, this question was posed to them just before we travelled to the island, making it unnecessary for us to repeat these questions. In a poster competition in early 2002 the students were asked to consider the way their island might change. The results were published on the school's website (Prince Andrew School 2002).

Many of the posters featured highways and skyscrapers, and most included an airport. Ideas joint winner Laura Lawrence was more pessimistic than most others (for the posters mentioned here, see appendix I). The wirebird will have disappeared, Donny's place (a popular disco and club) will have turned into a tea and cake shop for the elderly, who wave their children goodbye at Hoole's wall (the wharf). The airport only exists in dreams, and meanwhile Prince Andrew School will have turned into a retirement home. The RMS looks like it's going to die. Probably Laura herself does not want to be part of this gloomy picture.

Mario Pisaneschi (joint ideas winner with Laura Lawrence) sees a brighter future. He sees an airport with flights available for emergencies, and a bigger, more modern hospital as well. More fruit, more modern cars and buildings: positive change will come.

Some posters included not quite realistic features such as a bridge or a tunnel to Ascension. Children feel really connected to Ascension, if only because many of their family and friends are there. So they would like to see even closer links with this island. This was for example expressed in the poster by Kayleigh Henry, Jeremy Clingham, Sophie Young and Colin Thomas, who also think a McDonold's will finally be opened on the island.

Ascension features in a few of the posters, as well as the Britishness of the island. On some posters Saint Helena is coloured in with the colours of the British flag, such as the poster by Kurt Johnson.

The big question is if these children want to be a part of Saint Helena's future themselves. They are already confronted with life outside, through their family and friends overseas, but also through TV and the internet. Their spatial identities are shaped differently, due to a larger amount of information about the world outside. Part of this outside world is also brought back to the island, for instance in music and clothing. Young saint Helenians will probably want to be more and more part of the rest of the world, which is closely interconnected through media like the internet and global TV channels. Even if they do not physically become part of the world outside, many elements will be brought to Saint Helena, resulting in change and possibly in conflict with older generations.

Still, the future is always unclear and children are susceptible to influences by teachers and parents. In the posters it was clear that there had been lessons about railways and tall buildings at the school. There had also been environmental lessons, as care for the environment featured prominently.

Funnily, on the same school homepage results were also shown from a similar competition in 1979, where children were asked to describe their thoughts about the looks of the island in 2002 in a poem. Russian invasion loomed at the horizon in some poems. One poem worth quoting is by Elaine Benjamin, who is now headmistress of Pilling School. As a 13-year old in 1979 she wrote the following:

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I hope that in the years to come,
At least another twenty three,
Our isle will be a lovely home In the far Atlantic sea,
I hope that the hills will be covered with grass
As it was in those years when no-one was seen

I wish that our island will be like the sun,
As bright and as gay can be,
With the fresh green trees and the beautiful flowers,
A place in the South of the Atlantic sea.

About this time the tourist industry will have begun,
And lots of people to this island will come
The houses at half tree hollow will not be sparse,
With builds growing up very fast.

She was right on a few things, and is now working on the future of the island herself. She talks about the future with her pupils, many of whom want to leave. "Lots of them like to go to the Falklands, or Germany. Also the armed forces are very popular now. We had a careers fair here in February, where different jobs were promoted. That inspired them as well. But on Saint Helena it is difficult to see far ahead. With citizenship it becomes more real, they feel they can reach a goal. But this goal might mean leaving the island". Her wish is this: "I hope there are more jobs around to retain people on the island, especially employing the younger people".

9.3 Changing spatial identities

What then, will the spatial identities of the citizens of Saint Helena look like in 2020? Many things will have changed. Saint Helena will still be a lonely rock in the middle of the South Atlantic, but insularity will probably no longer be such a keyword. Already Saint Helena is rapidly opening up to the outside world through the internet, and the same internet and television bring the outside world to Saint Helena. In spite of the physical isolation, instant contact with Saint Helena is now possible, and the possibilities of these forms of non-physical communication are likely to expand in the future. Saint Helena's place in the wider world will be less peripheral, as communication with the rest of the world is made easier.

Improved communications with the outside world might also decrease at least the *feeling* of dependency. The younger people will realise that there is more than just Britain once you leave the island. Spatial identities will be based on more knowledge of the outside world and might therefore become more complicated and differentiated. Now there are two distinct spatial identities: one for 'insider use', and one for 'outsider use'. In the future it might not be that easy anymore to divide the world in insiders and outsiders. Of course, people on Saint Helena will still know each other, but family might not be the only thing anymore. Families get smaller and smaller in size, and social networks outside the immediate family might therefore gain importance. Besides, it might be easier to move to different social networks if access is radically improved through an airport. People might come and go to the island more easily, adopting a more fluid identity.

An airport, if it comes, will also influence the ties of dependency that shape life on Saint Helena to such a great extent at present. Economic and political dependency will remain as long as the island is dependent upon a single ship as its literal lifeline. If economic development comes through an airport, Saints might be able to take the future in their own hands. Besides, a political system which includes more responsibilities for locals might 'mature' Saint Helenian society. That is not an argument for political independence, but if Saints see that they shape, or at least influence their own future through their own (political) actions, there is more to remain on Saint Helena for.

Or to come back for. Because we think it is unrealistic to think that anything happening on Saint Helena will stop people from leaving the island. Young people will want to see the outside world they have already 'tasted from' through internet and TV for real. What Saint Helena should aim for is to attract these people back once they have seen the outside world. Because even if you are away from the island, part of you will always include 'being a Saint'. If that can be activated, if there is something to return to, there might still be a future for Saint Helena.

If you are born a Saint it is likely that Saint Helena will always remain the stable centre of your universe. The lonely rock will be your home base and something you will want to return to at some point. In the worst case, Saint Helena will become a retirement home. Already now you see people retiring to their island once they have finished working in the UK or South Africa all their working life. The longing for home gets to them, or in the words of Royle: Saint Helena wins again. The question for the island is the timing of the win: if Saint Helena wins again during people's working lives, there is a future to be built up on the island. Otherwise there will just be a history to return to.

Chapter 10   Epilogue

Saint Helena is unique. Its particular history, geography and insularity make it incomparable to any other place in the world. This was our first statement in chapter 2, and it has become even more apparent throughout this thesis.

Saint Helena's place in the wider world is one of marginalisation and dependency. That is not strange if your people form your main export product, and the mainstay of your economy is supported by remittances from overseas workers and grant aid from the 'colonial masters' in London. But islanders are proud of their island and its Britishness. They form a tightly knit community in which family is of great importance.

The concepts of insularity, scale and spatial identity have been theorised in chapter 2 on the presumption that they are useful for explaining how Saint Helena 'works'. What can we now conclude about their interrelatedness and how can these concepts help in answering our central question?

The traditional geographical conceptualisations of identity in general, and spatial identity in particular, do not provide a relevant framework for explaining the particular case of Saint Helena. A flexible approach to theoretical concepts is quintessential for understanding Saint Helenian society. Valuable insights might be gained by looking over the 'borders' of one's scientific field. For example the link between home and identity as distinguished in cultural anthropology has proven useful in structuring the discussion about Saints' spatial identities.

Let's then take a final look at Saints' spatial identities in figure 10.1, a Saint Helenian child's view of the world. This figure was published in the draft version of the citizenship's commission's first report (Turner 1994). The concept of insularity is easily visible: Saint Helena is far from anywhere and even for a Saint Helenian child it is not in the centre of the world. Ascension is the main link with the far away outside world and is therefore in the centre of the map.

Nor is there a lot of 'rest of the world'. The areas with which there is some degree of familiarity are all at the edge of this world. England is the island in the northeast, America in the northwest. Southwest there is Cape Town, which is not connected to the rest of (South) Africa. In the bottom left corner we find the Falklands, an important place for employment for Saints but also at the edge of the world.

Scale is not something absolute in this worldview: the size of for example Ascension in comparison to England is not according to reality. Scale as size has little meaning for Saint Helenians. They live on an island with 5,000 people and that is their point of reference. Nor can the distinct hierarchy of scales as in for instance Britain or the Netherlands be found on the island. There is a certain hierarchy, but a number of spatial scales that can be seen in the rest of the world are missing: there is Saint Helena, there is Ascension, and then there is the outside world. The Falklands, England and Cape Town (note: not South Africa, just Cape Town) form the 'known' part of the outside world. With the rest of the world Saints (usually) have no relationship.

Interaction does not take place on a great number of different spatial scales; it 'stops' at the level of the island, which forms a 'little whole of humanity'. But a British part of humanity, as is shown by the Union Jack colouring in the island in figure 10.1.

The spatial identities of Saints are strongly influenced by the insularity of their island and the lack of exposure to the outside world. To the familiar community of insiders there is hardly any need for identification, while towards outsiders a proudness of their community is shown.

Figure 10.1 Saint Helenian child's view of the world
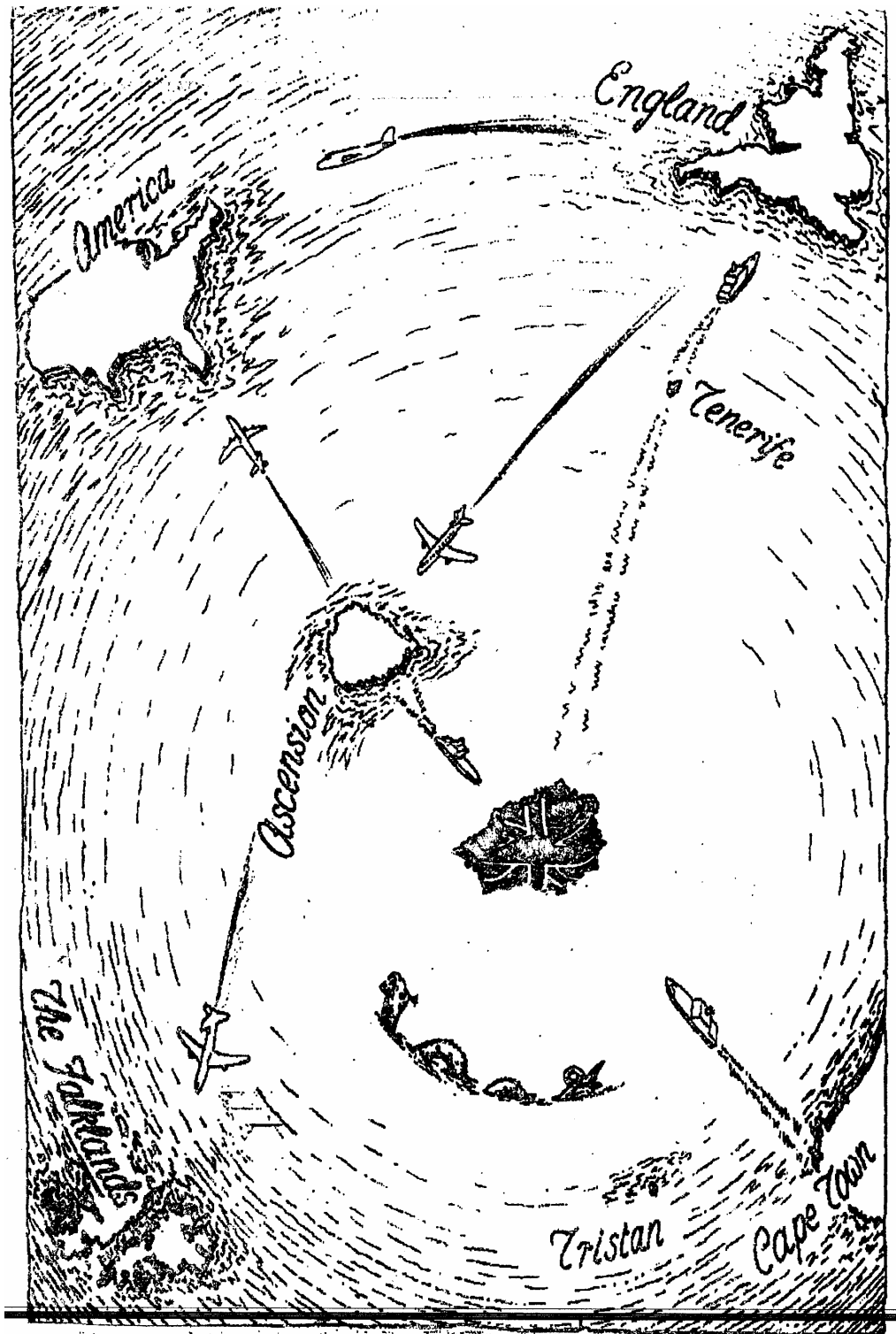
Source: Turner 1994, p. 8

In the future the picture from figure 10.1 might change. If Saint Helena had an airport, it would at least be in the centre of the Saint Helenian's view of the world (as was shown in figure 8.7 already). The rest of the world would be closer by and the dragon would disappear, or be confined to the waters around Tristan. Land might appear beyond Cape Town, and England might become the portal to the EU. This of course is facilitated by the return of British citizenship.

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Hopefully for the island arrows will be pointing towards it, and not just away from it. Right now the arrows are pointing away, as Saint Helena is losing its people more and more rapidly. Only economic development can stem the tide, and the only way to bring economic development is through an airport.

But even an airport might not bring development, or it might be too late already. There are less and less young people on the island, whose population is ageing rapidly. Saint Helenian society as a whole is under threat, and the word depopulation has already been mentioned in the local newspaper.

We hope it will not come to that, and we think it won't. The love of Saint Helenians for their island is so great that they will always want to come back to it. In the worst case for the island, it will just be a place to retire to. Hopefully for the island development will come. But in any case: in 500 years from now the lonely rock will still be there.

Chapter 11   Summary

In this thesis we have tried to give an answer to the following central question:

What are the spatial identities of the citizens of Saint Helena and how will these change as a result of enlarged interaction opportunities, notably the return of British citizenship and the improvement of access?

We did this by addressing the part of the question concerning the present in part one: what are the spatial identities of the citizens of Saint Helena *now*? In the second part of the thesis we have focused on the future: what will change?

The concept of spatial identity is a key element of this thesis and has therefore been defined in chapter 2. We defined it as the "feeling of attachment to territory at a certain geographical scale, perceived as unique to and by an individual or group". Following this definition we stated that "certain layers or scales are more important than others, either because they have a greater impact on day-to-day life, or because they contain elements that make the group very distinct from other groups at the same scale".

It has been made clear that St Helenians feel strongly attached to their island; but that they also feel they are British. Our study in regional differences showed that although differences between districts are considerable, they are not crucial to a Saint's identity: It is not something a Saint will immediately refer to, nor will a Saint use it to identify him- or herself with. They do however identify strongly with family. The 'lowest' level of identity that seems to be important is thus family.

Although from a geographical point of view, this is not necessarily a *spatial* identity, there are certainly spatial elements in the 'family identity'. Families tend to be concentrated together: uncles, aunts, grandparents etc. often live close to each other in one district. Besides, the family identity is often connected to a certain piece of land, on which the 'family house' might be built. Often the whole family is supplied with fresh produce through the part-time farming of a family member on a particular piece of 'family land'. Even when away from the island, the family often retains its importance for identity. Remittances go through family lines, and more often than not Saints overseas end up in communities with other Saints, where identification through family continues.

Moving up the 'scales of spatial identity', we then get to the island level. The Saint Helenian identity has been perceived by many researchers to be the local identity of the people of Saint Helena. The Citizenship Commision stated however that this Saint Helenian identity does not exclude British identity. In this thesis we have gone one step further than the Citizenship Commission: We think that being Saint Helenian *includes* Britishness. Elements of Britishness are a part of everyday life on Saint Helena, and of course you can point at certain symbols of Britishness. But it is impossible to take out the British elements, in order to identify what is perceived to be truly Saint Helenian. Britishness in its physical and non-physical forms is an integral part of 'being a Saint'.

If this is related to spatial scales and spatial identities it seems clear that on Saint Helena there are basically only two options possible. Either you talk to an 'insider', and then you will refer to family; or you talk to an 'outsider', and then you will refer to being a Saint. Your family impacts your day-to-day life, while being a Saint makes you distinct from others.

Does 'being a Saint' then include a national identity? Are Saints "a politically self-aware community of persons who associate themselves with a particular territory on the basis of historical and cultural criteria"? Yes, they are. But while in most cases the political self-

awareness leads to political action, this is hardly the case on Saint Helena. While Saints are politically self-aware, most of the needs that come with "nationalism" are fulfilled by the Britishness that is incorporated in being a Saint.

Family and 'being a Saint' shape the spatial identity of the citizens of Saint Helena. The national identity of Saints remains somewhat vague and the concept of home seems more appropriate.

What then, will the spatial identities of the citizens of Saint Helena look like in 2020?

Many things will have changed. Saint Helena will still be a lonely rock in the middle of the South Atlantic, but insularity will probably no longer be such a keyword. In spite of the physical isolation, instant contact with Saint Helena is now possible, and the possibilities of these forms of non-physical communication are likely to expand in the future. Saint Helena's place in the wider world will be less peripheral, as communication with the rest of the world is made easier.

Improved communications with the outside world might also decrease at least the *feeling* of dependency. Spatial identities will be based on more knowledge of the outside world and might therefore become more complicated and differentiated. Of course, people on Saint Helena will still know each other, but family might not be the only thing anymore. Families get smaller and smaller in size, and social networks outside the immediate family might therefore gain importance. Besides, it might be easier to move to different social networks if access is radically improved through an airport. People might come and go to the island more easily, adopting a more fluid identity.

An airport, if it comes, will also influence the ties of dependency that shape life on Saint Helena to such a great extent at present. Economic and political dependency will remain as long as the island is dependent upon a single ship as its literal lifeline. If economic development comes through an airport, Saints might be able to take the future in their own hands. Besides, a political system which includes more responsibilities for locals, might 'mature' Saint Helenian society. That is not an argument for political independence, but if Saints see that they shape, or at least influence their own future through their own (political) actions, there is more to remain on Saint Helena for, or to come back for.

If you are born a Saint it is likely that Saint Helena will always remain the stable centre of your universe, whether there comes an airport or not. The lonely rock will be your home base and something you will want to return to at some point. Without economic development though this might only be attractive for retired people, which would make St Helena into a retirement home.

Chapter 12   Acknowledgements

There are many people we would like to thank. So we do!

Of course this thesis would not have been possible without the generous financial contributions of:

- The Universiteit Utrecht, who gave us the Trajectum grant

- The Faculteit Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen, who sponsored us out of the potje van Harts

- Our Parents, who gave up their second car for their beloved sons

- The V.AA.G., for their small but useful K.R.E.N.TE.N.B.R.O.O.D.-grant

Then of course there are all the people we interviewed on Saint Helena. They are listed in appendix x, and we would like to thank them all very much for their cooperation. We would like to thank everyone we met on Saint Helena and on the RMS (except Mr. and Mrs. Butterfly). You made us feel very welcome.

In particular we would like to thank the following people and cat (in no particular order)

- Norma, Roger and Holly, for providing the roof over our head, helping us to get settled and dropping by on a very regular basis to feed
- Tiddles (who we also thank for the constant miauw - input)
- Our neighbours, and Iona Thomas in particular for the finest fishcakes on the island
- Basil George, for providing us with loads of information
- Sandi and Rick, for great parties
- Felicity, for her pleasant company
- Harold, for his great lunch
- Captain Smith, for Guinness, cigars and frogs
- Joao da Nova Castella, for discovering Santa Helena
- Tom, Shannon, Gus and Tate, for many well-spent weekends and their help in trying to let the Dutch invaders take over the island
- Jill and David, for loads of things, but our first taste of octopus in particular
- Janet and Rob, for great fun on the RMS and a great time in Cape Town
- Stefan and Toni, for cheesecake, lasagna and letting us throw them on the bouncy castle
- Stedson Stroud, for taking us up Lot
- Matthijs and Fraukje, you know why
- Our parents, you know why as well
- Ben de Pater, for criticism and support in supervising us
- Stephen Royle, for his valuable comments
- Martin Kemp, for sharing his experiences

Thank you, we really enjoyed ourselves!

The Dutchies

APPENDICES

Appendix A.   Map of Saint Helena
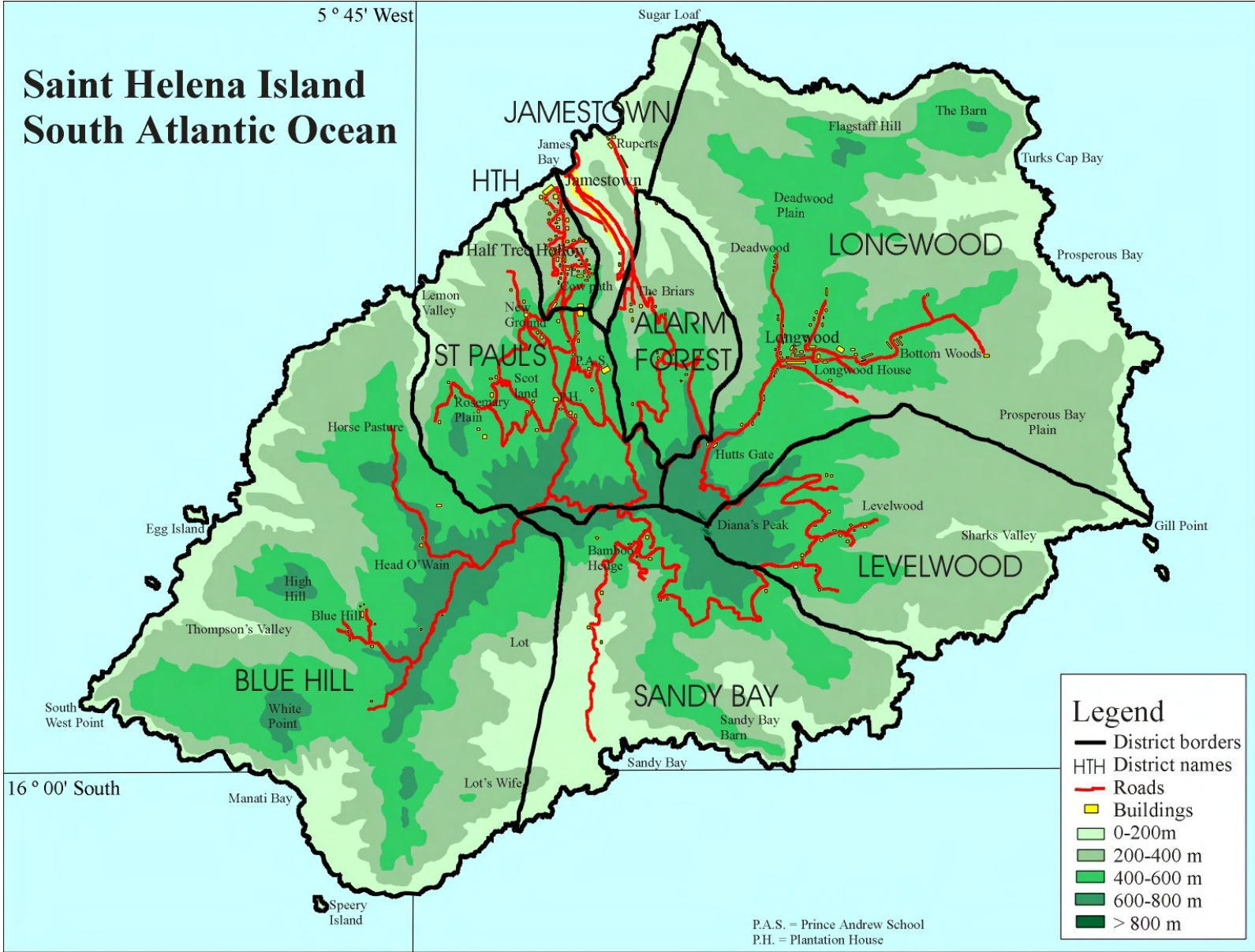
Appendix B.   Process and Methodology

In this appendix we will explain why we have used certain methodology to answer our research questions, and how we have set up the research. Our research can be divided into three periods: first the period of orientation and preparation, then the actual fieldwork itself, and finally the data processing and writing of this thesis.

Orientation and preparation

First there was the idea to write our final thesis together. This decision was taken early in 2001, and went looking for an interesting and challenging subject. We were thinking about a remote place, an island, and stumbled on Saint Helena on the map. Then we read an article by Irish geographer Stephen Royle about Saint Helena and we decided there were many interesting aspects to study there.

The first idea was put to paper in March 2001. Then it was already about 'scales of spatial identity', but the proposal was not very detailed, nor was it clear what exactly we wanted. But we decided to give it to one of our lecturers anyway, because we wanted to find out if they did not rule our idea out altogether. The first idea was heavily criticised, mainly because it lacked scientific and societal relevance.

We then contacted Stephen Royle and sent him our proposal. He criticised it as well, but saw possibilities to make it more interesting. These suggestions we put in a second proposal, which we gave to the same lecturer as before in early May 2001. We chose this lecturer, dr. Ben de Pater, because we thought he would be sympathetic to out-of-the-ordinary ideas, and because he is highly critical.

This second proposal was received more positively. Although it would need to be worked out in much more detail, it could form a basis for a thesis, according to Ben de Pater. This same judgement came from a second lecturer, prof. Hauer. Ben de Pater answered positively on our question if he would like to be our supervisor.

That is when we decided to leave the scientific side of our project for a while, and concentrate on the practical side first. We sent a number of e-mails to the Saint Helena Government to ask permission for our research. Besides, we decided on the route we wanted to travel and the period we wanted to be away for and made a budget. We also went looking for funds for our travels. In July 2001 we made our booking for the RMS, and we booked the flight back from South Africa. Through the tourist office we booked accommodation in Jamestown: a self-catering house. We asked the people in the tourist office many questions, most of which must have sounded very silly. It was a good idea after all not to take bikes with us.

In September and October we did not do much, except making an application for a grant from the British Council. We also applied to two Dutch funds. Unfortunately neither of these funds thought we matched their criteria and they rejected our applications.

Our University was kind enough to give us the Trajectum grant, and our Faculty also gave some money from a fund intended to help students do fieldwork. Besides, our parents helped bridging financial gaps which were still there.

In November we went to work refining our proposal, and we looked up more literature on Saint Helena. In December and January we read a lot about the island, and about theoretical ideas which could help us. In February we sorted out the last practicalities, and early March was time for departure.

By then we had already made some choices regarding methodology. Our research questions would require a detailed study of literature on the island. Interviews would be a good source

of information as well. We were not looking for results that could be put in numbers, but for something intangible: spatial identity. So to answer our main questions we would use qualitative methods.

One aspect we thought was very important was spatial behaviour. A prediction of future spatial behaviour of Saints could be very useful, we thought. That is why we were thinking about doing a survey among school children on Saint Helena about their aspirations and expectations.

We had already been discouraged from doing a large-scale survey by everyone we contacted who had been on Saint Helena. We were told the results would probably be quite useless because Saints would either tell us what they thought we wanted to hear, or they would not take us seriously.

Before we departed, we made a list of people we wanted to interview, and we made a schedule for our time on the island. We took quite a bit of literature with us, either because we thought we needed it, or because we wanted to read it during the two weeks on the ship.

Fieldwork

The 'fieldwork' actually started in Cardiff, before boarding the RMS. Here we met the first Saint Helenians. Over the next two weeks we talked to virtually every other passenger on the ship, and this was very interesting to form an image of Saint Helenian society. Everyone on the ship knew us, and this made our arrival on Saint Helena easier. News about who we were spread quickly. Through the e-mails we sent to the government and tourist office they knew we were coming as well.

Soon we made our first appearance on Radio Saint Helena, in the program Primetime. We were interviewed for the Saint Helena Herald, the local newspaper, as well. Two weeks after our arrival everyone on the island knew who we were (we were referred to as 'the Dutchies').

We had used these first two weeks to get settled, and get to know the island a bit better. The library was visited a number of times, to read some reports that were only available on-island, and read back issues f the newspaper. On the first day we had held our first interview, with Mr. Conrich, representative of the Transshipment company. He was leaving the next day, but could advise us who to interview, being an outsider like us.

Afterwards we started planning our other interviews. We started with a number of people from SHG, before moving on to people from the private sector. Then there were a number of other interesting people, and towards the end of our stay, the Governor.

Most interviews were held with a tape recorder. We also made notes during the interviews. One of us would ask the questions and the other would make notes, although the other could (and would) also ask some questions. Some questions were the same for all the people we interviewed (such as the question "what do you think Saint Helena will look like in 2020"), but most were 'tailor-made'. Interviews were not very structured, as we would improvise according to what the person being interviewed told us. Towards the end of the interview the one of us who was interviewing would always ask the other if he still had questions left.

Certain interviews went 'smoother' or were richer in information than others, but we think all our interviews were useful.

After the interview we would try to work it out as quickly as possible. For that, we took turns listening to the tape recorder and typing the questions and answers into our laptop computer. Our tape recorder did not work properly a number of times, or we would not have any tape left to record on (we had two tapes with us and one of them broke quite quickly). In these

cases we would rely on notes, and obviously these interviews had more priority in working out.

Once finished working out an interview, we would each read through it once again, to check what the other had done and correct mistakes.

We decided against a survey among school children, mainly because of the same reasons we cited before. Besides, some excellent data from school children were already available. Children in P.A.S. had been making drawings of what they thought Saint Helena would look like in 2020, which were published on the school's website. Later on, the results of an essay competition about 'what makes a Saint' were published in the local newspaper. This provided us with enough data, and we decided not to 'bother' the school children. We did visit the school, as well as one of the middle schools on the island, to get an idea of what education on the island looked like in practice. We talked to some school children informally as well.

A number of important events during our stay provided information as well. First there was the restoration of citizenship, which was celebrated in a commemorative church service. Then there was Q5; the quincentenary celebrations. The 21st of May was a day on which the identity of Saints was expressed in many forms.

Other information was gathered by walking around the island a lot, getting to know a little bit of the different districts, and talking to people on the way.

Saint Helena Radio was also a valuable source; especially the program 'Primetime', in which current affairs were discussed. Some of these broadcasts we taped and used later.

We visited the sights of the island: Longwood House, the Boer graves, Diana's Peak, etcetera. Besides, we visited some businesses: the Argos fish processing plant and Reg Yon's coffee plantation. We made a visit to Prince Andrew School for an interview, and visited the sports day there. The newly opened Saint Helena Museum had interesting displays as well.

The planning we made beforehand turned out to be quite useless in practice. We spent the first two weeks getting to know the island a bit and the next six weeks we worked hard on gathering data. Then was the week of the quincentenary celebrations, and in our last week on the island we made an inventory of the data we had and gathered what we still missed. After finishing the last interview we had the idea we were ready: although it could of course be interesting to interview more people, we thought we had enough to work with.

During our stay we kept in contact with 'home', and with our supervisor through e-mail. And all through our stay we wrote a "study diary", in which we recorded what we had done that day. This proved a valuable source of information while processing our data.

Data processing and writing

Even before we went to the island, we had started on writing certain small parts of the thesis. Daniël started on geology and physical geography; Maarten on history. But the bulk of the data processing only came afterwards. After returning home and settling in again, we had about four weeks in which we read through all the interviews and the study diary again, and started the writing. In the interviews we would mark certain interesting passages, and we grouped similar questions from different interviews together. While writing a certain chapter, we would go through the interviews again, to look for interesting statements.

We divided certain subjects. Some of this we had already divided before we went to the island: Maarten would concentrate more on the citizenship and constitutional issues, while Daniël would concentrate on access.

Meanwhile we still followed the Saint Helena Herald on the internet, and we kept in touch with some people we had met on the island by e-mail.

In late July we each went on holiday, and afterwards we had a fresh view and started working again. The theoretical framework was written first, along with chapters 3, 4 and 5. The table of contents was once again changed, and our conceptual model was refined.

One of us would write a certain paragraph or chapter and send it to the other by e-mail for comment. Then he would process the comments and have a fresh look for himself. Usually a chapter would go back and forth like this a coupe of times, before we gave it to our supervisor for a critical look. Many MB's of information went back and forth through e-mail.

Before we went to the island we had set ourselves the target of trying to finish a first version of the thesis by the 1st of October. This was very ambitious and we did not make it, but we came close.

Another thank you to everyone who helped making this thesis possible.

Appendix C. List of figures

Appendix D.   List of Tables

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Appendix E.   Abbreviations used

ATM	Automatic Teller Machine
BC	British Citizenship
BDTC	British Dependent Territories Citizenship
BOTC	British Overseas Territories Citizenship
C&W	Cable and Wireless
DfID	Department for International Development
ExCo	Executive Council
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
HTH	Half Tree Hollow
LegCo	Legislative Council
PAS	Prince Andrew School
Q5	Quincentenary celebrations of the discovery of Saint Helena on 21 May 1502
QANGO	Quasi Autonomous Non Governmental Organisation
RMS	Royal Mail Ship (the RMS means the RMS Saint Helena)
SH	Saint Helena
SHDA	Saint Helena Development Agency
SHELCO	Saint Helena Leisure Corporation
SHFC	Saint Helena Fisheries Corporation
SHG	Saint Helena Government
SNCG	Saint Helena Nature Conservation Group
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Appendix F.   Population Pyramids

1. Population Pyramid of St Helena
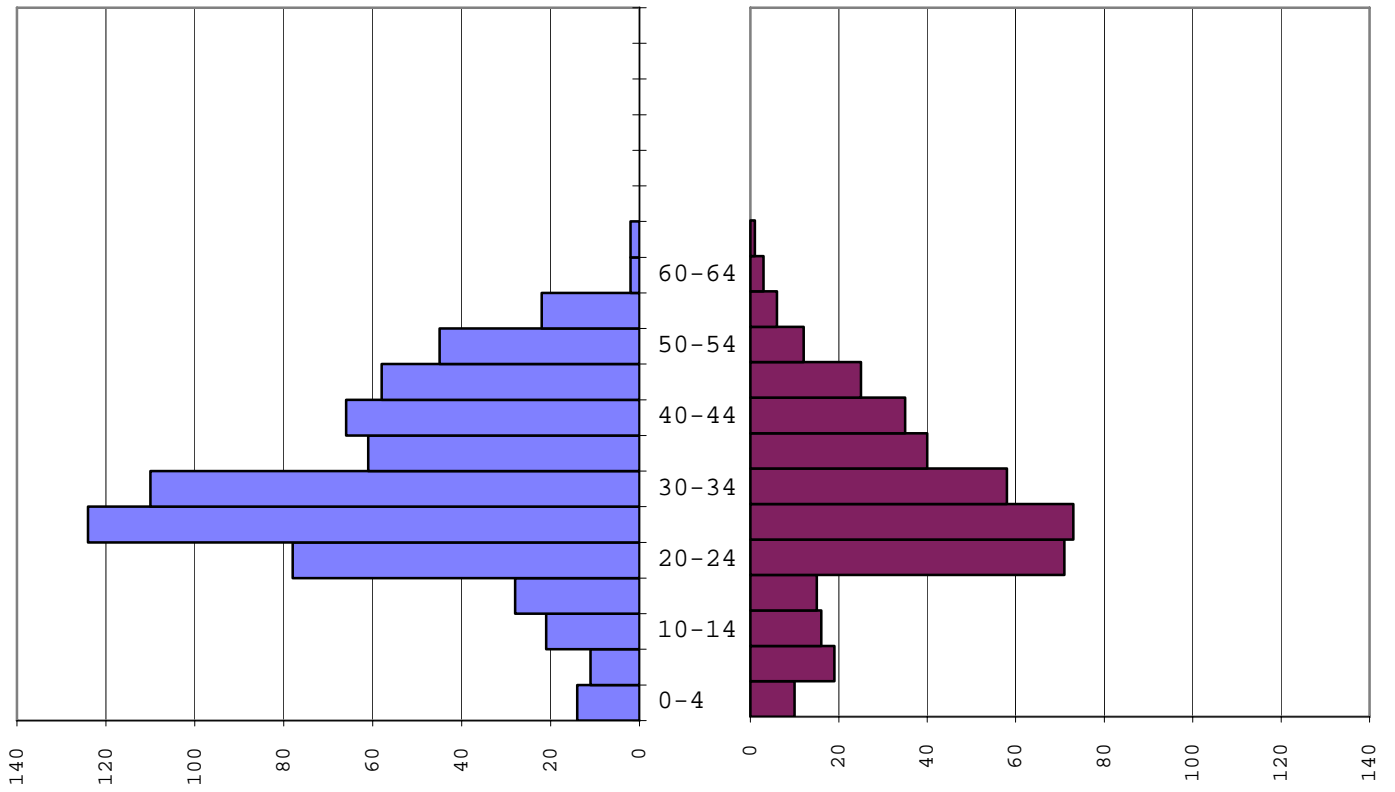
Source: Population Census 1998
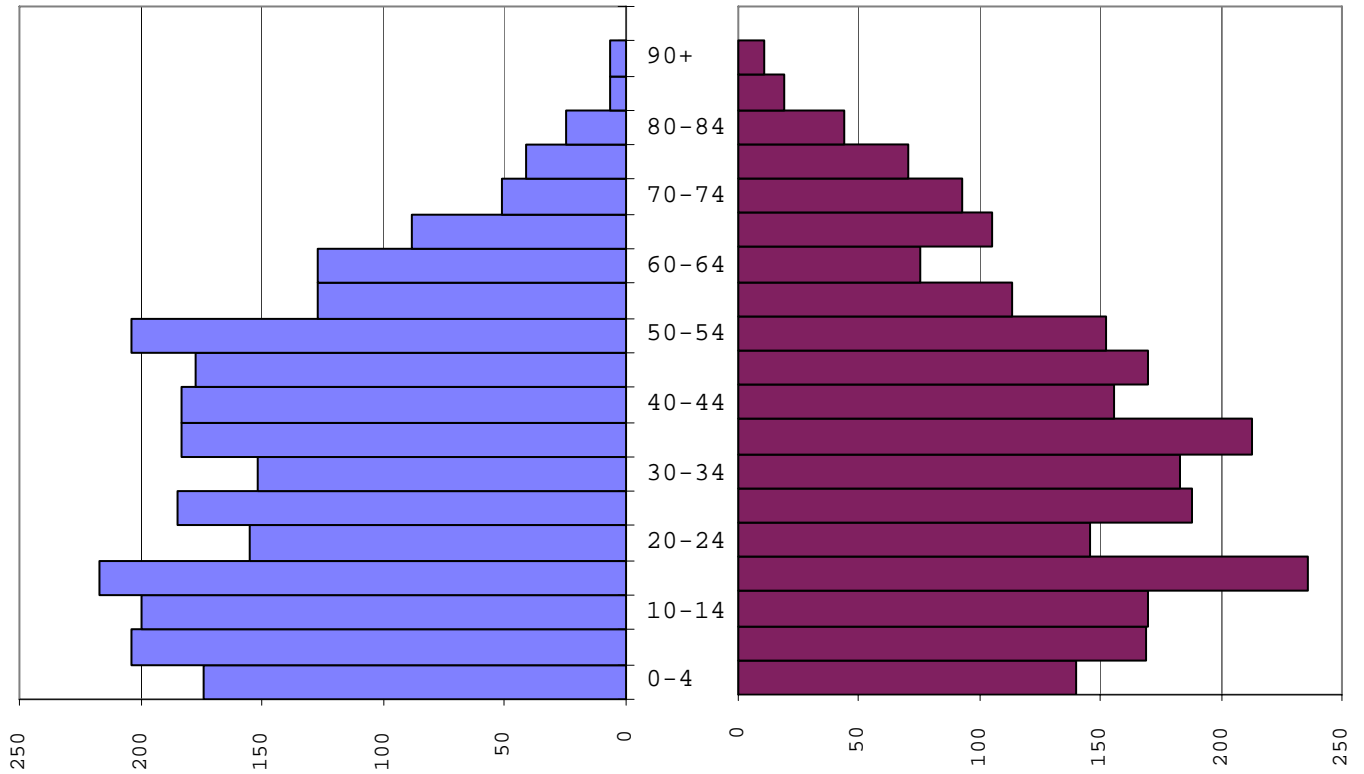
2. Population Pyramid of Saints on Ascension and the Falklands
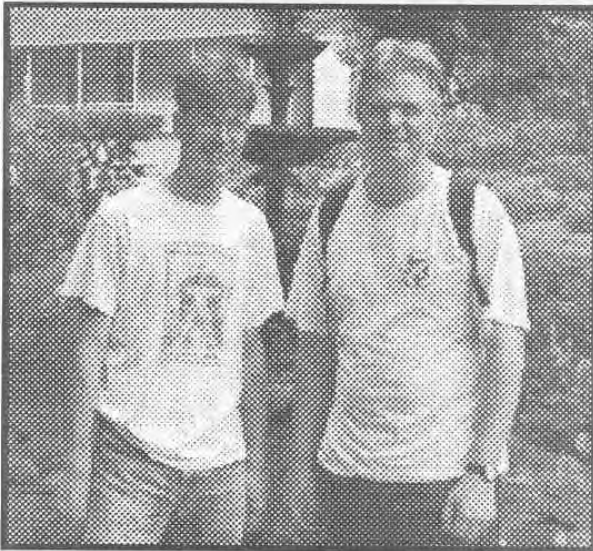
Source: Population Census 1998

Appendix G.   Interview with authors in Saint Helena Herald

Published 28-3-2002, p. 8

A SPECIAL IDENTITY FOR THE SAINTS

By Shelley Magellan

On Thursday 21ˢᵗ March the R.M.S *St.Helena* arrived from the UK. Onboard were family, friends, short time visitors and two Dutch University Students from Holland. 23 year olds Maarten Hogenstijn and Daniel Middelkoop are Geographers; both attend the University of Utrecht. Although they major in Human geography, they also specialise in Regional Geography, this involves the study of people, their way of life, culture, economy and so forth. At this point of their course they are required to produce a Thesis on a specific place and it's inhabitants. Why St.Helena?

Maarten and Daniel read an article about St.Helena, which was written by an Irishman Mr Steven Royle who visited the Island some time ago. Their interests were sparked and they began looking more into the Island by visiting the St.Helena website, that proved to be "very helpful."

When speaking to Maarten and Daniel they appeared to be very eager to commence their Thesis, which will be entitled 'Special Identity and special behaviour of citizens of St.Helena.'

Both students will be leaving St.Helena to return to University in Holland on the 31ˢᵗ May. They will then accumulate all of their research to create a 100 page Thesis. It will be written in English and is hoped to be displayed on the Internet for anyone's viewing pleasure.

Maarten and Daniel equally look forward to meeting as many Saints as possible during their time spent here and hope to organize a few interviews with you. If anyone would like to contact Maarten and Daniel for more information involving their project you can reach them on Telephone: 2068.

Appendix H.   Chronological list of "official" interviews conducted

Name	Employer /organisation	Function	Date held
Martin Kemp*	Bristol University	Researcher in medical anthropology	?
Bob Conrich*	Saint Helena Transhipment Co.	Director	21-3-2002
Tom Crowards*	SHG	Government Economist, Air Access project manager	4-4-2002
Pamela Young	SHG	Director of Tourism	11-4-2002
Lyn Thomas	Saint Helena Development Agency	Managing Director	15-4-2002
Ethel Yon	SHG	Deputy Chief Secretary (Acting Chief Secretary)	15-4-2002
Desmond Wade	SHG	Chief Finance Officer	17-4-2002
Fiona Duncan	ARGOS	Office Manager	23-4-2002
Reginald Yon	Coffee company	Owner	25-4-2002
Michel Martineau*	French Government	Honorary consul on Saint Helena	29-4-2002
Alan Savery*	British Executive Services Overseas	Banking Adviser	29-4-2002
Hensil O'Bey	Cable & Wireless	Managing Director	30-4-2002
Pamela Lawrence	SHG	Chief Education Officer	3-5-2002
Johnny Drummond*	Saint Helena Herald	Editor	7-5-2002
Basil George	Citizenship Commission	Chairman	8-5-2002
Mandy Fowler	Consulate Hotel	Manager	8-5-2002
Susan O'Bey	Prince Andrew School	Headmistress	9-5-2002
Ralph Peters	Radio Saint Helena	Presenter "Primetime" news show	10-5-2002
Tracy Thomas	SHG	Statistical Officer	13-5-2002
(Head Librarian)	Public Library	Head Librarian	15-5-2002
John Salt*	Anglican church	Bishop of Saint Helena	15-5-2002
Elaine Benjamin	Pilling Middle school	Head teacher	16-5-2002
David Hollamby*	Her Majesty's Government	Governor and commander-in-chief of St Helena	24-5-2002
Dougie Paterson*	SHG	Social work manager	27-5-2002
Eric George	Legislative Council	Councillor for Sandy Bay	28-5-2002
Corinda Essex	SHG	Chief Development Officer	29-5-2002

* indicates not Saint Helenian-born

Appendix I.   Saint Helena 2020- posters from P.A.S.

1. Poster by Laura Lawrence

2. Poster by Mario Pisaneschi

3. Poster by Kayleigh Henry, Jeremy Clingham, Sophie Young and Colin Thomas

4. Poster by Kurt Johnson

source for all posters: website Prince Andrew School (www.princeandrew.edu.sh/future2020.html)

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i Authors' photograph

ii Authors' map