

Surveying technical

A visit to the Saint Helena Island airport project

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The St Helena International Airport construction projects represents a historic milestone for one of the most remote islands in the world. Over R3-billion has been allocated for the project which encompasses a 1850 m concrete runway with taxiway and apron; an approximately 8-million m³ rockfill embankment through which a 750 m long reinforced concrete culvert will run; an airport terminal building of 3500 m² and support infrastructure; air traffic control and safety; bulk fuel installation for 6-million litres of diesel and aviation fuel; a 14 km airport access road, and all related logistics.

When making the announcement to colleagues and friends about a visit to Saint Helena, one of the following three responses would normally follow:

- Are you going there to visit Napoleon's tomb?
- Oh, you must be going there to go and see the Anglo Boer war prisoners' grave yard.
- Saint Helena, that's just up the West Coast from Cape Town near Stompneus Bay, right?

The answer to the first two responses is most probably a definite yes for many a tourist, especially South African tourists to the island of Saint Helena. The last comment however is way off the mark – let's see, about 3000 km off the mark.

The island of Saint Helena

Sometimes referred to as the forgotten island, Saint Helena is situated about 3000 km from Cape Town in the South Atlantic Ocean. The nearest port on a major landmass is Walvis Bay in Namibia at 2260 km, and the nearest international airport is Quatro de Fevereiro in Luanda, the capital of Angola.

A little bit closer to Saint Helena is Ascension Island, 1300 km away to the North West. Both of these islands and also Tristan da Cunha, are British territories.

Saint Helena is an island of volcanic origin measuring 122 km². The island is stunning to say the least, alternating between rugged volcanic terrains to lush green forest areas. Deep valleys contrast with very mountainous areas,



Fig. 1: The Royal Mail Ship St. Helena in James Bay.



Fig. 2: Rory Cole setting up the GPS.