

The St Helena cruising adventure will continue, despite ship's decommission

St Helena spokesperson

ABOARD the "RMS", as the Royal Mail Ship St Helena is fondly known, passengers enjoy a bygone era of cruising aboard a ship which is strongly reminiscent of the well-known Union Castle Line ships which were once the main form of travel from SA to the UK. The RMS St Helena is an intimate ship and lasting friendships are often forged during the voyages.

St Helena Island is not only breathtakingly beautiful, but also steeped in history, with links to Napoleon and the Anglo-Boer War, as well as being a natural paradise. The island is nearly crime-free and, in many respects, charmingly old fashioned.

This could change somewhat with the opening of the airport which is being built on the island and is due to be completed in February 2016. Sadly, the beloved RMS will then be decommissioned and the "old lady" in her current state will no longer ply the waters of the South Atlantic, with all its adventure stories.

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If you wish to experience the cruise of a lifetime while you still can, contact Suzanne (passenger manager, Andrew Weir Shipping) in Cape Town on the number in the advertisement or email aws-sa@mweb.co.za. For more information, see www.rms-st-helena.com or www.sthelenatourism.com.

In spite of the impending end of RMS St Helena's life as a cruise ship and greatly speeded up travel to the island, with the introduction of direct flights, other cruise ships will still be free to visit. However, in line with the island's quaint historical unsophistication, there is no breakwater in James Bay – the location of Jamestown – and visiting cruise ships drop anchor in the bay while passengers

are taken to the landing steps in the ship's lifeboats, adding another traditional aspect and a touch of adventure, being assisted ashore by the sailors.

St Helena Tourism representatives go on board each cruise ship to provide a "meet and greet" welcome and information for passengers. In addition, a St Helena Tourism information point is located at the seafront to welcome and provide an information service for visiting cruise ships' passengers. The largest ship to call at St Helena was the Queen Mary II, in 2010.

For any information on visiting cruise ships to St Helena, contact Solomon's Shipping Office, St Helena by emailing shipping.manager@solomons.co.sh.



HISTORICAL: The RMS St Helena approaches Jamestown. Other cruise ships will continue to follow in the tradition.