

PRESS RELEASE

UK single-decker bus embarks on an unusually long route, leaving Portland for Cape Town, via the remote South Atlantic!

When the only working Royal Mail Ship, the RMS St Helena, sails into Portland this week (Thursday 23 March 2006) she will be collecting slightly more than the usual supplies. A brand new single-decker bus will be among the cargo being loaded on board. It is travelling via the remote South Atlantic British dependency of St Helena and is an unusual route for something going to South Africa.

According to Captain Bill Langworthy, General Manager of Andrew Weir Shipping the managers and operators of the ship, this is all part of a normal day's work: "We have been asked to take many items on board over the years. It can be anything from barges, JCBs, cars and buses, and a motorbike that had been driven from Cape Town across Africa to the UK via Egypt - we then moved it back to Namibia via St Helena! All this sits alongside the more routine supplies of cornflakes, baked beans and a whole array of household items, plus quite a range of livestock. We have carried sheep and pigs and frequently passengers' pet cats and dogs. Of course all shipments both in and out being subject to DEFRA regulations."

The island of St Helena is also renowned for its own unique coffee, which is exported to many countries because of its special heritage and flavour that has remained unchanged for over 300 years. A supply is being brought in on the ship and will form part of a major promotional presentation to national travel agents to promote the island of St Helena while the ship is in port.

The trusty Royal Mail ship is able to transport cargo of all shapes and sizes. Bill added: "Increasingly a number of our passengers are taking their own 4 x 4 vehicles and motorcycles from Cape Town to Walvis Bay to explore the Namibian dessert in their own vehicles for a totally different type of holiday."

Andrew Weir Shipping manages the RMS on behalf of St Helena Line Ltd which operates the route from Cape Town and Portland in the UK to St Helena and Ascension Island, via the Namibian coast. For more information visit www.rms-st-helena.com.

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