

Plantation House.

## BACKGROUND

Plantation House was built in 1792 by the East India Company as a country residence for the island's Governors. It is also home to the island's oldest inhabitant (and world's oldest known land vertebrate), Jonathan the Tortoise. Today the house, built on a plantation, retains its charm, which is further enhanced by the beautiful surrounding forest and grounds, through which there is a very popular and easy nature trail.

## PLANTATION HOUSE

The house has 35 rooms, many of them very large, that are connected by striking passages with archways. The main entrance hall is dominated by large paintings of King George V and Queen Mary.

The elegant dining room is the largest room in the house. The impressive table can accommodate up to 22 people for formal dining, and, with the table removed, the room can and has been used for receptions. Plantation House can accommodate up to 300 guests for any reception, which includes the use of the main hallway and a garden marquee.

A striking feature of the dining room is the chandelier, half of which is the original chandelier from Longwood House. The Duke Wellington's journal records that he dined at Plantation House in 1805, when he spent a month on the island on his way back from India.

The Library at Plantation House has been referred to as 'the heart of the house' with iconic bookcases holding over 2,000 volumes. The Library was built by Sir Hudson Lowe around 1816. Lowe was Governor at the time when Napoleon was exiled on the island.



# St Helena Island

Secret of the South Atlantic

## ABOUT ST HELENA

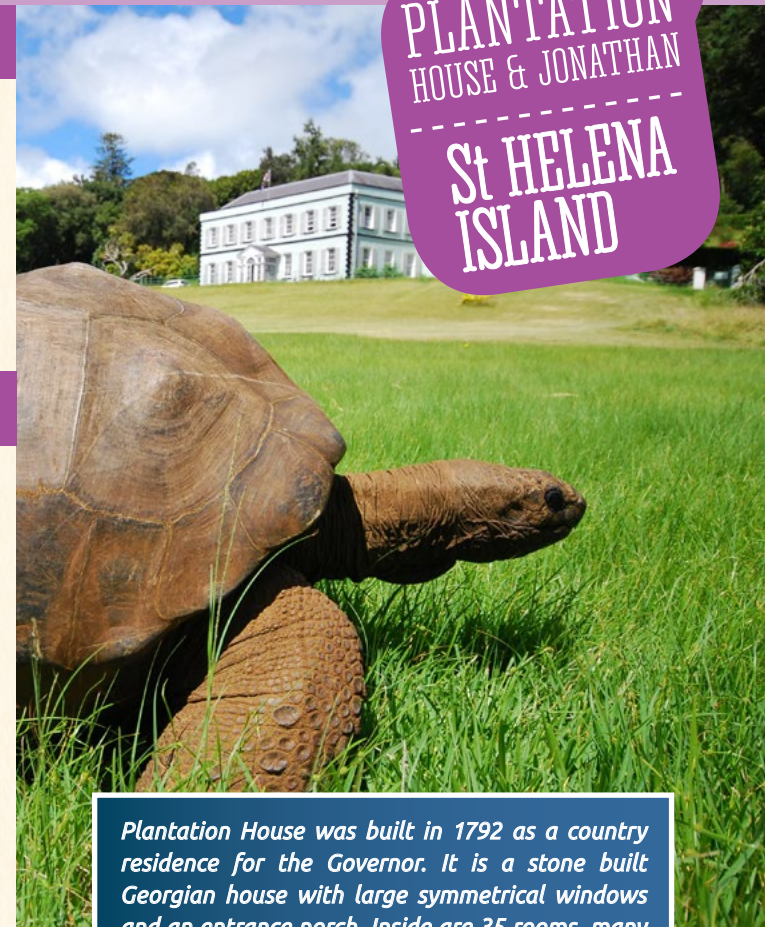
St Helena is a small British Overseas Territory situated in the South Atlantic Ocean. One of the remotest places on Earth, it is also one of the most extraordinary places to visit. Its unique character and unspoilt beauty lies in contrasting and spectacular scenery, a rich cultural heritage and an environment extremely rich in biodiversity. These are just a few of the reasons why this remote jewel is a perfect location for active exploration and discovery.

## THINGS TO DO

- Birding and wildlife
- Diving and marine activities
- Walking and hiking
- Whalesharks, dolphin and whale tours
- Historic legacy and cultural tours
- Napoleon
- Astronomy and photography



PLANTATION  
HOUSE & JONATHAN  
ST HELENA  
ISLAND



*Plantation House was built in 1792 as a country residence for the Governor. It is a stone built Georgian house with large symmetrical windows and an entrance porch. Inside are 35 rooms, many of them large and connected by passages with archways. The grounds are also home to the island's oldest inhabitant, Jonathan the Tortoise.*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

 [visit.sthelena](https://www.facebook.com/visit.sthelena)

 [@sthelenatourism](https://twitter.com/sthelenatourism)

Telephone: +290 22158

Email: [enquiries@tourism.co.sh](mailto:enquiries@tourism.co.sh)

St Helena Tourism, Jamestown

St Helena, STHL 1ZZ, South Atlantic Ocean

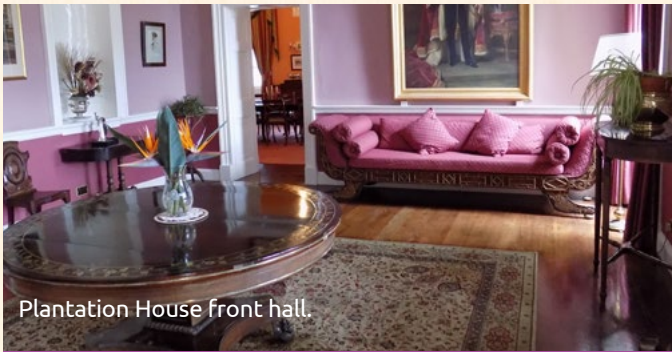
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Plantation House front hall.

## GOVERNORS

The parchment roll of Governors is mounted in the main corridor. From 1659 to 1828 there were thirty one Governors employed by the East India Company, including the first St Helenian born Governor John Goodwin. In 1834, administration of the island was transferred to the Crown and since then thirty four Governors have been employed. Hudson Ralph Janisch was Governor from 1873 until he died in office on March 10th 1884, aged 55. He was the second and last St Helena-born Governor and was instrumental in the development of the first flax industry. The latest Governor for St Helena is Her Excellency Lisa Phillips who was appointed Governor in April 2016. She is St Helena's first female Governor and enjoys hosting regular tea parties as a chance to get to know island residents, listen to their views, and for guests to enjoy the splendour of Plantation House.

## TOUR INFORMATION

Plantation House is open for house tours. The tour takes visitors on a viewing of both the ground and first floor, with a look at Jonathan and his companions through the Tortoise Corridor ending with a complimentary cup of tea or St Helena coffee (guests can also purchase cream scones/cakes and souvenirs). The tour lasts approximately 1 hour and children are welcome, provided they are accompanied by an adult. It is possible to view the tortoises at any time along the Tortoise Corridor, located below Plantation House.

Plantation House Library is also available for visitors to enjoy the large volumes of books available for their reading pleasure. St Helena coffee and tea is available next to the fireplace under the carved marble mantelpiece. For more information on booking a tour or visiting the Library, please contact the Tourist Office.

## PLANTATION HOUSE EVENTS

Plantation House is available with approval from the Governor to host local events, such as exhibitions, musicals, talks and fairs to raise money for local charities.

## JONATHAN

Jonathan is the oldest known land vertebrate in the world and is estimated to be around 185 years or more. Arriving in 1882 as a mature adult of at least 50 years, he was presented as a gift to the Governor. He has seen more than 30 Governors pass through Plantation House.

Jonathan has been identified as a Seychelles Giant Tortoise, *Aldabrachelys gigantean hololissa*. As such he is a solitary example of a handful of Giant Tortoise survivors existing in the world. The Saint Helena five pence coin has Jonathan on its reverse.

During the visit of the Royal Family and King George VI in 1947, much amusement was caused by Jonathan who had to be stirred out of a clump of Pampas grass. The King called for his cine-camera and took photographs of the Queen offering the tortoise a banana.



Royal visit and Jonathan.

## JONATHAN'S FRIENDS

His companions are David and Emma who were brought here in the late 1960's and Fredrika who was presented as a gift from the Honorary French Consul in 1991 after she had lived at Longwood House for 19 years. There was also another tortoise that stayed at Plantation from 1972 named Myrtle, but unfortunately she passed away in 2016. The tortoises graze the lawns, browse low hanging branches, feast on fallen fruits and are hand-fed a variety of vegetables once a week by the Plantation House gardeners.

## VISITOR ATTRACTIONS NEAR PLANTATION HOUSE

Visitor attractions that are located near Plantation House and well worth a visit are St Paul's Cathedral, High Knoll Fort, Prince's Lodge, Prince Andrew School and Knollcombes, where the Boer Cemetery is situated.

## PLANTATION HOUSE NATURE TRAILS

Explore Plantation and follow the trails to find some of the following features: In the woods below the Ladies Gardens are the graves of two slaves. The inscription on one is now illegible but on the other it reads: "Here lieth the body of Margaret wife of Francis Butcher who departed this life November 1777".

Margaret's headstone bears a skull and two arrows and the other a butcher's cleaver crossed by two bars. Whilst stories are told about the death of Margaret, and the position of the graves, it seems likely that Margaret's husband was a butcher and the place is known as the Butcher's Grave.

There was once a Ladies Bath and the Ladies Garden beyond the lawn on the west side. Lady Ross (wife of Sir Patrick Ross, 1846-51) who was a fine botanist, described the Ladies Garden as being crescent shaped, beautifully kept and full of rare plants and trees. No trace of this garden now remains.



Plantation House tour.