



# Inspire Inclusion

March is Women's History Month and the 8<sup>th</sup> of March is International Women's Day.

The theme for International Women's Day 2024 is **"Inspire Inclusion"**. This campaign theme emphasizes the importance of understanding and valuing women's inclusion in all aspects of life, which ultimately contributes to creating a better world. When women themselves feel inspired to be included, it fosters a sense of belonging, relevance, and empowerment.

Here are some remarkable women who have made a significant impact on history and society and fostered inclusion here on St Helena:

## **CLARA GEORGE**

**A formerly enslaved woman who founded a successful school.**

Clara was born into slavery around 1784 her father was Jacob, one of the enslaved owned by Mr Wrangham. We don't know when she gained her freedom, but she was able to marry a formerly enslaved man, Charles George, and the St. James' Church marriage register records her as being 'free'.

Clara began teaching by educating her own children, though how she became educated herself is unknown as many slaves were illiterate. In 1816 she started teaching her neighbours' children and this soon developed into an independent school in Jamestown accepting the children of both slaves and free and both boys and girls.

Lessons included basic literacy and numeracy but also useful handicrafts like needlework and lace making; Clara is the first recorded teacher of lace making on St Helena.



## **DR. JAMES BARRY**

Dr Barry was St Helena's Medical Officer from 1837-1838 but all that time kept a great secret...

Dr Barry arrived at St Helena on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1836 as Principal Medical Officer and established the island's first organised vaccination programme against disease.

The intrepid doctor had no concerns about challenging the establishment in many areas, particularly where medical care was deficient or not available fairly to soldiers and civilians on the same basis.

*So why does Dr Barry qualify for a mention in an article about women?*

Because Dr Barry was not a man but a woman. Born Margaret Ann Bulkley, 'Dr Barry' assumed the appearance of a man because women were not, at that time, allowed to practice medicine. Dr Barry is included here for both advancing fairness and equality in medicine and for practical support in the advancement of Women's Rights.

These women, among many others, have left lasting legacies and continue to inspire generations. Their courage, creativity, and determination have shaped our world in profound ways.

**Let's collectively work towards a more inclusive world for women by actively promoting their participation and recognizing their diverse contributions in all fields of life.**