



Compiled by JANINE DE VILLIERS

Promotions and Publications

The festive season is upon us! Last minute shopping in bustling shopping malls, dodging nervous out-of-town drivers in the traffic and attempting to entertain your bored offspring will surely not provide you with inspiration for an eye-catching video display in your library. Bear in mind that your patrons who are suffering a similar fate or even worse - a means of escape is what they need...and you, the eternally ready and alert librarian, are able to provide it.

Let them travel to long white sandy beaches with waving palm trees and interesting rhythms of local music to calm their troubled minds. For the more adventurous there are isolated spots with wildlife and others with spectacular volcanic eruptions that will capture their imaginations.

The Central Film and Video Collection of the Library Service boasts an interesting variety of videos on faraway islands, be it an isolated windswept island or a popular tourist destination, your patrons will surely appreciate an escape from the Christmas countdown.

Africa in focus la Reunion: mountain in the sea / director, Al J Venter.

A programme in a series of fourteen, which examines the social, political and economic development of a number of African countries. The island of Reunion lies in the Indian Ocean, about 640 kilometres east of Madagascar and 160 kilometres southwest of Mauritius. Though situated some 11 000 kilometres from Europe, politically it is part of mainland France and the islanders send deputies and senators to the French legislature. The French took control of the island in 1638 and imported African slaves to work on the plantations, but today the population is of mixed African, Asian and European descent. Volcanic in origin, much of the island is inaccessible, but sugar cane is grown on virtually all cultivable land

and still forms the mainstay of the economy. This programme visits Reunion, touring the colonial capital of Saint-Denis and flying over the mountainous areas. It shows something of the various cultures represented and illustrates its appeal as a tourist attraction.

Africa in focus Comoros: islands of the moon / director, Al J Venter.

A programme in a series of fourteen, which examines the social, political and economic development of a number of African countries. The Comoro archipelago, a volcanic group of islands, lies at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel, about half-way between Madagascar and the south-east African mainland. There are four main islands, namely Grande Comore, Moheli, Anjouan and Mayotte. When, in 1975, the first three opted for independence to form the Federal and Islamic Republic of the Comoros, Mayotte voted to remain under French administration. The people are of diverse origins and the predominant cultural influence is Arab, with a leavening of French. Though the country is poor and tourist facilities are primitive, an increasing number of people are discovering the beauty of the islands. The programme attempts to convey this and shows something of the daily life of the approximately 469 000 inhabitants.

[Africa in focus] South Africa's 'red isle' neighbour / director, Al J Venter.

Starting with archival footage of the South African-led, Allied invasion of the island during World War II, this video visits Madagascar, situated off the south-east coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. The estimated population of some 10 million is of mixed ethnic origin and has retained a number of unusual customs and traditions, not the least of which is an elaborate burial ceremony, with which the programme ends. It shows something of the beauty of the island, including the capital city of Antananarivo, and talks about some of the social problems facing the inhabitants. It

explains that although it has a great tourist potential, up to that time it had been the government's policy to restrict the entry of foreigners.

Saint Helena: South Atlantic Ocean / producers, Charles and Julia Frater.

Saint Helena, a small volcanic island in the middle of the South Atlantic, is one of the most isolated inhabited places in the world. For some two hundred years its position, squarely in the path of the south east trade winds, made it an important outpost of first the Dutch and then the British empire, but today it is best remembered as the site of Napoleon's last exile. Though now bypassed by shipping, it remains an interesting place and this programme presents a general introduction to the island and its inhabitants. It tells of its history since its discovery in 1502 by the Portuguese navigator Joao da Nova Castella and provides a very comprehensive overview of its geographic features.

(Not in the Central Collection but available in Library Service stock.)

Tristan da Cunha: no place like home - a South Atlantic journey with John Heminway / producer, Jane Wellesley, director, Mark Anderson.

Situated in the Atlantic Ocean about midway between South Africa and South America, Tristan da Cunha is generally regarded as one of the most isolated inhabited places in the world. Discovered in 1506 by a Portuguese admiral, Tristao da Cunha, the island group was annexed by the United Kingdom in 1816 and since 1938 it has been a dependency of the British colony of St Helena. This programme accompanies travel writer John Heminway on a sea journey that takes him to Tristan and nearby Nightingale via St Helena. As he tries to get to know the islanders, he records his impressions and gains an insight into the life of the approximately 300 people who make up the island's community. The film also includes archival footage of the volcanic eruption of October 1961, which resulted in the evacuation of the entire population to Great Britain, from which the main body returned in November 1963.

After travelling to these exotic destinations via their television screens your patrons might feel quite refreshed...and they would not even have had to spend once cent of their hard-earned end of the year bonus cheque to get there.

Note: Reviews by Freddy Ogterop, Film/Video/DVD Selector.

