

# CONGRATULATIONS



LIEUTENANT COLONEL

*Vincent Bongioanni*

ON YOUR  
RECENT  
PROMOTION

**PETER LÜRSSEN DONATES £2 MILLION  
TOWARDS ENDOWMENT  
FUND TO CONSERVE  
ASCENSION'S WATERS**



## EXCITING MYSTERY VISITOR

**INSIDE THIS WEEK:** Peter Lurssen's £2 million Endowment Fund to conserve Ascension's Waters/New Head of Administrator's Office and more...



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**Deadline: 6:00 pm Mondays**

The Islander post-box is situated on the down-  
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Please submit copy on disk/disc

or via e-mail.

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**Next Edition's Editors: Pam and Helen**

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## *Editor's Note*

Hello Readers,

I am sure that you will all join me in extending huge congratulations to Lt Col Vinnie Bongioanni on his promotion. We are especially delighted that this promotion came during his tour here on Ascension Island.

A warm welcome to Xander Hallewell, Carolyn Nutkins and a few others who have recently joined us in the middle of the South Atlantic. We hope that you will enjoy your experience on Ascension!

One of the guarantees of living on Ascension is that at some stage we must all leave. On the flight on the weekend we will bid a sad but fond farewell to Gilbert "Boot" and Prudie Peters. I am so sorry that I didn't get the chance to sit and prepare a little article with them before they leave. I am sure that Gilbert would have had a lot of good and funny memories to share. The one thing I have always loved and admired about Boot and Gilbert is their ability to still make each other laugh after all the years that they have been together. A truly lovely couple who will be missed by everyone who knows them. We wish you both the very best for the future.

As I write this week's editorial, the rain is pouring down outside. Less than a few hours of rainfall and already there are huge puddles on the roadsides as well as some areas of red ash washout making it rather dangerous for both motorists and pedestrians. Motorists should be mindful of their speed as we will also start to see donkeys and sheep drinking from the road sides. February has always been the main month for flooding here on Ascension, lets hope that we don't have to start pulling out the sand bags and the weather remains good for the SA Airlink flight on the weekend.

There appears to be something a little weird and mystifying going on in Two Boats Village at the moment. Some of the residents have reported strange sounds at night....but could it really be a bat! Whilst not impossible, it is certainly highly unlikely.... surely?! I remain as unconvinced as there being a Monkat on St Helena! Many had professed to have seen or heard it but there was never any photographic evidence produced. The Islander would love to receive any footage/pics from anyone who manages to capture a shot of the Two Boats visitor. Please report any sightings/sounds to the Conservation Department. Those late night stragglers from Two Boats Club who have had a few shots or beers need not bother.... we still don't believe those little green men stories...

Until next time, have a great week.

Kitty and Sara

## The Met Office Weather Report

### Statistics for the week ending Monday 3 February 2020

	Max (Celsius)	Min (Celsius)	Rainfall (mm)
<b>AIRHEAD</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>TRAVELLERS</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>RESIDENCY</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>GEORGETOWN</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>ST. HELENA</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>6.0</b>
<b>FALKLANDS</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>11.6</b>
<b>UK (Brize Norton)</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>12.0</b>

### Tide Times & Georgetown Pierhead/English Bay Swell Outlook

For more detailed information, including swimming and swell warnings, please contact the Met Office on Ext: 3317

Day	Swell	High Tide	Low Tide	Sun Rise Set
Wednesday 05 Feb	0.8 - 1.0 M	02:51 15:37	09:13 21:47	06:58 19:24
Thursday 06 Feb	0.8 - 1.0 M	03:50 16:25	10:04 22:39	06:59 19:24
Friday 07 Feb	0.8 - 1.0 M	04:41 17:09	10:49 23:24	06:59 19:23
Saturday 08 Feb	0.8 - 1.0 M	05:27 17:51	11:32	06:59 19:23
Sunday 09 Feb	0.8 - 1.0 M	06:10 18:33	00:08 12:13	06:58 19:23
Monday 10 Feb	0.8 - 1.0 M	06:53 19:14	00:51 12:55	07:00 19:23
Tuesday 11 Feb	0.8 - 1.0 M	07:37 19:57	01:35 13:37	07:00 19:23





## New Head of Administrator's Office Arrives

Hi, I'm Xander Halliwell, (pronounced Zander.) I arrived on 30 January to fill the Head of Administrator's Office role, a Foreign & Commonwealth Office position working within the AIG for the next 2 or 3 years.

This is my first posting on Ascension, and I have arrived into a long-required but fairly new position. I'm looking forward to the new adventures the post will bring and adapting to and becoming a part of your unique community.



With the exception of a short break in the UK over Christmas, I've come to Ascension from the British Embassy in Washington DC where I worked in Defence Policy. I arranged visits of Senior and VIP Brits to their US counterparts and ensured they were briefed and fully informed on the key issues to be discussed – an interesting time and place to watch history unfold, and to somewhat stage manage some of its main actors!

When I originally left my family's dairy farm in Devon for college in Exeter, and then moved 'away' to Bristol for University, my very rural community were worried that the big cities were so far away. Having now challenged them to imagine the world as far as London, then Washington DC, I'm delighted to extend their horizons even farther afield with this move. On joining the UK government and working in London I helped to establish the Office of Counter Extremism and I business managed the MOD's Ministerial and Senior Military offices. My family are comforted that I'm 'returning' to a less cosmopolitan way of living for a few years and so am I.

Being a Devon boy, I love the outdoors. I can't wait to shake off the comfortable USA lifestyle I've enjoyed for something a bit more active, so I'll be tackling the many letterbox walks. My husband Adam, also a UK Civil Servant, remains in the UK for now, with Tim our Beagle to keep him company. So being without my own pup, if any other dog owners need a day/night off, I'd be happy to dog-sit for you!

I'm thrilled to be here working and living alongside the many different communities on Ascension, and to have an opportunity to get stuck in to contributing with you to the tremendous efforts to facilitate Ascension's bright future.

Office of the Administrator  
03 February 2020



## Coronavirus

Many if not all of you will be aware of the existence of a new and previously unknown strain of cold virus called „Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCov)“ which first appeared in China in December 2019. Although “new”, this virus is part of a large family of similar viruses which has been present in the human population for thousands of years. These viruses cause typically mild symptoms of “cold” such as a runny nose, sore throat, cough and fever.

This particular strain is more virulent at the moment, so that it can be more severe for some persons and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties. More rarely (as with most of these viruses, especially Influenza), the disease can be fatal. Older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as, diabetes and heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with this virus.

Experts currently predict that this strain of Coronavirus will spread from China to most other populations, but at the moment relatively little is known about its severity. It may be that the virus behaves much like Influenza, and measures used in treating Influenza will apply. Whilst health authorities across the world are taking vigorous steps to limit or slow the rate of its spread, it is not going to be possible to completely contain this new strain.

Currently Ascension has a very low risk of exposure as most, if not all, cases are related to contact with travellers from, or travel to, China. Ascension’s Senior Medical Officer Dr Bill Hardy and his team are collaborating with colleagues on St Helena and Public Health England and are this week assessing what further measures should be taken to minimise the risk of ill travellers bringing the Coronavirus to the island in the future.

For those wishing to know what personal steps should be taken in the event that cases are seen here in the future, the following general principles are recommended:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. This will kill the virus if it is on your hands.
- Maintain social distancing. Try to keep at least one metre (three feet) distance between yourself and other people, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever. This will decrease the risk of inhaling droplets of the germ.

- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Hands touch many surfaces which can be contaminated with the virus. If you touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your contaminated hands, you can transfer the virus from the surface to yourself.

- If you have mild respiratory symptoms, carefully practice basic respiratory hygiene, covering your coughs and washing hands immediately afterwards, and stay home until you are recovered, if possible.

- Many will have seen footage and photos of people wearing surgical face masks. These masks are not themselves more effective in preventing the spread of the virus than the measures mentioned above.

Finally, please be assured that the Hospital medical team, together with AIG and our

partners in the RAF and USAF, are currently planning to ensure that the island is prepared to effectively manage this illness if it arrives on Ascension. Dr Hardy is happy to answer any queries you might have and will keep us informed as the situation develops.

The UK government website, at <http://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novelcoronavirus-information-for-the-public>, is a useful source of further information on the virus and its symptoms should you wish to learn more.

Office of the Administrator  
04 February 2020

# SA AIRLINK FLIGHT—SATURDAY, 08<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY AND SUNDAY, 09<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020

The SA Airlink flight is expected to arrive at Ascension Island at approximately **1620 hrs** on Saturday, 08 February and is due to depart at 1115 hrs on Sunday, 09 February 2020.

**Check in times for those passengers departing on Sunday, 09 February is at 0830 hrs. This time must be strictly adhered to.** Outgoing passengers, once checked-in, will be required to remain in the departure area until called forward to board the aircraft.

**All excess baggage and airfreight** for this flight should be booked with the travel office by no later than 1200 hrs on Friday, 07 February. Anyone wishing to weigh their baggage can pop by the shipping office no later than 1200 hrs on **Friday, 07 February**.

Passengers in transit to Johannesburg and who are staying on St Helena for a holiday on their **return leg to Ascension Island**, may, with the assistance of St Helena Airport Security clear **one small 8kg cabin bag at St Helena Airport**, to be collected on their return to St Helena and **the bag and those same contents to be taken out of St Helena on their return flight to Ascension Island**.

This procedure is being trialled as a gesture of goodwill on behalf of St Helena Airport and St Helena Customs, to try and assist transit passengers en-route from Ascension Island to South Africa and who are in possession of a **return ticket and intending to holiday in St Helena on their return to Ascension**. Passengers are advised that if St Helena Customs find items other than **used clothes, footwear and personal effects in these cabin bags then the courtesy will be withdrawn**.

**Passengers transiting directly to Johannesburg but returning to St Helena for a holiday who wish to take advance of this opportunity, must contact the Travel Office on 66244/66500 by no later than 12 noon on Thursday, 6 February to enable St Helena Customs and St Helena Airport to be notified. St Helena Customs will not accept any bags that arrives in St Helena without prior notice.**

All updates will be placed on our flight line – 66300 (allow 7 rings)

## **BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES:**

**For passengers travelling to/from St Helena *only*:**

Passengers are permitted a maximum of **30 kgs hold baggage for PCA passengers (entitled)** plus **one item of cabin baggage** (at a maximum weight of 8kgs) and a small laptop bag or purse **or, 20 kgs hold baggage for non PCA passengers (non-entitled)**, plus **one item of cabin baggage (at a maximum weight of 8kgs) and a small laptop bag or purse**. Please note that these baggage allowances are for the flight between Ascension & St Helena only.

**Excess baggage or airfreight for the flights from St Helena Island to Ascension Island or from St Helena to Johannesburg should be booked with the Travel Office on St Helena as follows: shipping-travelmanager@solomons.co.sh; or calling 00 290 22523 by no later than 1200 hrs on the Friday before the flight.**

**Passengers are reminded that liquids exceeding 100 mls are NOT permitted in their hand baggage. Any liquids exceeding 100 mls found in hand baggage will be confiscated and destroyed. Any liquids 100 mls and over should be placed in hold baggage.**

Appropriate footwear must be worn for travelling. Trainers, closed in shoes, sandals (fastened at the ankle or heel) and heels not exceeding 1 inch are all considered appropriate footwear. Flip-flop type shoes are not permitted.

#### **OTHER INFORMATION:**

Please note that the Ascension Island Government reserves the right to change dates of travel without notice even after payment has been received.

The Ascension Island Government will not be held responsible for any delays or cancellations to flights, nor will it be held responsible should such delays or cancellations mean that you miss a connecting flight. The Ascension Island Government bear no responsibility for any belongings or valuables that are lost or stolen during travel.

An **unabridged birth certificate** for all children under the age of 18 years **must** be produced to the South African immigration authorities on arrival there. **You will be refused entry into the country without this document. If two parents are listed on the child's birth certificate but is only travelling with one parent, you will require an affidavit from the parent not travelling with the child. You will be refused entry without this document. You are strongly advised to check immigration procedures for entering South Africa before you travel.**

#### **TRANSITING ST HELENA:**

It is recommended that passengers transiting through St Helena on their way to/from Ascension Island have with them approximately £200, this is in case of a flight delay on St Helena and a subsequent enforced overnight stay. Credit card facilities are extremely limited, as are banking facilities – there are no cash machines (ATMs) on the island.





*I ain't afraid of no net...*

## Ghost Busting to Protect Our Marine Life

In October 2019 a large net was reported by a concerned member of the public to the AIG Conservation and Fisheries Directorate. This had washed up in a small cove up the coast from North East Bay. This is an example of **ghost gear**, which is the term for lost or discarded fishing gear in our oceans. Once in the sea, fishing gear can persist for



years, wastefully killing fish and other marine life. Often made of plastic, 640,000 tonnes of ghost gear enter the ocean every year! It makes up 10% of all plastic pollution in our oceans worldwide but forms an even higher proportion of the plastic floating at the surface. This is where it is the biggest threat to entangle marine life like whales, dolphins, turtles and sharks. It can wreck habitats while competing with fishermen for their catch and can also be a hazard for ship navigation.

Fortunately, this net did not have any wildlife entangled in it - just a fine haul of rocks. The net itself was also very clean of algae and not degraded by sun and weather, which could indicate that it had not been in the ocean for very long. Holes that had been patched up with different rope would indicate that it had been used, though we cannot know whether it was lost or deliberately discarded, or from how far it has travelled.

Throughout many visits, AIG staff brought in the net, with the invaluable help of the RAF and local volunteers.

In total, the net weighed over half a ton –



**10% of all ocean plastic  
pollution is ghost gear**

**592kg** to be exact! First, there was the strenuous task of dragging it out of the surf and as far up the cove as possible to minimise the risk of it washing back out to sea. Then it had to be untwisted and detangled and unloaded of rocks. Before finally cutting the net into manageable sized pieces that were laboriously carried back along the coast.

AIG would like to thank everyone who came out to help shift and carry net and Peter Williams and his waste management team who are working to dispose of it.

When faced with the sheer magnitude of the issues that threaten our oceans, it can be overwhelming to see depressingly huge numbers. 592kg is a lot, but it may seem like a drop in the 12 million tonnes of plastic that enters our oceans every year. We must not become apathetic in response, or

let that dishearten us. Think about how many turtles, dolphins, and other marine life were saved by removing this single net. In 2018 a single ghost net killed 300 turtles off the coast of Mexico. Every action can have an impact; picking up one piece of litter can make a difference, especially when we work together.

*“No matter what you do it will never amount to anything but a single drop in a limitless ocean..*

*- What is an ocean but a multitude of drops?”*

*David Mitchell, Cloud Atlas*



Using the net, we created this aerial image of a whale and calf - hopefully all our marine life is a little bit safer now that this threat has been removed from our shore.

If you are interested in more information about ghost gear, consider reading the 2019 Greenpeace report on ghost fishing available free online <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/publication/25438/ghost-gear/>

If you have any questions please contact the AIG Conservation and Fisheries Directorate on 66359 or email us at [conservationenquiries@ascension.gov.ac](mailto:conservationenquiries@ascension.gov.ac)



# *Saving life in the ocean*

Peter Lürssen's pledge to conserve Ascension Island's waters...



*SuperyachtNews* spoke to Clare Brook, CEO of the Blue Marine Foundation, an organisation that focuses on conserving the world's oceans, about the support it has received over the years from Peter Lürssen.

Lürssen has been a key donor for the foundation for several years and recently has, in collaboration with Blue Marine Foundation, invested in a project to protect a huge area of British territories water.

Operating from a single room in Somerset House, Blue Marine Foundation has grown from a team of six people, to 16 in its London office and 14 worldwide.

"Peter's support has been completely invaluable," says Brook. "In the past few years he has helped fund our core costs. Often in NGOs, people give money for specific projects but no one actually pays for you to keep the lights on."

"He has also supported our marketing and communications, without which we would have been unable to produce our end of year review," she continues.

Most recently, Lürssen has agreed to donate £2 million towards an endowment fund to protect Ascension Island. Located in the South Atlantic Ocean, the British overseas territory measures only 10km across and boasts a population of just 700 people. “What is most interesting however is the 441,000 square kilometres of surrounding ocean that belongs to Ascension, which is a part of Britain’s ocean estate. To put that size into context, it is an area bigger than Germany”, adds Brook.

“The area is home to an unusual amount of biodiversity – thanks to the undersea volcano, the bed is extremely nutrient rich and therefore attracts huge sharks, swordfish and sailfish. It is also the second largest nesting sight for green turtles in the Atlantic.”



However, the level of biodiversity also makes the area vulnerable. “The large amount of tuna attracts a lot of fishing vessels using huge lines with thousands of baited hooks to catch as many as possible, but also lots of other creatures and rare species in the meantime. The by-catch list read like an episode of *Blue Planet!*”

The Blue Marine Foundation persuaded the British government to close half of Ascension’s waters to long line fishing vessels but the other half was still left open. “Local islanders wanted to see 100% of their waters protected but they couldn’t afford to give up the income from the sale of their fishing licences to Taiwanese and Japanese vessels that pay to fish in those waters.”

“While a licence would typically cost around £20,000 for an entire fishing season, this is only a singular stream of income for the Ascension Island’s government, but takes away millions of pounds’ worth of fish. This is why it was decided an endowment fund was a better option to protect the surrounding waters without penalising the islanders.

**“Peter’s support has been completely invaluable”**

“We calculated an endowment fund of £2million with a 5% yield, giving the islanders around £100,000 a year. Additionally we managed to ensure that the British

government pays for the monitoring and enforcement of this area – there is currently a satellite and a patrol vessel to ensure no ships enter the area.”

The protection of 100% of Ascension Island’s waters takes the total amount of British waters protected to 32%. “Protection of 30% of the ocean is the new gold standard, this happening in the Ascension Islands and is very much down to Peter Lürssen.”

Brook agrees that sustainable efforts such as this need to come from the top down. “You need governments and you need business,” she says. “We decided to inform the British government about Peter’s offer of £2million. At a time when many nations are becoming more insular, the story of a German businessman willing to personally protect a British overseas territory sets such a brilliant precedent and gives the locals of Ascension such a wonderful sense of significance. Sustainability has to work for people as well as nature.”

Lürssen and the Blue Marine Foundation are currently in the process of setting up a separate charitable trust in the UK for the endowment fund, which should be ready by the end of the year.

When faced with a barrage of media rhetoric on tense political discourse, a story that outlines a gesture of extreme generosity from one individual towards a nation that isn’t his own is refreshing to hear. Peter Lürssen’s gesture is a shining example of how one influential individual can make a significant difference and should hopefully provide inspiration to other members of the superyacht industry to follow suit.



Peter Lürssen



By Georgie Anstey, 24 Jan 2020

The Islander would like to say a huge thank you to Clare Brook, CEO of Blue Marine Foundation and also to Georgie Anstey for allowing us to reprint this article.





## **New Lay Advocate Appointed**

On 21 January 2020 the Public Solicitor, with approval of the Governor, appointed Siobhan Stewart as a Lay Advocate for Ascension. Siobhan Stewart joins Hilary Price and Kevin Hudson as appointed Ascension Island Lay Advocates.



In recognition that individuals have a right to legal assistance in times of need, and in consideration of Ascension's specific circumstances, the Lay Advocates Ordinance 2007 provides for the appointment of Lay Advocates.

Under the supervision of the Public Solicitor's office the advocates provide advice and support to people on Ascension in legal matters, both civil and criminal. As such Lay Advocates are trained and assisted by the Public Solicitor's office in the execution of their duties, and are entirely independent of AIG.

For those who would like to understand more about the work of the Lay Advocates, or to discuss a matter of concern with them, please contact the Lay Advocates directly by telephone through the below details:

Kevin Hudson 64612

Hilary Price 64641

Siobhan Stewart 64682

Office of the Administrator  
23 January 2020



## ASCENSION ISLAND GOVERNMENT

### Hydroponics Manager

(Two month short-term cover contract – between March to May 2020)

The Ascension Island Government (AIG) is looking for an experienced individual to provide cover to the existing Hydroponics Manager for a two month period beginning in March 2020. The successful candidate will be responsible for overseeing crop production at our small-scale hydroponics farm site. This is an important role for both AIG and the island, as the site provides the only supply of fresh produce between supply ships.

The Hydroponics Manager is therefore responsible for ensuring the regular supply of consistently high quality vine and leafy green variety crops. You will also be responsible for managing the relationships with local retailers. You will need to be practical and able to deal with day-to-day maintenance of the facility as well as manage the supplies and equipment to keep the site operational. You will be working with an experienced youth trainee to maintain current output levels of around 175kg of vine crops and 150 bags of leafy greens per month.

We are offering a short-term two month contract with a benefit package including a salary of £13,000 and:

- Food allowance of £3,089 pro rata
- Return journey to the country of recruitment/residence
- Rent free housing, with electricity and water allowances
- Free primary medical and dental care

To be successful you will be experienced growing a range of crops for commercial sale and familiar with food safety and hygiene standards. You will be sufficiently experienced with identifying and overcoming issues related to pests and disease, and familiar maintaining profit and loss accounts. This is a physical role and you will need to be fit and like outdoor work in all weather conditions.

This is a single status role. As such you will not be able to bring family to live with you, although they may be able to visit on a tourist visa.

To find out more about the role, or for an informal discussion, please contact:

Operations Manager, Siobhan Stewart, [siobhan.stewart@ascension.gov.ac](mailto:siobhan.stewart@ascension.gov.ac), or  
Assistant Director of Human Resources, Carolyn Nutkins, [Carolyn.nutkins@ascension.gov.ac](mailto:Carolyn.nutkins@ascension.gov.ac)

To apply visit: <https://www.ascension.gov.ac/lifestyle-and-employment/vacancies>

Closing date: **Wednesday 19 February, 12midday**

Interviews: **TBC, between 20 and 24 February via Skype**

**Please note that because of flight arrangements, the successful candidate would be required to arrive on Ascension on Saturday 14 March and depart on Sunday 10 May.**

# DEW POND CHALLENGE

## 23 FEBRUARY 2020

For those who read the article in last week's Islander, this is the second article. For those who are seeing this event for the first time, you've already missed a week's training so have some work to do!!

By now, you should have moved yourself forward for a mile and should rightly feel very pleased with yourself. As I said last week, this training programme is for beginners and your New Year resolutions may have included getting fitter or setting yourself a challenge; this is the opportunity you've been waiting on! This week's challenge is to move yourself in a forward direction for 2 miles to build on the mile you've already completed. This might seem daunting but it is necessary if you want your Dew Pond Challenge to be trouble free. Try to include a hill or two in your route (for obvious reasons) and the best way to do this is to measure a mile from a set point using your car milometer and just run/walk to that point and return. It doesn't really matter if you run all the way, walk all the way or a combination of both but as long as by the end of the week you have completed the distance and raised your heart rate.

It is important to mention hydration here. If you haven't run a distance before or exercised to this level, you won't have much idea of your hydration needs which is why training is so useful for your body. You will see many adverts promoting electrolyte replacement fluids, energy drinks and powerburst potions all of which claim they will enhance your performance – what rubbish! A glass of water with a small pinch of salt and some sugar stirred in is exactly the same thing although it won't have a brightly coloured bottle or a million pounds of advertising behind it to convince you otherwise. Real ale enthusiasts can sup from the nearest armpit. Plain water is best and unless you are performing at an elite level, isotonic or energy drinks are unnecessary. How often do you see elite runners in a 10k event in international games drinking anything on the track? This is why training and testing your body is so important.

We are moving quickly towards the big day – nothing to worry about! It will all be about taking part and doing your best on the day. Next week will include some dos and don'ts on the day to help you prepare more and, as you might expect, encouragement to cover 3 miles – nearly half way up the hill! Good luck with your training, see you next week.....

# Dew Pond Challenge

Sunday 23 Feb 2020

0730 - walkers' start [Turtle Ponds]

0815 - runners' start [Turtle Ponds]

0900 - children's start [Two Boats]

£10 entry

covers: water/snacks, subsidized brunch  
at Two Boats Club and finisher's medal

## *Merchandise available*

- *T-shirts, microfibre towels, gym towels, hoodies, leggings etc*
- *Any size / colour but including the Dew Pond Challenge logo*

*[coming soon - thank you to Two Boats School for hosting our competition]*

Register in advance or obtain info  
on merchandise eg costs, colours

[jane.disley@ascension.gov.ac](mailto:jane.disley@ascension.gov.ac)



### ***So long & thanks for all the Rocks!***

Bridie & Becca here, the two remaining (until Sunday L) volcanologists. As our time is coming to an end we wanted to thank the MANY people who have helped us out these past weeks.

We arrived in December, just in time for the Christmas Eve parade (we had Christmas at sea in our heads for weeks!) - right from the start everyone on Island made us all feel really welcome.

We have been busily making notes on all the weird & wonderful rocks that the Island has kindly put on display for us & have collected almost enough samples to raise the Island by a couple of metres (you'll thank us when the climate emergency raises global sea levels!). Seven weeks in the field including 4 weeks of trekking down to letterbox & back is pretty hard work, but it would undoubtedly have been 100 x harder without the help of some very enthusiastic, helpful & generally awesome people.

The wider Island community has been super friendly & helpful but there are a few special mentions we **have** to make;

The team at Conservation: **Dee** - you're a logistical angel, without you we wouldn't be on Ascension!

**Mountain Matt** – without your unwavering willingness to read rambling notes day & night, who would know that we made it back safe from Letterbox??? **Sophie & Laura** – you saved our legs, & we can never repay you...ever. **Will** (aka Sunday Roast) our honorary volcanologist – you put up with our Sunday wining & made an excellent field assistant. Other special mentions to **Vicky, Lucie, James, New Matt, Dan** for your excellent company over games night etc.

**Al – Hash king!** So many reasons to thank you, not least for feeding us haggis & giving us a Burns night we will never forget! See you on the runway! (sobs...loudly).

**Sunday's Volunteer Army:** Times were tough & you dug us out of a tight spot (pun intended). Without you Becca would only have half a PhD (Look for your names in her thesis!) **Rob, Al, Duncan, Will, Hugh, Bex, Lucie, James.** Extra thanks to **Hugh** for his excellent work in NE Bay – you are a digging machine!

Those who fed us: **Rick, Anne, Lucie, Vinnie, Vicky** (awesome Brownies), **James.** Food is definitely the way to our hearts!

Everyone at Two Boats School: You made us feel so welcome, asked **GREAT** volcano questions & we **LOVE** our thankyou card!

**Steve, Kitty & everyone at AIG** – Thanks for making our trip possible, the warm welcome & helping us out at every turn.

**Syrena @ JAMS** – the air con was a life-saver, sorry if we left the room smelly!

There are many more people we could thank but we are running out of space – if we've spoken to you / waved at you / you've stood close of us after a day in the field without cringing at the smell. Then thank you – Our time here has been amazing!

Volcano Love until next time (we hope!),

Bridie & Becca





## **Discovering the volcanic past of Ascension Island**

Since 2014 a group of volcanologists from the UK have been researching Ascension Island's volcanic past to understand: why the volcano is here, how magma has continued to drive volcanic activity, the type and size of volcanic eruptions, and the volcanic hazards these eruptions produced. Rich and Charlotte have been on island since the 21<sup>st</sup>

December along with two PhD students, Becca and Bridie, to continue our work and take the next steps toward investigating the magma beneath the volcano.

Over the last 5 years we have discovered that Ascension Island has had a tremendous range of styles of volcanic activity which is fairly unique given the small size of the island. Whilst the submarine extent of the volcano is much larger than the island suggests, we know very little about the volcano on the sea floor. On land we have discovered that there have been three eruptions within historic times, mainly associated with activity around Sisters Peak and the youngest two eruptions were around 500 years ago. Since then there has been very little sign of activity on the island.

In general there are various signals that may indicate an increase in activity before an eruption, including fumaroles or steam vent activity, small earthquakes, and ground swelling. To investigate background levels of activity we have deployed equipment. Five mini-seismometers called Raspberry Shakes have been installed around the island to detect small earthquakes which are too small to be felt normally but may increase in number and size before an eruption. Monitoring to establish background levels of activity is needed to identify change. These mini-seismometers are the first steps toward identifying this background level of activity and will provide an indication of activity to inform potential full-scale volcano monitoring stations in the future.

On this visit we have been working on Letterbox to look at the volcanic deposits erupted here and the lava flows produced by that eruption. We have dated some of these deposits and it looks like Letterbox last erupted around 28,000 years ago and is much older than the dark glassy lava initially suggests. Becca has just started her PhD

erupted around 28,000 years ago and is much older than the dark glassy lava initially suggests. Becca has just started her PhD and will be researching the details of the Letterbox and Devil's Inkipot eruptions. She has mapped the 16 craters active during this period of activity and is disentangling the air fall deposits and lava flows that were produced.

We have also been collecting rocks from all over the island and a new geological map of the island will be published in March this year. If you are interested in the work then please have a look at our website [www.ascension-island-volcanology.com](http://www.ascension-island-volcanology.com) and follow BGS Volcanology on twitter where we will post updates on our research and announce the map when it is available for download.

Our work would not be possible without the help of so many people on the island. We would like to thank Steve, Dee, Al, Rick, Will, Hugh, the seabird team at Conservation, Kitty, Casey and many others who have helped us and made our time here a pleasure.



**Charlotte, Rich, Bridie and Becca**

# Ascension's Yachting Season Begins...



Clarence Bay has been particularly busy over the last few weeks with the visit of several ships, but visitors to Georgetown would not have missed the arrival of several yachts over the past few days!

Since last Sunday 7 yachts have arrived from St Helena with many more scheduled to call here over the next few months. At long last there will be some much welcomed tourism on the island, albeit at a very small scale. It will be nice to see some new faces around though.

Some of the yachts that have arrived and some still scheduled to arrive are part of the World Arc Rally 2020. World ARC is a round-the-world adventure taking place over 15 months and covering 26,000 nautical miles. Following the classic tradewinds route, the rally avoids regions of political instability, piracy and the storm seasons in both hemispheres.

Sailors can join either in Saint Lucia or in Australia, and sail a half rally or make the whole circumnavigation. World ARC is a mix of cruising in company and free time to explore which allowed some of their participants to wander from the set route and spend a few days in Ascension Island.

We look forward to seeing many more of our yachting visitors over the next few months!







St Helena  
Government



AIRLINK



ST HELENA  
AIRPORT

- Additional mid-week flights from Cape Town to St Helena between December and February 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Provides greater options and certainty to visitors, tour operators, local private sector and the travelling public
- Presents opportunities for twin-destination holidays in Cape Town and St Helena

### **MIDWEEK FLIGHTS TO ST HELENA** **SUMMER SEASON 2020/21 AND 2021/22**

Additional mid-week flights between Cape Town and St Helena will be available for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Summer Season.

In addition to the regular scheduled weekly flight that operates on a Saturday, during the period December 2020 – February 2021 and again from December 2021 – February 2022 a second weekly flight originating in Cape Town will operate to St Helena on a Tuesday.

The normal Saturday flight will continue to operate from OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg. The monthly flight to Ascension Island on the second weekend of each month will also continue as normal.

Financial Secretary, Dax Richards, said:

*"This is great news for our customers. Securing additional mid-week flights for both this year and next year's Summer Season provides greater options and certainty for our visitors, tour operators, local private sector and the travelling public."*

*"Knowing now that an additional flight from Cape Town is available during our busy peak period allows travellers to plan well in advance. It also presents opportunities for twin-destination holidays in Cape Town and St Helena which people have been taking advantage of previously."*

Managing Director and CEO of Airlink, Rodger Foster, said:

*"Airlink is delighted to announce this commitment to the summer schedule as it provides certainty as to the travel options available to our customers. Moreover, we are pleased by the support for the Cape Town service that we have witnessed over the past weeks and we are confident that this will continue into the next summer seasons."*

Tickets are available online, 12 months in advance of the required date of flight, via the Airlink website at: <https://flyairlink.com/> and through all IATA travel agents.

For those passengers resident on St Helena, ticket bookings can be made via Solomon & Company (St Helena) Plc's Shipping & Travel Agency at the Malabar in Jamestown. Passengers can visit the Shipping & Travel Agency in person or contact them via email: [shippingtravelmanager@solomons.co.sh](mailto:shippingtravelmanager@solomons.co.sh) or tel: 22523.

**#StHelena #StHelenaAirport #Airlink**

<https://www.facebook.com/StHelenaGovt/> <https://twitter.com/StHelenaGovt>

**SHG/Airlink**  
**29 January 2020**





St Helena  
Government

• Today is World Cancer Day

• The recently introduced  
Chemotherapy Service at the  
General Hospital last year treated 16  
patients on-Island

### **WORLD CANCER DAY 2020**

Today, Tuesday 4 February 2020, is World Cancer Day - an international day used to raise awareness of Cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment.

To recognise the importance of this day, this article introduces the Chemotherapy Service provided by the Health Directorate here on St Helena:

The first chemotherapy treatment was delivered in November 2018. At that time the Health Directorate provided a service for a few patients who had already started their treatment in South Africa and were able to finish their treatment at home. Within three months it became clear that there were more Saint Helenians treated in South Africa who would benefit from this service and this prompted the development of the chemotherapy service during 2019.

A space was converted in the General Hospital as the Oncology Day Unit and the Oncology Nurse specialist arrived in May 2019 and was able to develop the Oncology Day Unit further.

The Pharmacist, Doctor and an Oncology Nurse make up the Oncology team and plan and deliver all treatments.

Last year, a total of 16 patients were treated with chemotherapy for a variety of Cancers, including Breast Cancer, different types of Bowel Cancer and Blood Cancers.

A patient undergoing chemotherapy said:

*"The Oncology Nurse was so lovely. She came to see me before my operation and afterwards and gave me support when I needed it. One time, I phoned her late at night because I was confused about my Cancer tablets, and she sorted it out for me, there and then. I thought that they just gave chemotherapy, but they do so much more."*

The Health Directorate works closely with a Cancer specialist in South Africa and, if recommended by the specialist, provides chemotherapy for patients on St Helena from start to finish.

The Health Directorate still completes chemotherapy treatments for patients who have started their treatment abroad. For many patients this has made a big difference, as they can now have all their treatment at home.

Another patient commented:

*"I had made up my mind before seeing the doctor that I'm not going away for treatment. I had made up my mind that I was going to die. When I heard that I could have my operation and the treatment after at home, I decided to go for it. Being able to have my treatment at home has kept me alive."*

Director of Health, Ted Rayment, concluded:

*"The Health Directorate hopes to treat more Cancers early when the treatment is more likely to cure Cancer. Knowing your own body can help to prevent Cancer. New lumps or swellings in breasts and testicles, blood in your stool and unexpected weight loss can be one of the signs of Cancer and it is important that you see the doctor to make sure that there is nothing to worry about. Screening for Breast Cancer and Cervical Cancer also helps to detect Cancers early."*

**SHG**

**4 February 2020**

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Visit us: [www.sainthelena.gov.sh](http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh)







**99.9 THE PIRATE**

**ASCENSION ISLAND  
FM RADIO**

[99.9thepirate.asi@gmail.com](mailto:99.9thepirate.asi@gmail.com)



## From The Archives

Our series of extracts from Mrs Gill's book *Six Months on Ascension* continues with a description of the reasons for a fight. The book is an account of her time with her husband's 1877 expedition to observe the Transit of Mars, from where Mars Bay gets its name.

One cloudy afternoon towards the end of September we discovered, in the course of our evening ramble, that a rough path led across the little tongue of land which I have already described as lying to the south of us. Ever since coming to Mars Bay I had looked at this forest of lava, and wondered whether it might be possible by any means to penetrate it, and so reach the twin bay on the other side. But the needlelike rocks were not encouraging, and it required some practice in clinker walking, before we could make up our minds to attempt it. However, on the afternoon in question we resolved to explore, and set out about 4 o'clock in a spirit of enterprise, and armed with our alpenstocks.

We entered the rocky forest at what seemed the most accessible point, close to our shore, and then tried to steer eastward. After clambering a few yards, we noticed that in some places the sharp points of the rocks were broken off, and the hollows filled up with them, "just as if it were meant for a road," we remarked, never dreaming that this was other than chance. But as we proceeded, it became clear that a road had actually been made here; shadowy indeed, and we often lost it, but only to find it again at another turn. The discovery affected us with something of the scared surprise that Robinson Crusoe felt at sight of the foot-prints on the sand.

For the first time I saw beauty in Ascension. Grim and joyless, but grand and majestic, were these gloomy rocks, trimmed round the base with delicately-tinted coral, their sternness veiled in feathery foam. Millions of shell-fish covered the lower rocks, among which lurked

lucid pools, lined with the wonderfully-constructed homes of their habitants.

While poking at a lovely shelf of pink coralline in one of these grottos, trying to dislodge it, I felt my stick suddenly pulled from my grasp. Thinking it must have got fixed among the stones in some way, I was about to put down my hand to disengage it, when to my horror I saw some ugly slimy tentacles wind themselves round my trusty staff, which was now the prey of a cuttle-fish. There was not the slightest occasion for it, of course; nevertheless, I screamed. This was no devilfish of Victor Hugo dimensions; but so hideous was the creature, that disgust, not terror, possessed me. David, ran quickly to my assistance.

"Only an octopus! We have seen many of these before."

"Yes, but only baby ones, who looked innocent enough to be gorged with crabs; this is a monster – a fiend!"

We stood watching him. Clearly my stick was not to his liking, for by-and-by he gradually unwound himself from it and sank sullenly down among the coral, looking, as before, like a tuft of harmless seaweed.

How I congratulated myself on not having trusted my hand under water! Had I done so, and had I been alone, I doubt not that this monster of ugliness would have cost me at least a limb, for I fear I should have lacked the strength and presence of mind to fling him off at once, before the "suckers" had seized firm hold – the only chance, I believe, of freeing one's self without hurt. David wished to secure our big octopus for future contemplation, and aimed at him a strong blow, hoping by chance to touch his vital part, but he only touched his

spleen. Immediately on finding himself attacked, the creature emitted an inky fluid, which turned the clear pool dark as Styx, and under cover of this he made his escape, much to David's disappointment, and to my relief.

The museum is open every Saturday from 10:00 to 12:00. We have an extensive stock of books, t-shirts and many other mementoes of the island.



## **TWO BOATS CLUB**

TWO BOATS VILLAGE - ASCENSION ISLAND - SOUTH ATLANTIC  
OCEAN

ASCN 1ZZ

Telephone 64621/64610/64439

E-mail: [twoboatsclub@atlantis.co.ac](mailto:twoboatsclub@atlantis.co.ac)

### **Friday 8th February 2020**

Lunch time special – Fishcakes & Fries

The normal Lunchtime menu will also be available.

Orders can be placed in-advance on Tel No 64610/64621/64439



### **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

#### ***Kids Valentine's Disco***

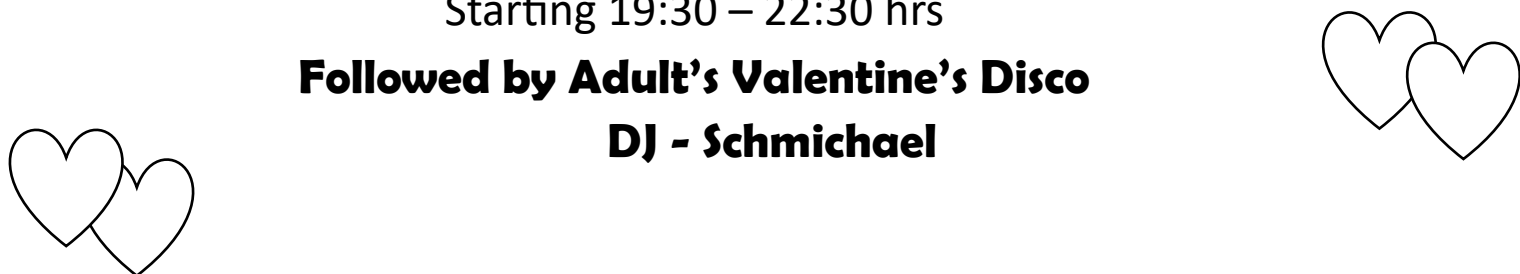
Competition for the best dressed Kiddie's

Mr & Miss Valentine

Starting 19:30 – 22:30 hrs

**Followed by Adult's Valentine's Disco**

**DJ - Schmichael**



### **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

#### ***Mixed Music***

DJ – TBA

Entry list for Dart's League 2020 posted on Club's  
notice board. Enter your team now!.....