Hi everyone,

This time we have a bumper edition - six months news which is proving hard to compress into one newsletter. There are lots of highlights - we have opened Ascension's first ever National Park which was indeed a historic event. Read more about this inside.

Stedson went to the UK to receive his MBE - we congratulate him on his well deserved award - an article on this is also included.

Enjoy reading - it would be good if we had space for more but we had to stop somewhere. Hopefully the articles will give you a taste of what is happening here.

Tara

April – September 2005

Sarah Sanders (RSPB), Ian Fisher (RSPB) Dick Beales (DFID) visit

ASC 001: Developing and initiating the implementation of Ascension's first National Park Management Plan
Project completed

Green Mountain National Park opens

Land crab man (Richard Hartnoll) visits the island

ASC 002: Securing local ownership for long term seabird restoration on Ascension - hundreds of Masked Boobies found on the mainland

2 new part time workers join the team

More information on Stedson's MBE

Catherine Marriot (RSPB) volunteers for a month

Successful propagation of Pteris adscensionis

2006 Calendar competition run and won.

ASC 002 OTEP project AEIOU starts.
Stedson Stroud awarded 
MBE

Press Release – embargoed until 001 hours GMT on Friday, 31 December 2004

New Years Honours 2005

It gives me great pleasure to announce the award of Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire to Mr Stedson Arnold Stroud for services to St. Helena. This was included in the 2005 New year Honours List published in London today (Friday 31\textsuperscript{st} December 2004)

This award recognises Mr Stroud’s outstanding contribution to nature conservation efforts here on St. Helena. His enthusiasm for St Helena’s endemics is well known. He also put into practice conservation principles as a private farmer, producing organic beef, honey and cosmetics. He made a personal and voluntary contribution to the rediscovery and propagation of St. Helena’s endemic flora, including the bastard gumwood and the boxwood. He has also assisted with training courses in conservation techniques.

Mr Stroud was a founder member of the St. Helena Nature Conservation Group and Vice Chairman of the St. Helena National Trust, which was launched in May 2002. In 2002, he delivered presentation at two environmental conferences held in Gibraltar and Skye.

In addition to his nature conservation interests, Mr Stroud also served as Justice of the Peace for some five years on St. Helena and was a voluntary producer for Radio St. Helena.

Stedson Stroud is currently continuing his conservation interests through highly regarded work on Ascension Island in support of the Conservation Officer there.

Office of the Governor
The Castle

Stedson Stroud received his MBE from Her Majesty The Queen at a ceremony held at Buckingham Palace on Wednesday 13th July.

It was a very proud moment for Stedson who was accompanied at the Palace by his sister Diana and friends Mary and Denise. Friends from all over the UK, including Lady Caroline Garnell, the daughter of the late Earl of Bradford joined Stedson later in the day to celebrate.

Stedson received his award for his contribution to nature conservation efforts on St.Helena. He is currently continuing his conservation work on Ascension Island where he recently opened the Green Mountain National Park.

OTEP
OVERSEAS TERRITORIES ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
Green Mountain National Park Update

Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) ASC 001

Contributed by Tara Pelembe

By Georgina Close (aged 9)

I thought the Opening of the National Park was great, at the beginning it was a bit boring because it was a bit more for grown ups because everybody was talking for a long time.

Stedson Stroud was the person to open it by cutting it with his big knife. But when I got up there it was fantastic there was a lot for children like a bit of a playground people went through the tunnel, I did it was a bit scary but it was fun. I would recommend it to people who like the dark and I would not wear flip flops that's all I'm telling you the rest you can find out for yourself.

Me, Hannah and Megan (my friends) did a dance as well as there was another dance there was more people in there dance, there was about eight in it.

I thought they were both good.

Some people planted ferns going up to the Dew Pond.

There was coffee and tea at Garden cottage with cakes as well.

There was a few stalls the conservation did one with T-shirts, pens, hats, magnets and key rings.

I think Stedson and Tara and the rest of the Conservation Staff did a FANTASTIC job.

Green Mountain National Park Opening 25th/26th June 2005

Contributed by Tara Pelembe.

Ascension’s first ever National Park opened on the 25th and 26th June 2005. The National Protected Areas ordinance was enacted in 2003. In March 2005 the Ascension Island Council agreed to designate Green Mountain as the first National Park under this National Protected Areas ordinance.

Since April 2004, the Ascension Island Government has been working on an Overseas Territories Environment Programme Project entitled: Developing and initiating the implementation of Ascension’s first National Park Management Plan. This year long projects culminates in the opening of the Park on the 25th and 26th June.

Over the past year lots of hard work has gone into developing and implementing the National Park Management Plan. Paths have been improved, greenhouses covered to create nurseries for the propagation of endemic plants, and areas have been cleared and fenced where these endemics will be reintroduced into the wild. Stedson Stroud has been on training at Kew Gardens and in Cambridge and has successfully propagated our critically endangered endemic fern *Pteris adscensionis.*

Volunteers are being trained as tour guides, and various interpretive material is being produced to try to make the mountain more interesting for residents and visitors. School children have worked on planting grass in the picnic areas, have weeded and have given ideas for the mountain plan and Shane Green won the competition for designing the National Park Logo.

The whole community was invited to the opening, it was a day to celebrate the beauty and value of the environment.
More about the Opening of the Park

Contributed by Sarah Sanders, RSPB
Photos by Jonathon Clingham

Hundreds of people, including the Administrator and Ascension Island Council, gathered this weekend to celebrate the opening of Green Mountain National Park, Ascension’s first National Park. It was a proud moment for Ascension as another milestone is achieved in conservation history.

Dick Beales from the Department of International Development (DFID) was also present.

The Administrator highlighted in his speech, that for the past year, Stedson Stroud, MBE, with the Conservation Department and a dedicated group of volunteers, has been working night and day on the Park. It was a moving moment as Stedson cut the ribbon to the Park with his machete.

Green Mountain National Park, a site of great natural beauty, is home to a wide variety of the island’s wildlife including land crabs and 5 of Ascension’s 6 endemic plants, which are found nowhere else in the world. It also offers a great deal of historical interest, ranging from the Norfolk Island Pines, planted to provide timber for sailing ship masts, to the tunnel, dug in the 1830s to enable water to be pumped through the mountain.

Funding from the UK Government (DFID/FCO) Overseas Territories Environment Programme has enabled the Conservation Department to prepare a management plan for the Park, which will focus on the protection and restoration of endemic plants and development of the area as a place for all to relax and appreciate the beauty of the island.
Activities during the weekend included guided tours up to the Dewpond and nurseries. There are only 100 of the critically endangered endemic fern *Pteris ascensionis* left in the wild. Stedson showed in the nursery how he has tripled the global population in 8 months. There was also endemic fern planting, children's fancy dress and a treasure hunt, a hash and the dreaded Dewpond run.

![Children singing after the fancy dress competition](image1.jpg)

Tea was served at the Residence following the church service on the Sunday and was much appreciated, particularly by the Dewpond runners. Fine weather throughout the weekend and the excellent organisation by the Conservation Department ensured all had fun.

I visited Ascension this time last year and the project was only beginning. Congratulations should be given to the Conservation Department for achieving such a tremendous success in such a short time period. The Green Mountain National Park will give pleasure to both residents and visitors for many years to come.

**Green Mountain National Park Calendar 2006**
*Contributed by Anselmo Pelembe*

![One of the winning photos of Green Mountain taken by Glen Yon](image2.jpg)

This year's photographic competition focussed on Green Mountain, Ascension’s first National Park. There were a few entrants in the competition, many quality photographs were received. Green mountain National Park provides excellent view and wonderful atmosphere, it is there for everyone to enjoy the natural beauty.

The judges had a tough time deciding which photos were the winning ones. Thirteen photographs were chosen after some deliberations amongst the judges. The winning photographs have now been printed in the Ascension Wildlife calendar 2006.

![Green Mountain National Park Calendars (2006) are now on sale from the Conservation Centre at £5 each](image3.jpg)

**Sea Bird Restoration Update**
*Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) ASC 002*
**Masked Booby colony on Letterbox**
*Contributed by Anselmo Pelembe*

For the first time, the splendour of the seabirds returning to the mainland was seen. A colony of over 200 Masked Boobies have started to make Letterbox their home.

This is one example that shows the impact of the seabird restoration project. It is the large numbers that we have been waiting to see. Only three of the birds in the colony have nested, but the presence of such a large number of Masked boobies on the mainland is indeed an exciting sight.

*Anselmo Pelembe photographing the new masked booby colony*

Such a scene is great motivation to continue with the feral cat monitoring which is due to finish in March 2006. The monitoring programme has been diligently followed by the fieldworkers, and since January last year, there have been no known feral cats.

**Re-trapping Adult Sooty Terns**
*Sterna fuscata* on Ascension Island
*John Hughes & Colin Wearn*

Ringing and then re-trapping birds provides vital information for calculating their survival rate. The Army Ornithological Society (AOS) and the Royal Air Force Ornithological Society (RAFOS) started a ringing programme on Ascension Island in 1996 and to date some 6,000 Sooty Terns have been ringed. Our re-trapping programme commenced in earnest in April 2003 and since then we have re-trapped some 400 Sooty Terns. From the information we have gathered we have been able to establish the life span of the Ascension Sooty Tern (longevity), age of first breeding and the fact that some Sooty Terns are immigrants to the Island.

**Longevity**

On 25 June 2002, we captured a ringed Sooty Tern; the bird was incubating an egg on Waterside Fair and was captured using a hand net. The number on the American ring was 1013 13651. The following season, on 22 April 2003, we captured another Sooty Tern with an American ring number 1013 13584. Corrosion on the ring made reading the last three digits difficult in the field and this was our best guess at the ring number. Due to the degradation of the ring, the bird was re-ringed with a British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) ring. In 2005 the original ring was examined in a laboratory and the number confirmed as 1013 13584. This bird was incubating an egg on our Mars Bay study site. Both birds were returned to their nest to carry on incubating.

The Bird Banding Laboratory at Patuxent was contacted and their records revealed that Dr N. B. Gale ringed 200 Sooty Tern pulli on Ascension with this banding sequence during the early part of November 1975. The first Sooty Tern we captured was thus 26½ years old and the second was 27½ years old.

Terns are long lived birds and the oldest tern recorded is a Sooty Tern aged 36 years (Schreiber & Burger 2002). The oldest known breeder on the Seychelles is 34 years; Dry Tortugas 32 years and the Pacific 26½ years (Schreiber et al. 2002). The previous long life records for Sooty Terns on Ascension are 16½ years on 7 July 1942 and 18 years in March 1944 (Thacher Cooke 1945). Our ring recoveries suggest that despite feral cat predation on Ascension Sooty Terns in the South Atlantic live as long as other Sooty Terns in the Pacific, Indian and North Atlantic Oceans.

**Age of First Breeding**

During the June 1998 breeding season we ringed 300 pulli (chicks) and three of these were re-traps as adults incubating eggs on their natal site in February 2004. Although our ringing effort in the following season November 2004 was similar to that in February we did not re-trap any
more Sooty Terns from the 1998 cohort. The Sooty Terns we did re-trap returned to breed seven seasons (5½ years) after fledging. Elsewhere in the range the age of first breeding for most Sooty Terns is 68 years (Schreiber et al. 2002).

Immigration
The first evidence that immigration to the Ascension Island colony does occur was gathered on 24 April 2003 when we re-trapped a Sooty Tern wearing a Brazilian ring number H25617. The bird was netted while incubating an egg at Mars Bay. It took two years to obtain details of where the bird was originally ringed. In July 2005 we obtained a certificate from the Brazilian ringing authority CEMAVE that the bird we had re-trapped was ringed as a pulli at Atol das Rocas 03º 50´S 33º40´W. Atol das Rocas is located 266 km northeast of the city of Natal NE Brazil and is some 1500 km west of Ascension.

Our re-trap programme on Ascension is similar to the Re-trapping Adults for Survival (RAS) project set up by the BTO in the UK in 1998 in that we collect survival data on a particular species from one main study site. However, we do not attempt to capture all 150,000 pairs of Sooty Tern that breed on Ascension. Whilst RAS ringers in the UK collect data annually, on Ascension Island the collection has to fit in with the Sooty Tern’s breeding cycle, which is every 9.6 months. The AOS has plans to continue with the re-trapping programme until sufficient data is collected to establish the survival rate for Ascension Island Sooty Terns.

Re-trapping Adult Sooty Terns


Ascension Environmental Information Operational Utility (AEIOU)

Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) ASC 201

Contributed by Alan Mills

Location Location Location

Living on a small island like Ascension, you feel that you know where everything is, how to find your way around and how to get back home if you get lost. Sophisticated maps and interactive web sites in the rest of the world telling you where 35 Maple Avenue is or how best to get from Birkenhead to Broadstairs are not really appropriate here.

But maps can be used in a variety of ways and combined with the power of computing, interactive maps can be very powerful tools to map the terrain, manage the environment, plan for the future, maintain the infrastructure and look after waste.

The Conservation Office has been awarded a substantial grant to combine relevant geographical information into a database that many government employees will be able to access next year. The grant was awarded by the UK Department of International Development (DFID) in conjunction with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for their Overseas Territories Environment Programme or OTEP. OTEP has provided funds here in the past, for
the development of Green Mountain National Park and Seabird Restoration Project, and in April 2005, Conservation was awarded money for the captivatingly named Ascension Environmental Information Operations Utility or AEIOU. It aims to use Geographical Information Systems (GIS – last abbreviation) which is this interactive mapping system, to integrate satellite, map, database and Global Positioning Systems (GPS – darn it, another one) data into a structured set of tools.

Two GIS specialists have been on island for the past fortnight; Dr Edsel Daniel from Vanderbilt University, Tennessee, USA; and Mr Alan Mills from the NRgroup in Kent, UK. They have been ferreting around people’s computers and filing cabinets looking for anything which looks like a map, numbers in tables or photos of places. Almost any data that people use in government has some kind of location, be it a bungalow, turtle nest, rat trap or electricity wire. So they are trying to find out what kinds of maps the government need to do their jobs and look for existing data to fit into those maps.

Some ideas raised include mapping all buildings; another is to plot bird nesting areas; a third is to map where Mexican thorn invades. Some data do not exist in computer form, so have to be “digitised” from hard copy, or created from scratch. A new satellite image of Ascension at a very high scale (every meter is scanned) will help. This means that buildings can be picked out clearly, tracks can be seen in the mountainside, and the guano of birds can be spotted from space.

Additionally, maps of turtle nesting numbers and bird populations as well as selected other data will be available to the public and kids using systems installed at Two Boats School and the Resource Centre to not only help extend their knowledge of the environmental riches on the island, but to show how all facets of island life interact.

So even if you think you know where everything is on the island, you may locate something you didn’t know when the system is installed at the end of next year.

Rare visitor to Ascension Island

Contributed by Ian Close

Spotted in the Government stores, an unusual visiting bird was handed in to The Conservation Department. After some rest, food and water it was set free to roam the Island. The bird was identified as a juvenile Allen’s Gallinule a very rare visitor to the Island.
Ascension before the rats.

From: S.Royle@Queens-Belfast.AC.UK

I was in London last week working in record offices on early St Helena and I came across by chance two descriptions of Ascension, one from the late 16th century; one from the late 18th. They say what the island was like before 1817. The people are well known, but maybe their pieces on Ascension are less noted than other things they did. The 1799 one is by Captain William Bligh, he of the Mutiny on the Bounty story. And all the way down to St Helena his log is full of sailors being flogged, so one could see why Fletcher Christian might mutiny.

Captain Bligh went past Ascension 14 December 1799 ‘The Island of Ascension on the Eastern part is about the same height as St Helena. The highest mountain lies about 2/3 of the extent from the west end where the land is low. Off this part we saw a white beach in a bay where I suppose is the anchorage. It must be well sheltered as I apprehend that the points which from it bear about north and south of each other, the west end of the island being the north point of the bay. The whole country is peculiarly barren. We could not discover with our best glasses a shrub on any part of the hills’. [British] National Archives, ADM 55/19

Linschoten, Jan Huygen Van (1598) Discourse of voyages into the East and West Indies, English translation, John Wolfe: London

The 95 chapter: Of the Island called the Ascension ‘This island was discovered upon Ascension daye, and in size seemeth as great as the Island of St Helena, but no so high. It is ful of hills and dales, lying under eight degrees and a halfe on the southern side of the equinoctal line and lyeth northwest distance from St Helena 196 Spanish miles and from the Equinoctall line 140 miles. There is not any fresh water in the island nor one green leaf or branch. It hath many hills of a reddish colour, which show like a certain earth in Spain called almagro and is full of stone hilles and dyed land, it is like St Helena. There hath been some shippes there that missed St Helena and sought for fresh water in that island but could find none. It hath certain fair and white sands about it, and great store of fish, wherein it surpasseth St Helena, but there are no beastes at all, onley by reason of the great quantity of fishes. There are so many birds in it and it is strange and they are of the bignesse of young geese and came by thousands flying about our ships, crying and making great noyse, and ranne up and downe in the shippe, some leaping and sitting on our shoulders and armes, not once fearing us, so that we tooke many of them and wrung their neckes, but they are not good to eat because they taste moist(?). I think the cause they are so tame is because there see but few men, and some desire to go to them. About that Island and the island of Saint Helena, unto the Equinoctall line there are flying fishes, as great as herrings which fly by great flocks together, two or three fathoms above the water’.

The book was first published in Dutch in 1596. The author was in Ascension with a Portuguese convoy in 1589 The copy I saw was in the Royal Geographical Society at MG265D2

WILD THING

Contributed by Cyril Leo

The Landcrab must be the first true indigenous resident of Ascension Island and these cute fascinating creatures appeal to my affections. Numerous crabs crawl their way pass our bungalow situated at the bottom of Green Mountain and they are always welcome to sample my plants on their way to the ocean, some five miles away, to lay their eggs. After a day or so in our garden, they first cross the adjoining main road, the most dangerous part of their journey, on their way to the coast. Unfortunately many landcrabs are crushed on the
road by vehicles and I often wonder if some deaths could have been avoided.

I absorb much pleasure from observing the individual appearance and characteristics of land crabs. Some are nervous, some inquisitive, they can be very shy, some will bravely confront intimidation; others hastily (or wisely) retreat from the threat of a menacing human. Their variety of colours, shapes and sizes can be endearing.

As the crabs claw their way around the bungalow, it would seem that some will signal their departure by scratching on the wall panels; those with a sense of humour will wait until I’m asleep first or start their racket a few hours earlier than my alarm clock in the morning.

Just recently a friendly beautiful crab with special skills and dark searching eyes called by:

One night as I watched TV there was a constant clawing at the kitchen door that I was forced to investigate—within every species there is always one that will abuse a privilege and take advantage of good nature. After slowly opening the door, I was amuse to find an exceptionally pretty yellowish orange crab with its right claw raised as though she was giving me that teen cool thingy my son Ben often does with his fingers. A crab with an attitude! I inflated my chest and stepped outside. To my amazement the crab, with a cheerful expression, blinked and lowered her claw as though to shake my hand. I quickly grabbed the smooth firm shell and picked her up expecting a fight as they normally retaliate when I do this, but the crab calmly looked around at me, winked and distinctly motioned with one claw towards the kitchen door.

My family supports my interests in the crabs; they never complain, in my presence, about the noise, nuisance or the favourite plants the crabs destroy. Now I was about to see if their tolerance would stretch to my abnormal sense of hospitality. As I gently rest my newfound friend on the carpet my wife arrived on the scene and questioned, “Who you got there now”. There is something very unique and special about this crab, I said, as I got up from the carpet to get my camera. Enjoying the limelight and seemingly aware of what will impress, the crab showed no sign of being camera-shy and instead started to pose and, follow instructions like it was determined to be the perfect subject. Lift up your right claw, I commanded as I indicated with my arm, and rest the other one on the carpet; okay, now lift both claws above your head—a bit higher; wave; open wide; now, gently touch my finger. I had just captured proof of a phenomenon, with talent, unique to Ascension.

A top crab would have to have a top name and Kring somehow seemed perfect. Kring was like a pet and that thought gave me an idea. I would give her a home and provide her with the best food and drink. Soon I was cleaning out a large container. Now a fresh crispy lettuce is like gold on Ascension but my third was sliced up and shared with Kring. Sleep comes easy when you have been kind to some creature.

Early next morning I went to see how my pet was. It was encouraging to find that all the lettuce had been eaten; this was a clear sign that Kring was comfortable and contented. But as we looked into each other’s eyes through the clear plastic I only saw sadness and despair. It was freedom that had caused our paths to cross and brought me this priceless experience with one of the island’s unknown treasures. How could one now be so self-centred? Without hesitation, I gently lifted Kring from the container, stroked her shell a few times and then set her free. The crab just stood still for a few moments, took one last look in my direction and then slowly crawled away. It was free to live in the garden but I knew instinct would soon entice it to move on and reach its destination.

Concerned for its survival yet prepared, if necessary, to identify her smashed body, I was tempted to mark this special crab on its shell but then decided not to. I wanted to always believe that kring managed to avoid being crushed to death by a vehicle on the main road and she made it safely across the hills and valleys to give birth to her offspring, on her Island, somewhere by the sea.

Volunteering for Ascension Conservation
Catherine Marriot (RSPB)

Introduction
I had spent months planning my visit to Ascension Island and had seen a few photographs of the island and heard about the
conservation projects. Even so, I still wasn’t sure what to expect as my flight landed at Wideawake Airfield on Monday morning, 2 May.

I was on a sabbatical trip from the RSPB and my objective was to assist the Ascension Conservation team in whatever way I could. On that first morning, I met Tara and her team and spent some time in the office before settling in at Clarence House, which was to be my home for the next month.

**Turtles**

On my first evening, I joined Jacqui and Ian showing three visitors the amazing spectacle of Green Turtles nesting on the nearby Long Beach. It took almost three hours to find a suitable turtle, the long wait mainly due to car headlights disturbing potential nesting turtles. As it neared midnight, the visitors and I were delighted (and Jacqui was relieved) to see a large turtle laying her eggs. Turtle tours towards the end of May were more rewarding; despite being late in the season, on one night we spotted three adult turtles nesting successfully. We also saw hatchlings leaving their nests and scurrying down to the sea. I admit I couldn’t help but give assistance to a few that were obviously going in the wrong direction.

**Seabird Restoration**

The RSPB’s main link with Ascension has been the Seabird Restoration project, so I was keen for some sort of involvement with that. In fact, on day two of my visit I was at the back of a line of four people clambering over what seemed like an endless expanse of rocks on the way to Pillar Bay and Cocomanay Bay, to check for the presence of nesting seabirds. We saw only one nesting bird on the mainland, a red-billed tropicbird which had settled opposite an offshore stack which was populated by many more birds. Trips to a couple of areas on the North of the island, were similar.

However, the walks to Letterbox on the East of the island, on 11 and 18 May, were far more fruitful. Many nests had been established and there were also naked chicks, which had visibly grown into large furry ones by the time of our second visit.

One the first trip I was given a quick lesson on how to hold a masked booby without sustaining an injury and then there I was holding one while Tara attached a ring to it’s leg! It certainly was a change from my normal day job, in front of a PC monitoring the RSPB’s complex computer network. I became more skilled as more birds were caught and tagged and the novelty wore off only slightly when number 507 left a large deposit on my shorts. Our second trip provided the icing on the cake when we spotted several colonies of boobies along the coast; hundreds of birds that were hard evidence of seabirds returning to the mainland.

I sampled other aspects of the work for this project, such as “lines” (setting bait to check for the presence of feral cats) and fishing for that bait. I didn’t catch a thing but hey, I didn’t catch a rock like a certain person I know!

**Landcrabs**

I hadn’t been on the island long before I was introduced to the landcrab phenomenon. Terri and her team of volunteers were measuring and recording any landcrabs they could lay their hands on. On the first Letterbox walk, I spotted something which delighted Terri and amazed us all, a very young landcrab. It must have taken hours to make it’s way from the sea, up Spire beach to where we saw it, a feat many humans find difficult.

**Green Mountain**

I had hoped to make a contribution to the team’s preparations for the new National Park and I wasn’t disappointed. One of my first tasks was to help judge the photo competition, most enjoyable. I also spent many hours formatting and checking the content of new leaflets for the Green Mountain National Park. But perhaps the most enjoyable was the hands on experience up on the mountain. I was determined not to be a lightweight with my assignments there after hearing Stedson’s comments that people come up to do a day’s weeding/clearing and then he never sees them again! I got stuck in and got dirt under my fingernails clearing patches of ground ready for planting. In the last week of my stay I helped Stedson, Simon and Ashley with the “taming” of the Dew Pond path. Stedson gave
me a demonstration of how to use a machete but fortunately for all, I didn’t need to use one.

Summary
I left the island on 31 May, after one of the most interesting and enjoyable month’s of my life. My thanks go to Tara and everyone else I met while I was “working”, and thanks to all those I met along the way for making my stay so pleasurable. Over 1000 digital photographs will keep my memories of Ascension island alive until my next visit. After all, I didn’t paint the Ascension Lizard and legend has it that that means I will return!

Conservation Centre moves to new location
The Conservation Centre has moved from its old location in the old Bakery Georgetown to a more spacious building just up the road.

Staffing Changes
Simon Emson
Simon Emson will be joining the team for a short term, he has worked with Conservation over the last year, and we welcome him into the department. We should have a photo of him in the next edition!

Anselmo Pelembe
Anselmo Pelembe will be leaving the Conservation department. He has made an excellent contribution as one of the seabird restoration fieldworkers, ensuring that the 2 year project is working towards fulfilling its commitments. We will shortly have a new fieldworker to fulfil his role. Anselmo was a keen photographer and took some excellent photographs during his time in conservation. We wish him well for the future.
New Items for sale in the Conservation Centre

National Park Commerative goods:

- Pens £3
- Key rings £1.50
- Fridge magnets £1.50
- Hats £7.00
- T-shirts (adults) £9
- T-shirts (children) £6

The seabirds return to the mainland.

James and the Giant Grapefruit

Jimmy Bennett of Georgetown Ascension has giant grapefruits growing in his garden. This goes to show what can be grown in Ascension soil with a little tender loving care.

Jimmy Bennett in his Georgetown Garden with the giant grapefruit.

Georgina Close modelling National Park hat and T-shirt
New Stamp Issue -