

project would create an education / public awareness section of the UKOTCF website, which would provide links to educational and public awareness materials in UKOTs and UK. It would also provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, and virtual tours of the territories, as a way of increasing knowledge and understanding about them to as wide an audience as possible. Strong elements of the forum would be led by young people throughout the territories using a format that they are familiar with. Additionally this would be a convenient way of making available appropriate basic information about the territories.

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Identification guide to the major Caribbean reef species (XOT407)

At present there is no good or comprehensive source of identification for the main reef occupiers and builders of Caribbean reefs, namely corals, soft corals and sponges. This is extraordinary, given the popularity of the Caribbean as an area for research, especially of the kind which uses countless 'amateur' divers for data gathering. Some popular books have many errors, and are incomplete. Most of the detailed taxonomic literature is obscure and of little help to fieldwork.

At present, many reef surveys are being done throughout the Caribbean region, and have been done recently. Most record several species by name, but almost all leave many important reef components as e.g. Sponge 1, 2 or 3 or soft corals A, B, C... etc. Someone working in say the BVI cannot therefore assume his/her Soft Coral 6 is the same as the Cayman Island survey's Soft Coral 6. Indeed, it probably is not the same. Thus no cross-regional comparisons can be made.

This proposes a compilation resulting from fieldwork in (mainly) BVI and Bermuda (and non-UKOT locations). A draft has been finished, which comprises almost all Atlantic corals, most dominant sponges and most soft corals found on reefs. This includes nearly 200 species using 1,000 photos, with descriptions of each species. Example pages are at:

www.2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/bio/research/ee/ee/people/charlessheppard/images/

It is currently at a stage where (a) more specialists need to examine and correct it, and (b) it needs translation to html language for www delivery.

It is already translated into Spanish for wider Caribbean uses (see example pages).

Its structure will readily accommodate additional biological groups (and languages) when wanted, but the three groups included in the draft are the three key reef builders and space occupiers.

Within the web version, hyperlinks will be prominent, directing users to sites of current, active Caribbean reef programmes. This is entirely compatible with the overall aim of providing a service to reef research in many places. Further, the directed sites will be asked to provide similar hyperlinks to this site.



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The following articles give summaries of progress or completion of a range of OTEP projects already active.

Completion of the New Island Reserve Management Plan

The management plan for the New Island reserve, an OTEP funded project, which has been running for the last two years, has now been completed. The New Island South Conservation Trust, recently renamed the New Island Conservation Trust since its acquisition late in 2006 of the whole of New Island, is a leading biological and conservation research establishment in the Falkland Islands.

In Falkland terms, New Island is a medium sized island. It is eight miles in length, but in many parts less than a mile wide, and embraced by some 50 miles of rugged coastline. New Island is relatively remote, being situated at the western extremity of the Falkland archipelago and on the edge of the Falkland Current. It is this position, which



The west cliffs of the New Island reserve

makes it an Important Bird Area (IBA). New Island has the distinction of having been operated as a wildlife reserve for 36 years and remains the only purpose designed and built facility for conservation research in the Falklands.

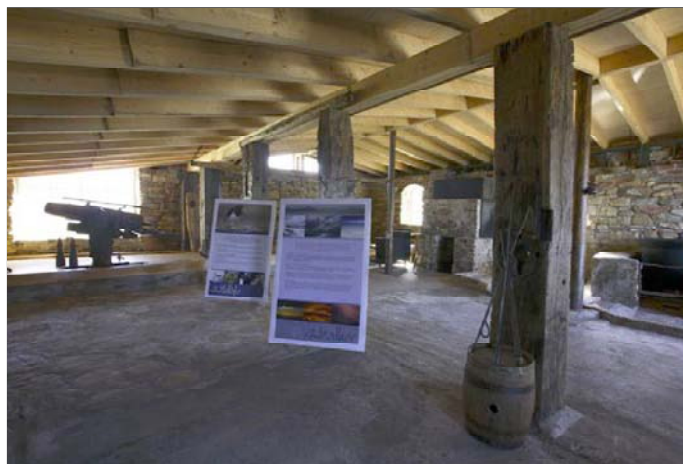
Its remote situation, 147 miles from Stanley and centred in one of the Islands' richest wildlife areas, presents a unique site for research, and for the field scientists who work on the reserve. A total of eight scientific personnel worked on the reserve in the 2006- 2007 season. On the other hand, its remoteness gives it an element of isolation from some public activities and recognition for its research. The award of an OTEP grant in 2005 to the New Island Conservation Trust (NICT) was not only of financial importance, but of immense value in bringing attention to the work it does.

The OTEP-funded project embraces several aspects of the NICT work. The continuation of its work on non-native species has been possible, the result being that at least two scientific papers will shortly be published covering some six years of work. Continuing long-term monitoring and study of black-browed albatross has been made possible. The importance of this work on the New Island reserve, with its 29 years of monitoring data to support its findings that the populations of this species are increasing, is of immense value. The monitoring of other Agreement on the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels (ACAP) species, in particular white-chinned petrels, is also a long-term programme and, in 2006, was part of joint census work with another conservation organisation, the Falkland Conservation Trust.

The history of New Island goes back to the late 1700s when it became an important base for early American whalers. Part of that history

remains on the island in the form of an old stone building, the origins of which go back to a Captain Charles Barnard who was marooned on the island in 1812. With the help of the OTEP grant, this building is now fully restored as a museum and visitor centre. Not only does it fulfil the New Island Conservation Trust's memorandum, which embraces the conservation of historical buildings, the building now offers an important educational facility and centre for the wildlife tourists who visit New Island on specialized cruise vessels.

Of particular importance has been the funding, by OTEP, of the completion of a management plan for the New Island reserve. Entitled "New Island, Falkland Islands- A South Atlantic Wildlife Sanctuary for



A section of the interior of the Barnard Building & Visitor Centre" on the New Island reserve.

Conservation Management" This is now available as a PDF (available on www.ukotcf.org) and will shortly be available as a soft back. Containing 160 pages, it is heavily illustrated in colour and is not only a plan for the islands future, but traces the islands history and development over 200 years.

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Environmental education - links across territories

The importance of environmental education and the raising of public awareness of environmental issues was highlighted at the 'Biodiversity that Matters' Conference, Jersey 2006. Following discussions of issues and needs in the conference session, participants from several territories, with the help of the enthusiastic team of Jersey students, identified the initial ways of addressing these.

A successful application was made to the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) (see summary of Project XOT406 on p. 11). The short time between the conference and the OTEP deadline meant that this was the only project arising out of the conference discussions to be supported in this OTEP round.

This project, running over 2 years, will make use of UKOTCF's website to provide an environmental education section, with 3 strands:

1 – an environmental education resources section, where people can be made aware of ideas and materials for environmental education, and these can be shared. This should help the development of environmental education programmes and materials tailored to a particular locality, by allowing people to build on existing work, especially from other UKOTs.

2 – a "virtual tour" of each territory. Knowledge and understanding of the UK Overseas Territories within the metropolitan UK is very poor, so this would help raise awareness there, as well as enabling people from the territories to get to know more about their "sister" territories.

3- an e-discussion forum (not a chat room) for the sharing of information, concerns and issues between the territories. This was a particular wish of the students who helped develop the ideas for the project, and would be targeted initially at young people.

The form of the e-discussion forum was decided after consultation, particularly with some of the students who participated so



Ann Pienkowski (right) and Juliet Rose lead the discussions on environmental education at the conference in Jersey.

enthusiastically in the Jersey conference. If you would like to be part of piloting this before it goes on general release, please contact Ann (below).

Meantime, we are gathering material and references for the resources strand, and collecting and compiling material for the virtual tour section. Please contact Ann if you have any information on environmental education resources relevant to UKOTs, or you have any thoughts on content for a virtual tour of your territory. In addition, the project would be pleased to know about any photographs or video which could help develop this strand.

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Strategic Planning Workshops in Montserrat

Despite continuing volcanic disruptions, both the Montserrat National Trust (MNT) and the Government's newly formed Department of the Environment have given serious thought to taking forward environmental matters in Montserrat in a strategic way, building on existing work. In 1995 the Soufriere Volcano destroyed the main area of the endemic Montserrat Oriole and other globally important fauna and flora, as well as making two-thirds of the island an exclusion zone. How Montserratians and their visitors should use the parts of their island remaining safe and accessible is a key question.

Emergency measures have been taken to conserve threatened species in their remaining habitat in the Centre Hills, and other work has developed from this, including a Darwin Initiative-funded project to lay the foundations for creating the Centre Hills National Park (see *Forum News 28*). The concept of strategic planning more generally for the environmental aspects of Montserrat's future came out of discussions between the Montserrat National Trust, the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF), Montserrat Government departments and others in 2005. A successful application for funding was made by UKOTCF and MNT to the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP Project MNT302) to provide strategic planning training and development, and two workshops took place to deliver this in January and May 2007.

This exercise was timely, as the Department of the Environment had just been established, so discussion and clarification of roles

