

awhile during the conflict. Furthermore, Ascension once boasted the world's longest runway. In fact, the island still serves as an emergency landing spot for the space shuttle. Wideawake Airfield is jointly administered by the U.S. and the U.K.

Today the European Space Agency also maintains a tracking station on Ascension. This facility is used to track Ariane 5 rockets after they have been launched in French Guiana. Also, interestingly, Ascension is the location of one of the three ground antennas which are used

to operate the widely-used Global Positioning System for navigation. (The other two ground antennae are situated on Kwajalein Atoll in the Pacific Ocean and on Diego Garcia Atoll in the Indian Ocean.)

Like many small islands, Ascension's main export is postage stamps. Stamps were first issued for the island in 1922.

The pier, where cruise ship passengers come ashore in tenders, is located in Georgetown, the capital of Ascension which is home to over 500 people. Adjacent to the pier are stretches of beautiful white

sandy beach. Georgetown is the location of a cinder golf course. The post office, police station and Cable and Wireless office are also in the capital.

The farm is located on 859-meter-high (2,817-foot-high) Green Mountain, Ascension's highest peak. The fields there were once used to supply the island with fresh produce. Nowadays holiday flats on the mountain can be rented by locals for weekend use. There are artificial forests of bamboo and pine near the summit of Green Mountain, which is normally covered by clouds.

PRACTICALITIES:

Weekly air service to Ascension Island is available on Royal Air Force-run aircraft from Brize Norton Airbase in Oxfordshire and also from Mt. Pleasant in the Falkland Islands. Round trip individual adult airfare from the U.K. to Ascension

begins at sterling 1,009. See www.ascension-flights.com.

The 137-passenger Royal Mail Ship St. Helena cruises on the Portland-Tenerife-Ascension Island-St. Helena Island-Walvis Bay, Namibia-Cape Town route. See www.rms-st-helena.com for details of prices and schedules.



Wideawake Airfield

Visitors to Ascension require written permission from the Administrator. Information on how to obtain this permit and other important visitor information is posted online at www.ascension-island.gov.ac/visitors.htm.

Both hotel accommodation and car rental are available on the island.

ABOUT TED COOKSON: Egypt's most widely-travelled travel agent, Ted has been to every country in the world! He has also visited 307 of the 315 destinations on the list of the Travellers' Century Club (visit www.eptours.com and refer to World Travel Club). A travel agent in Cairo since 1986, Ted manages EGYPT PANORAMA TOURS, a full-service travel agency, at 4 Road 79 (between Roads 9 and 10, near the 'El Maadi' metro station) in Maadi. Contact Egypt Panorama Tours (open 7 days a week 9 AM-5 PM) at: Tel: 359-0200, 358-5880, 359-1301. Fax 359-1199. E-mail: ept@link.net

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Police station and vehicle



The author at the post office



Cable & Wireless building

