

# SAERI NEWS

## Research Cruise (JR15003)- Ascension Island

### Day 1

Dr Judith Brown

The time had finally come to board the ship, this trip has felt a long time coming. Fear over funding, ship delays, cancelled flights were just a few hurdles before we could see the fantastic red and white of the James Clark Ross (JCR) on the horizon. An extreme amount of hard work by Dr Paul Brickle from SAERI and the funding made available by Blue Marine plus amazing support from BAS means that our lucky group of 12 scientists can spend several days conducting marine research around Ascension Island. A beautiful calm day meant our transit from the pier head in Georgetown to the JCR was seamless. A sea of faces peering over the deck rails greeted us as we pulled up alongside and climbed aboard. All eager to get on with the science planned we had a few essentials to do first. Firstly a ship safety briefing – including donning lifejackets and getting inside the lifeboat. Next a ship tour – though I think knowing the location of the sauna and gym may not be necessary this trip! All back to the meeting area for a science brief – we are going to work 24hrs so it was important for all to understand what shifts they are on and to make sure they get rest in between. And of course before the work can begin there was lunch.



The afternoon saw a hive of activity. We split into teams with Elanor and Oli taking a look at the multibeam data (images of the seabed around the island). The ship's team had done a fantastic job collecting data the day before and this meant it was possible to select the first site for surveys. While the ship filled in some of the missing areas with the multibeam the rest of us took to setting up the gear, directed by the experts. The trawl

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gear was set up on the back deck and all the sampling gear unpacked and stored in the wet laboratory. The camera team took to work pulling the cable for the camera up and over a winch and back to deck again. A minor delay while we hauled it all back again and uncrossed it from the CTD wire and then re-hauled it back up but the sun kept shining so all was well. A brief moment of holding breath when there was no image from the camera but it wasn't long before we had a lovely clear image of the deck! Now for a test run and into the ocean!



The first deployment of the underwater camera was met on the surface by a delegation of local fauna represented by the orange backed flying squid (*Sthenoteuthis pteropus*) – that actually refused to fly. And a small school of large flying fish who were more akin to demonstrate their flying capacity and did several short lazy jumps to avoid the unwelcome lights of the ship. The first set was at 900m and was a sand and gravel bottom with abundant small shrimps with very Dali style long antenna! A single anemone and broken sea urchin tests scattered the bottom too. It's all so exciting to see images of the seabed that no other human has to date seen – but it's time to grab a few hours' sleep now and leave this to the others, the trawl shift starts at 3am and don't want to miss what it will bring up.....

