

# 38 Ice Times

Vesleskarvet, Dronning Maud Land, Antarctica

October 1999

## Activities

With the bad weather behind us and increasing warmth from the sun, we are once again outside often, busy doing what must be completed by the beginning of take over. Machines have been serviced, Cabooses repaired and prepared for the take over and we all clean up as far as we go. Other members fixed the damage that was caused by the severe storms, which I'll never forget in my life.

Well, there are also some other activities happening around here, people started to get more into exercising so that when the "foreigners" come, they find us in good shape(s). I guess it was the start of the long awaited long sunny days.

## Day and night

That period of midnight sun has already started, I mean the dawn is about 1 AM and sunset at 11 PM and you can just imagine what's to follow from now onwards.



The combined sunrise sunset effect

Ja-nee one just can't believe that few months ago we were kissing the sun "ku bye" for the winter and then wondering when is it going to come back.

I used to ask myself if I'd ever make it through that dark period, yes we did make it with flying colors.

There were a few problems in the beginning, but we really laugh at them now that the other extreme is with us. There were a few guys who lost their sleeping pattern, well I guess that also comes and goes like the sun.

The sun is starting to get warmer and warmer, and there have already been some warnings (sunburn) of the high intensity of ultra violet rays and one has got to put on goggles and sun block when you go outside, even for a short time.

## Sports

From our sports desk this month we have mainly Darts, which has been taking place since the beginning of the winter. Thus far the log stands as follows.

TEAM	P	W	L	DR	POINTS
SANAE	7	5	2	0	10
NEUMAYER	4	2	2	0	4
GOUGH IS.	2	0	2	0	0
MARION IS.	2	0	2	0	0
HALLEY	1	0	1	0	0

P-games played, W- games won, L- games lost and DR- drawn games.

Well all the games we took part in were a lot of fun with a heavy morning after on a day or two. We are however not only involve with the inter-base sports, locally there's also still stiff competition amongst ourselves in search for the best guys to beat the take over team guys when they eventually get here.

## Nashornet Field trip

Well as far as the field trip is concerned, we went and we came back. It started one sunny day, 28th October to be exact, after much planning and preparation. Everything (mattresses, personal kit, tools, spares, foodstuff and so forth) had to be packed into the white elephant (which we are going to officially rename - "Kwalepe Kaboose"). The time of departure was high noon, which didn't work out so well as Conrad who was one of the "span lede" wasn't through with some emergency repair work. To make things go much faster, some of "die ander span lede" had to help with a big part of his job (and they thought they were going to play croquet). In the end we won the battle and were on the "road" at about five in the afternoon.

From the outset we had a very bumpy section of ice and we thought we're going to have an uncomfortable ride which would also prolong our trip. On the whole the worst bumpy patch happened to be around Vesles and as soon as we were over it, the snow was thick and firm so we managed to reach our "Bosveld Plaas" (Grunehogna) at around eleven that night in relative comfort.

Approaching the "plaas huis" we could see nothing until we were almost on top of it (in more ways than one). We found that "die plaas huise het onder die sneeu in gesink".



Grunehogna base under snow

Ons moes die grawe en goeters vat en grou om die deure oop te kry. Gelukkig kon ons sommige deure maklik oop kry, maar ons het bietjie baie gesukkel om die Genny kamer se deur oop te kry, maar u

weet mos "n boer maak 'n plan". After a serious attempt of breaking and entering we could remove the snow that had built up inside the genny room and dig the snow away from the generator itself.

One squirt of "quick-start" and two cranks later the frozen genny amazed us by co-operating and soon the base was on full power and we could start cooking and heating the base for sleeping.

Next morning we were up and on our way deeper south. We couldn't go fast on the first stretch as it was an uphill slope, and after getting stuck twice we had to leave one sled behind while taking the one on further up and returning for the lonely deserted sledge, and that's how we made it to our destination, Nashornet.



Istind, the beautiful peak.

Nashornet is a koppie of one of the mountain clusters between two huge glaciers, the Juttelstraumen and the Viddalen. Anyway we arrived at Nashornet around 8pm and managed to off-load and establish the fuel depot in a short time, the objective of the trip. We had our "base" (Kwalepe Kaboose) up and running again, this time of course with only a small generator for lights and things like laptops, battery chargers and so forth but no heaters. We braaied chops (outside at about -19°C) for dinner that evening and of course many things happened during the course of that cold evening, I can only say I did not see or hear anything.

To cut a long story short, we woke the next morning early, took a ride by skidoo to the high point other side of Nashornet to get a view of the huge crevasses in the Juttelstraumen glacier aptly named "the ploughed lands". On the neck we found something half buried that none of us could make out, or what purpose it was serving, except for alien activity. Unfortunately the weather had clouded over resulting in zero contrast so we could not make out the crevasses below.

After that we headed back to the "plaas huis" where we found doors sealed up with snow again, so we dug our way in and we slept. The next morning some of the party went to the top of Grunnies mountain while others went on a circumnavigation mission of the same, whilst some slept and read novels. Later we made our tracks back home, safe and sound in the warmth of the main base.

### Home sick

I think it's about time to think of coming back home now, you know, (James has been away for 25 months already -Ed) as there are so many things I wish I could see or hear. I miss listening to a radio station, television (live), some animals and I wish it could rain again for a while, I wish I can go to the movies (you know like very big screen thing), and I miss the **girls**.

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### Workwise

As far as the work is concern for this month, things are going pretty good for we've managed to do most of the work that was due in preparation for the forthcoming take-over. The vehicles have been prepared for the tough period ahead and have been

lowered to the ground by platform hoist now that they're ready for the long hard trips ahead.



Extracting a buried sled loaded with junk

We also managed to dig out some of the stuff that has been buried under the snow for two years or more that must be returned to South Africa.

### 2000 Calendar

Do you want to have something different for your neighbor for the millennium? Or do you want something out of this world? Well if so then listen to this one. A calendar that would make you feel as cool as it looks. It is made out of the cold, that's why it will make you as cool as it looks, with pictures that you can't find anywhere in the world except here. For further information, contact Elza Cromarty (tel: (021) 335 6172 Home).

### Birthdays

No one in particular was born this month here at Sanae, but we celebrated birthdays of some of our neighbors; Gough Is. (Kobie), Marion Is. (Bianca) and Neumayer (Andrea) . Well we hope you all did enjoy the most unique birthday of your whole life.

### Plakkers op die Sastrugi

We are not even safe from squatters down here in the far south. Have you ever thought of how it would be to sleep outside here in Antarctica? Well we also thought of it and we did try it. And what!? Well, it was a brilliant experience. We slept outside on the snow without anything but a inner and main sleeping bag and the water proof cover.



Squatters on our sastrugi

We did cheat a bit and used mattresses but otherwise completely in the open. To tell you the truth we had a very good night. Before we fell into one of the best sleeps we have had in a while, we saw a few birds (Antarctic Petrels) flying over us and we knew that it was going to be a very good night.

### Quote of the month

The most spoken words for this month were:  
"What is your bra size?"

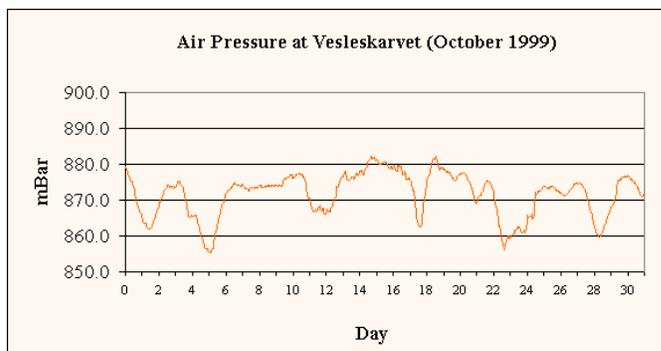
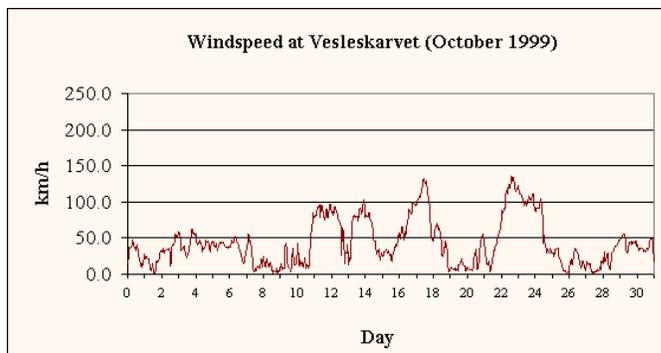
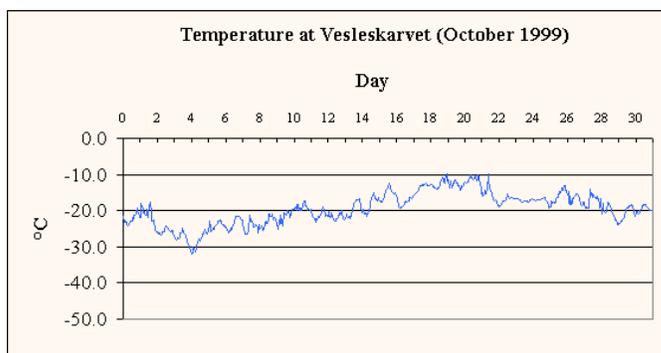
### Appreciation to the "B" team at home

Last but not least, we'd like to thank all the stake holders, parents, brothers, sisters, wives, girlfriends and everyone who help this team one way or the other. We'd also like to remind them that it's about that time again. If you're sending anything to any of us here, please contact us as soon as possible as the ship leaves Cape Town on the 25th November.

### Weather

Generally the weather was good with several days of nearly no wind although we did have four big storms. We also experienced much higher temperatures but also our coldest for the year.

	Minimum	Average	Maximum
Temperature/ °C	-32.36	-19.4	-9.04
Windspeed/ km/h	0	43.7	151.7
Wind Direction/ °	0.29	139.8	359
Air Pressure/ mBar	855.3	871.7	882.6



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