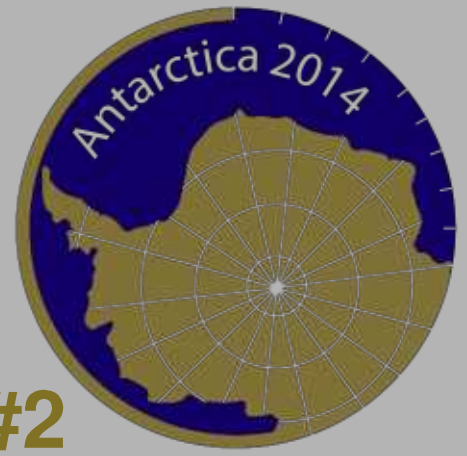


SANAE53

South African National Antarctic Expedition

Newsletter #2



TAKE-OVER

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Raymond Williams
Diesel Mechanic

In February, the SANAE 53 team was lucky to get a replacement diesel mechanic, who introduces himself here:

My name is Raymond Williams; I was born in Cape Town (Lansdowne).

I have stayed there for 35 years of my life and did my schooling and completed my diesel mechanic trademanship at City Tramway. Thereafter I moved to George to experience the beauty of the Garden Route, and worked there as fleet manager and mechanic at Super Rent. Then I worked at Fancourt Golf Estate as diesel mechanic until we moved to Oudtshoorn, where we are staying currently. George was always my home base, so I

worked in both areas for myself as mechanic.

On a more personal note, I am a very versatile person, enjoying to work with communities, people, interacting with organisations and I am a family person. I am a great believer in the religious world and enjoy reading spiritual books. One of the great qualities I do have, is being a spiritual motivational speaker.

I have been fortunate now to join up with 9 fantastic people in the Antarctic ice land, of whom I have the privilege of working with for a solid year. All I can say is, this is a challenging opportunity and an adventure at the same time. I enjoy the change of climate as it is something I always wanted to experience.

God Bless
Raymond Williams



Agulhas II to SANAE in a Trekker

Francois

We have been breaking snow covered ice for a couple of days and when you look outside it seems that we have already reached the continent. Except for the trail behind the ship of broken ice and frozen water you can see snow and icebergs from horizon to horizon. I'm one of fourteen people, who have been informed that we will have to pack and be ready in a minute's notice, to get on one of the first two helicopter flights. On the day of the announcement there is a lot of excitement and everyone is running around to pack and get everything in order. In all cabins of the "flight ready personnel", you can see the neatly placed backpack on the beds with one bag ready to go to the caboose (caravan). In all the rush another day passes and eventually we have to remove our bags from our beds and remove some clothing to go to bed. The next couple of days go by and on the sixth day after the announcement everyone who initially packed their bags is less ready for the flight than before the initial announcement.



As I walk out of the laundry room, I hear the announcement "Attention please. Everyone that is listed to be on Flight one and Flight two please report to the Starlite briefing room with all your bags". I run back to the laundry room only to see that my clothes are already soaked in water. I arrive in my room where it is now truly chaotic as everyone is repacking all their bags, but this time not from the closets, but from everywhere. And in all this is an amazing sense of excitement and adventure from everyone on the ship.

Two hours later and the helicopter slowly ascend from the ship and we can all see how lonely and small the Agulhas II looks in the ice. With beautiful scenery of penguins, seals and the ice shelf we arrive at summer station about 30 minutes later where we are greeted by the bearded men that went before us.

The next couple of





days are spent on fixing the snow smelter and learning to drive challengers and skidoo's (snowmobiles). We visited the old Neumayer II base that is buried below the snow and looks like an isolated ice castle. We also visit the new Neumayer III base where we join the German team for some meals and good German beer.

We were fourteen guys in the base. Five drivers, four

members of S53 and two members of S52, one Barloworld's mechanic, two dozers and luckily a chef. Initially we would have been at the summer base for two days before the ship arrives at the ice shelf, but we ended up spending two weeks there. The preparation for loading the cargo did not take us too long and with nice weather we were able to spend a lot of time outside and also visit the emperor penguin colonies.

After days of watching the ship drift West with the bay ice the Agulhas broke through and quickly progressed towards us and we were on our way to the ice shelf to collect the cargo. After 30 hours of non-stop off-loading we were ready with our cargo at summer base and had one night to sleep and rest before we start with the 300km trip to SANAE. It was Christmas Eve, but all we wanted for Christmas was some sleep. It was an early night for everyone with six Challengers waiting outside, each with 2 to 4 sleds with a weight between 40 and 70 tons of cargo. On these sleds were containers, fuel, skidoo's, our caravan (caboose), bulldozers and reefers (giant container freezers).

It was high summer with 24hour sunshine and getting up early in the morning meant that the sun was still high up in the sky. All cargo loaded and five Challengers with cargo started crawling towards Neumayer to pick up the reefers and head for SANAE. The schedule was easy to understand, two drivers with 2hours driving followed by two hours resting/sleeping. And for the four guys that would spend the trip in the back of the caboose the schedule was simply to sleep as much as you can and stay in your sleeping bag to fight the cold. It did not take long before summer-station and Neumayer station disappeared behind us and all we could see in a 360 degrees view was snow. No sign of any structure, mountain or life. All we could do was follow the little arrow on the GPS to stay on our crevasse free route.





4 The CAT-train usually moves at around 15km an hour. Each challenger has his own perks and disadvantages. Our trip started with very good weather and I was surprised by the fact that the sun can really warm up a cabin as if you are driving in a more familiar continent. Small backpacks or an iPad in the sun would get really hot. We were about two hours out when we had to stop for a first surprise. One of the challengers lost its alternator, after about an hour of trying and fixing we decided to jump start the challenger and it will be without electrical power, meaning only handheld radio, no ref counter or speed, no music and worst of all no heater. This is how one of the nicer challengers in the fleet can quickly change into the worst one. Luckily this was our first and our last issue with one of the vehicles.

Crawling forward over the snow is not a smooth ride: on many areas it feels more like moving across a concrete ocean where the waves were instantly frozen, driving a tank. We would only find out later at SANAE, after driving a dozer with steel rails, that a challenger is not close to driving a tank. And yet, the low refs of a diesel engine and the constant snow waves approaching, definitely make you drowsy and most people don't find it too difficult to sleep in their off time and start moving around in their chairs more often in their last hour of driving to fight against their sleep.



Staying with the metaphor of the ocean-like continent it's really beautiful to see how the light from the sun plays on the snowy planes, as you would see close to sunset over the ocean. Even though we have 24 hour sunlight, it still plays some tricks close to midnight as it gets a bit lower on the horizon and the long shadows and shadows of clouds set a spectacular scene.

After about 18 hours we got to the halfway mark where another caboose was waiting. This was left along with some diesel bowsers by the team on their way to the Bukta bay. On their way there, they were only four guys driving three challengers so they spent the night at the halfway house to rest. On our trip, we simply refuelled and heated some canned meals using



the gas stove in the caboose. About two hours later, we were on our way again taking the extra caboose and bowsers along with us for the second leg of the race. We started seeing small mountains on the horizon for the first time and it really felt that we are moving forward as we saw evidence of mountains moving towards us.

After another 8 hours of driving we saw the mountain on which the SANAE base stands for the first time. This meant that we had another 5 hours of driving left before we would reach it. On one of these 2 hour stretches I swapped with Patrick and went to Challenger number 4. This was when I realized how lucky I was to spend most of my time in a Challenger where the heater works. When I got into the truck my co-driver was lying in his mummy bag. This is a massive sleeping bag where only a little hole is left for some air. It was really tough to drive in the cold and no electricity also meant no music. After my two hour shift I didn't mind going back to the luxury of Challenger 6. Of course if this article was written by Patrick it might have included more detail on the temperatures of an Antarctic road trip.

As we approached the base we started going uphill. It's very unusual for a driver to be able to go all the way up the hill, but it's been done before and therefore a big challenge. If no one is successful, the driver that was able to get closest to home without unhooking a sled would walk away with all the glory. We finally arrived at about two o'clock in the morning of the 27th in the base. The structure looks magnificent and as you walk into the base for the first time you realise how the base is much larger than you imagined. But the story of "inside" will be left for another writer or article and will unfold over the next year.



Take-Over 2013/14

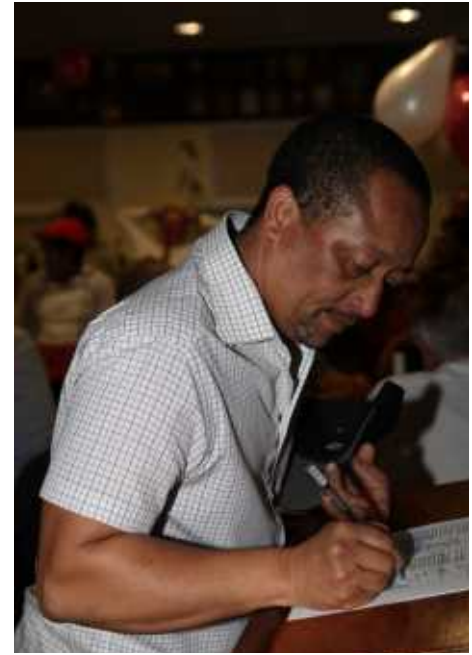
Charles

Finally arriving at SANAE IV our home for the next 14 months on Christmas day (2013/12/25), we didn't know what to expect. From the first day everything looked strange, but the excitement was growing inside with every second that passed. We were introduced to our predecessors, given orientation inside and outside the base and training on the vehicles we were to use while here.

The first week we started with our take-over training and getting to really know our surroundings. I, as the Electrical Engineer, got started with the power generation of SANAE IV base, the three generators that provide power to the base and surrounding areas. You think you know a lot but you learn something new everyday. Then we moved outside to get training on producing water for our consumption at the snow smelter, something I never knew anything about and it was an experience getting to know the operation of the smelter.

Week two, we got to learn about operating the challengers that transports heavy goods from the ship to the base as well as the diesel that the Gensets run on. I must say from my experience that it was challenging to the body and mind to be driving one of the challengers. Week three was more training and more to learn and preparing to officially take-over the operations of SANAE IV from last year's team. With all the take-over training there was also hands on repairs and upgrading to be done in and around the base.

But all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, so the take-over games were organized to take one's mind away from all the training and give a day off. On 2014/01/16 after the festivities of the games the official function arrived and the old over-wintering team SANAE 52 was preparing to step down and hand the mental and keys of SANAE IV base to the new over-wintering team SANAE 53. With much anticipation and some nervousness, we accepted the challenge of maintaining and preserving the standards and morals of previous teams that have graced SANAP SANAE IV base for 2014/15. Till the next take-over.



Take-Over Games

Hendrik



Take-over games happen just when everyone is tired of work and the person next to him. Then it's the time to release the inner beast and to try to devour the other team in terms of strength, skill or just plain luck. The games are diverse and range from the traditional tug-of-war to the unique Antarctica boot (Pampoenskoen) throw. This year we also had the very first Annual SANAE Antarctic Cross Country Run.

The games are there to see which team is the best. We had the following teams: The battered, bearded, old year team, S52; the new motivated, adventurous team, S53; the hardened drivers; absent-minded scientist; PWD (public works) and Starlite, the aviation group.

The eerie mist swept in on time for a highly anticipated event, boot-throw. The purpose is to throw a pampoenskoen as far as possible. Each participant received three chances to prove himself. This is not an event for pure brute force, but also skill: the ability to throw the boot with the optimal angle by having your timing perfect for releasing the boot. A concept that numerous of people underestimated. The men's league was won by none other than our metkassie.

I participated in the cross country run and it was just marvellous. It's extremely tiring to run on the Antarctic surface as one sags a centimetre for every step taken. But luckily we ran to the wind scoop, which is downhill the whole way. It was very quiet and all that you could hear was the noise in your head, your own rhythm and breathing. I was overcome by peacefulness away from the bustling base. The landscape is amazing, with drifting snow that sweeps across the surface, the sun near the horizon and SANAE base that stand on the nunatak (an isolated peak of rock projecting above a surface of inland ice or snow). It's just you, the desert and the person in front of you that you are trying to overtake.





8 The rest of takeover-games were “boep of the bukta” (who has the biggest boep), 50m dash in pampoenskoene, bullybeef eating competition (to get rid of 5 year old bullybeef), foosball, table tennis, pool, soccer and down-downs.

At the end of the games, we had our take-over function to formally handover all the responsibility of the old year team to the new year team. More importantly, the best person in each game as well as the overall winners were announced. - S53 of course, what else did you expect?



Camping at Summer Station

Christiaan

Why go camping when you are already camping 4000km away from home in Antarctica? I mean camping in Antarctica is pretty extreme. It's not like we're camping at the local holiday resort, or went for a stroll through the proverbial park. This is mean high level camping. So why go to a less comfortable campsite and make life even harder?

Especially considering that our home (SANAE base) is a very comfortable camp site. It's for 2 reasons way better than anything I've ever rented back in South Africa. Firstly it consists of more than one room, and secondly there's a walk in fridge with free food I wouldn't be able to afford on a regular basis. There's also a pool table, table tennis table, dish washer, TV (I don't own a television) and VCR (I didn't own a Video Cassette Recorder back in the eighties when they were still in circulation). Therefore without a shadow of a doubt, SANAE base makes for comfortable living in Antarctica.



So why join a 300km trek to summer base to assist with cargo work? Even here at SANAE, base the signs were clear that such an undertaking will result in extreme discomfort. For instance shoveling ice, going out with a skidoo, or checking the weather instruments close to base requires heavy duty cold weather gear. I've been here for 2 months and am still struck by how cold it is outside, and it's still a little disturbing seeing temperature's effortlessly and regularly drop below -20°C . My hands and feet don't become awkwardly cold, like on cold South African winter mornings, they become worryingly cold.

What worried me most after arriving at summer base was a bad case of déjà vu, which I later realized was actually a case of being reminded of flats I used to rent back in South Africa. Small uncomfortable places not recommended for first dates. For instance going to the toilet at summer base requires getting up close and personal with your own as well as the other residents bowl and bladder movements. We could also only shower every second day, with a





shower constituting of a quick rinse - wash – rinse procedure.

There was also a lot more outside time compared to SANAE base, with most of it spent driving noisy rattling 30 ton monsters, as well as hitching and unhitching 50 ton cargo. There was as usual a lot of ice shoveling, cleaning and carrying of stuff around. All examples of mundane work that became mundanely uncomfortable at -20°C .

So why go camping when you're already camping? Are we suckers for punishment? I actually don't understand my own reasons for doing it, even though I've been doing it since high school. All I know is that I usually get excited by it, followed by enjoying and moping about the displacement from daily comforts, and finally feeling 10 feet tall afterwards. And that's how I felt after going camping while camping in Antarctica.



The SANAE Lifestyle

Brandon

Welcome to the lifestyle of the SANAE IV over-wintering team S53. Our days start with morning breakfast meeting, which usually begins around 8:20 am, depending on the arrival time of all the team members. In this morning meeting each team member receives his duties for the day.

As one of the diesel mechanic for the team, my daily job mainly consisted of general maintenance of the generators, dozers and Challengers. Unfortunately for me here is an HS team consisting of two team members, also known as Hectically Strong. The HS team's role is to test the strength and ability of the dozers, but unfortunately the dozers are just not that strong and I always end up having to do the repairs.



At around 5:30 pm everyone will be back inside or pretty much finished with the day's labour and anxious for dinner to be served. Due to the novices preparing dinner, we usually start with pre-dinner drinks.

At 7 pm sharp daily we have dinner (Editor: filthy lies), with a vegetarian option normally on the menu, and on the random

occasion of some pork. Twice a week we have team building social events hosted by one of the team members after dinner, which often starts in the bar, but if not, most likely ends in the bar.

That pretty much sums up the life at SANAE IV.



Antarctic Quirks

Patrick

As I reach for the door handle, ZAP! It's the fifth static shock I've received today. And I've only been up half an hour! But I'm used to it by now. We all are. Getting shocked 50 times a day is just part of life here at SANAE IV, the air is so dry. After 2 months, I only get a kick out of the exceptionally huge shocks. Like the kind you get when folding laundry fresh from the tumble dryer.

I am discovering that our SANAE IV base has its quirks, like the unhealthy daily dose of static electricity, that serve to remind you that no matter how comfortable you may feel in the base, you're not in the real world.

I have not seen cash since stepping off the ship. There is no need for it in Antarctica. There are no shops and nothing to buy. Soft drinks are probably the closest thing to a currency that we have at SANAE IV. By the end of the year, when stocks run low, a can of coke will be worth its weight in gold!

If you dread your daily commute through traffic, come to Antarctica. Forget traffic, I have not seen a car since leaving Cape Town. Well... except for one mean-looking Toyota Hilux, with tracks instead of tyres, at Germany's Neumeyer III base. We use snow mobiles to get around. If we need to tow cargo sleds, we take a Caterpillar Challenger tractor. And if we need to move snow, we take a Caterpillar D6H dozer. There are no road signs, no lane markings, no traffic lights and no taxis. Only snow, ice and more snow.



Getting dressed to go outside is an undertaking. It's not unusual to start overheating in the change room, wrapping up in all of the warm layers. On a really cold, windy day you'll start off with a thermal base layer. On top of that will be a mid-layer, say work overalls. Then the bright red, waterproof, extreme cold weather suit on the outside to keep you toasty warm and dry. To save your fingers from burning with cold, you'll wear two pairs of gloves, inners and outers. And shove another few pairs into your pockets for just in case. With thick socks on, you'll stuff your feet into thermal insulating liners and then into black Baffin boots or bright-orange pampoenskoene. The last bit of exposed skin to cover is your head. A balaclava tucked into a buff and topped off with a beanie will leave only your eyes looking out. Put on your goggles and you're finally ready to head outside, no matter the weather.

The last oddity is the never-setting sun. During takeover, 24 hours of sunlight meant 24 hours of work and play. Simulating darkness with blackout blinds was the only way to get to sleep. The sun has only just started to set nowadays, towards the end of February. And the sunsets are extraordinarily beautiful. Although that may be partly due to us not having seen a sunset for two months. And just moments after the sun sinks below the horizon, you get to enjoy a sunrise too.



These curious characteristics of life in Antarctica are not so much a reminder that you are far from home, but rather a reminder that you are on the adventure of a lifetime, at the start of an epic year at SANAE IV.



So What is Antarctica All About?

Leonard

Now that friends and families more or less know where Antarctica is situated they might start asking what it is all about and how some of us experience it.



I can just say from the start that it is totally different from life back home. The smallest tasks that are so easily done at home can become a major issue outside and cannot be fixed with duct tape. Not even that works in this harsh environment. The only tool that seems to always be working is the good old garden spade and believe me, you get a lot of exercise with that. I am sure we will all become good gardeners once back home. And for any trivial job you want to do outside, it takes you at least 10 minutes to get into your cold weather gear.

And remember there are no animals at SANAE or mammals and birds are rather scarce and can only be seen during summertime when the odd pair of Skuas unexpectedly arrives for a quick base inspection. For me this is a big factor because at home I am always surrounded by animals, birds and my two best four legged friends, whom I dearly miss at this stage.

A part from your own inside work a lot of other tricks and skills also have to be learned in record time. Driving Challengers and dozers and hydraulic lifts and cranes, where the handling is in no way related to the driving of your luxury SUV or Merc back home. I am used to motorcycles and just cannot get over the feeling of falling off the wrong side of a skidoo, which do not have the ability to lean into a tight corner like a lekker tuned up Suzy 550GT on a Sunday “rock around the roundabouts” trip.

Tying down dozers onto sleds with chains and ratchet straps, digging out holes for sleds to fit in so dozers can be loaded, trying not to lose your body parts to frostbite in the process, remembering to keep on adding suntan lotion to the remaining exposed parts, and feeling like you are going to drown because for some reason or other your nose keeps running like a 3 year old toddler. I think maybe it’s the human body trying to over compensate for the fact that this is one of the driest places on earth, where hanged biltong will be ready in four days time.

And take-over. Now that’s something else. If you have never worked one month and twenty days nonstop without a day off and at least 4 hours overtime every day, then you haven’t been at SANAE yet. And might I also add that the chances of getting any sleep at night is almost



impossible. For starters, it is not night because the sun doesn't set. People gallop down the passages right through the night. And yes, you don't have a room to yourself but rather share with others who leave the room doors open at night and try to do a much better job than you in the snoring contest.



I accidentally had 5 minutes off the other day to visit the loo and flipped through a Getaway magazine that was lying around. I saw a picture of a springbuck being chased by a pack of cheetahs and a nice story written about it, and my mind started wandering about rather becoming a reporter and be in the nice African climate. And then I thought about take-over and how I can describe it, then some cognitive processes started to boil in my brain (or what's left of it at this stage) which connected the two scenes together. I imagined the reporter joining the chase in his 4x4 and sticking his mike and video camera out the window to capture the angst and feelings that the poor buck

must be experiencing. And I could hear the buck panting, "Huuuugh Huuugh Huuugh!" saying "Just managing bro. But let them first kill me. Then we can talk"

And then, just as you think the ship is leaving and you will finally get some rest, you might just become lucky and get chosen to go on the Caterpillar train for all 300 km to Akta Bukta, and yes, 300 km back. We did 3 hour shifts at the steering, and believe me there is no way you can get any sleep in this bumping, shaking, noisy steel machine with no heaters (although some do have).

And remember, there are no toilet facilities available along the road. Just the wide open space and a howling wind awaits you as you desperately step out of a stopped Cat with a plastic bag in your hand to do your business and neatly tie it up and store it at the back of the Cat for later disposal. That is if you are lucky enough not to have it blown out from beneath you and having to do the pants down bunny hop-catch game through the snow to retrieve it. All this just to get to Neumayer with its amazing new concept of a base. You see the Germans and they look so relaxed and happy that you might start asking now what are they doing wrong. But I must say their facilities are excellent , they even have a sonstoep. They offered us





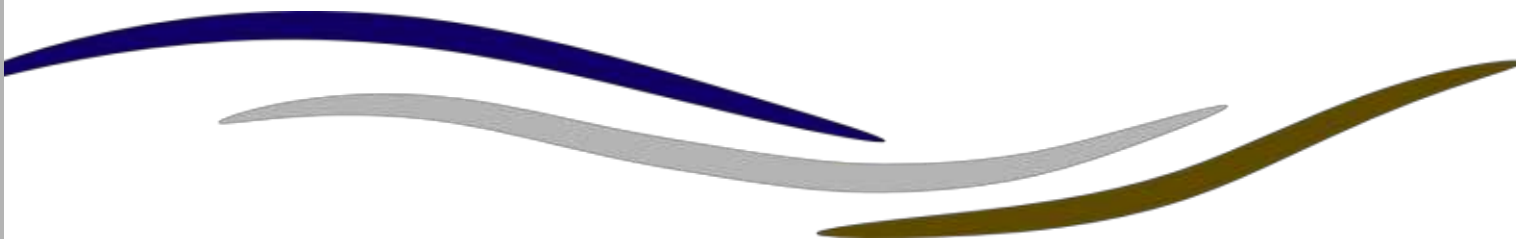
some great food and good beer (although a bit on the bitter side) and that eventually even put a smile on my dial and a lot of the travelling tiredness and pain disappeared.

So the Cat train is now over and maybe we will get some rest. You wish. Now all the depot work starts. Hundreds of tons of dozers and sleds and machines must be moved and depo-ed before the end of the summer season. On heaps of ice so that they will not get buried too deep in the winter storms. Note the “to deep” because in November the reverse process will take place after first digging them out with spades.

Ok, so now even the depo work is finished. Some time to relax? No way. For the first time since take-over started, you can now start with the backlog of all your own work that has been piling up since take-over.

But Antarctica is also a place of hope. One might hope that a team that was assembled in such a short time will glue together as a kind of family and live happily ever after until the next ship arrives. Maybe that is asking a bit too much of human beings. And the truth is that the other side of the coin can also happen. Things can go wrong and the whole experience may be compared to a failed marriage with lots of painful months being wished away until the eventual divorce and separation. I can only hope that it does not happen during this year. But I am sure that giving some time to relax and social after all the serious work is finished the members will start to understand each other better, which will hopefully result in friendships being formed.

So my dear friends back home. I am sure you can see that we are quite busy on this side and maybe that is why I did not keep in touch with you as I should during this time. However I hope that things will start to quiet down a little soon and that by next month I might even write about opening those trowsers with hobbies, that has been stashed away until now, on the odd off-weekend. Maybe even get time to figure out how that new camera that I bought for the trip actually works, other than just pressing the button and hoping for some miracle processes inside to create a good picture.



Keeping our Corner Clean

Cornelia

As custodians, scientists and explorers of the most desolated and untamed continent in the world, you would expect that Antarctica has always been treated with the utmost respect for the environment and wild life. Unfortunately this has not always been the case. With open waters being treated as convenient disposal locations for effluent, oil drums and heavy machinery on their last legs, and large open stretches treated as the municipal dumps, Antarctica's temporary inhabitants have had a less than pristine reputation. Fortunately in 1991 the Madrid protocol (Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty) was signed by Antarctic Treaty (1959) nations. The treaty parties declared Antarctica to be "a natural reserve devoted to peace and science", and committed themselves to the "...protection of the Antarctic environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems, and the intrinsic value of Antarctica, including its wilderness and aesthetic values...". The Protocol came into force in January 1998.



It seems that sometimes humans need a bit of prodding before we do the right thing. No more burning of old huts that no longer serve a purpose or pretending "what the eyes don't see ...". And while I'm sure that there isn't always 100% compliance (inherently lazy that we humans are), at least now there is the risk of shameful exposure and possibly a big stick for a blatant disregard of this beautiful continent.

So what do we at SANAE do to keep our little corner clean? I guess you could say we are trying to implement the saying "reduce, reuse, recycle". With 10 people being fed for the year and no power over the buying choices made by the DEA, we do not have a lot of control over the amount of refuse we create. But the way we do make a difference is by asking everyone (including the eighty take-over personnel) to leave all packaging material at home. This would include the boxes your six pairs of thermals came in (meaning over 500 boxes left in RSA) or your new camera's box (which you were planning on throwing away anyways, right after you had the chance to glance at the instruction manual). Next up we have "reuse". Once again,





we generate way more waste than we could possibly reuse, but certain things do find a use. With no ability to quickly go to the shop to buy something, sometimes necessity is the mother of all invention. Cardboard boxes become palm trees for your tropical party, and glass beetroot bottles are used for spice mixes, as pen holders and for onion marmalade (it's on my to-do list, promise). Oros bottles are sought after items used for anything from gym water bottles, to freshly squeezed orange juice bottles (while we still have oranges) or for incubating our homemade yogurt. But as per the (supposedly) Eskimo saying of "don't eat the yellow snow", I urge extreme caution when you find an Oros bottle in a Challenger or science hut. It is probably not Lemos.



When it comes to recycling, we probably do more than anyone of us have ever done at home. But what do you do with a year's worth of waste? There is no waste truck that rumbles past on Wednesday mornings to come pick up the dustbins. Everything needs to go back to RSA. Everything. Even old left-over's and our supply of rotting potatoes. We separate, crush and drum and seal all our waste. Glass and cans are crushed; plastic and paper is compressed;

food and oils are drummed. When we have a nice collection of sealed drums they are all lowered out of the waste room and put onto sleds for return to South Africa, where the DEA then takes over responsibility to have the separated waste disposed of in a responsible manner. So we do our bit to keep this beautiful continent clean. Zibi would have been proud (I'm assuming everyone remembers "ZAPPIT in the Zibi bin!").



Antarctic Personalities

Sonja

Georg Balthasar von Neumayer (1826 - 1909)



“The 6. International Geographic Congress in London, 1895, expresses the opinion, that the exploration of the Antarctic region is the most important geographic work still to be executed. Taking into account that human knowledge of almost all branches of science will benefit, the congress furthermore recommends to all the different scientific organisations from around the world, to do their utmost to start before the turn of the century. ”

Georg von Neumayer, Founder and Director (1876 – 1903) of the German “Seewarte”, Institute for Maritime Meteorology and Chairperson of the International Polar Commission from 1879.

During this time, Roald Amundsen lived with him and learnt geomagnetic measurement techniques.

Roald Engelbregt Gravning Amundsen (1872 - 1928)

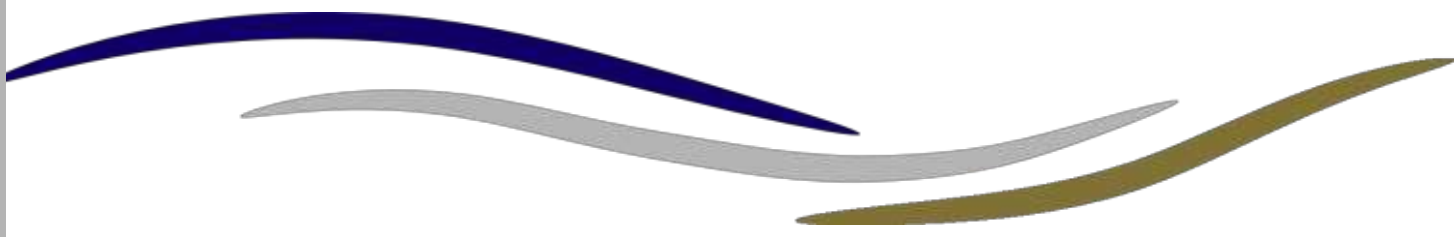


He was the youngest of four sons of a Norwegian captain, who grew up in Kristiana (now Oslo).

He is regarded as the most successful polar explorer, being the first human on both the geographic North Pole (12.5.1926) and South Pole (14.12.1911).

As Norway had recently gained independence and had friendly ties with the British government, Amundsen kept his aim – the South Pole – a secret, and only informed his team during the voyage. They all decided to continue along with him. In January 1911 Amundsen reached Antarctica, but could only start his journey to the South Pole on 20 October because of a false start due to bad weather. He reached his goal 35 days before his rival, Robert Scott. Amundsen relied on sledge dogs for transportation, which were later eaten for survival.

He died during a rescue expedition for the Italian Umberto Nobile, whose airship crashed over the Arctic.



Robert Falcon Scott (1868 - 1912)



He may not have been the most successful polar explorer, but he is definitely the most famous explorer and mailman.

He led the Discovery-Expedition (Nov 1902-Feb 1903) to reach the South Pole, but failed, which he blamed on Ernest Shackleton, whom he unjustly labelled the “invalid” of the group.

During his Terra-Nova-Expedition, he reached the South Pole, only to discover that Amundsen had been the first to reach the South Pole a month before him. Amundsen had left a letter at the pole, addressed to the Norwegian king, reporting about his journey to the pole, which he asked Scott to take back to Great Britain to deliver to the king. On the way back to the base, Scott and his four companions died due to hunger, disease and cold.

Ernest Henry Shackleton (1874 - 1922)



After the failure of the Discovery-Expedition, he returned to Antarctica 1908, leading the Nimrod-Expedition, setting a new record, having to turn around 180 km away from the South Pole.

After Amundsen and Scott reached the South Pole, Shackleton planned to traverse the pole from coast to coast on his Endurance-Expedition. This expedition also failed after his ship got crushed in pack ice in the Weddell Sea.

Shackleton might not have succeeded in his expedition endeavours, but he is famous for his genuine concern for his expedition members, especially the adventurous rescue mission after the failed Endurance-Expedition, where he managed to keep the whole team alive.

He died on his last expedition, the Quest-Expedition, where he died of a heart attack in South Georgia.

And our heroes:

First SANAE Team (1960)

Back, f.l.t.r:

Andre v.d. Merwe, Dick Binneman, Hannes la Grange, Marten du Preez, Blackie de Swardt, George Strauss, Nick Erasmus, Chris de Weerd, Vic von Brunn, Theo van Wijk.



Quote of the month: Sonja (Our team doctor)

' I prefer a Deputy from the back '

Song of the month: Brandon

Push the button (Sugababes)

Movie of the month: The Shining

Weather statistics for February 2014:

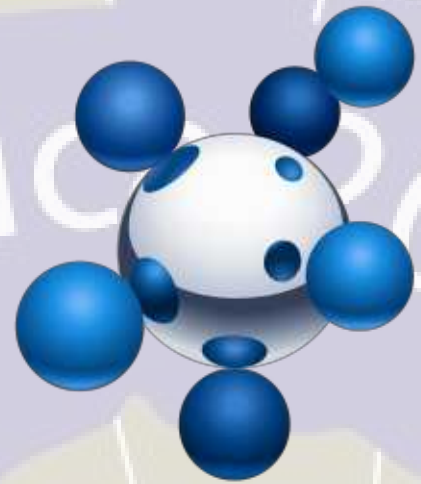
	Maximum	Minimum	Average
Pressure	897.5 (11th)	870.2 (20th)	885.0
Temperature	-4.8 (6th)	-19.8 (27th)	-12.3
Humidity	96% (6th)	27% (16th)	64%
Wind gust	20.3 m/s (10th)		
	39.5 knots		
	73.1 km/h		



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SEVEN OAKS WINE



ROBERTSON - SOUTH AFRICA

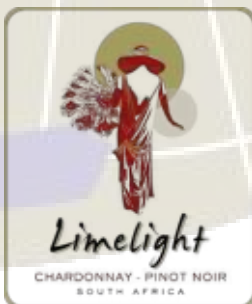
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