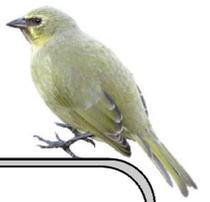


## In this edition

<b>Celebrations on Gough Island - <i>Sonja Lizemore</i></b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Martin's Birthday - <i>Sonja Lizemore and Tshepo Tawane</i></b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Leon's Labours - <i>Leon Keyser</i></b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Weekly Feast - <i>Graham Parker</i></b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The island of rain and wind - <i>Sonja Lizemore</i></b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Nature Notes - <i>Kalinka Rexer-Huber and Graham Parker</i></b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Photo synthesis - <i>Everyone</i></b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Gough weather</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Sponsors</b>	<b>20</b>

# GOUGH BUNTING



## Celebrations on Gough Island



February month is a month for love, and on Gough Island it was the same as any where else in the world. We were celebrating VALENTINES DAY on the 14<sup>th</sup> February. The team was invited to a Valentines Sunday brunch. The dining room was decorated according the theme of love and with red, lots of red. The dress code? Red and white of course!



*Sonja Lizemore*





## Martin's Birthday

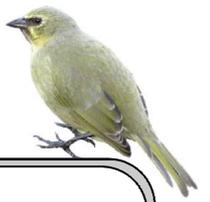
Our very first birthday celebration for the year 2010 was on the 23rd of February, the month of "LOVE" does it say something about Martin? Oh certainly yes, he is a loving and considerate guy indeed, as for the smile he emits it is like cupid has its arrow constantly on him.

It was 30something years ago around 5am or so when a baby boy was born to the Nysschens family, crying as he arrived on mother earth not knowing that one day he'll be on some island far far away from his blood family but fortunately he is not alone the Gough 55 family was there to celebrate this beautiful day with him. I thought of waking him up at 5am "or so" on this day, to get him wet so as to remind him of the conditions he lived under during the 9 months before this 30 something years. If you know what I mean! lol any way....



With great diligence Kalinka baked a chocolate cake and decorated it with small fishes because Martin likes fishing. The guys decided to take him out for fishing, fortunately the weather had honoured this special day the winds had subsided and the rain took a hike and more importantly the fish did show up they caught 2 five-fingers.

# GOUGH BUNTING



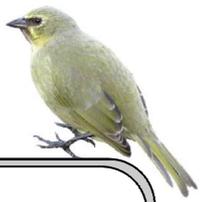
We thanked Martin for having his birthday on such a beautiful day **J**, we were able to have the cake on the outside table together as a team. We shared nice jokes and a good laugh. I should tell you; the cake was divine...! . We also had an early afternoon braai. A few shooters later and some retreat to their rooms for an early night. **J**.

The birthday party and all the calls from home will always be remembered, and also the nice pressies that his family packed in already last year and was handed out on his birthday. Martin's Gough present was a collage to let him remember Gough Island for ever, thanks to some team members working very late at night to finish it in time.



We are looking forward to our next celebration – a cake and tea afternoon next month. Will keep you posted in the next issue of The Bunting.

*Tshepo & Sonja*



## Leon's Labours



Hello and welcome to all our readers. From time to time I get requests from people asking me what I am doing on Gough Island and what the lifestyle is like. We live here the same as at home except that there is no television. Everyone has his/her own daily tasks, and to keep every one happy the base is running like any household.



One of my daily tasks is to see that there is fresh water. The supply comes from a river from the mountain near the base. From time to time maintenace has to be done especially when there was a gust of 50 or more knots and the top of a watertank was blown away and need a new top.

Leon and Martin fixing a new top on the water tank

Our electricity is generated by diesel generators. There are three generators – two Perkins engines, six

# GOUGH BUNTING



cylinder water-cooled and one Deutz engine six cylinder air cooled, and this engine also powers the crane. These engines are serviced every 250 hours and refueling is a daily task. The generators also supply the power to the 2 walk-in-freezers, 4 geysers, the balloon room generator, the satellite dish and the usual power for the base.



Leon at "his" generators



The 10 diesel tanks

The diesel is stored in 10 tanks – each one holds 16 000 litre diesel. These tanks are refuelled during take-over from diesel that was carried by the S.A. Aghulas.

# GOUGH BUNTING



I also operate the crane when The Edinburgh – a fishing boat of Tristan da Chuna- delivers parcels to us. We were so lucky to get parcels on Christmas day. There is no docking place on Gough Island, and the only way to come on land is either by helicopter or with the crane.

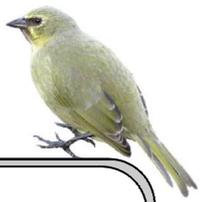
There is still a lot more to tell of Gough Island, but the editor told me I can't take the whole Bunting for my article, so till we meet again.

Diesel pumped from the ship to the tanks

*Leon Keyser*



Leon operating the crane

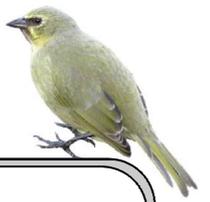


## Weekly Feast

Life on this 65 sq km island in the South Atlantic Ocean is wonderfully peaceful. There are none of the hustles and bustles generally associated with a normal life back home; supermarket lines, traffic jams, running late to work etc. Our days are occupied by the work we do, and the activities we enjoy in our spare time. However one of the things that stands out in the island life for me is the blurring of time. Life at the base is no Monday to Friday workplace. The weather work is conducted 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The diesel generators run and must be monitored constantly, the communications must be checked daily, the medic is always on stand-by should anyone need help. For Kalinka and I there are always data to collect, so the weekends are often just work days. It becomes hard to distinguish a Monday from a Saturday, or a Thursday from a Sunday. We don't have jobs, newspapers and TV's reminding us of where in the week we are. In many ways I think time passes months at a time, as each month it becomes nearer to the time that those missing loved ones get to see them again.

There is one important event that separates our months into weeks however: Leon's Sunday lunches. Leon is not only the all important diesel mechanic and maker of superb Biltong; he is also a heck of an enthusiastic and talented cook. On Saturday afternoon, ingredients usually start to accumulate in the kitchen. Sunday morning, when most of us are still in bed, Leon sets to work. It is fairly common for the base to be full of the delicious smell of a roasting leg of mutton or some such as many of us wake for breakfast. Sometime around lunch time the dinner bell is rung, and we get to enjoy the delicious meal that Leon has created. I can't think of a better way to finish a week, and remind us another week is about to begin, then to sit down with the team and enjoy a great meal (frequently followed by a Sunday nap). Leon's a family man, with three grown kids back home. His delicious home-cooking here on the island helps bring all of us together as a family too. And it does a lot to help in saying goodbye to one week and readying for the next.

*Graham Parker*



## The Island of wind and rain



“Most of the southern hemisphere is covered with water, from the icy Antarctica to the more temperate coastlines of the southern continents there is little in the way of land. Dotted about this vast ocean are several relatively small islands and archipelagos. The majority are uninhabited by humans but are home to many seabirds and seals, unique terrestrial flora and invertebrate fauna. Gough Island has seen almost 350 years of human involvement – first it was a place where replenishment of fresh water was taken from ships on their way to the Far East and also people that were on sealing expeditions. Apart from sealing activities other commercial ventures were considered and attempted on Gough Island in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century like guano harvesting, an attempt for diamond mining and fishing.

The value of meteorological observations at Gough Island and especially in conjunction with data gathered from other meteorological stations in neighbouring parts of the world make Gough Island a very important weather station. The South African Weather Station was established on the Island on 13 May 1956 after some research was first done to see about the results from the Island. These results were extremely useful for the Cape Sea Route because they rely on the observations obtained from the sites to the west of the country where frontal systems that bring bad weather move from west to east in the Southern Ocean.

# GOUGH BUNTING



The Gough Island weather station is not a automatic weather station (AWS) only, as remote areas elsewhere, but is manually operated as well. An AWS only make surface observations which are insufficient for accurate forecast of weather conditions. Surface observations require information from the air column from ground level to high elevations (several kilometres) and this information is usually obtained from an instrument known as a Radiosonde, attached to a weather balloon.



Radar systems and Global Positioning Systems are also used to track the paths of Radiosonde and thus gather information about wind speed and direction in the upper atmosphere. Two ascents are needed per day and at Gough Island, with its strong and gusty winds this information is very valuable

for weather forecast world wide.”

(Hanel .C. Chown, S.L. Gaston, K.J. *Gough Island a Natural History*. 2005).



With this article I want to inform you about the winds/gusts we're experiencing here and why Gough is known for its unpredictable weather. The weather on Gough Island can pass from bright, warm, sunny conditions to thick mist, rain and substantial cold in a matter of minutes.

At 40°S Gough Island lies on the cusp of the roaring forties, and in the path of oncoming frontal systems that are born in the Antarctic and dissipate over southern Africa. Gough Island has a temperate oceanic climate with strong, prevailing westerly winds. Average wind speed of between 97.92km/h or 54.4 knots up to

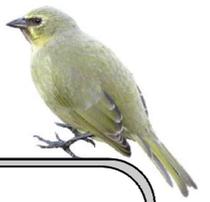
# GOUGH BUNTING



265.32 km/h or 147.4 knots (recorded from Sept 2009 – Feb. 2010) blow on about 5% of summer days, whereas they are about three times more frequent in winter.

Not only are the winds strong on Gough Island, but the rainfall is also heavy. Compared to other places it is very wet. Mean annual precipitation is about 3000 - 3500mm. This elevated rainfall is probably partly a consequence of orographic clouds. Generally these clouds lie between 300 and 500m, making clear days something of a rarity. Misty conditions are also common at sea level and can reduce visibility to less than a few metres.

*Sonja Lizemore*



## Nature Notes



February has almost come to an end on Gough. Many of us hoped some beautiful calm weather would arrive as the roaring forties settled into late summer. Not so it would seem, as February proved to be wet and windy, frequently keeping us challenged as we went about our working days. It was a busy month for us, with many of the species we study on the island well into their breeding seasons.

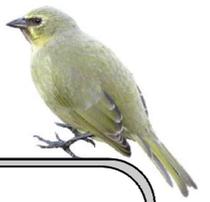
Many young birds are around and about on Gough at the present. Having just left their nests, a lot of the young birds stand out - being a bit clumsy in flight, or having croaky, not yet mature singing voices, or being feathered differently to the mature adults. Lovely chocolate brown Skuas are all over the island, wide eyed and alert to the new world they are experiencing. Young Buntings on the coastal cliffs and in the mountains are particularly bold, frequently coming right up to us to investigate what funny things we humans are. Moorhens lacking the colourful plumage of the adults nervously dart out from cover. What often characterises the young of all species is their lack of alarm to a couple of humans wandering past. The young birds seem frequently unaware that we are anything but a normal part of their surroundings, so don't flee at our sight, whereas the adults know we are definitely not locals, and generally give us a wide berth.

Atlantic Yellownosed albatross chicks are starting to grow true flight feathers and lose their downy feathers. They are also transforming from a rounded chickball to a shapely albatross, with rumps starting to protrude from the nest mounds that they have occupied since December. These molly chicks will fledge next month and into April.

Sooty albatross chicks are also growing at a great rate of knots. Gough has the largest population of Sooty albatross in the world. The coastal and mountain cliffs provide ample nesting sites. Some nests are just a wee scrape on a vertical cliff towering tens of metres above the sea. Luckily Sooties don't seem scared of heights.

The mountains are now full of Tristan Wandering albatross, incubating their large

# GOUGH BUNTING



eggs. Gough is the only place on the planet these birds still survive. The Tristan albatross build massive nests that look very cosy. We find it fascinating to see the variation in nest building - some nests are monstrous stacks of vegetation and bill-tamped mud, while others are rather haphazard piles of comparatively easily-collected moss. The adults take turns incubating the single egg, with shifts lasting on average for 10-12 days. Tristan albatross are capable of flying at speeds of up to 100km/h, so the foraging trips for the non-incubating adults can take those thousands of kilometres from Gough, before returning to take their turn incubating the egg. Chicks hatch in March, after 70-78 days of incubation. The chick stage is the tough time for Tristan albatross; this is when mice attack the young chicks, sometimes when the parent is still at the nest with the chick. For mice that weigh less than 45 grams to kill a chick that weighs many kilograms, it is death by a thousand cuts. We'll be monitoring the number of Tristan albatross chicks that make it through this vulnerable stage. In past years it has been around 27%, a value so low that in the long term it will lead to the extinction of Tristan albatross. Yet another reason why one day it is hoped to attempt a mouse eradication on Gough.

The coast of Gough is lined with new Sub Antarctic fur seal pups, their large shiny eyes standing out among the fluffy fur. There are an estimated 300,000 fur seals on Gough, producing somewhere around 60,000 pups per year. Sharing the coast with the fur seals are the Northern Rockhopper penguins. Penguins are moulting currently; the only birds to moult all their feathers at once, penguin feathers blanket the rocks along the coasts and cause small feather-blizzards at the slightest breeze.

(Photos, from top: Graham in dense fog, northern Gough; the 'base skua' chick; molly chick; sooty chick and adults; nesting Tristan albatrosses; fur seal pup; moulting Rockhopper penguin.)

*Graham Parker and Kalinka Rexer-Huber*

# GOUGH BUNTING



## Photo Synthesis



Presented here is a selection of photos taken by the team during their time here on Gough island.

*Please vote for your favourite photo.*

Email: [gough@sanap.ac.za](mailto:gough@sanap.ac.za)

Telephone: 021 405 9470

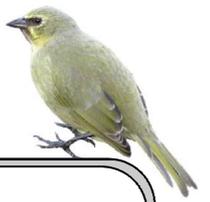
Facebook group **Gough 55**

### Winning Photo for January

Two Antarctic Terns during courtship by Llewellyn Kriedemann



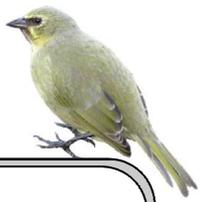
# GOUGH BUNTING



# GOUGH BUNTING



# GOUGH BUNTING



# GOUGH BUNTING



## Pressure

---

<b>Ave Max Pressure</b>	<b>1010.1 hPa</b>
<b>Ave Min Pressure</b>	<b>994.5 hPa</b>
<b>Ave Pressure</b>	<b>1004.9 hPa</b>
<b>Max Pressure</b>	<b>1022.3 hPa</b>
<b>Min Pressure</b>	<b>834.1 hPa</b>

## Temperature

---

<b>Ave Max Temp</b>	<b>17.8 °C</b>
<b>Ave Min Temp</b>	<b>12.1 °C</b>
<b>Ave Temp</b>	<b>14.9 °C</b>
<b>Max Temp</b>	<b>23.4 °C</b>
<b>Min Temp</b>	<b>8.6 °C</b>

## Humidity

---

<b>Max Humidity</b>	<b>97 %</b>
<b>Min Humidity</b>	<b>24 %</b>
<b>Ave Humidity</b>	<b>78 %</b>

## Wind

---

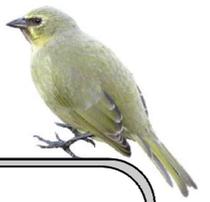
<b>Max Wind Gust</b>	<b>31.3 m/s or 112.7 km/h</b>
----------------------	-------------------------------

## Rainfall

---

<b>Total Rainfall</b>	<b>167.6 mm</b>
<b>Highest in 24 Hours</b>	<b>39.4 mm</b>
<b>Total days with rain</b>	<b>23 days</b>
<b>Total days &gt; 1mm</b>	<b>17 days</b>
<b>Total Sunshine</b>	<b>123.6 hours</b>

# GOUGH BUNTING



## Sponsors

We would like to thank the following sponsors for making life on Gough island even more exciting.

EXCLUSIVE BOOKS



L'ORÉAL  
SOUTH AFRICA