



# Gough Bunting

September 2009



**Back:**

Tom Mc Sherry (Medic / Leader), Vincent Rademeyer (Diesel Mech.), Rupert Spann (Met.), Henk Louw (RSPB Field Asst.), Paul Visser (RSPB Field Asst.)

**Front:**

Itumeleng Lefakane (Met.), Andries van Staden (Snr. Met.), Chantal Steyn (Radio Tech. / Deputy Leader)

welcome to our final letter  
This was our journey... enjoy the read...



## Farewell Gough...

They came they saw they conquered. Gough 55, our relief team, arrived with all the scientist, base maintenance personnel and Take-over managers and now it's time for Gough 54 to go home. And to keep us on our toes, they arrived 2 days early. So while we were busy giving the Base a necessary spring clean, Tom came running into the kitchen yelling, "They're here, the ship is here!" Afterwards the new team commented on the fact that it looked very quiet at the Base from the ship, no-one outside. The reality was we were all locked in a frenzied cleaning binge. But when the inspectors arrived with the first flight, incredibly, we were ready. That for me was a testament to the efficiency and team spirit of Gough 54.

And that's how Take-Over started. From there we worked to off-load the ship and to unpack containers. First couple of days of Take-Over was a strenuous affair. For me it felt as if people talked slightly too fast. Luckily the island worked its magic and soon the new comers were as slow as the old islanders, happiness. From there things relaxed slightly and we could start training our replacements both on and off duty. There were a couple of intense training sessions in the Bar and at the braai. I am confident Gough 55 are up to the task that's before them. They do however have very big shoes to fill; we wish them best of luck. So now that we've come to the end of our expedition, we can look back and evaluate ourselves. On my report card I give this team full marks in every discipline. Make no mistake, we're not angels and it wasn't always plain sailing but we solved problems and survived in style. We did our work, we had our fun and that which we did not get round to doing simply was never meant to be.

Although all of Gough 54 is looking forward to going home, I am sure it will not be long before we miss this crazy island with its muddy mountains and insane bird and plant life. And we'll miss the friends we made here and the tranquil life style. Some say you need to be slightly mad to survive an island expedition. It is my contention that you are completely insane if you prefer rush hour traffic to island calm.

But no man (or woman) is an island. We did not do this on our own. With support from family and friends back home difficult situations became bearable. Therefore first of all we want to thank our people back home for their support during the year. Never underestimate the power of hearing a mom, dad, brother, sister or buddies voice on the telephone, nor the value of an ear at a receiver when you need to unload outside the team.

Next we need to thank our support and managers back home and here during Take-Over. Organizing and running these expeditions are no trivial task. We had our bitching sessions but that was because we care about the program and if our moaning can improve it, so be it. Make no mistake though, we appreciate the difficulties and the work that was done in order to make our year as comfortable as possible. Cheers to the people at SANAP(South African National Antarctic Program) and DEAT(Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism) and specifically to Sam Oosthuizen whose calm management style made both Take-Overs a breeze when it could have been a hurricane.

Finally, thanks to all our sponsors. We thoroughly appreciate each and every little thing that helps to make the Base a home.

And that was that, an incredible year, many new friends and wild experiences. Its time to go home, we're looking forward to going home, can we please go home now...

*All the best for Gough 55.*

*Cheers from Tom, Chantal, Dries, Vince, Henk, Paul, Rupert and Tumi.*