

Gough Bunting

February 2008



The month of love
DON'T LEAVE MEEEE!!!



Skivy
Protecting the environment and cleaning the base, all at the same time.



Ringing the Changes
Change is inevitable except from a vending machine.



Hiking, Camping and Banding Birds
Refuelling before the long journey back to the base.



“CENSUS”
Counting of the Tristan Albatross colony at Gonydale continues.

The month of love

John, Brian and Richard left for South Africa early in February. I was very sad since they were here for almost three months; I got use to them being around. There was a day here where the sunset was just perfect, that fascinates me, sunsets. It does not matter where you are the sunsets are never the same. I love it!



February is the month of love for those who believe in love. Here on Gough it is no different. Some believe this is the time to tell that special person that you like him or her. The evening before Valentine's Day I smell freshly baked cakes, I was wondering who was cooking. The next morning there was a card on my door and a cake in the oven with an icing heart on it. Hearing from your loved ones is just a perfect ending to such a lovely day! My one sooty chick is growing up so fast; it is almost as big as his parents. It still looks like a ball of fluff but so cute. That is all from me this month. Till next month!

-Charlene

Skivy

In South Africa lots of things are taken for granted. Depending on where you stay garbage removal is one. Back home, if you are in the towns, or cities you place your garbage on the sidewalk every week or so for collection. On the farms and rural areas you probably have a hole, or area set aside for rubbish. Here in the bush however we are responsible for our own.

On Gough we live in a wildlife site that is so unique, that it was classified a "World heritage site". So we take every precaution to make sure we protect the site from all our daily activities.



We don't throw anything away. Every week we sort all our rubbish and store it in separate containers just outside the base. Burnable waste, Glass, Plastics, Metals, even certain left-over food items are

kept to prevent damage to the sensitive eco-system we live in here.

Garbage removal however still remains a dirty, and sometimes smelly job. So we have made it a more communal event. Every week when the two people whose turn it is to remove the rubbish, the others clean the base. Vacuuming, dusting, mopping.



So when the garbage team comes back, the base smells and looks fresh. Ready for another week.

-Johan



Ringing the Changes

February 2008

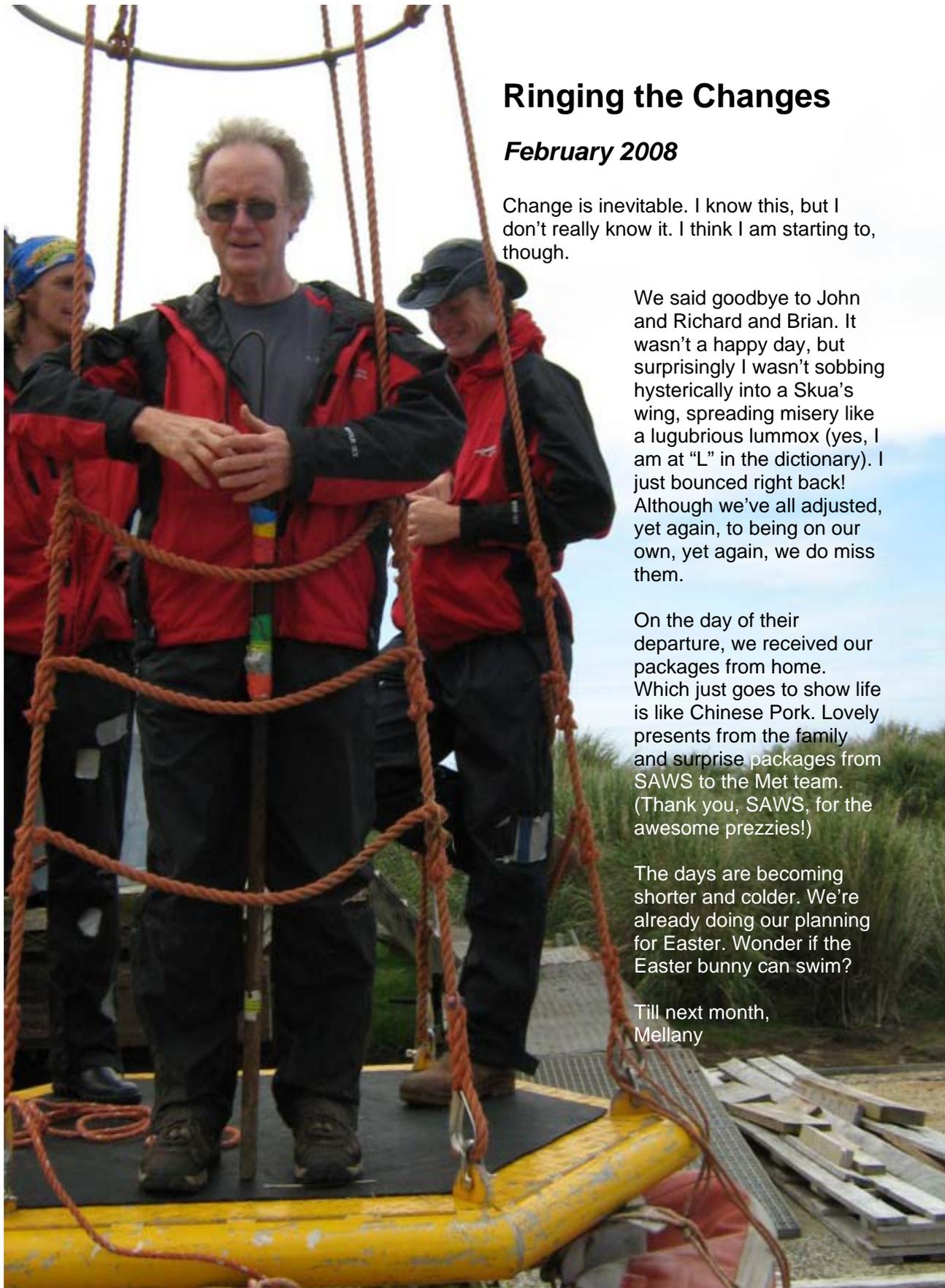
Change is inevitable. I know this, but I don't really know it. I think I am starting to, though.

We said goodbye to John and Richard and Brian. It wasn't a happy day, but surprisingly I wasn't sobbing hysterically into a Skua's wing, spreading misery like a lugubrious lummoX (yes, I am at "L" in the dictionary). I just bounced right back! Although we've all adjusted, yet again, to being on our own, yet again, we do miss them.

On the day of their departure, we received our packages from home. Which just goes to show life is like Chinese Pork. Lovely presents from the family and surprise packages from SAWS to the Met team. (Thank you, SAWS, for the awesome prezzies!)

The days are becoming shorter and colder. We're already doing our planning for Easter. Wonder if the Easter bunny can swim?

Till next month,
Mellany



Hiking, Camping and Banding Birds

Leather clothes wet and very cold yet you cannot take them off because you still need protection from scratches and mud when falling, that is what often happen when going for hiking on a wet day. Our trip was even worse as we were hit by a cold front before



reaching our destination. Walking on soaked moss and unable to see the path we finally reached the campsite. Without wasting time we erected our tents in the rain, took a nap and around two in the afternoon we started working. We managed to band more than 10 birds that afternoon.

Back at the campsite we ate supper at 7 our normal supper time in the base. There was no time to sit and chat as it was very cold and we were tired. In my tent I tried to read a book but after few pages my eyes gave in, so, I was asleep before eight. This being my first camping ever it felt so peaceful when I woke up

the next morning, for few seconds I didn't know where I was. We had a very early morning; by 6 o'clock we were already busy with the birds. We could have finished banding all the birds at Gonydale that weekend if it wasn't for the three that did not come to relieve their partners. We went back to the campsite and by twelve we were on the road to Tafelkop where there was one bird to be banded and we were in the base just before five in the afternoon.

A week later Kholekile and I went back to Gonydale to check the three birds that were outstanding. We got there, found two out of the three and at 13:00 we were back in the base.



In the base we are still having a great time and I trust that you are also fine.

Best wishes and blessings!!!

Nkoane Jack Mathabatha

“CENSUS”

It has been raining since the beginning of the month, but one morning we decided to go and camp at Gonydale so that we could finish the “census” of the colony (Albatross). Although the weather was not that good, the team that went up there really loved the outing.



I did a second visit with Jack and we were really disappointed about this bird because we did not find its partner and that would mean that we must do another day trip before it hatches.

Till next month.

Kholekile

Climate Stats: February 2008

Pressure

Ave. Max	1013.4 hPa
Ave. Min	1005.6 hPa
Average	1009.3 hPa
Maximum	1023.4 hPa
Minimum	995.7 hPa

Temperature

Ave. Max	18.7°C
Ave Min	12.4°C
Average	15.6°C
Maximum	24.6°C
Minimum	6.2°C

Humidity

Average	77%
Maximum	95%
Minimum	75%

Max Wind Gust	28.3 m/s or 101.8 km/h
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Rainfall

Total	161.2 mm
Highest in 24h	40.8 mm
Total days with rain	19 days
Total days >1mm	13 days
Total sunshine	174.2 hours

Gough 53 team members

Charlene Oppel – Meteorologist

Johan Hoffman – Radio Technician

Kholekile Cita – Medic
(Deputy Leader)

Mellany McPherson – Meteorologist(snr)

Nkoane Mathabatha - Meteorologist

Sarel Steyn – Diesel Technician
(Team Leader)