

The Wanderer

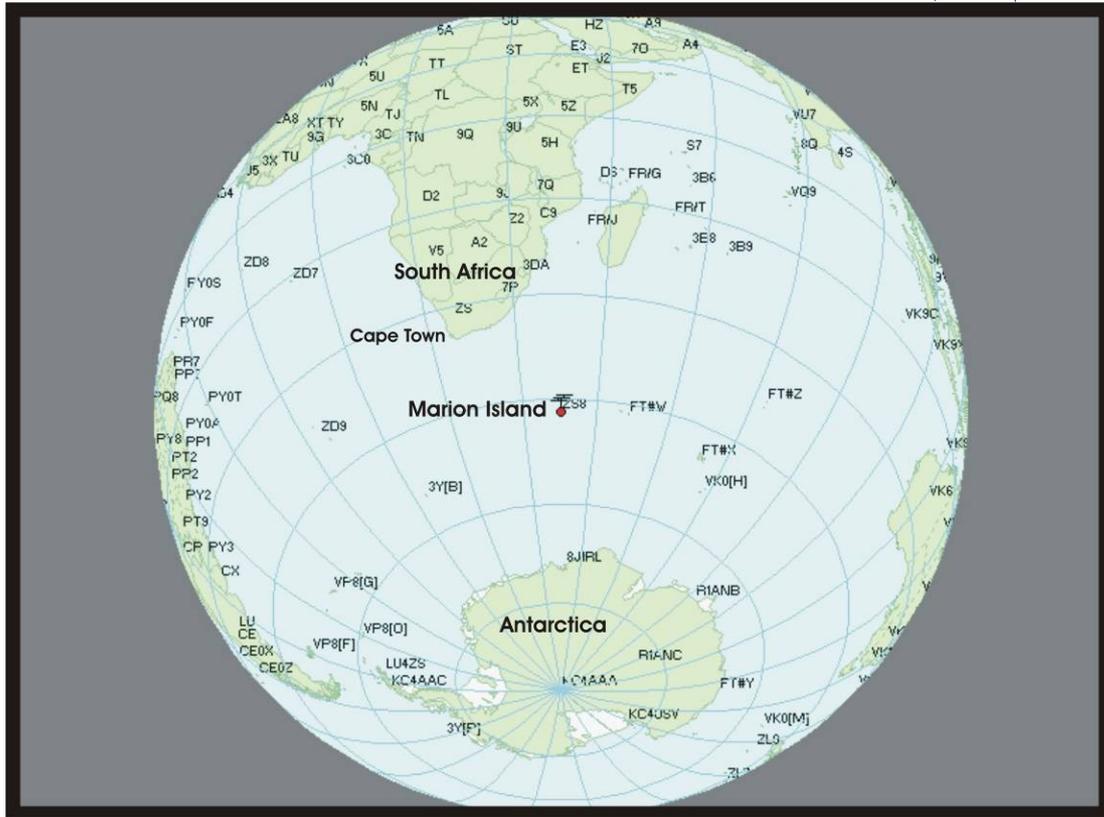
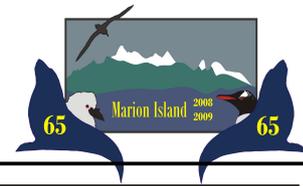
May 2008

Marion 65
Mid winter edition



And they sailed away for a year and a day to land where no tree stood....
**Marion Team 65 before boarding the SA Agulhas
at the Cape Town docs on the 26th March.**

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Wow, I am on Marion Island

The day of departure was 26 March 2008 from Cape Town Harbour and I still couldn't believe I was leaving for Marion Island being part of the over-wintering team, Marion 65.

What a privilege.....

So our journey to Marion then started on the SA Agulhas sailing towards my home for the next year. The ship was very interesting meeting new people from all around South Africa and having loads of fun.

And then the day had come, we arrived at Marion on the 31 March 2008 and now my dream had come and no turning back, so we all started departing via helicopter that was operated by TITAN's fantastic and enjoyable crew. Once we arrived at the helipad we were welcomed by Marion 64

Team, and they showed us to the base. We were all allocated our sleeping quarters and unfortunately I spent the whole of take-over sleeping in E-Base and wow, what an experience alone, mice mania... But I survived!

So take-over went well, with off-loading, hut restocking, round island trips, and various other tasks which were performed during take-over period. And then the day had come, good-bye friends, time to leave. The take-over personnel and everyone except for Marion 65 had to start boarding on the SA Agulhas on the morning of the 25 April 2008 and then they were all gone by about 14:00 that afternoon.

Finally I then realized now, my adventures will begin and to present I have had the most amazing and exciting adventures. And many more will come!

Jared Harding



**Introducing
Marion 65**

**Petrus
Medic &
Team leader**

**Shadrack
Senior
meteorologist**

**Johnnie
Diesel
mechanic**

**Dieter
Radio Technician**

**Bigfish
Meteorologist**

**Dineo
Meteorologist**

**Mphumsi
Geomorphologist**

**Ryan
Sealer**

**Anne
Ecologist**

**Thomas
Sealer**

**Mashudu
Ecologist**

**Linda
Birder &
Conservation
officer**

**Greg
Birder**

**Jared
Birder**

**Edith
Birder**

**Genevieve
Birder &
Deputy Leader**



Back again

I guess everything has a beginning and ending hey. So I find myself on Marion after 6 years. I started my involvement with the SANAP in 2000. Since then, I've been hopping between Antarctica and islands. Nothing has changed on Marion from my last expedition except that there is a huge orange building.

Oh, almost forgot. Let me introduce myself. Shadrack Podile is my name and I work for SAWS (*Ed.- South African weather Service*). I came to Marion to do Meteorological observation and I hope to enjoy to the fullest. Now let me take you on what I did since 28 April 2008.

Takeover went well. The spirit was fine and made friends and maybe enemies in between who knows. I couldn't wait to be alone since I knew what to expect. The new expeditioners to the programme were excited to be left alone. It is good for them so that they can enjoy the island without their space being limited.

May month started well and with strong winds. The base had to be roped down in some places. The roof became loose on those sections. I did 3 trips so far. Myself and Petrus did a trip to Repettos 2 days before my birthday. The birthday was a blast. The team made so special since this is my last involvement on the programme. The cake was decorated with all the expedition group numbers that I did. We did the second trip to Repettos and through to Cape Davis to help Ryan weigh seals. Gen and Edith also came through since they were busy with their work at Goney. I must say it was fun doing it again. Petrus and Gen went through to Mix Pickle because we didn't have communication with Mphumzi and as a safety measure they had to go.

On the 29th, Gen and I, took Johnnie on a laid back/relaxed trip to Kildalkey so that he could release the pressure of being stuck in base, get out and to stay sane. It took us 6 hours to get there. We spent 2 nights there. I took Johnnie out to the beach and we didn't reach. The mist moved in and the visibility was reduced to 5 m. We turned back and straight to the hut. On the 31st we headed back to base. The walk was great since the sun was shining and I could take out the camera for a change. The mountains were covered in a white blanket.

I can say lots of things but let me stop here. You have the whole year to hear all our stories.

Go fitlhela nako e tlang. Itumeleleng setlha sa mariga.

Kgabo mokgatla(Shadrack)

<i>Pressures of May</i>	
Average maximum	1012.1 hPa
Average Minimum	1009.7 hPa
Average	1006.5 hPa
Maximum	1028.4 hPa
Minimum	969.8 hPa

Die winde op Marion Island vertel verhale

Op die 2de Mei het die wind begin waai en met tye het die wind baie kwaad geklink. Soos die dag aangegaan het, het ek besef dat die wind gaan nog lank waai, want die wind praat met n growwe stem met ons wat op Marion Island bly. Ek het weer eens tot die besef gekom dat mens kan nie die wind beheer, wat deur DIE GROOT MEESTER geskep is nie. So het die wind dwars deur die nag gewaai en n deel van die oggend ook.

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Ek het n brief die oggend op die kombuis tafel gekry wat sê dat die dak van Santon se dakplate los gewaai is, en dit voorspel net nog gewaar, en ons het besluit om dadelik werk daarvan te maak. So is daar ook plate op die bird lap los gewaai en ons het dit ook herstel met groot gespook in die sterk wind.



Petrus and Johnnie fixing the roof of Santon after wind attacks.

Later die dag het ons na die nuwe basis se kant toe geloop en op verskeie plekke stukke dakplate sien lê en ons het besef dat iewers is daar nog skade, ons sal moet vasstel waar dit is. Met verdere ondersoek het ons gevind dat die nood huis , n deel van die muurplate ook afgewaai het, en dit was die stukke plate wat oral gelê het. Na ons herstel werk daar gedoen het, het ons n lekker koppie tee geniet en daaroor gepraat, maar al hierdie dinge maak Marion eiland n spesiale plek en ons geniet dit terdee.

Max
 Johnnie

Marions maximum 33.6 m/s or
wind Gust in May 121.3 km/h

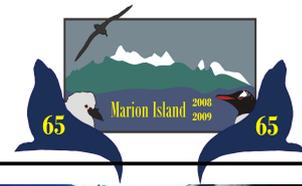


Tinkering together e-base pannels that the wind relocated to unknown locations.

Just another day at the office

Many people wonder why we do what we do. Why do we choose to spend hours in the wind, rain, shine, snow AND hail to write down lists of numbers or to fill little bottles with various odd collections? Only to follow that with hours in laboratories or in front of computer screens trying to figure out if these numbers or odd collections make any kind of sense. Some of us might have moments when we reason about this ourselves or wonder how we can explain to others why we choose this life over more secure office bound alternatives. But every now and again a day comes along when the reasons for our choices become crystal clear. The Gogga lab recently had such a day.

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Mashudu and Greg at the snow patched island heights.



Anne and Greg taking in their daily rations of solids.

The massive base skivvy finished, the Gogga lab clean and, yes, mouse free at last (!!), it was time for a day out. I had to set up an altitudinal transect running from Trypot to 1000m. The weather man was on my side because the morning that dawned on the day I had scheduled to work was without doubt the most beautiful morning I'd experienced on the island yet. It was one of those shimmering silent mornings

when the air is so clean and clear and the sun shining so brightly that the sparkling almost velvety surface of the island stretches as far as the eye can see. In very high spirits, Greg, Mashudu and I set off on our day's expedition. The tone of the day was set when we spotted 3 Orcas hunting close inshore in the bay at Trypot and although not seemingly possible, the day got better and better after that. It was clear and warm with bright blue skies as we trundled up the hill towards Juniors with magnificent all round views. Even the two-steps-forward-sliding-one-step-back of First Red couldn't dampen our spirits and after munching on snow and the odd snowball fight, we made it to Katedraal to greet Mphumzi who was alone up there and very happy to see us!

<i>May's Temperature statistics</i>	
Average Maximum	9.4°C
Average Minimum	2.9°C
Average	6.2°C
Maximum	13.9°C
Minimum	-1.8°C

It was mid afternoon by this point, but the weather gods were still smiling brightly at us, so we carried on going onwards and upwards towards Bald Peak. This was my first visit to the higher altitudes and I was speechless as to the beauty of the place. The snow drifts twinkled and the rugged peaks and rocky slopes were softened by the late afternoon sun as we finished setting up the last few sites. We dumped

our packs at 1000m and climbed up the slippery icy slopes of Delta Kop to top off our glorious day. The mist and clouds were just starting to swirl around Bald Peak as the skies slowly turned pink. We could even see Grey Headed hut from up there it was such a clear day! We exploded with happy shrieks and laughs and, although a clichéd saying, we really did feel like we were on top of the world. Well, definitely on top of a small island in the sub-Antarctic for sure! Dusk started to set in as we meandered back to Katedraal hut. The cones and mountains were draped in soft moonlight as we bum slid our way down all the snow drifts, giggling like five year olds all the way.

Mashudu had carried Boerewors all the way up from base to surprise Mphumzi, so we had a good feast and great chats around

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the heater. Our pillows felt like pure soft silk and we were fast asleep by 9 o'clock. I dreamt of adventure as the winds shook the hut about and whistled in the amphitheatre of Katedraalkrans.

One of those perfect days on Marion that leaves me with absolutely no doubt why it is we do what we do.

Anne

(Ed- Gogga: a South African word referring to insects, crustaceans and any other low life creepy crawlies. Also, may be an acronym for Group of Groping Geriatric Alcoholics)



Mashudu on top of our world.

“MY HOME; MY COUNTRY; MY CONTINENT & MY WORLD”.

Our continent, MARION ISLAND -The Jewel of Southern Ocean. “Fhethu hure mbiluni yanga (The place in my heart)”. So much has been scientifically & poetry explain about her in the way that I feel its enough. But no matter the explanations the best explanation should be based on my own experiences simply describes it as ” The place in my heart” because I’m in just in love with the Island love this place because it is simply giving me the basic

<i>Humidity on Marion in May</i>	
Average	85%
Maximum	100%
Minimum	32%

empowerment I was still waiting for. Going through this training now will be so useful in my whole life, I know. Believe that My GOD is busy preparing for my tomorrow. My destiny is so huge that it needs me to arrive with all necessary training to able to live my life to the fullest. Any time I have the ridiculous past, I know that is the indication of my coming destiny.

While I was in Cape Town, I lately realized that big things are yet arrive. This was after I become a civil servant, when every morning we set to Waterfront early & goes back late . Now in the Island, we are separated by Southern waters of more than 2 000 Km with civilization. Maybe because I understand the responsibilities that the S AFRICAN Scientific family has laid on my shoulders. Whenever I am in the field, forget that privilege of visit the S African most special piece of land and work hard to be a scientific valuable tool. I met many important personalities from Mrs. S Vosloo to the other GoGGas. The information I had about the Island is slightly different to the actual experience. The oldest picture on the legends, which I relate to, is birth year team. My Professors (J Crafford & SL Chown) were in this same island in that year.

Take-over has lasted and goes for a month. I manage to affiliate my first round-island during take-over. Since this month I have already completed the second round-island. The biggest thing is that my physical being has adopted the Island hardship standard. Whenever I am not in the base should be wearing the gumboots & water pants.

All this always made me to have the better understanding of everything happening to & around me. My HOLY GOD didn't

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took me this far to leave me ,after this preparation I will be able to inherit what He destined for me. I know that we are one the big family; our world has only 16 residents. [“I understand that my life experiences are merely lessons meant to bring me closer to self-knowledge & unconditional self-love. I know that I will at times have to inspire others to reach potential God gave them. I know my past, understand my present & face my tomorrow. I am not afraid of tomorrow; for I have seen my yesterday, I love today”.]

To my beloved people in home it will just take some time before I arrive but “I WILL BE BACK”.

<i>Marion May Reign</i>	
Total Rainfall	144.6 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	35.0 mm
Total days with rain	25 days
Total days > 1mm	20 days
Total Sunshine	100.0 hours

A message from Clokie

What a privilege it is to be back!! Once again I would like to thank Marine and Coastal Management i.e. Rob, Leshia and Bruce for giving me this opportunity. I was part of the 2005/06 expedition (M62) and remember times when I was so happy that I could not even explain it to anyone. Once you have had an experience like this, it changes your life. It is hugely challenging, and at the end of the day, once all the stories are told it is incredibly self-satisfying to be able to reflect on what has happened and say “I did it”. I braved the weather, the terrain, the solitude and isolation but I gained a whole lot of “soul food”. “Soul food” is so important in life and so many people go through life never nurturing the wonderful creation of nature,

which is what I call “soul food”. Whilst walking this island this “soul food” starts to run through your veins, taking away all your troubles and enriching your life.

But going back to the real world after this – **reality check!** - not a pleasant experience.

It starts off with the approach to Cape Town and the band of smog that lies over the city. Your first thought – Am I going to have to live in this?

It is wonderful to see all the old friends and family, but then you need to get home or to a place to stay. Roll on traffic – worse than a rollercoaster when all you have had is your 2 legs for transport for a whole year.

The city noise is unbearable when you have grown accustomed to the island silence - just the sound of rain, snow pellets, wind, the ocean and the noises of the animals.

Food - no vege’s or salads for a full year you want to become a rabbit for a while.

Then you hear all the news about what has been happening in the country whilst you have been away - it makes you want to run away and hide.

Power cuts seems to be a way of life – with island life, the only power cuts we have is when we change the generators which takes 10 minutes. Everyone is prepared for this and it is called a power change.

What about having to find a job, bosses, restriction, time constraints, as you have to make money to live. Money! what is that does it really grow on trees? No - you have to earn it, and then once earned, you have to spend it. Horrors!! Shopping malls - so many people all walking so slowly as if

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they have the rest of their lives to get from point A to B. Queues – people standing around waiting, intruding on your private space whilst waiting!!

Sadly that is life, and that is what is expected of us – a life where we live to survive the crime around us and the “torture” we have let life become. The only crime here is the ways of the wild – shocking, not nice to see, but all for a purpose – mealtime for a host of animals.

I do believe going home for a second time will be much easier, but the first time it is a real shock. Fortunately we still have many months before we have to deal with this situation.

I am so lucky to have a wonderful family that have supported all the adventures I have taken on through my life.

Thank you again for this lifetime experience.

Linda Clokie

May's tribute to Marion's History



Cat hunter graffiti on the walls of the old Watertunnel hut.

Marion Island Trivia

- Marion time zone is GMT +3
- Located at S46°52", E37°51"
- Current sunrise 0800
- Current sunset 1649
- Marion was annexed by South Africa on the 29th December 1947

A mixture of hut life on Marion and the desire for warm food when retreating from the cold outdoor results in experimentation. The long nights give for plenty of to tweak our perfections so here is an old favourite...

Hut bread

1 500g bag of self-raising flour
1 tin of sweet corn
Anything else you can find

Go scrabbling through the various containers in the hut pantry, sift through the hot chocolate, green beans, tennis biscuits and over load of bully beef until you eventually find your ingredients. By this time it may be dark but the nights are long there may still be time for the hut bread mission, so...

Tuck your fingers into your armpits until they begin to ache again. This achieved, you should be able to move those digits enough to open the tin and mix it with the flour (as well as with the herbs, picnic ham and dried onions you located during the afore mentioned search). When a dry dough ball is sits nicely over your splayed fingers it should then be placed in a small pot. Using those skills acquired with toys you had when five, fit the small pot into a larger pot and put a bit of heated water in the bottom of the large pot to steam cook it (and to preserve the pot). Cover the larger pot and turn on the gas. For best effects warm your fingers on the flame while the bread cooks. After an impatient hour or so, you should be able to turn out your supper which is usually consumed off the counter in indecorous haste. The water remaining in the large pot can be used to clean up the inevitable mess before rounded tums slumber in the now toasty hut.



Sponsor of the month

STATE THEATRE



Many thanks to State theatre for the costumes that make respectable folk of the island ruffians for the first birthday of our year.

FIRST MONTH AT MARION

On our way to Marion Island, we had a wonderful trip, the sea was calm. We arrived here on the 31st of March 2008. During take over, it was hectic because the base was full of people even though they were all busy doing their staff. On the 25th April they departed, we made a braai, we were having a nice time. We were waiting for this day to come so we can be alone and experience how does it feels to be around each other. A few days after their departure, was my birthday (29 April), It was wonderful, and what made it so great was the outfit. We did celebrate Shadrack and Greg's birth days and it was cool. So far we are all happy and healthy, we thank God!

Chat to u again soon!
Dineo

May's Meditation

“The answer my friend is blowin’ in the wind.”...

Bob Dylan

So, *please* stop asking the questions.

An exhausted field assistant

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You are invited to the M65

Marion Island

midwinter party '08

21 June 2008
15:00, Marion House
Including midwinter Olympics & dinner

The directions

**The nights are drawing in
so join us for a mid winter swim,
or bring along your pool tool,
and a pin up tail for the mule.**

**Landing upon the albies' strip isn't bad
but put your boots down upon the helipad.
Find us at 46 52 and 37 51.
Forget not your permit, t'would be so sad,
but you'll pass with an ex cat gun
or one large warming bottle of rum.**





Marion 65th Expedition sponsors



generously donated large torches and batteries which mean team members can brave the catwalks outside of the warm base after dark (after 5pm, Marion Time GMT +3).

EXCLUS¹VE BOOKS

have kept the intellectual brains among us occupied with the shelves of varied reading they have supplied.



have been our guiding light by generously sending headlights for each team member.



WORLD SPACE Although we are neatly tucked away from civilization, our satellite radio connects us to the 'real' world. and keeps us informed. Many thanks to worldspace for this sponsorship.

STATE THEATRE have revealed the characters amongst us by supplying stage costumes.

Colgate Palmolive ensured we will go back with all our teeth and that the field assistants smell a little less unsavoury when they return to base by sponsoring toothpaste, palmolive soaps and shampoos.

SAB sent down more than a little extra to help us build castle in the skies on the few days it's warm enough to have an outdoor braai.

Oleg Neruchev of The Russian House gave the team DVDs for our long winter nights.



Foster Brothers

sent documentaries that tweak the interest of camera fundies and environment carers alike.

Japie de Klerk of FOTOLENS, Durbanville

gave team members special islander prices on camera equipment and bent double with our team training schedule to ensure that the desired pieces were delivered at crazy times of day.

Shiraan Watson must be thanked for the books and DVDs he has given the islanders.

Baie dankie aan ons vriende wie ons gedurende die spanopleiding gehelp het . 'n Groot dankie aan **David Hartzenberg**, wie rond gery het en die meeste van ons sponsors opgetel het in ons laaste paar dae, in die wereld van winkels en motors. Ons is ook dankbaar vir **Ross Wanless**, **Paul Putter**, **Craig Blanckenberg** en **Louretha van Staden** wat sponsors vir ons gekry het.

Our newsletter is named after the largest bird breeding on Marion: the Wandering Albatross

