

Gough Bunting

May 2007



May has really been a month where the island has decided to throw its worst weather at us. As you can see by the weather stats at the end of this newsletter, we have had an incredible amount of rain, and very little sunshine. The increase in water flow has also kept us busy with the base's water supply. Filters needed to be cleaned more often and we have also had to make a few repairs to our water line due to storm damage. The base heaters have been working overtime and we are still very snug in the base.

Towards the end of the month, Ross Wanless and Martin Slabber arrived on the Edinburgh fishing vessel for about a month. It is a welcomed change to our routine and we also appreciated all the gifts they brought for us from home. They are continuing the clean up of Sagina, an alien plant species on the island. They are also busy with research on the eradication of the mouse problem on the island.

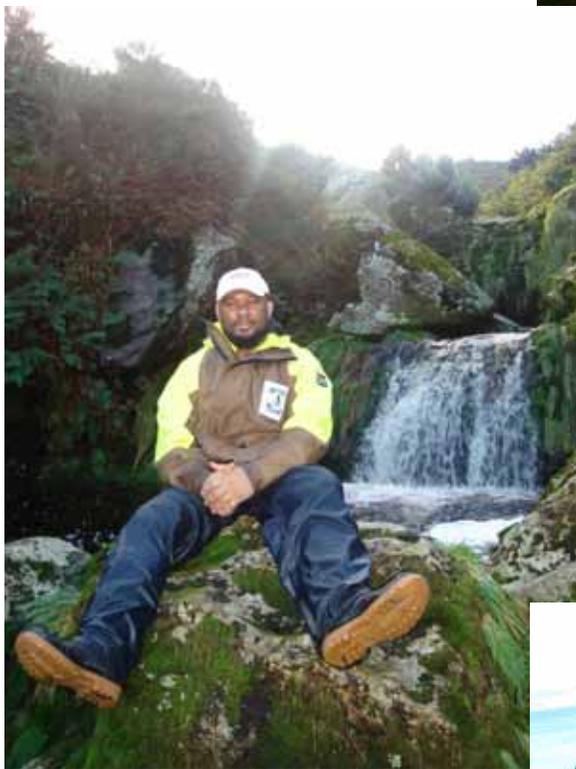
Ed.



The team enjoying a rare calm night at crane point.

From the Diesel Mech

We had no water in the base due to a burst at a joint in the water pipe. The picture to the right is Brian trying to fix the problem. This is normal after heavy rain because the system is gravity fed. It was hectic because the path was wet and muddy. Fortunately for us we had our rain gear.



This is the main Skua and he is tired due to the distance traveled to the dam on foot. Behind me is the flow of water from the Mountain which we use in the base.

The Gough boys are enjoying themselves next to Crane Point. Look at the view behind us. It is the beauty of the Sea.

*All From
Thuls*



Die mag van 'n swart balletjie:

Regoor die hele wêreld is daar baie instansies, metodes om die uitkoms van gebeure te bepaal. Vir die Gough 52 span word baie dinge bepaal om die poeltafel. Ek dink nie Marianne het besef watter effek sy aan die gang gesit het met die skenk van die berugte “beanie” nie.

Sy kan soos Frankenstein sê: “I created monsters!” Die helderkleurige mussie het so in aanvraag gekom by die weeklikse pool kampioenskappe dat almal ure begin spandeer om te oefen.

Almal in die span het 'n hoë standaard bereik wat die spel aan betref. Daar word baie streng volgens die reëls gespeel. Die reëls word so streng toegepas dat met elke spel wat gespeel word 'n skeidsregter aangestel word. Die skeidsregter se woord is finaal!

Weeklikse kookbeurte, skivvies en aller ander verpligtinge word gereeld bepaal met die uitkoms van 'n pool wedstryd. Die wenner kan byvoorbeeld 'n spyskaart versoek aan die verloorder wanneer dit die individuele beurt is om te kook.

Daar word gereeld ook gespeel vir pryse. Die mag wissel van 1 – 3 bottels brandewyn tot 'n boks sjokolade. Jonty en Thuls is die 2 groot skua's wanneer dit kom vir die spel van voorregte/ items. Van die deelnemers kan nie altyd die volgende dag onthou of hulle gewen of verloor het nie, seker al die spanning.



Petrus lining up for the break.

Men in Black are back, taking out the aliens on Gough

We both leapt at the chance to come back to Gough. We met Bigfish when he took over from us as part of the G50 team. Ross was here in September last year, as Conservation Officer, and enjoyed meeting the G52 team and helping them settle in to their new home. Also, we are both members of Gough 49, and with team-mate Petrus now on the G52 team, and Martin's SANAE 44 team-mate Brian as G52 leader, there were plenty of reasons to return. But besides seeing old mates in familiar circumstances, Gough is just an awesome place to be.



The MIBs cleaning up all the alien scum

Some things haven't changed a bit. The base looks and feels the same, and the team here are really laid-back and bending over to help us, so we fit right in. But I am surprised to see other things. Like the fact that Sooty Albatrosses and Antarctic Terns are still around, despite the fact that it is now June. I don't remember them being here this late. And the Skuas, too, seem to be back from their winter exodus very early, in reasonable numbers in mid-June. I wasn't expecting more than a handful of birds. The presence of the Atlantic Petrels increases with each day, and the Grey, Great-winged and Kerguelen Petrels are also visible and audible in the evenings, making the place a lively spot and reminding me why I love it so much – there are so many cool birds that you just cannot see anywhere else. I cannot wait to get back up to the highlands, to see the big Gony chicks on their nests, and watch the adults returning to feed them.

It's great to be back!
Martin and Ross
MIB II

We are here as part of the Sagina programme, an 'alien' weed that John Cooper and Co were here to whack away at in Jan and Feb. The plant requires constant weeding, spraying with herbicide and heat-treating to kill the seeds. It grows really fast and despite getting the visible infestation down to a few individual plants in March, we have found plenty of regrowth already, and so plenty of work. When you are hanging off 40 m cliffs with the seething Southern Ocean beneath you, looking cool is almost unavoidable! Besides the alien Sagina plants, we are also here to work on the alien house mice. With Brian and Petrus offering invaluable assistance in the field, we have been hard at work studying the food preferences of the mice.

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FRIDAY SKIVVIES

We normally clean the base every Friday, on the 18th of May I was cleaning the bar and the waste room. This is one kind of skivvy that I hate the most, due to the fact that we have to go to helipad, and Gough Island is always wet. We put the waste inside the big containers up there, the skua's shit is all over the place and the worst part of it, is that the shit is wet....oh.... its so disgusting, Even though I hated it, someone has to do it and unfortunately on that day it was me and Jonty. The wind was very bad that day and I mean very bad, on our way back the bin was empty and the wind was blowing it off the trolley.



Jonty pushing and Dineo pulling the waste trolley up to the helipad



Dineo enjoying her freshly baked scone

We took the bin with food waste to skivvy gat, I was on day shift so we went to take the sea temp reading leaving the bin. To our surprise when we came back, the lid of the bin wasn't there. We looked around but nothing, so Jonty thought that someone took it, then we came back to the base, asking the guys about it but they were as surprised as we were. Jonty went back to look for it, only to find it next to the sea, the wind was so strong that it blew it away (the weight of the lid is +/-6kg). Usually I make pizza on Fridays but that Friday I wanted something I haven't eaten for a while so I took a long bath thinking, then I thought of making scones, It was very good. After having my lunch it was nearly time to knock off so I went straight to bed.....what a long day!

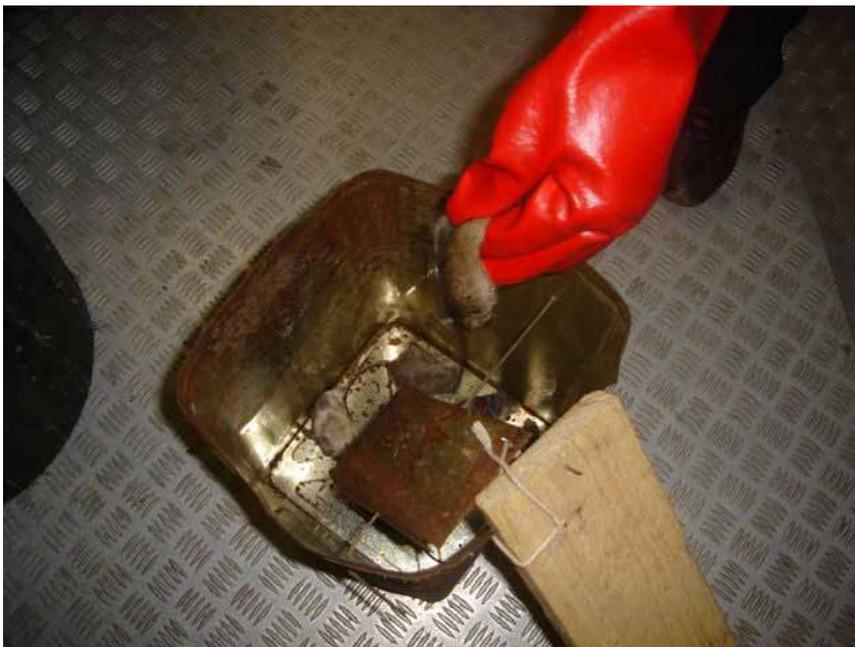
Dineo

Mus musculus

When the cat is away, the mice will play (everybody knows)... The house mouse (*Mus musculus*) is the only terrestrial mammal on the island, which was presumably brought ashore inadvertently during the 18th century by sealers. Mice are now



Fish holding one of the mice he caught



One of the water traps used on the island to catch mice

widespread and abundant, occurring in all habitat types from the coast to the island summit. Now these small "beasts" are trying to terrorize our base.

Mice traps and "water traps" are our most reliable way of getting rid of these rodents. When we got the news that some biologists will be coming around for their research projects, I said to myself, "woooow", someone is coming to help us get rid of these mice.

The arrival of Ross and Martin was a blessing to us. Maybe, "and maybe", they have something to help get rid of these mice.....Who knows?

Tshifhiwa-wa-Vho-Nthaduleni uri: Masha.

The rivalry continues

It is seen as a get together, having fun and keeping the team going, but instead it has created fierce competition amongst team members; pool that is.

Every Sunday we have a competition to determine who can have bragging rights as the champ for the week and who will be the umpire for the doubles competition on Saturdays. The champ on Sunday earns himself a trophy for the week in the form of a knitted beanie and the last player gets the opportunity to umpire the doubles games.

We started out playing not too bad at first, but with time the skills were very much improved. This has created fierce competition amongst competitors. The resultant being challenges being laid down and promises made by individuals as to the outcome of each competition. With the steep competition there's always bickering and bantering going on. All this for the shake of competing.

During the week skills are sharpened by 'friendly' games or even just playing alone. There is the occasional bet for something. These matches are very tense at times for no one wants to lose the bet. Funny enough rematches are played to establish who won the night before or to restore some dignity.

At competition time limiting mistakes are vital for survival, for there is no holding back from opponents. Committing a foul can easily sway a win to a loss. The strong will be victorious. Rules are strongly enforced by the umpire, who has to keep a close eye on proceedings as well as handle the stress of the spectators. And I might add that the onlookers are sometimes brutal in

their assessment of the way the game pans out. A win in the first game is crucial as it lays a sound foundation to eliminate the fellow competitors. More times than not it all boils down to the last game to determine the winner for the week.

Contentious decisions by the umpire, playing dangerously and input from the crowd, these factors doesn't disappoint when it comes to entertainment. There'll only be one winner. It's not over until the black is sunk.



Jonty and Thulani pose for a photo after Jonty beat Thulani by a white wash. As you can see by the number of balls on the table, Thulani was not able to sink even one of his balls.

JK

Awesome waves on Gough

There is nothing more incredible than watching the awesome power of nature. On Thursday 17 May 2007, we saw some incredible waves on Gough Island. Since our base is built on the south of island we are generally protected from the large waves that occur on the north of the island. Unusually on this occasion the sea swell was coming from the south east. The swell was easily 10 m and at times higher. The sea spray from the waves crashing into the cliffs below the base was hitting the base. What makes this feat even more remarkable is that the base is 54 m above sea level and 200 m inland. We excitedly rushed outside in our waterproof clothing, which in this case was to keep us dry in the sea spray. It was amazing to stand at crane point and watch the waves crash into the cliff edge and see and feel the spray fly past us. The spray was seen to be blowing up all the ridges running up from the sea. It is difficult trying to take photos with some much moisture flying around.

The rough seas continued throughout the day, and often we would mistake the sound of the sea spray on our corrugated iron roof of the base as rain. It is also unusual for us to have a strong south easterly wind, the wind was helping to carry the spray further. The following day we found pieces of kelp around the base and some of the grasses on the cliff edges had wilted slightly from the salty sea water.



A series of photos show a breaking wave covering the crane at crane point. The view of the crane has been enlarged in each photo. The crane is roughly 30 m above sea level to give an indication of the size of the wave.

Personality of the Month
Jonathan Kotze
Senoir Meteorologist

How old are u?
24 years young.

Where do you call home?
I move around quite a lot, but for now it has to be Vanrhynsdorp.

What do you think about Gough? Well it's an awesome place; natural and unique in every single way.

What's the name of your haircut in the photo?
Bos

What's the story about the maglight and leatherman?
It's fashion accessories hahahaha. To be ready at all times for whatever situation.

What and whom do you miss the most in Mzantsi?
The people I hold dear to my heart and driving.



What plans do u have after Gough? A bit early to disclose, but there are thoughts in the pipeline.

What have been your best and worst moments since you arrived here at Gough Island?
My best moment would be experiencing Gough Island. The day the AWS PC crashed gave me headaches.

Any plans for another expedition perhaps?
Time will tell.

Are you married?
NO!!! It's just a ring, nothing to it.

Do you like pink?
Not on me.

What does fong Kong mean?
Anything fake or a rip-off

Who is better at pool, you or Thulani?
I would say we are at the same level. On any given day it's anyone's game.

Sponsor of the Month

We would like to thank the following sponsors:

- Bondi Blu (Sunglasses, T-shirts, Sun cream, deodorant, back packs)
- Cadbury (Chocolate)
- Colgate Palmolive (Shower Gel, Roll on, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Mouth Wash)
- Durbanville Hills (Red Wine)
- Engen (Jackets, Beanies)
- Eveready (Batteries, Torches)
- Exclusive Books (Books)
- Flagstone (Red and White Wine)
- Ina Paarman (Sauces, Spices)
- KWV (Brandy, red wine, Caps)
- Nintendo (Game Cube)
- Pen Bev (Coca Cola, Fanta, Sprite, TAB)
- SAB Miller (Castle Lager)
- SABC (Videos)
- Uniross (Rechargeable Batteries, Peak Caps, Lanyards)
- World Space Radio (Satellite Radio, Peak Caps, T-shirts)
- YUM (KFC Chicken, KFC chips, KFC sauces)



*Brian about to open a bottle of **KWV 5 years brandy** for the team to enjoy*

From the Weather Office

CLIMATE STATS: May 2007

Ave. Max Pressure	1008.4 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	998.0 hPa
Ave. Pressure	1003.5 hPa
Max Pressure	1021.8 hPa
Min Pressure	975.7 hPa
Ave. Max Temp	14.4 °C
Ave. Min Temp	9.3 °C
Ave. Temp	12.1 °C
Max Temp	19.8 °C
Min Temp	4.3 °C
Ave Humidity	80 %
Max Humidity	97 %
Min Humidity	52 %
Max Wind Gust	31.8 m/s or 114.5 km/h
Total Rainfall	454.6 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	91.2 mm
Total days with rain	30 days
Total days >1mm	24 days
Total Sunshine	67.2 hours

This Space For Rent

Email gough@sanap.org.za for details

Gough 52 Rugby Team

Hooker
Brian Bowie
Prop
Thulani Jakalashé
Flank
Jonathan Kotzé
Flyhalf
Dineo Matsana
Wing
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