



Welcome to our Monthly Newsletter...



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Tristan da Cunha Island and the 'Tristanians'...

Hello and a warm welcome to all our readers! As promised I've put together an article about the most remote inhabited Island in the world; *Tristan da Cunha Island and the 'Tristanians'*



The Capital 'Edinburgh of the Seven Seas' – Tristan da Cunha Island

Tristan Da Cunha Island was discovered more than 500 years ago, the year of 1506 by Admiral Tristão da Cunha.

Even before I knew about the South African National Program in Antarctica and Islands have I heard about this remote Island right in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean! As a young boy my father told me about this friend he had, who had to go down and do some specialist work on the Island. Now I'm not a geologist, and therefore can't tell you all that much about volcanic Islands, but one thing I do know is that there is an underwater ridge (a mountain range) running half way round the world called the mid Atlantic ridge and due to volcanic activity this Islands have risen from the deep dark of the ocean millions of years ago. These volcanic eruptions have formed layer upon layer up until they eventually surfaced.

In 1816, the British annexed the island and set up a garrison as a precaution against the French who, it was thought, were planning to rescue Napoleon from exile on the island of St.

Helena. In the end it was Corporal William Glass from Kelso in Scotland, who is regarded as the Founder of the present community. This is as far as my knowledge go about the history of the Island.

Ref: www.sthelenase/tristan/tristan.htm

Soon after we left Cape Town I met the first Tristanian named Norman Glass. He is living in Cape Town and works as an observer on fishing trawlers and is studying Marine and Coastal management. He was contracted to do some specialised rope access work to help remove an alien plant commonly referred to as 'Sagina'. Second Tristanian named Trevor Glass as environmental officer became a dear friend on the Island. I learned a lot from him, mostly how simple it is to catch Snoek from the shore on hand line, and a lot about the Islands fauna and flora.



First Glimpse of Tristan was out of this world, a lovely rainbow was a heavenly welcome to this magnificent place, a typical volcanic cone shaped Island, surrounded by the most beautiful deep blue water, home to Crawfish, Yellowtail, Bluefish, Snoek, Five-fingers and Jacopever! The peak was covered in a white blanket of snow, and the mighty Tristan Albatross was circling the 2000 feet cliffs.

After landing on Tristan da Cunha Island (we were flown from the ship in a Komov Helicopter by Titan aviation) I met up with the policeman and conservation officer and at the time acting Administrator, Conrad Glass. He is the author of the book 'Rockhopper Copper', the only book authored and published by a Tristanian. I got our passports stamped in his office, bought an exemplar of his book for £12 and got it signed; as well as a book titled 'Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island', a field guide of the animals and plants. Much to the amusement of the local girls in the museum I've never seen British sterling, and found this currency quite interesting, turned the coins all around tried to figure the value and no, there is nothing wrong with my eyes, my arms seem to be a bit short though! I am more accustomed to the American dollar, which found its way all over Africa and the Middle East.

Our group of four, 'Oom' Sam, the two Watson brothers and I decided to take a long walk to the potato patches, a 3.5 mile long asphalt road past healthy looking cattle and sheep. This is an old Irish tradition and Tristanians come here every weekend and work these fertile grounds for what is believed to be the healthiest and most tasteful potatoes in the world! We got a lift back and took a lazy stroll through town. We visited the Post Office, the museum as mentioned, the ST Joseph Catholic Church, the Anglican Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, and the Old fashioned Supermarket. Nostalgic moments like this, a step back in history and one can't help to think, do these people know how lucky they are?

I made a note of the original settlers in the Museum, the town has grown to a capacity of near 270 permanent residents, and there is no such a thing as serious crime or joblessness! Fishing and especially crawfish is the main source of income, this delicacy is packed and exported to South Africa and Japan. A fire destroyed the fishing factory earlier this year but reconstruction has started after building materials were delivered earlier this month.

There are so much more to tell, the school, the lava rock fencing, the warm and friendly residents, but if you're



The Potato Patches

interested you'll need a book, or do some research on the internet. On a lighter note Conrad Glass told me about this American Cruise liner and tourists visiting the one year, asking amazed how on earth the sheep manage to graze on the steep mountain slopes more than 600 meters high? He answered that the sheep miraculously evolved and have two short legs on the one side of the body, and two longer ones on the other side, this enables them to go where no animals have been before...that's worth a good laugh, especially when the tourist awaited confirmation with a straight face!

Original Settlers – as displayed in the museum

- 1816 William Glass from Scotland married Maria Leenders from Cape Town in 1816;
- 1821 Alexander Cotton from England marries Maria Williams from St Helena in 1827;
- 1826 Thomas Swain from England married Sarah Jacobs from St Helena in 1828;
- 1836 Peter Groen (Green) from Holland married Mary Jacobs from St Helena in 1827.

Married into second or later generation:

- 1836 Thomas Rodgers - North America;
- 1849 Andrew Hagan - North America;
- 1892 Gaetano Lavarello – Italy;
- 1892 Andrea Repetto – Italy;
- 1908 Elizabeth Smith – Ireland;
- 1908 Agnes Smith – Ireland.



Sadly the 'Longboat' tradition has come to an end. These boats were handmade from wood and fibreglass and used in earlier years to sail to Inaccessible Island to hunt shearwater birds for their oil and as a dietary supplement. This was quite a mission, Trevor told me that one had to take enough fresh water for your stay, and the return was obviously weather dependant. In his book 'Rockhopper Copper' Conrad Glass gives the reader in depths look from personal experience.



The Traditional Longboat

Modern technology has reached the Island in later years, motorised boats, even a Patrol boat christened the 'Wave Dancer' and capable of doing 40knots down swell!

The Tristanians will confirm that the longboat had its ups and downs, on the downside it was very heavy and had to be towed by tractor to the harbour, launched by a crane, been difficult to land and pulled ashore, and yes there were some safety concerns, but on the other hand rowing out into the open ocean, putting up the masts and sail...one cannot help to see the hungry eyes, the desire of maybe one more time!

"Fortunately the longboats still do exist and are lying next to the Administrators house, tied upside down to remind everyone about yesterday when men were made from steel, and boats from wood!"

- Mr Henry Valentine

... by Tom Mc Sherry



Water on the Island...

Our drinking water here on Gough Island is running water that comes from one of the many streams that run down the mountain into the ocean. There are no dams build here and we mainly depend on rainfall through the year for fresh water. The water has a brown colour* to it with a mixture of wood, leaves and feathers of the sea birds that live on the island. The water is gravity fed to the base and there is no need for a water pump to supply water.

Water is filtered through a strainer at the source and through two different filters at the base. The first filter consists of plastic disks with grooves on each side which fit side by side creating vine galleries where water enters the filter and the dirt stays behind. The second filter is a sand filter which holds back fine particles of dirt letting clean water through to the holding tanks.

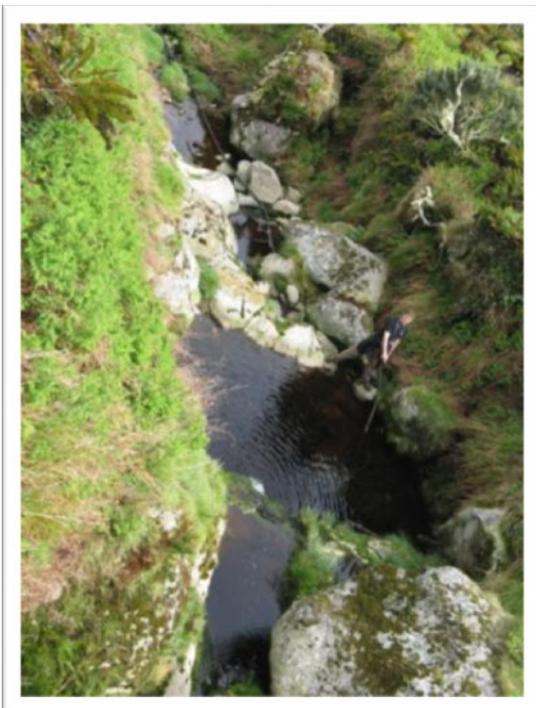
It is now clean enough to drink and to be used for cooking but still have a brownish colour* to it. A third filter with a fine alimint is used to produce cleaner drinking water.

* Decaying vegetation (leaf tissues, bud tissues, seed tissues, roots and stem tissues) in the water results in the leaching of tannins from this vegetation, resulting in transparent, acidic water that is darkly stained, resembling tea or coffee. These streams or rivers are commonly referred to as blackwater rivers.

Ref: www.wikipedia.org

by Vincent Rademeyer.

(Picture: Vincent's imaginary friend, Dirkie, taking a bath)



Gough Island fresh water source



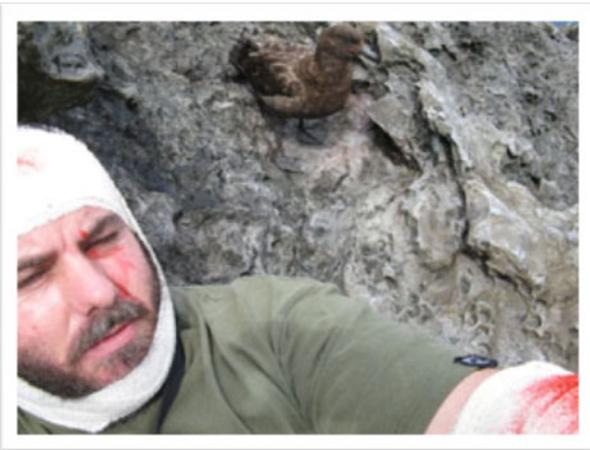


Rescue at Snoekgat...

One of the duties of a responsible team is to always be prepared for the possibility that TomVanBrits may sneak into the Stywelyne Hall of Fame and catch a 50kg bluefish at Snoekgat. Not only do we need to be mentally prepared for the mandatory months of manic boasting, wild bragging and inevitable exaggeration but we must also be able to haul the monster fish up the cliffs or else we will never be able to coax Tom back to the base again. With this in mind the team decided to stage a rescue exercise at Snoekgat.

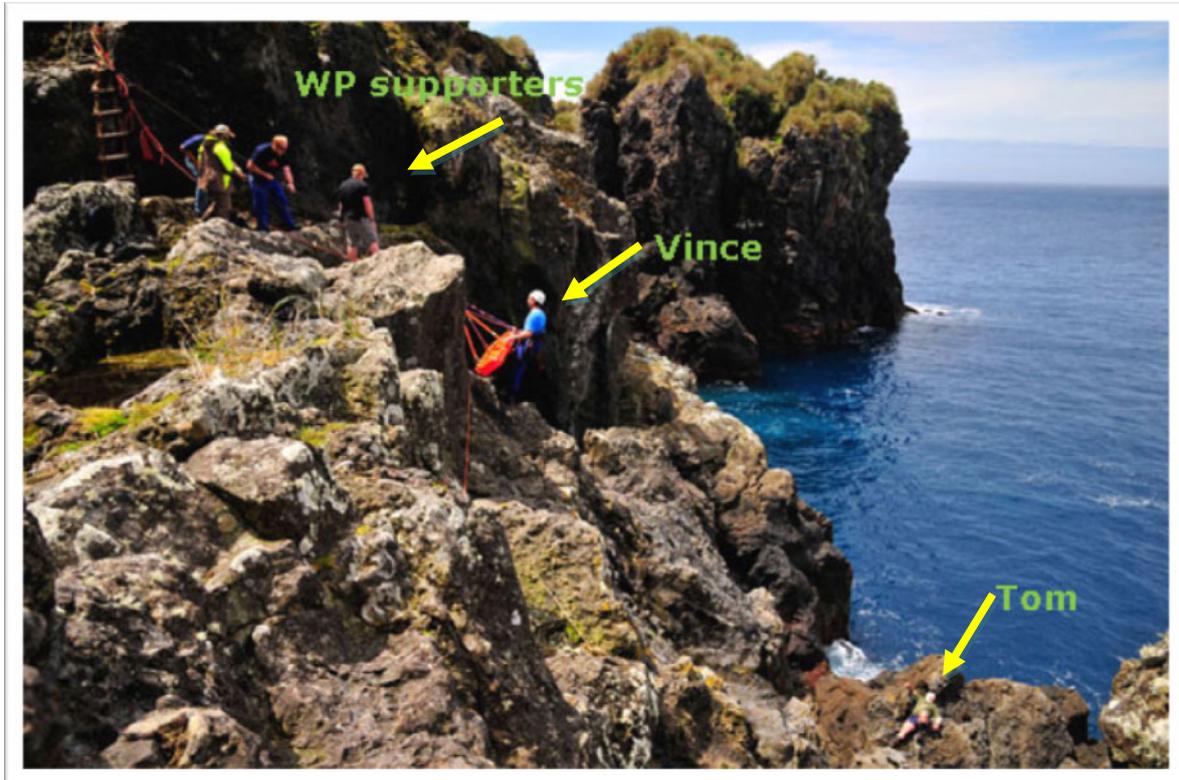
At first the plan was to simulate a bluefish by loading a rescue stretcher with all the baking powder we could find at the base. When we could not find any baking powder, Tom volunteered to play the part of baking powder simulating a bluefish. In this way, he argued, he will be able to enter the mind of his quarry undetected and so out-think, out-play and eventually snare the colossus, fishing ninja style.

Setting the date for the exercise everyone was adamant that we should wait for the worst possible weather so as to simulate the most extreme conditions. Unfortunately the weather of late has been so good that we eventually had to use a beautiful day for the staged rescue. So it came to pass that we sauntered down to Snoekgat one fine November morning oblivious of the fact that soon there would be no more pumpkin, only broccoli.



Arriving at the rescue point we proceeded to assemble the pulley system that would be used in lowering the stretcher to Tom-Baking-Bluefish-Powder in order to haul him out. This involved a fare amount of highly amicable discussion on what would be the best system. Tom unfortunately entered the conversation from the wrong angle, muttering something about a Blue Bulls prop who can build a pulley system quicker than us. For this he suffered the Western Provincial consequence. After Chantal managed to stop his bleeding Tom climbed down to the likely position chanting "blue, blue, blue..." and instantly made friends with a hungry Skua.

It took us some time to convince Paul that the chant referred to fish not bull. I listened to my team mates and discovered that sometimes I am wrong, unlikely yet proven empirically. So we eventually managed to set up the pulley system and started lowering Vincent down because he lost the rescue rock-paper-scissors game always played before death defying feats of heroism. As Vince slipped over the edge he begged Henk for a confidence building affirmation of the integrity of our rope work. Henk tearfully waved at Vince but could not look him in the eye. Vince furiously argued that there's no way paper can beat rock, but it was too late, we all new paper killed rock.



Vince survived the belay down the cliff. He later told us it took some time for him to tranquilise Tom once at the bottom. Apparently, lying in the sun staring at a future without chicken or braais induced an anxiety attack in Tom who was frantically grabbing at the Skua and snarling braai-chicken recipes. For posterity and the general cheerful theme of this article we will say the skua was too agile. Anyway, skuas are not endangered because they taste foul (cheap & nasty).

Vince strapped Tom into the stretcher and we rigged the extra stops. Tumi was on the shunt and helped to haul, Chantal reset the system and Henk and I were the main haulers. Paul golem-clambered up and down the cliff demanding to be called Pieter and howling something to do with "...haak...". RupertOnDuty stood on the rocks above with a gonzo fist raised in solidarity and his head in the clouds. Slowly an extraordinary calm drifted in from our blue horizon. We settled into the rhythm of the Gough machine, seduced by the hum of island civility and ubiquitous natural humanity. After a couple more scrapes and bumps that had nothing to do with the Bulls comment we had Tom and Vince at the top.





It may sound like pumpkin pie but the general consensus was that hurting yourself at Snoekgat would be a very bad idea slowly boiled into hours of torture seasoned with the slow individual extraction of nose-hair, if you're not a bluefish. If you are a bluefish your future would be equally bleak most probably for eternity. If you think you're a bluefish, you'll be fine as long as you don't look like a bluefish, in which case, don't eat anything Tom gives you. (Peace)



Sweet November...

Sweet November is what I call it, especially on Gough Island. November is also the month that I was born. My second birthday on an Island, one was on Marion Island and now this one on Gough. I also got some nice presents from the team (Photos)

We had some good days the last couple of weeks, open skies and sunny days, just like Namibia.

After the Edinburgh came to offload some goods at the island, Tom got us two crayfish nets from the Captain and it wasn't two days and we already caught some crayfish to eat.



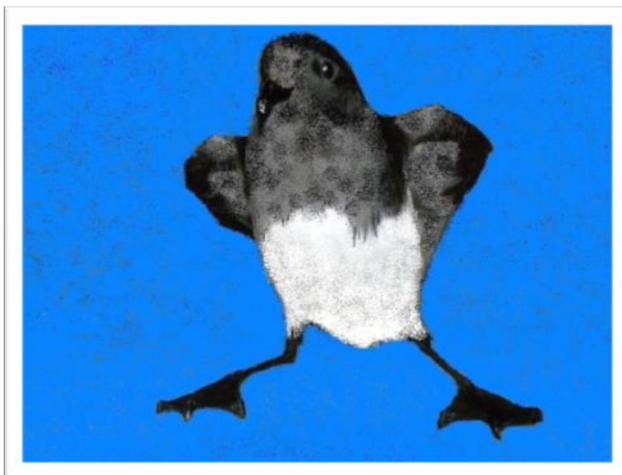
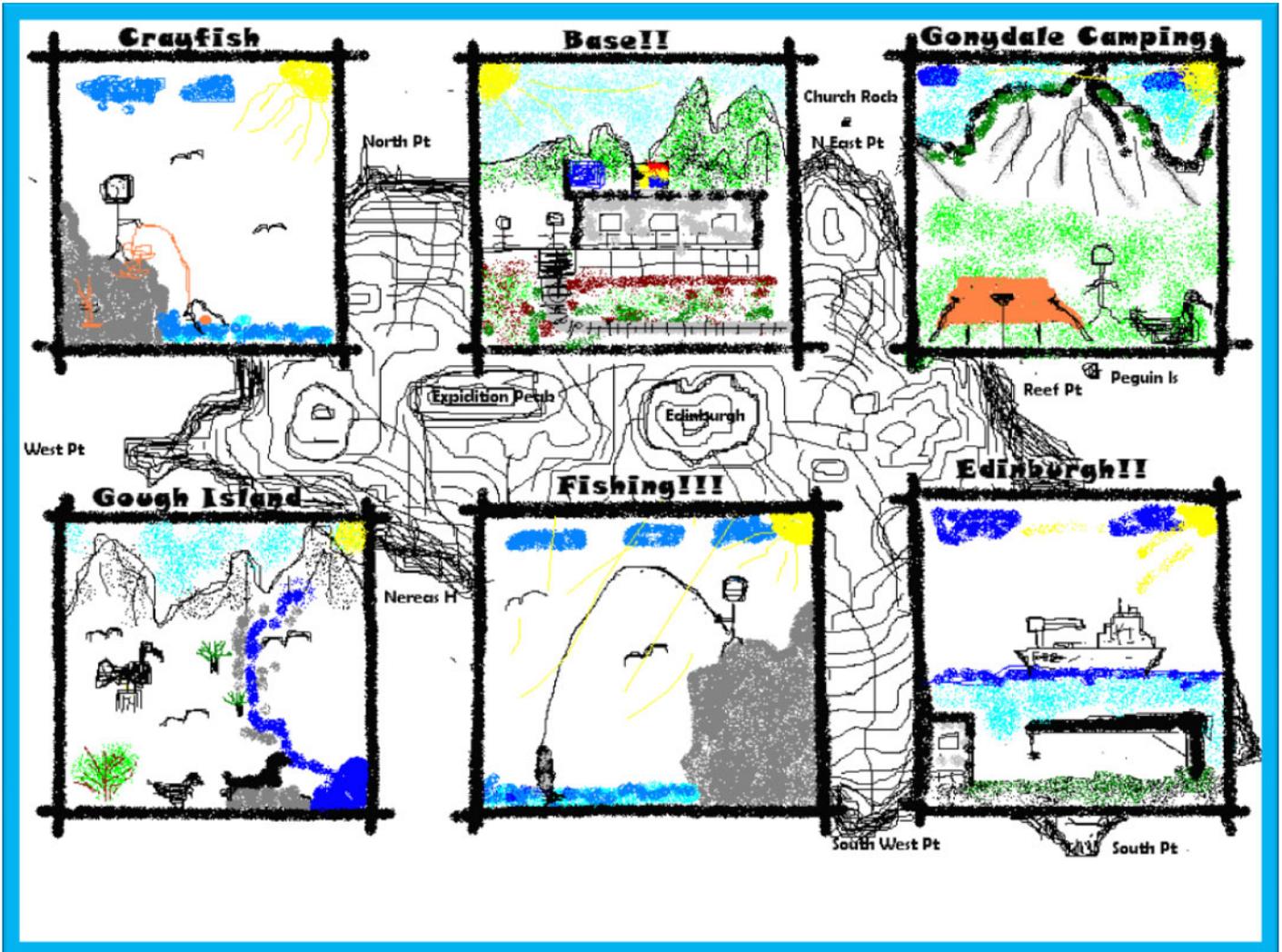
Some of the birds on the Island like the Rock hopper Penguins and the Yellow Nose Albatross will be happy from this month forward to December, because they going to be parents soon. The Rockies chicks already hatched and the Yellow Noses are starting now. You also see some Moorhen chicks running around and the Buntings are also busy breeding on the island.

Fun times for a field assistant to see and work up close with these animals that God has created.

We also went to the North side of the Island to count Southern Giant Petrel Chicks, but that was like walking in the dark, because we had misty weather for 4 days, so we didn't see much.

Fun times at Gough---and it still summer, so warmer and longer days!!





by Paul Visser...



Lost in the mist of ourselves...

Lost in the mist of ourselves...

Ever wondered what it would be like to be lost
not the, I must have taken the wrong turn, lets retrace
not the I'm not sure where it is or where to go, or
I think I'll take this bus, taxi or train, or even a plane,
it should take me somewhere familiar.

No I mean to be lost in oneself, in the mist of our own little self
where everywhere you look, it looks the same,
left is right and right is left; it's only a matter of perspective.
Yes being lost in your own little world, that's what I'm talking about.

To many it might seem scary, and yes it is scary to be lost,
but being scared is caused by fear and the way I see it,
fear is only the emotion you experience when uncertainty threatens.
I find it exciting as scary as it is, taking that step of faith, trusting transcendently.

Being lost makes you walk in circles, but that's part of the experience I think, it takes you back to
the starting point, you retrace your steps and well, you see the next time round where you went
wrong the first time, and you take a different route, something new, something scary, but
something exciting and it may just unlock doors greater than can be seen by the mist that is all
around.

by Henk Louw...



Paying the dowry...

And so she came over the big blue, the Edinburgh, white as little Trevor's socks after a day in the park but loved by two field assistants after a long wait.

I woke to the sound of the radio organizing the offloading of parcels. I pulled myself out of bed, but with no real effort as an excitement rose in me. Unaware of what really triggered it I was walking down the catwalk to the centre of attention, the crane point. I found Vince operating the crane as if a little remote controlled aircraft and way down in the water were those classic little crayfish boats, lying unmoved and as stable on the water as a rugby front rower on his feet, five meters from the try line. As the morning preceded the amount of joy multiplied as the amount of people did at the crane point. First it was the tote bins and weather station equipment and then the mouse non toxic bait for our test trials. But the protein powder was nowhere to be found.

It was only through our excitement and eagerness that we missed the two containers of protein powder and with great relief we finished unpacking the equipment destined for the laboratory. Then there was an opportunity for two men of the



ship's crew to see the Island, I remember, the two blokes being hoisted up with the crane from way down there and the size of their eyes as they saw these Gough citizens with that funny look in their eyes, almost as if it were feeding time and they are on the menu. Clinging to the netting of the platform, they said it was not to fall off while

was too much for some people as one of the blokes fell asleep, apparently



night watchmen on the ship, but I think it was those Romany Creams and coffee, I think Tom had something to do there. But his little friend never left him alone, and mind you may be a good thing; we might have just filled our freezers again.

But the two men from the sea were on their way, back to the Edinburgh and things calmed down again on the island as things settled down, every man into his little hole again, trying to figure out the equipment that was sent, seeing what presents were received, and Paul and myself, we were sipping our protein shakes.

Over the next few days the citizens of Gough were down at the water with every chance they could to see if they can catch those ever illusive blue fish (*Hyperoglyphe perciformis*).

But alas, no blue fish to date have been caught, but the sizes of the Five-fingers have increased immensely, and those crayfish nets provided for record size crayfish being pulled at Diesel point.

The ship's visit was well enjoyed and even as the ship is on its way back to Cape Town, the joy is still going. Crayfish and Five-fingers keep the islanders well fed and healthy with all those really essential oils, and well the squid, well, that provides for the mental well being as it drives the islanders to the waters in search of the big one.

I would like to thank everyone involved in helping to get our packages to the island, it is well appreciated.

Also note that some things in the article are over exaggerated to a certain extent.

by Henk Louw...



Art and Entertainment...

If the Normal Island weather traps us inside the base for a few days at a time, we all look to our Creative sides to keep busy or just relax with a book, listen to music or indulge in a marathon movie session...

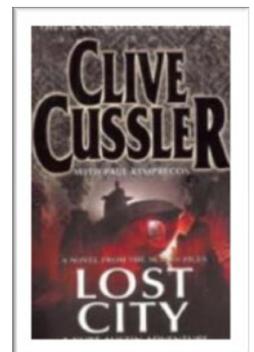
This is what the bad weather produced this month...

Item	Description Artist
	<p>Gough House model – for Paul’s birthday</p> <p>by:</p> <p><i>Andries van Staden and Chantal Steyn</i></p>
	<p>Wooden Impala Airplane – for Paul’s birthday</p> <p>by:</p> <p><i>Tom Mc Sherry</i></p>

Book Review:

This book will be quite entertaining for any scientific researcher or adventurous traveller. Especially for someone like me, sitting on this island; it was very easy to identify with the main characters and completely get lost in the “reality” of this story.

...the discovery of a body frozen for ninety years in a glacier high in the French Alps seems of unlikely concern to Kurt Austin and the NUMA (National Underwater and Marine Agency) Special Projects team. But when those on site are trapped in alpine tunnels flooding with glacial meltwater, Austin can hardly ignore a cry for help. And this near tragedy proves to be no mere accident. For the body held a secret. A secret someone was prepared to kill for. Soon Austin is plunged into a mystery involving a virulent algal weed ravaging the Atlantic’s Lost City trench, while he and the team face a family of astonishing greed – Who will stop at nothing to get what they want...

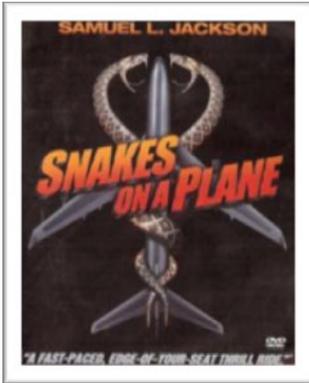


Clive Cussler is the author of a whole series of novels he collectively calls the NUMA files, including Atlantis Found, Valhalla Rising, Fire Ice and a whole lot more.. - **Chantal**



Movie Review:

I love movies like I love Music, and for that reason I resent anyone attempting to lure me away from my passions. Well like any other thing in life one will be tested until they reach their boiling point. Our DVD this week tried to push and shove me over the edge but you know what they say "the pen is mightier than the sword". I love Leroy Jackson a lot I love his screaming antics when giving orders in a movie...but this time around I stood there with awe and despair when I saw him in, wait for it...**SNAKES ON A PLANE!**. I am not the kind of individual who goes around screaming..." It burns, it burns oh my eyes my poor, poor eyes" unlike other people who does this every time they pass a church, but I succumbed to the scream. Ten minutes into the DVD my eyes where turning red as my brain was boiling from the lack of creativity the director displayed.



Well here is how it pens out, bad guy kills state prosecutor, we have a witness we know what bad guys do or attempt to do to witnesses, there's plane, pheromone, lots of snakes, immense biting and casualties yadayadayada! And the famous Samuel L. Jackson's antic... the authoritative scream aimed at encouraging others to take firm actions against the foe!

We here on the island are very fair individuals even when faced with dreadful decisions; we have our beautiful birds, the Albatrosses, Skuas, Moorhens and other birds and mammals. The hierarchy here is visible...and for that reason our best reviews are awarded accordingly.

This DVD, **SNAKES ON A PLANE**, will be awarded 2 moorhens as it does not display any attempt by the director at creativity. As I am not subjective I will encourage people to see the movie and send their own reviews just to level the playing fields...2 moorhens from me! Nothing more nothing less! -Tumi

Photo Competition...

October winning photo:



Photo: Chantal Steyn - taken on the way to Goneydale

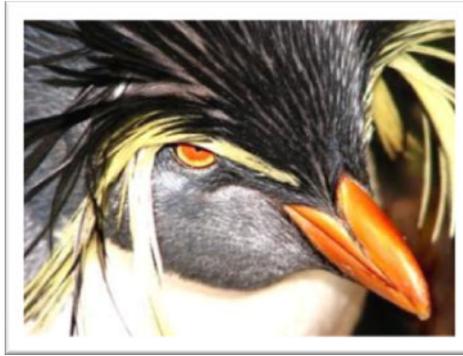


November Competition photos:

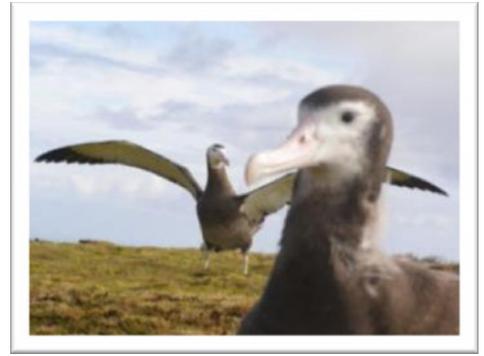
1. Kergeulen Tern with lunch



2. IF looks could kill... – Rockhopper



3. Albatross courting



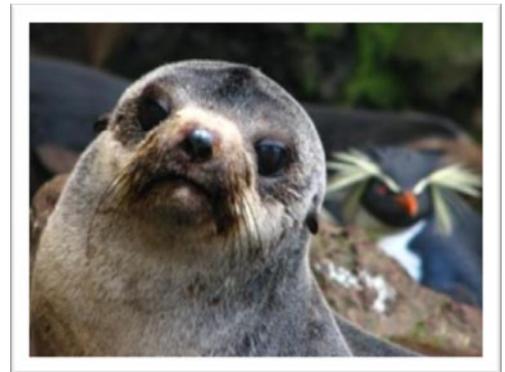
4. Fur seal pup



5. Rockhopper taking a shower...



6. Fur seal pup



7. Albatross feeding



8. Herman & William Meetin' the Hills...





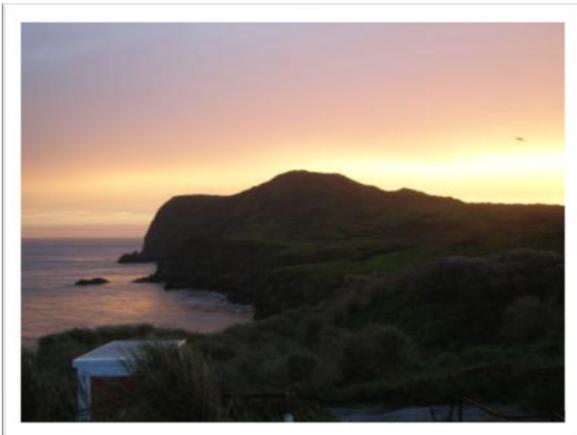
9. Agry Rockhopper



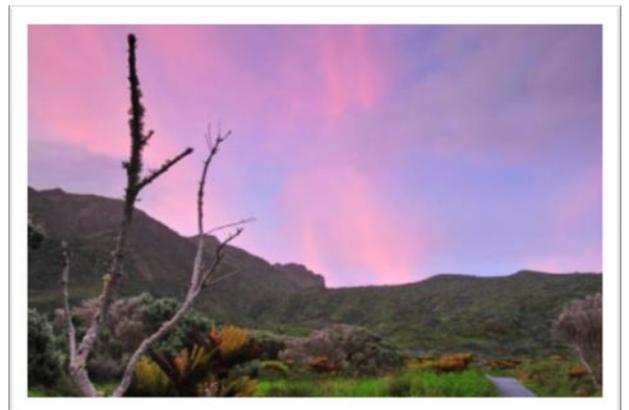
10. Common Noddy



11. Sunset over Richmond Hill



12. Pink clouds at sunset..



Please vote for your favourite photo:

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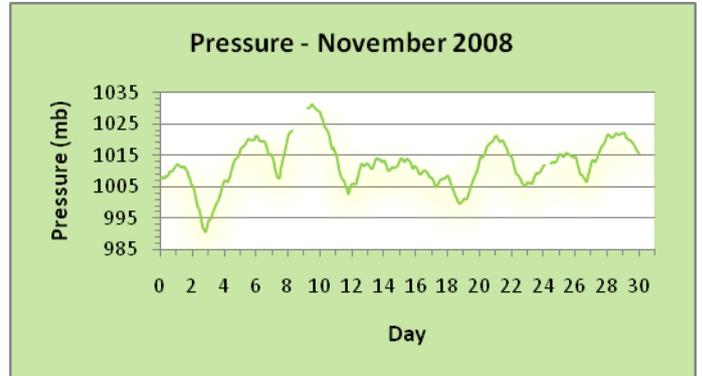
Fax: 021 405 9474



Weather Report...

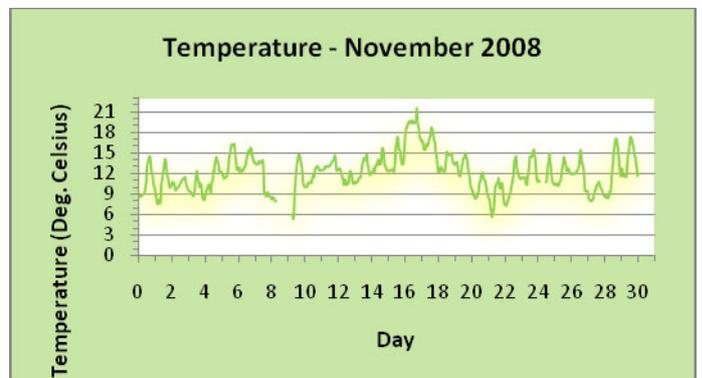
Pressure

Ave. Max Pressure	1016.6 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	1009.4 hPa
Ave. Pressure	1012.3 hPa
Max Pressure	1031.3 hPa
Min Pressure	990.7 hPa



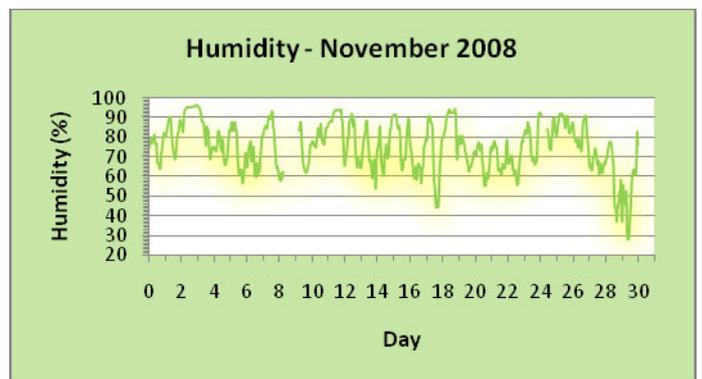
Temperature

Ave. Max Temp	15.1 °C
Ave. Min Temp	9.5 °C
Ave. Temp	12.3 °C
Max Temp	22.0 °C
Min Temp	5.2 °C



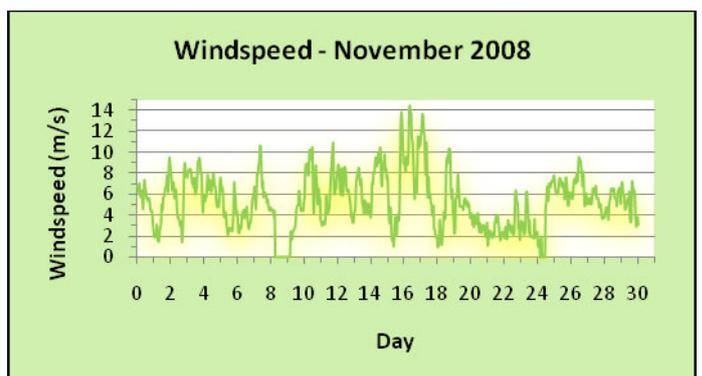
Humidity

Ave Humidity	75 %
Max Humidity	97 %
Min Humidity	27 %



Wind

Max Wind Gust	26.3 m/s or 94.7 km/h
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Rainfall

Total Rainfall	213.6 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	73.8 mm
Total days with rain	19 days
Total days >1mm	12 days
Total Sunshine	187.9 hours



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