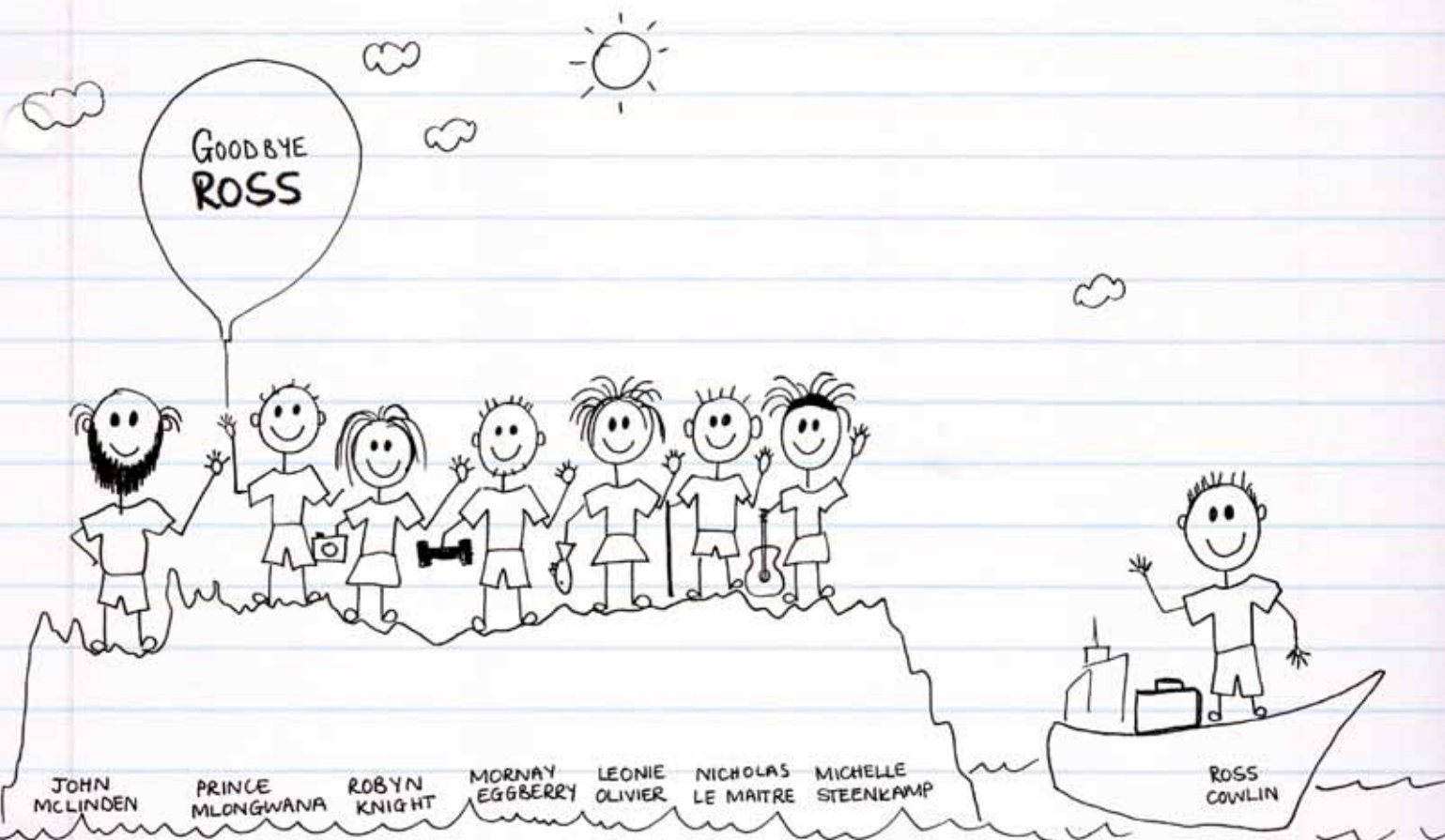


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Our Now Rossless Rosters...



This month we were lucky enough to have the *M.V. Edinburgh* sail past Gough again. It is such a luxury for the team to receive so many eagerly-awaited parcels from friends and family; the thought of new magazines, CDs, movies, fudge and tea was enough to keep the team excited for the ship's arrival. We really are thankful to the crew of the *Edinburgh* for delivering our parcels, and of course to everyone back home who sent much needed (and much wanted) supplies.

Sadly though, Ross had to return to Cape Town with the *Edinburgh*. After a hectic week of packing, we had a farewell braai followed by a little pool tournament where Prince and Ross could finally "settle it".

Ross, even though our Nesquik lasts longer now that you're gone, you're missed here on Gough. Good luck with your endeavours back home.



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STORY, POEM & PHOTOS
by MICHELLE STEENKAMP
with ADDITIONAL PHOTOS
by ROBYN KNIGHT



Goodbye Mister Face

Goodbye Mister Face

At our dinner table there's one empty place
There's no one here to fix our English
Or to remove mice without being squeamish

Your first meal in that kitchen was full of stress
But by the end you'd managed to impress.
You also managed to be the "ultimate winner"
And once even cooked a ten-minute dinner.

Who must Robyn now teach to dance
To that cool Roxette song you liked by chance?
Thanks for our kazillion pool games after a long day,
Even when we didn't have much more to say.

I'll miss having someone to go with on a walk.
When you left did you take with your lucky fork?
We have so much Nesquick, now that you're gone!
But don't worry; it's still us in the bar, jamming to your song.

Steering the red Ferrari now is really hard;
You made it easy pushing it uphill that last yard.
We'll say hi to the GPs while you're not here,
So enjoy being back home where the weather is clear.

Whether Johnny Cash ever sang that song we'll never know,
But it made us sad to see you go.
Good luck with all that lies ahead,
And may you one day find the egg!



"Dis 'n eerlike wyn, dié" - Mornay

"Dié goed proe soos 'n rot" - Leonie

Twinsavers - The Ultimate Collection

...cue the soppy music...

Valentine's Schmalentine's (what the boys missed when they went camping)



"It's 'Juicy Red', not 'Juicy Black'" - Michelle

...invitations by Michelle... decorations by Leonie...

...& heart-shaped pizza by Mornay and John ...



JUICY RED NIGHT
 Gough Bar: VALENTINES DAY 2011
 Dress code: RED
 Bring a bottle of wine
 Know any fact about it
 To share with the
 drinkers and
PARTY ON



From the Met Office Wave Watchers

On 27th February 2011, there was a cut-off low-pressure system in the upper atmosphere (i.e. between 700 and 300hpa, or approximately 10 000 to 30 000 feet above ground), associated with the slow-moving cold front at the surface. As one can observe from the surface charts, the cold front was squeezed by a high-pressure system; in other words, the high pressure was ridging strongly behind the front, creating a steep pressure-gradient which in turn resulted in strong to gale-force winds.

The orientation of the winds was different to what we were expecting. We expected a north-westerly ahead of the front and a south-westerly behind, but in this instance the winds were mainly easterly, and this was possibly due to the way the cold front approached the island and the high pressure system that was closing the front (see the surface chart).

The high swells and rough seas were generated by the slow-

By Dipuo Tawana (SAWS Forecaster)



Original Photos: Robyn Knight. Stitched by Robyn Knight



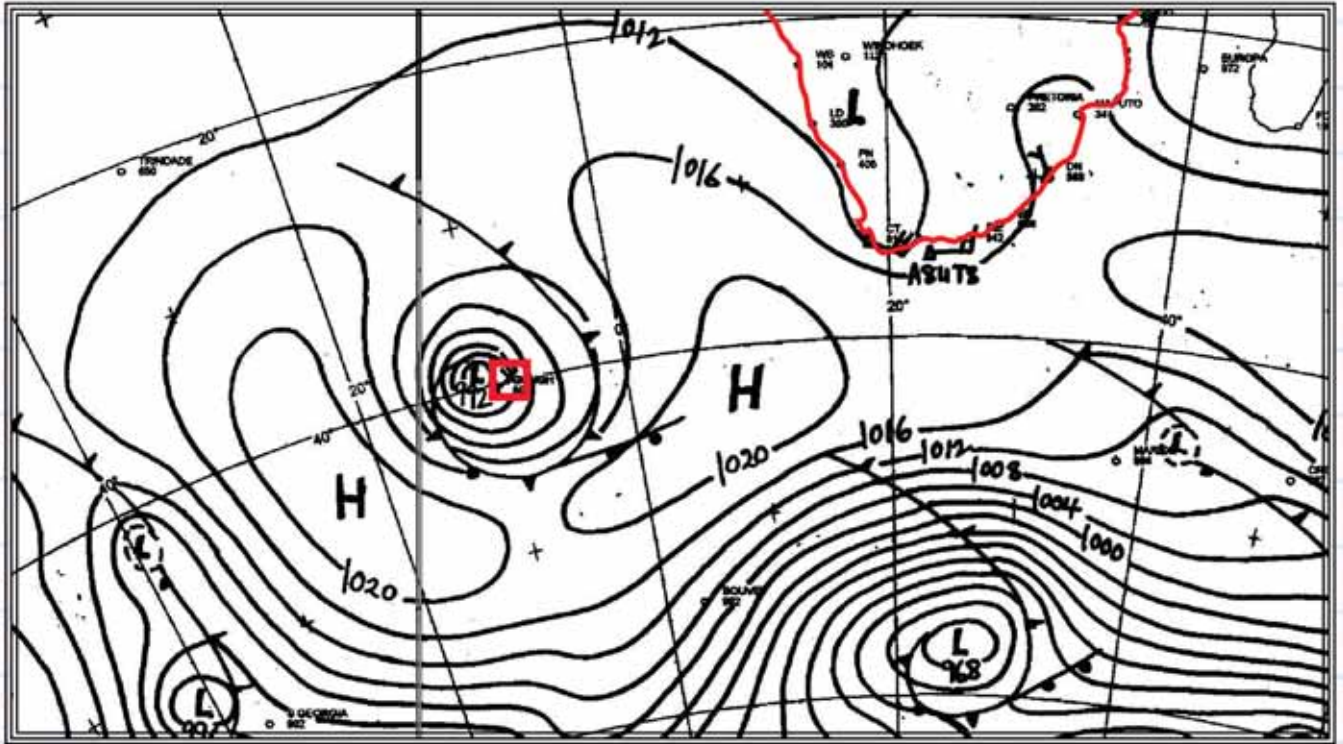
Original Photos: Nicholas Le Maitre. Stitched by Robyn Knight

moving front and the strong winds of the system.

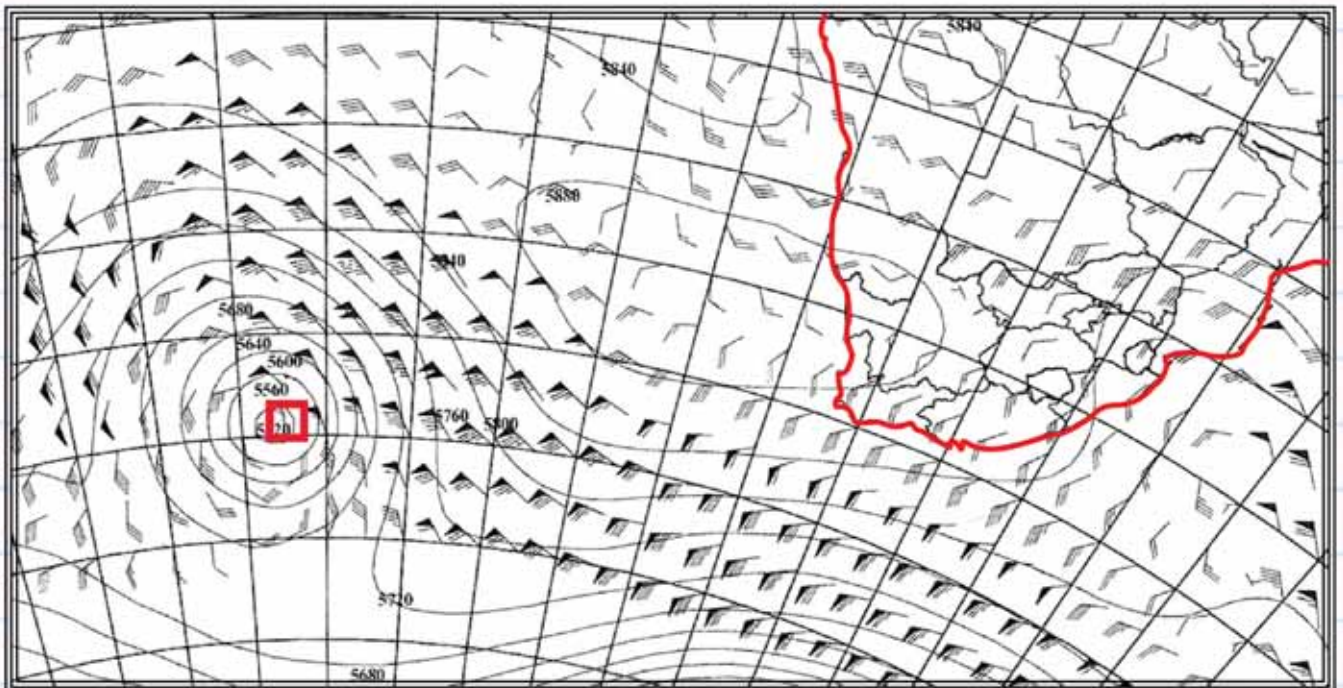
A cut-off low system is a cold-cored low-pressure system in the middle- and upper-troposphere.

Cut-off lows are formed when an upper low-pressure becomes caught in one place due to a lack of steering winds. Cut-off lows are usually associated with moderate to heavy rainfall,

but at times also with freezing rain or snow as the freezing level drops to lower levels. The severity of the associated weather depends, of course, on the intensity of the system.



27 February 2011 06h00Z Synoptic Chart, showing pressure isobars

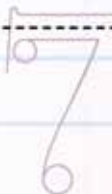


Surface Wind Chart [500 hPa Geopotential Heights and 200 hPa Winds 2011022512 - Sunday - 2011022712 (48hr)]



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□ = Gough's position



FROM THE LAB

by **NICHOLAS LE MAITRE**

February has been a busy month, especially with Ross' departure happening sooner than had been expected. Some planned work has had to be modified or dropped altogether, such as the round-island count of Tristan albatross nests which has been reduced to a count of nesting birds on Albatross Plain, rather than a "grand-tour" of the island.

The main focus for this month was to find all the Tristan

albatross nests in Gonydale, the Hummocks and on Tafelkoppie, mark each one with a numbered pole and identify both partners for each marked nest. This year has been a good one for nesting numbers with 192 nests in Gonydale and the Hummocks and a further 17 on Tafelkoppie, with the averages being 125 and 15 respectively. Sadly, most of the eggs will not make it to hatching or the chick will be eaten by skuas or the

introduced mice, resulting in an overall nesting success rate of 16%, which is terribly low.

Several trips have been made to Tafelkoppie and to Gonydale to attempt to identify both partners at each nest. Prince was kind enough to accompany me to Gonydale and was a great help checking nests and holding birds so that I could attach rings to their legs. He even attached one ring himself!

The rest of the month was given over to the spraying of herbicide in areas around the base, especially Crane Point, Diesel Cove and Snoekgat to control and prevent the germination of seeds of *Sagina procumbens*, an invasive weed that was accidentally introduced to the island several years ago. It was probably introduced from Marion Island, where it is also invasive and hugely problematic, causing significant changes to the island's ecology. Here on Gough it is confined to a small area of cliffs near the base and the hope is to eradicate it completely.

The weather, as always, has played a significant role in modifying the best laid plans and has made it difficult to complete all the planned work. Hopefully (but doubtfully) next month it will be better.



Courting Tristan albatrosses. Photo: Nicholas Le Maitre



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WEIGHTWATCHERS

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY LEONIE OLIVIER



One cold and wet day on the island, a medical emergency exercise took place. Nic was the patient and positioned himself outside our emergency base; he presented the team with a fracture of the left tibia and wrist, and a laceration above the left eye. The team met in the base and decided that Michelle would be the scene commander. Once the team had the necessary equipment they departed to the scene. It was on this occasion that we learned that we have an Academy-Award-winning actor in our midst; Nic played a very convincing patient and deserved his Oscar at the end of the day.

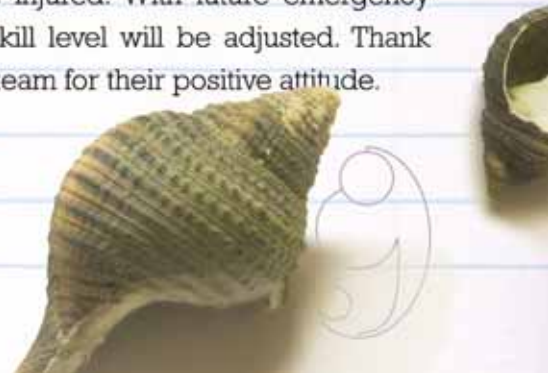
The team worked well together; the patient was treated according to protocol and carried back to

base with great care. The exercise was successful as the team showed good communication and teamwork skills, and everyone is now confident with the equipment available.

As this team's paramedic, I have full trust in my team's ability to handle an emergency, even if I were to be injured. With future emergency exercises the skill level will be adjusted. Thank you to the G56 team for their positive attitude.



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MORE FROM THE WEIGHTWATCHERS AUTHOR

Days of Our Lives

Words and Photos by Leonie Olivier

Family is not only about the blood that runs through your veins; it's the people that you love, and those who return that love to you.

What makes the G56 team unique is each individual's character and the contribution each person makes to the team by just being them. After months on the island, one can identify the sounds of the different footsteps in the base, so much so that you know who's on their way to you before you hear the knock on your door.

The needed and mutual respect for privacy in the base is understood within our team, and on days when everyone is having "alone time" the silence can be frightening. You quickly realise, though, that there is still life around you....

The aroma of flowers (remember, there are no flowers on the island) lets us know Robyn is awake, or, alternatively, a cold-blooded scream lets us know there is a mouse in her room again.

The squeaking of the chair in the radio room and the foreign language of Juliet Oscar Hotel November ZA 30 is heard, and we know that John is making sure that the world knows there are still people on Gough Island, via two-way radios. (Oh John, we love it when you talk foreign.)

If your coffee, tea, food or shoes disappear in front of your eyes then you'll know Mornay is at



his best. Prince seems to be the one at the brunt of most of Mornay's mischief, having come face-to-face with the masks and scary outfits in the middle of the night. This causes Prince's blood pressure to sky-rocket and to this day he threatens Mornay with potential "pay back time". On a few occasions others have had their revenge, though; Mornay's already had to suffer KY jelly on the phone, bathroom surfaces and door-handles.

The sounds of a guitar and harmonica fill the base and its surrounds with songs that remind us of home. This makes us look for company and we know then that it's not necessary to look for Michelle in her room; follow the music and your best bet is to find her on the roof of the base. You



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won't find a better audience than the one here on the island. Michelle, when you're famous, please remember us islanders.

And, oh, the smell of food that wakes us up! You know you're hungry and you're not even awake. And when you're awake enough to look at the time, it's such a pity that your watch says it's not time to eat yet! Prince makes it very difficult for us to fall asleep again at 02:00 after his midnight snack. And so we've come to understand that the metkassies' shifts cause them to have odd sleeping- and eating-patterns. As a result, the weight-watchers sleep with nose-pegs on.

Like the biologists do the molly-run, where they monitor the progress of the molly (yellow-nosed albatross) nests, Leonie does the mouse- and Domestos-run. Armed with glue and coconut flakes, she checks each mouse trap on a daily basis for those that are set off without catching anything. Leonie believes that these mice are gearing up with helmets and protective clothing. And the smell of Domestos only means one thing: she is on a cleaning mission again and is in her happy place.

You know Nic is somewhere on the island busy with work, but you don't see him anywhere. He wakes up way too early, so it's only by late afternoon that you see his shadow and then hear the word "foutjie" from one of the other team members; this let's us know Nic is back safely. Nic "du Randt", as Mornay calls him, is always on the run.

As there is no qualified psychologist on the island, we've decided as a team that our mental states are all normal. Well, we all still keep the washing machine on the "NORMAL" setting, at least.

Clean bill of health for the team - the power of prayers must never be underestimated.



Salon Van Gogh

PHOTOS by LEONIE OLIVIER



BEFORE

AFTER

HOMIE IMPROVEMENT

BY JOHN MCCLINDEN

This month was not as busy as the last. It has, however, started to rain more, and with the rains we started to find leaks in the roof. Mornay and I spent some time on the roof looking for leaks and sealing them as we went along. And

just when we thought we had all the leaks fixed, along came a nice storm to show us where there were still holes, so back up on the roof we went. We'll await the next big storm and then we shall see!

Our other regular job is replacing light bulbs all over the base as they go, and the regular grass-cutting which Mornay takes care of.



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THE WALL OF ~~FAME~~ SHAME

MOUSE-HUNTER of the Month:

Shmonie - 106 mice

MEAL of the Month:

Leonie's Sunday Meal

(Mornay's Sweet 'n' Sour dish was also in the running, except there was a dispute as to whether it was bluefish or pork...)

DESSERT of the Month:

Prince's "Black Like Me" Pudding

FLOP of the month:

Leonie's pap, burnt by Michelle

DAREDEVIL of the month:

Michelle, for her bomb-drops at Swemgat



COSTUME of the Month:

Earlier this month, on a not-so-sunny day, a trip to Swemgat was in order. The water from the waterfall redefines the word "cold", but after five minutes we really couldn't feel how cold it was anymore and so the bomb-drops and real swimming started. This being shortly after Valentine's Day, Mornay was still in the mode of wearing red and paraded his red hot pants, unanimously securing the number one spot for "Costume of the Month".

(Photo omitted due to censorship.)



next
THE WALL OF
~~FAME~~
SHAME

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"Once you go black you'll never go back" - Prince, about his award-winning dessert

"She banged me with a stick" - Ross

"This song's actually not too bad" - Ross, about an 80s Roxette song

"I don't want to see your mia-uuw" - Nic to Mornay

"Ek kraam sommer 'n fo**en otter" - Leonie

"Is 'f*k' with an 'F'?" - Robyn

"Ek poef en ek puff" - Leonie

"Ons kuier altyd as ek moet drink" - Michelle

"Laaste dop, dan sal ek drink" - Leonie

"You just swing big cats, you don't eat them" - Robyn

"Foutjie!" - Mornay



next next

THE WALL OF ~~FAME~~ SHAME

THE DARWIN AWARD

"A QUICK SMOKE BEFORE DINNER"

In the process of winning "Meal of the Month", Shmonie also won herself a Darwin Award for setting off 9, yes NINE, smoke detectors while trying to roast tinned potatoes (specifically for Nic), which seem to be simply unroastable, and thus burning the oil.

"PRINCE'S SHOCKING EXPERIENCE"

Only Prince himself knows exactly what happened. All we know is that, while apparently ironing in his room, he managed to trip the base's power and interrupt the movie playing in the TV lounge... so we'll leave it to your imagination.

"CABIN FEVER"

One skivvy day Michelle was so eager to get outside that she starting vacuuming the grass in the quad. She says she broke a glass and was vacuuming up the pieces but we're not so sure...

"ANONYMOUS"

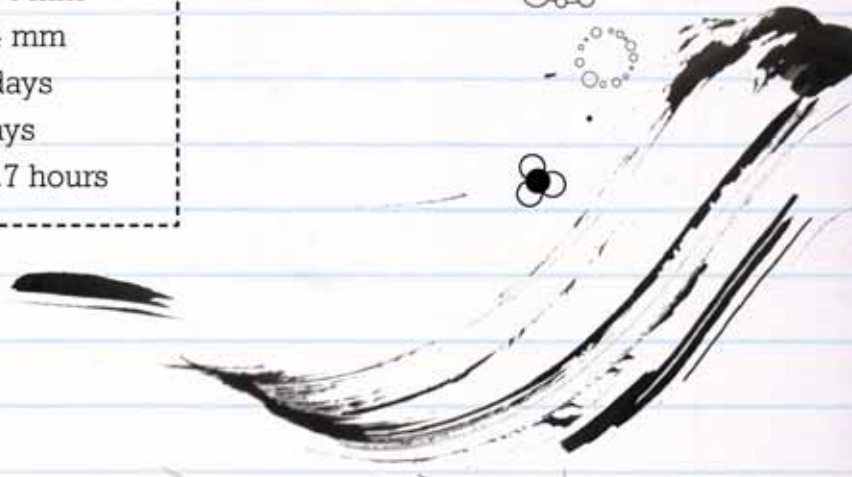
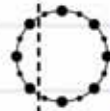
Someone very clever attached Ross' passport to one of Mornay's parcels, and we didn't find it until Ross had gone and we were opening our packages back up at base. Needless to say, the ship had to be radioed quickly to send a powerboat back and we had to lower this tiny little passport with the crane! We're not sure exactly who to blame for this so Ross himself can get the award for not being more organised.



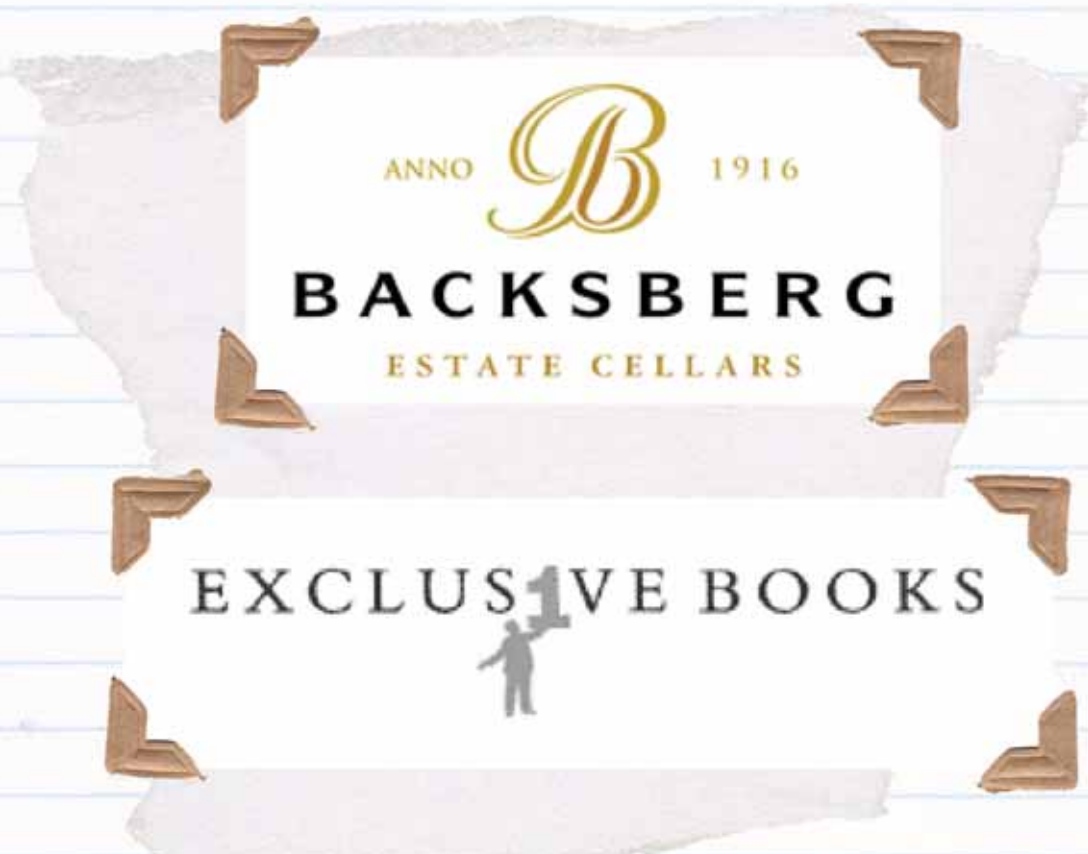
GOUGH WEATHER

• FEBRUARY CLIMATE STATS •

| | | |
|----------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Ave. Max Pressure | : | 1010.8 hPa |
| Ave. Min Pressure | : | 1003.0 hPa |
| Ave. Pressure | : | 1006.5 hPa |
| Max Pressure | : | 1020.4 hPa |
| Min Pressure | : | 985.1 hPa |
| | | |
| Ave. Max Temp | : | 17.7 °C |
| Ave. Min Temp | : | 12.2 °C |
| Ave. Temp | : | 14.9 °C |
| Max Temp | : | 21.4 °C |
| Min Temp | : | 9.5 °C |
| Max Sea Temp | : | 16.1 °C |
| Min Sea Temp | : | 14.4 °C |
| | | |
| Ave Humidity | : | 81 % |
| Max Humidity | : | 98 % |
| Min Humidity | : | 52 % |
| | | |
| Max Wind Gust | : | 28.3 m/s or 101.9 km/h |
| | | |
| Total Rainfall | : | 166.4 mm |
| Highest in 24 Hours | : | 38.4 mm |
| Total days with rain | : | 20 days |
| Total days >1mm | : | 3 days |
| Total Sunshine | : | 121.7 hours |



SPONSORS



G56 would like to thank Exclusive Books for their kind donation of three large boxes of books, as well as Backsberg Wine Estate for the wine we received from them. Their contributions have definitely helped make us feel that much more like we're at home away from home.

If you have any comments or queries about any of the content of this newsletter, or any suggestions for following issues, please contact us:

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Translations and cover illustration
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