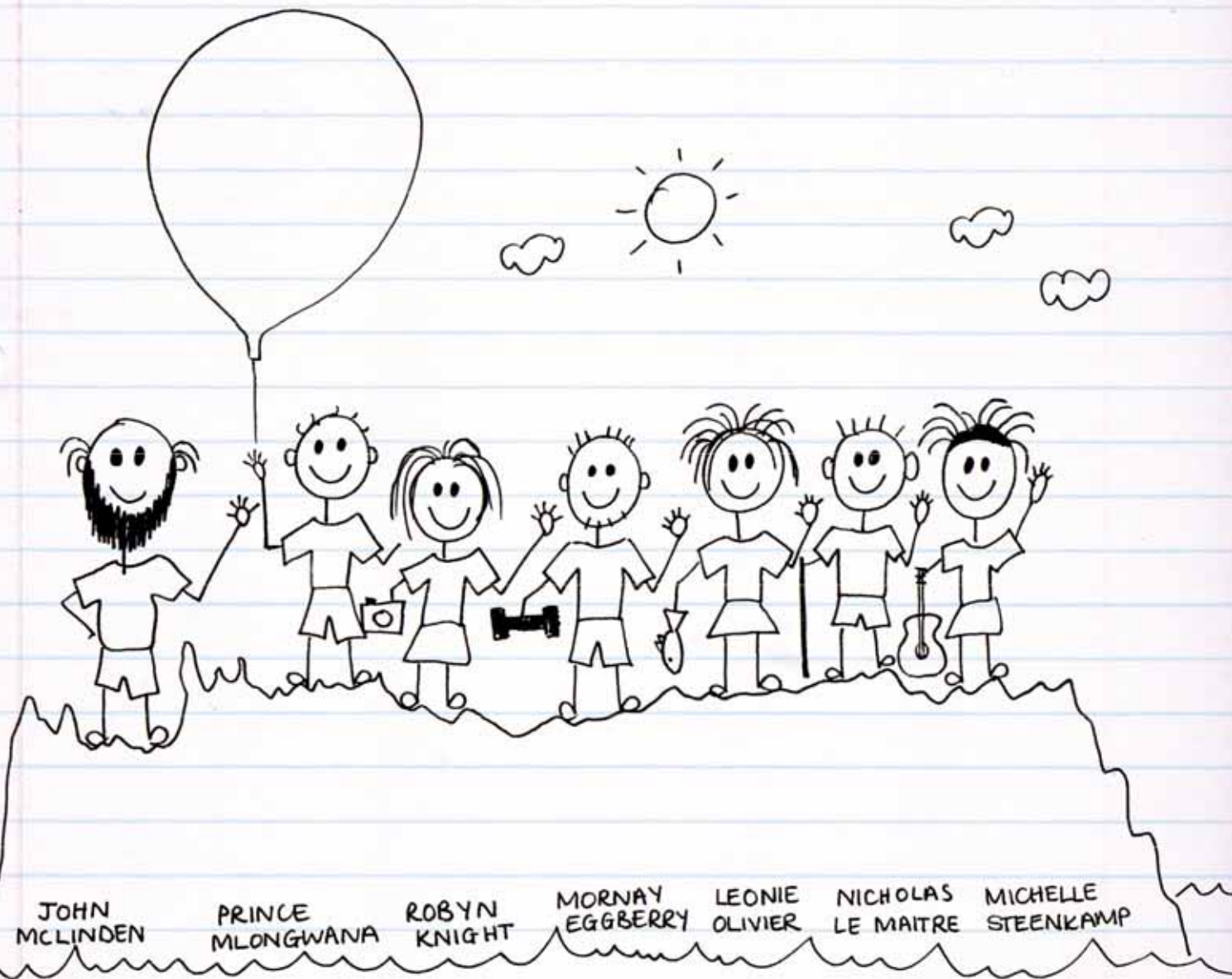


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JOHN
MCLINDEN

PRINCE
MLONGWANA

ROBYN
KNIGHT

MORNAY
EGGBERRY

LEONIE
OLIVIER

NICHOLAS
LE MAITRE

MICHELLE
STEENKAMP

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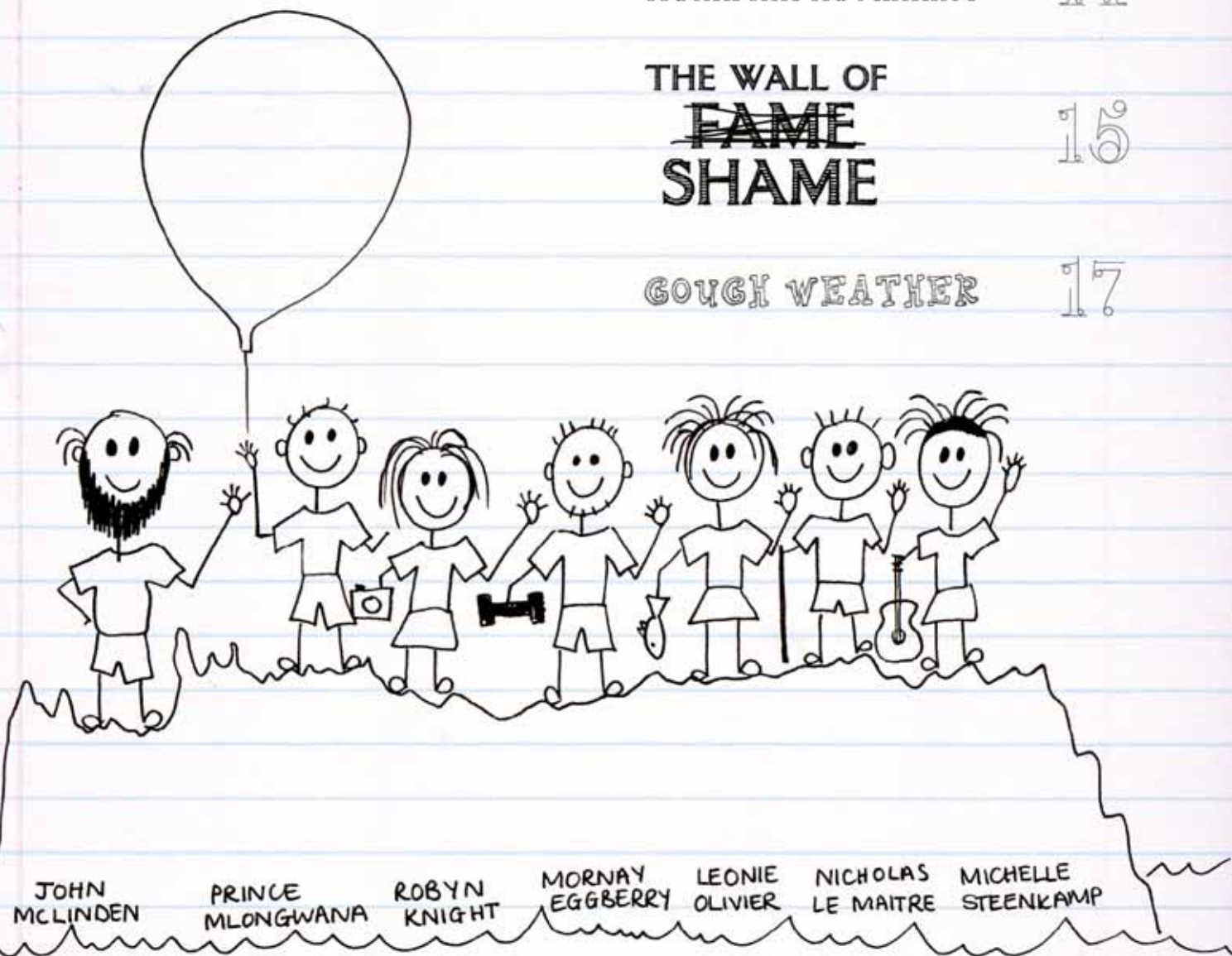
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Nic's Birthday: 30 April 2011

CARTOONS

PHOTOS by ROBYN KNIGHT, MICHELLE STEENKAMP, LEONIE OLIVIER & NIC LE MAITRE



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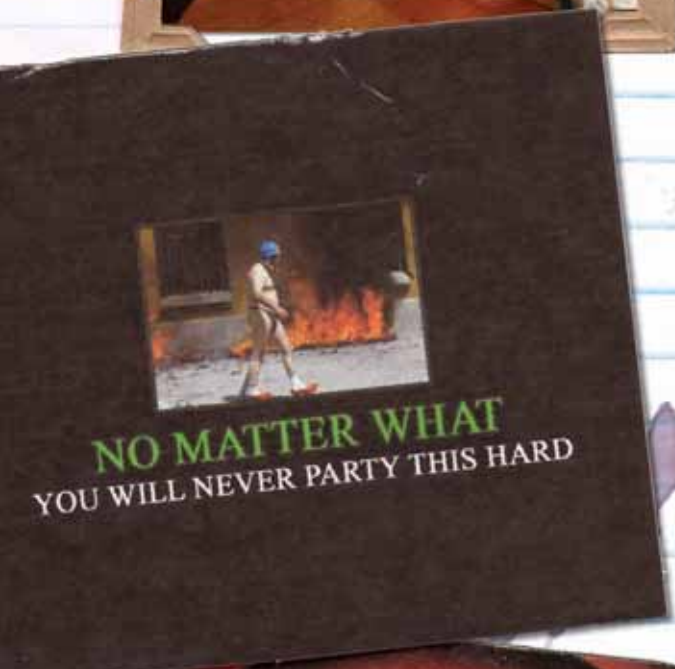
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Michelle and her sort-of alcoholic namesake



QUOTES FROM THE OCCASION

"Excuse me, I have to bring my ball" - Nic

"Quasimodo's doing a strip dance!" - said Robyn with great excitement

"For you, Michelle, I'll do anything" - Nic

"Ek rook vodka" - Leonie

"I want there to be a pole here" - Robyn

"You don't just peel off the world. If I had the world taped to my chest I'd leave it like that" - Michelle

"Dis 'n Stellenborg wyn" - Leonie

"Nic kry te siek" - Leonie, trying to rhyme



by MICHELLE STEENKAMP

THE ADVENTURES^{to} the HIGHEST & LOWEST ALTITUDES

April has been a particularly busy month as far as exploring the island is concerned. A spell of bad weather in March left Mornay, Robyn, Nic and I on top of South Peak with less than five metres visibility, and we had to abandon our plans for Edinburgh Peak and head back to base in pouring rain. Nic and I tried again a week later, but once again the weather had changed overnight and after a long walk we arrived back at base drenched. We were losing hope for enough good weather to make the trip. Finally, in the first week of April, the forecast was in our favour and Robyn, Nic and I headed out to Gonydale one more time.

We spent the afternoon ringing the Tristan albatrosses nesting at Gonydale and then had a long night sharing our tents with the mice who insisted on nibbling their way inside. The next morning we woke up to the sun shining brilliantly on Mount Rowett, which is usually covered completely with cloud; we'd been blessed with a perfect day on Gough. Two hours later we



Michelle and Nic below a sunlit Mount Rowett and an almost cloudless sky - a rare sight at Gonydale. Photographed and stitched by Robyn Knight



Michelle and Nic on Michael's Coll, preparing to climb South Rowett. Hag's Tooth is in the middle-ground. Panorama: Robyn Knight



Nic on South Rowett. Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



were at the top of South Rowett enjoying the view of either side of the island and, after a quick albatross-count on Albatross Plain, we were on Windy Ridge. This is the ridge along which people have been known to leopard crawl to get across, as the ridge is completely exposed to winds belting from every direction. We must be one of the very few Gough teams who have ever been able to stop on Windy Ridge and wonder how it earned the name. The crawling, however, did happen later when we found ourselves stuck in the bogs trying to cross Tarn Moss, where Robyn nearly lost her boots. By noon we were at the foot of Edinburgh Peak setting up our tent at Waterfall Camp. With the weather still being spectacular, we decided (against the will of our legs) that the best option would be to head up Edinburgh Peak that same afternoon. Fortunately by then our backpacks were in the tent and we no longer had to lug extra weight up the hill, and before we knew it we were sprinting the last 10m to reach the summit! The three of us were rewarded with a view that can hardly be explained. Finally, after two failed attempts, we were standing on the highest peak of the island!

After waking up in mist the next day, we had to abandon our plans to see the sunrise from the edge of Tarn Moss and counted



Michelle and Nic doing the count on Albatross Plain below. Photo: Robyn Knight



Michelle and Nic on the descent from North Rowett, towards Windy Ridge, with Tarn Moss and Edinburgh Peak in the distance. Photo: Robyn Knight



Michelle and Nic on a windless Windy Ridge, looking out over Tarn Moss, with Edinburgh Peak in the distance to the left. Photo: Robyn Knight



Robyn getting stuck in the marsh at the foot of Windy Ridge. Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



Michelle and Nic at the foot of Edinburgh Peak, searching for Waterfall Camp. Photo: Robyn Knight



our blessings that we'd climbed the peak the previous day. We headed back to Gonydale to ring the remaining nesting albatrosses and by the time we arrived the weather had cleared and we were spoilt with yet another windless day on Gough, as well as a beautiful afternoon and a sunset at Cooper's Coll. As we started walking back the next day, seeing the base for the first time in three days was a huge relief - we were only hours away from real food, clean clothes and warm showers.

Only five days after being back from Edinburgh Peak, the three of us had the opportunity to visit the Glen to see whether or not the recent oil spill from the *MS Olivia* had affected any of the penguins there.

The Glen is on the east coast and is one of the only places on the island where a boat can reach shore; this was the area where the first ever landing on the island was made in 1675 and later, where vessels continued to send boats ashore for fresh water and penguin eggs. In the 1800's sealers lived in caves which are still there today and in the early 1900's it was where diamond prospectors set up a camp. After the annexation took place on that specific shore in 1938 it also became the position where South Africa built the first meteorological station on Gough.



Robyn on Windy Ridge with North Rowett in the distance. Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



Waterfall Camp. Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



The view of the Rowetts and Albatross Plain from Edinburgh Peak. Photo: Robyn Knight



The summit photo! Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



Crossing a stream on the Baseline on the other side of Albatross Plain in the mist. Photo: Robyn Knight



A clear view of South Rowett again while we tagged albatrosses at Gonydale. Photo: Robyn Knight



Nic watching the sunset at Coopers Coll. Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



Although the huts and other structures built at the Glen have been continuously removed in different stages for over forty years, remains of the structures can still be found; the area has a rich atmosphere of history and many stories to tell. We spent the day exploring the sealing caves and rock engravings left by previous explorers and stood amazed at the size of the adult elephant seals on the beach. What an absolute privilege it was to spend a night on such a special part of our island.

All of these adventures around Gough wouldn't be possible if it weren't for every person in our team who is always ready for any situation in which we may find ourselves while we're away. So a special thanks to the whole of G56 who takes over shifts, stands ready at the radios and who greets us back at base with a hot meal to "hit the spot".



Michelle and Nic warily photographing the elephant seals. Photo: Robyn Knight



At the entrance to the sealers' cave
Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



A rock engraving on the beach outside the cave
Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



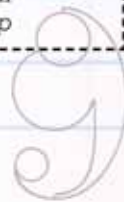
One of the many engravings attached to the cliff faces. Photo: Robyn Knight



Hag's Tooth from the beach
Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



The beach and Archway Rock from the penguin colony upstream. Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



A MONTH OF MANY VISITORS



Terry (left) and Ian (right) even had time to give some of the GS6 team members a hands-on lesson in crayfishing! Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



Terry (left) and Ian Lavarello, Tristan da Cunha's Chief Islander (right), visited Gough via the Edinburgh on 8 April, during a lobster sampling voyage being done on behalf of the Tristan Fishery. The Edinburgh also very kindly delivered parcels to us from Cape Town again. Photo: Leonie Olivier



The Nereida sailed past Gough on 28 April 2011. On board is Jeanne Socrates who is attempting a solo, non-stop circumnavigation. For more info visit <http://svnereida.com>. Photo: John McLinden



The Black Rover, a British Navy Auxiliary vessel, sailed past Gough on 23 April 2011. Photo: Michelle Steenkamp



FROM THE LAB

by **NICHOLAS LE MAITRE**

Winter is coming to Gough and this means that most of the birds are leaving the island. The Tristan albatross chicks are the only birds to stay on the island throughout winter. The yellow-nosed albatrosses, the sooty albatrosses and the great shearwaters are all fledging and will soon be gone. The rockhopper penguins have finished moulting and left too, only to return in September. The first birds to return will be the Atlantic petrels and that will only be in July and August. So until then the island will be quite quiet.

There has been some worry that oiled penguins may turn up

here after the disaster of the *MS Olivia* shipwreck on Nightingale Island, close to Tristan and about 200 nautical miles from Gough. Therefore, since the wreck, I have been checking penguin colonies close to base regularly. It was felt that a check of the large colony at the site of the old base, the Glen, was necessary and so Robyn, Michelle and I made a trip there. Thankfully, there were no oiled birds there. It appears that Gough has escaped unscathed. While we were there we were lucky enough to see a pair of elephant seals; truly something special to behold.

During the trip to Edinburgh Peak, which you can read about

elsewhere in this issue, Michelle and I were able to undertake a portion of the much delayed round-island count of nesting Tristan albatrosses, by counting nests on Albatross Plain. This was supposed to have been done in February just after the birds have established nests and laid their eggs but due to various factors, not least of which was the inclement weather, it was delayed until now. With the very able assistance of Michelle and Robyn it was possible to ring several of the nesting adults in Gonydale as part of the Tristan albatross study. Both birds in every pair of nesting adults are ringed with a metal ring carrying a unique identification number and a plastic "Darvic", a large plastic ring with an easy-to-read alphanumeric code. It is then possible to quickly identify each bird and its partner, and to see, over the course of several years, if the Tristans maintain monogamous relationships and assess the reproductive success of each pair.

Very little is known about the rockhopper penguins' habits: where they feed, how far they travel to feed, how long they are



Albatross Plain as seen from South Rowett. Photo: Nicholas Le Maitre



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at sea and even what they eat. To this end, much work has been done with the rockhoppers this year, and this month was no different. Twenty-four GLS's, small recorders which record daylight hours allowing determination of the bird's position on any day, were deployed on the rockhoppers before they left this month. They will hopefully be recovered in September when these penguins have returned and the data can be used to elucidate some of their habits.

The sooty albatross chicks

are also fledging and so it was time for a survey of several sites on the island which are monitored every year. A count of the hatchlings is taken early in the year and a count of the fledglings this month. This way it is possible to determine if the reproductive success rates are changing from year to year.

I have also begun work on the construction of several cages. These cages, each a cubic meter in size, will be used to house a single Gough moorhen for six weeks. This is being done

to find out if it will be possible to maintain a captive population of moorhens during an attempt to eradicate the mice from Gough using airdropped poison. It is felt that the moorhens are at great risk of either eating the poisoned bait or eating the dead mice and dying as a result, with the possibility of wiping out the island population totally. It is therefore necessary to find the best method of keeping a captive population of moorhens during the mouse eradication so that the species does not become extinct.



Male and female elephant seals at the Glen. Photo: Nicholas Le Maitre



WEIGHTWATCHERS

BY LEONIE OLIVIER WITH ADDITIONAL PHOTOS BY MICHELLE STEENKAMP

The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams - Oprah Winfrey

The appointments for the monthly medicals in April came face to face with

creative excuses from the Gough team. This was not because any of the team members are scared of injections (although Prince did

run right around to the far side of the hospital bed before laughing nervously and pretending to be



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MEDICALS - TUESDAY

WEIGHING IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN

- NO SCALES ARE TO BE USED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE -

AS PER TRISTAN MANAGEMENT

Michelle's humorous addition to Leonie's original "Medicals - Tuesday" note

brave for his looming injections) but rather because of the dreaded scale that had some of the team members in a tight spot. The scale, however, was in a good mood and favoured some of us who'd lost weight. The reward for this was warm, homemade choc-chip and peanut-butter cookies left in the kitchen by Michelle.

There is a good possibility that the scale is going to go missing in May, so that there can be no proof of the numerous hot cross buns and Easter eggs consumed during the Easter weekend.

On a more serious note, medical

treatment for some team members was necessary during the month, but it is with thankfulness that I can report that they reacted well to the treatment and made a full recovery. Each team member is once again as fit as a fiddle!

As a matter of interest: Adcock Ingram Holdings has three months to withdraw all medicine containing dextropropoxyphene (DDP) after the Medicine Control Council (MCC) cancelled the local registration of this medicine. The MCC did not provide a detailed explanation for this decision. Adcock Ingram's DPP-containing medicines, namely Synap Forte, Lentogesic and Doxyfene, have been used for more than five decades as effective analgesics in South Africa.

According to media reports, new research shows the drug was linked to serious abnormal heart rhythms, but according

to Adcock, independent data has shown that none of the products involved have led to any increase in heart-related conditions in South Africa.

Due to the fact that DPP products had not been withdrawn from the market in Australia and France, Adcock's board decided to appeal the MCC decision. In June 2009 DPP-containing products were banned in the European Union because of fatal overdoses. The UK banned it in 2005. In November the American Food & Drug Administration (FDA) asked suppliers to voluntarily remove all medicines containing DPP from the US Market, citing that DPP's safety risks outweighed its analgesic benefits.

None of the above-mentioned medicines containing DPP have been supplied by the department to Gough Island.



Salon Van Gogh

THE 'A.M. D.I.Y. EDITION

PHOTO by LEONIE OLIVIER



HOMIE IMPROVEMENT

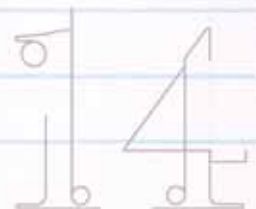
BY JOHN McLINDEN

This month we were not busy as the weather has not been very good. Although we were not able to do much outside, Leonie

did manage to sand down a table and get a coat of varnish onto the sanded surface. We have, however, been kept busy inside doing inventory checks so that we can start getting our yearly orders ready. And, of course, the sealing of leaks and changing of light-bulbs continues.



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THE WALL OF ~~FAME~~ SHAME

MOUSE-HUNTER of the Month:

Shmonie - 102 mice (Base: 35 • Food Store: 43 • Workshop: 24)

MEALS of the Month:

Prince's Stirfry Wraps

Leonie's Sweet 'n' Sour Pork a.k.a. "Brown Fish"

John's Roast Leg of Lamb

DESSERT of the Month:

Michelle's Cinnabons

(Leonie's Date Pudding was a close second
but she forgot to include the hot men)

FLOP of the Month:

Nic's Frozen Carrots - the freshest
veg we've had here so far!

INJURY of the Month:

Michelle sticking a wire from her harmonica stand in her eye

THE DARWIN AWARD

"...GOES TO MICHELLE... AND TO MICHELLE AGAIN"

One day, whilst sitting quietly at her desk, Michelle heard a loud noise and couldn't understand why she was suddenly sitting on the floor. It took a while for her to realise her exercise ball had burst beneath her. (She later found pins on her carpet dropped whilst doing her crafts.) But she ALSO gets the award for thinking her two jars of cookies would last a week, when, as everyone else expected, they only lasted two days.



next

THE WALL OF ~~FAME~~ SHAME

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"I haven't even had wine yet and I'm already songy" - Michelle

"Nothing like a good puke" - Michelle

"Nic, please push my button" - Michelle
(and later, when discussing the Quotes of the Month:
"My mom would be proud I at least said 'please'")

"So much of happiness of sweetness" - Leonie

"We don't look and learn; we Google-search" - Ian Laverello

"I never thought I'd get so much enjoyment
out of two old men" - Michelle

"If you can't drink with the big dogs, don't come barking" - Leonie

"French cuisine is so international, you can eat it in the
Sahari [no, that's not a typo] Desert" - Robyn

"Whisky tastes like old cow wee" - Michelle

"Rum tastes like old horse wee" - The same alcohol connoisseur

"You just eat your sphincter" - Michelle (referring to the viennas)

"How to use a fire blanket: you stand there
with no legs and wave it at the fire. You can
only use it if you're an amputee" - Nic



GOUGH WEATHER

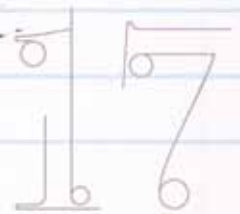
• APRIL CLIMATE STATS •

Ave. Max Pressure	:	1018.1 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	:	1010.7 hPa
Ave. Pressure	:	1014.0 hPa
Max Pressure	:	1024.5 hPa
Min Pressure	:	992.7 hPa
Ave. Max Temp	:	16.5 °C
Ave. Min Temp	:	12.3 °C
Ave. Temp	:	14.4 °C
Max Temp	:	19.6 °C
Min Temp	:	6.6 °C
Max Sea Temp	:	14.9 °C
Min Sea Temp	:	13.7 °C
Ave Humidity	:	79 %
Max Humidity	:	87 %
Min Humidity	:	67 %
Max Wind Gust	:	32.2 m/s or 115.9 km/h
Total Rainfall	:	186.0 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	:	49.2 mm
Total days with rain	:	23 days
Total days >1mm	:	19 days
Total Sunshine	:	85.6 hours

Compiled by Prince Mlongwana



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SPONSORS

The Gough 56 team 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. Their contributions have definitely helped make us feel like we're at home away from home.

ANNO *B* 1916
BACKSBERG
ESTATE CELLARS

EXCLUSIVE BOOKS

Designed and edited by Robyn Knight
Translations and cover illustration
by Michelle Steenkamp

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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