

the Bunting

WORLD
ALBATROSS DAY
19th June

KOMBUCHA
how to live
forever

Best Kept Secret

island recipes

Box yogurt

a new way to make yogurt

HIKING
best day hikes
around base

Bird Monitoring

Gough's birders work overview



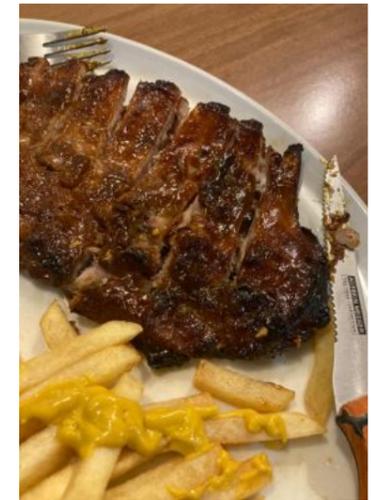
Juvenile Bunting greeting us early in the morning at *Barren Dome*

PHOTO BY ROELF



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Incubating Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross

Photo by Roelf Daling



OUR LAST FEW MONTHS

Sandile Nkebe

This has certainly been, and continues to be, a very cold and windy winter season here on Gough! It was not surprising to wake up to find the nearby peak of Tafelkop dusted with small patches of snow on one of the colder days last month. Despite the near-hibernation atmosphere that the cold has brought to the team, we are still excited and proud to have made it this far!

Not a day goes by without thoughts of home and the countdown to the end of our expedition has been simplified to “next month” when the relief voyage arrives with the new team to take over from us. With each week

going by so quickly, the finish line is clearly getting closer!

The recent news from home about the lifting of pandemic restrictions, no more mandatory mask-wearing and limited social gatherings, has been very encouraging and we are relieved to know that the Covid19 situation has improved significantly since our departure from South Africa last year. It is also a great relief to know that our families are still safe!

We’ve had quite a number of events and celebrations in the past few months. We celebrated Nkosi’s birthday on the 9th of June and our own mid-winter tournament took place from the 18th, with the first rounds of knockout games. The finals of this tournament were held with much ceremony on the evening of the 21st of June and the celebrations, combined with my birthday, saw a delicious Gough baked red velvet cake! World Albatross Day on the 19th of June also saw some creative fun in the kitchen and James #skua celebrated his birthday on the 8th of July with a fresh birthday-bread (instead of cake!) and an enjoyable poker evening. The Antarctic Games are also currently

happening and a few of our team members are participating alongside many other nations overwintering on Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic islands.

The G67 team is still healthy and well-motivated to finish our time here on a strong note. I want to express my gratitude beyond measure for the tireless efforts and enthusiasm of our in-house event organizers! In my experience of all the many things which these people do for us, I have come to see just how important their efforts are for the continued mental wellbeing of the whole team!

We are starting our preparations for leaving and we look forward to welcoming the new team to their home away from home!

Goodbye Gough Island and thank you for everything.
– Sandile Nkebe (Team leader of G67)

BE GOOD AND GOOD BYE

It is with mixed emotions that we send these final greetings from the G67 team! The time has come to present our ultimate Bunting newsletter before handing over the reins to the next editor(s) who will be responsible for introducing the resilient members of G68. We are looking forward to meeting them ourselves, and spending our last few weeks on this incredible island teaching them the ropes and handing over the metaphoric keys to our home.

For this issue of the Bunting, our central theme is ‘food’ or anything kitchen related on Gough and we are excited to reveal some of the best-kept secret recipes that G67 has to offer; explore the mysteries of

fermentation with homemade yogurt and become master brewers of kombucha. We learn all about the indigenous Gough night-crawlers and how they contrast to the intrepid day walkers. As a gift to the G68 team and future expeditions, we made a list of some of our best tips to make life on Gough just that much better. This colourful and flavourful issue is jam-packed with many pictures including Gough’s fantastic birdlife and some of the fun that we’ve had as a team.

What a privilege this has been!
– James and Roelf



A composite logo from the three teams who entered the Antarctic Games' Art Challenge. Read about it on page 21

G67's Crowd Favourites



PEANUT BUTTER CHICKEN

SERVES 10

I'm sure you've all heard of butter chicken, a very popular chicken dish back home in South Africa, but peanut butter chicken is definitely the new and improved version. With plenty of time (and plenty of peanut butter) to experiment, Peter came up with this delicious and innovative alternative to a classic meal! Just shows you how just because something works well, that doesn't mean it can't be updated!

METHOD

- 5 tablespoons peanut butter
- 6 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 teaspoon rosemary
- 1 teaspoon sweet basil
- ½ teaspoon peri-peri
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon curry powder
- 3 cubes of chicken stock
- 2 teaspoon chicken spice
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 350 ml lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon garlic
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 can tomato & onion mix
- 1.5 kg chicken fillets
- 1 litre water

Mix paprika, ginger, and garlic powders in a large bowl. Then add chicken spice, salt, and lemon juice. Marinate the chicken in this mixture for 20 – 30 minutes (allowing it to absorb the flavours).

Melt 3 tablespoons of butter in a pan and fry the marinated chicken until it turns brown (continuously stir for 2 minutes).

Remove the chicken from the pan. In a clean pot, melt 3 tablespoons of butter. Add the tomato and onion mixture, and stir continuously for 30 seconds. Add the peri-peri, sweet basil, rosemary, peanut butter, turmeric, curry powder, and water, and then stir properly. Add the chicken and allow it to cook for about 30 minutes. Best served with basmati rice.

RECIPE BY PETER CHUKU

FOOD

CURRY CRAYFISH

SERVES 10

Here on Gough (as you would have seen from the Edinburgh article in January's Bunting) we are privileged to have quite a good supply of crayfish. The winter months have unfortunately meant fewer braai opportunities for emptying some of our boxes so we've had to find other ways to serve this delicacy. Luckily for us, we can count on Peter to produce his incredible crayfish curry! Some members of G67 are still a bit skeptical but the rest of us dig in with gusto. It is recommended to have a large pile of serviettes within reach because this is often a very messy business.



METHOD

- 20 crayfish tails
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp curry powder
- ½ tsp garlic
- ¼ tsp peri-peri
- ½ tsp sweet basil
- ½ bowl hydrated onions
- 2 cans tomato & onion mix
- 1.5kg packet mixed Vegetables
- 3 cubes chicken stock
- ½ cup cooking oil
- 1 litre water

Wash the crayfish tails, boil in water for 15 minutes, and then drain. In a large pot, heat the oil and stir-fry the hydrated onions (that have been soaked in warm water) for about 30 seconds. Add the tomato and onion mix and stir for another 30 seconds. Add salt, curry powder, garlic, peri-peri, sweet basil, and chicken seasoning cubes to the mixture; stir properly, and then add water. Stir the mixture and add the mixed vegetables. Finally, put the crayfish into the pot and allow it to cook for 15 minutes. Best served with brown rice and broccoli.

RECIPE BY PETER CHUKU

GOUGH SPARE RIBS

SERVES 10

It's hard to overstate the importance of a good rib recipe. With an excess of ribs in our freezer stocks, it is a great relief to have a professional ex-employee of Spur on hand. Peter once again never fails to impress us with his mastery of marinade and the techniques he uses to produce such tender and delicious results! Be warned; you're hands, face, and general surroundings will get splattered and smeared so just go along with it and finish eating before fetching the mop and bucket!



METHOD

- 20 pieces of pork ribs
- 750ml mustard sauce
- 470g chutney
- 1 kg traditional syrup
- Spare Rib marinade & basting sauce (750 ml)
- 1 tbs brown vinegar
- ½ tsp garlic
- 1½ tsp black peppercorn
- ½ tsp salt
- BBQ sauce (500g)

In a large pot of water, boil the ribs for 30 minutes with salt and leave them to soak for another 15 minutes. Pour out the water and allow the ribs to cool. In a separate bowl, mix the following: mustard sauce, chutney, syrup, spare rib marinade & basting sauce, brown vinegar, garlic, black pepper, and BBQ sauce. Stir the mixture properly and use ¾ of it to marinate the ribs for about an hour.

Lightly grease 2-3 pans (depending on their sizes), preheat the oven 175°C, and place the already marinated ribs into the pans. Grill in the oven for about 10 minutes, flip the ribs around, and grill for another 10 minutes. Temporarily remove the trays from the oven and baste the ribs with half of the remaining basting used to marinate. Return the ribs to the oven and grill for 5 minutes. Flip the ribs again, lightly brush with the last bit of marinade and return to the oven for another 5 minutes. Best served with potato fries.

RECIPE BY PETER CHUKU

FOOD

SAN'WHEEL'ES

SERVES 8-10

After the takeover period had come to an end and all the additional people had departed from Gough along with the dedicated takeover chef, we truly had to start fending for ourselves (most notably in the kitchen). For me, the mere thought of having to prepare a meal for a large group of people was quite daunting and would trigger my anxiety until my cooking turn had passed. The pressure seemed to be unending until the food was served, and it was always a relief when everyone complimented a good and tasty meal. Over the next few months, while we were working in pairs still, my cooking partner James and also Peter were very helpful in giving advice and assistance to make me feel more comfortable in the kitchen and handling pots. I would occasionally phone my wife for suggestions and my friend on Marion, Bubele, suggested that I browse the internet for some good recipes.

It was a very encouraging sign that my cooking wasn't so bad when my team mates not only finished what they had dished onto their plates but also couldn't resist going back for a second helping. I am very grateful for their patience, encouragement and compliments which have made me much more confident in my abilities. There is nothing more rewarding than positive feedback to keep producing and improving on the meals I prepare.

I discovered the following snack which works well as a simple Sunday lunch and can even be served for dinner, perhaps with a few vegetables on the side.



METHOD

- 2½ sheets of puff pastry
- 1kg boerewors/mince meat
- BBQ sauce
- paprika to taste
- black peppercorns to taste
- chicken spice to taste
- 2 large eggs

First ensure that the boerewors and puff pastry are completely defrosted (remove from freezer the day before). Remove the meat from the wors casing (thin layer covering on wors) and put aside. Roll out the puff pastry and coat with a thin layer of BBQ sauce.

Evenly spread a wors/mince layer across the puff pastry and season to taste with paprika, black peppercorns and chicken spice (I have no measurements but be careful not to over-spice boerewors as it already spiced).

Roll up the puff pastry as shown in the picture (below?) and slice it into approximately 5 cm thick pieces. Using a spoon or brush, coat each piece with the beaten eggs. Bake at 175°C for 25 minutes or until golden brown and crusty on top and sides.

RECIPE BY SANDILE NKEBE

DHAL CURRY

SERVES 8-10

It is an understatement to say that we eat a lot of meat here on Gough. With day after day of rich ox-tail, t-bone steaks and mutton stew, it is a great relief (for a few of us at least) to learn that Nkosi is preparing his famous dhal lentil curry. This dish is a tasty, fragrant, aromatic and surprisingly filling treat. Although the wannabe carnivores never fail to eye the pot with badly concealed scepticism, Nkosi graciously serves his main dish with a side of boerewors.



METHOD

- 500g red lentils
- 125g split moong dhal (optional)
- 40ml cooking oil
- 1 tbsp ginger
- 1 tbsp garlic
- 1 tbsp coriander (ground)
- 1 tbsp cumin (ground)
- 1½ tsp turmeric
- 2 tsp garam masala
- 1 tbsp vegetable stock powder
- 3 or 4 cinnamon sticks
- 6 cardamom seeds (lightly crushed)
- 6 dried curry leaves
- 2 tins tomato puree
- 2 tins mushrooms (optional)
- 1.5 large onions, finely chopped (1 or 2 cups dried onion)
- 375g frozen sweet potato (optional)
- 500ml boiling water
- Lemon juice, sugar and salt to taste

Soak lentils for about 30 minutes and drain well. Add onions to the pot and sauté briefly in oil. Add the ginger and garlic. Then stir in all the spices except the garam masala and cook for 2-3 minutes, add the tinned tomatoes (optional mushrooms and sweet potato), boiling water and stock. Bring it to boil, simmer for about 10 minutes. Add the lentils. Cover and simmer until lentils are tender, adding extra water if needed, and stir it frequently. Add lemon juice, sugar and salt to taste. Just before serving stir in garam masala

Serve dhal curry with smash potatoes or basmati rice and topped with an optional seed sprinkle

Prepare the Seed Sprinkle by heating oil in a small frying pan and frying the ingredients until the mustard seeds start to "pop".

SEED SPRINKLE

- 1tbsp sunflower seeds
- 1tsp yellow mustard seeds
- 1tsp coriander seeds
- Pinch crushed dried chilli

RECIPE BY NKOSI MADAMA

APPLE CRUMBLE

SERVES 6-8

This apple crumble recipe is a slice of home for me, and all thanks to my mom and granny! It's something quick and easy to make, never seems to flop even if you just eyeball the measurements, and always seems to go down well with the crowds. It's also versatile - once you have the basic recipe down, you can mix and match the fruit filling with whatever you have on hand (berries, apples, pears, peaches, etc.) and you can play around with the addition of oats, nuts or spices in the crumble mixture. In my experience, as long as the ratios of wet : dry ingredients stay the same, the crumble usually turns out fine. I hope that, when you give this a try, you enjoy making and eating it as much as I do. Happy baking!



METHOD

- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 2 cups of cake flour
- 1 cup of brown sugar
- 2 tins of unsweetened apples slices
- ¾ cup of butter

Empty the apples slices (can substitute this with any other fruit – pears, peaches, frozen berries, etc. or mix and match) in a medium sized glass oven dish. Sprinkle with the sugar and cinnamon. Mix until the apples are nicely coated. Press down into dish so that all the fruit is level.

Add and mix the cake flour and brown sugar in a mixing bowl. Add the butter and mix the dry ingredients into it by rubbing it between your fingertips until you get an even crumb. Softening the butter a bit in the microwave helps. You can add more butter until you get the right consistency. The crumble is ready when you squeeze some of it together between your fingertips and it stays together, but you can easily crumble it apart again. See picture.

Place the crumble mixture on top of the apples and spread it across evenly. Then press the crumbs down. Bake at 180°C for 20 minutes until the crumb is golden brown. Serve with vanilla ice cream or custard



RECIPE BY KIM STEVENS

BOLOGNAISE

SERVES 10

Bolognaise, or mince, is one of the most versatile dishes and is also relatively simple. With a standard mince mixture, it is possible to make a bunch of different main courses including lasagne, spaghetti or pasta bolognaise and it's even good for serving plain with rice or smash (the closest thing to mashed potatoes here on Gough).

As this is my favourite thing to eat and also the dish I make most here, I'll walk you through how I make a standard mince.



- 3 or 4 cups of dried onion
- garlic flakes or granules
- 2kg of mince (3kg if you want left-overs)
- 2 cubes beef stock OR 1 packet brown onion soup powder
- 2 tins diced tomatoes
- 2 packets of tomato paste
- 1 tin butter beans (optional)
- 1 tin chopped mushrooms
- 1 tin mushroom soup
- mixed herbs
- salt and pepper to taste

some water and allow to simmer for another 20 minutes while stirring often to avoid burning.

You can now mix in the butter beans, mushrooms and tin of mushroom soup. Feel free to add chutney and/or tomato sauce as well if you'd like. After an additional 15 minutes of simmering you can turn off the stove; the mince dish will be ready and should stay hot until you are ready to eat.

METHOD

Soak the dried onion, garlic, some salt and pepper in water for 10 - 15 minutes and drain excess water. Saute the rehydrated onion and garlic in a large pot over high heat, stirring often so that it doesn't burn. You can also add some mixed herbs here. When the onion is soft and beginning to brown a bit, add the mince to the pot. Keep stirring / mixing this until the mince has browned (no pink visible).

Add the stock or onion soup (stock cubes/ onion soup powder should be dissolved in about 800ml of boiling water before adding), reduce heat and allow to simmer for approximately 20 minutes.

Add the tins of tomato, tomato paste,

At this point, or a few minutes earlier, you can start with the pasta, or whatever you are serving the bolognaise with. All the different pasta varieties work well with this (spaghetti, screws, tagliatelle, etc) and two 500g packs will be more than enough. Follow the direction on the packet to prepare the pasta (add some salt to the water). If you want to make lasagna, you'll also need to make white sauce (ready mix tub of powder with instructions) and layer this with mince and pasta sheets.

If necessary, you can heat up the mince again before serving and enjoying!

Note: if you have enough mince left over after supper, you should definitely try using some in toasted sandwiches the following day.

RECIPE BY JAMES BURNS

ISLAND BILTONG

It is common knowledge that biltong is a very popular (if not staple) part of the South African diet. For those of us who have been living on a remote island for some time, it was only a matter of time before the “lus” (craving) for biltong struck! And so, as the saying goes, ‘n boer maak ‘n plan!

The keys to making good biltong are proper spicing, and also drying time. Once you get these two components right, it is possible to turn almost any type of meat into a quality batch of biltong. Although there are a number of different varieties in our freezers to choose from, the best meat to use for biltong (in my opinion) is rump steak. Here are some steps to help guide you towards your own biltong-making success



- beef cuts (max 2cm thick)
- vinegar
- Worcestershire sauce
- crushed coriander seeds
- salt and pepper
- optional chilli flakes
- optional red pepper flakes

METHOD

The first step is to defrost however much meat you would like to transform. Wash off most the blood and leave in a strainer to drain the excess blood and water, approximately 5 – 10 minutes. Cut your steaks into strips according to your preference (I like mine about 2cm thick). Try to make your strips the same size (as much as possible), so that they will dry at a similar rate. Arrange your meat strips on a clean table and dash both sides liberally with white vinegar (you may also use brown vinegar and Worcestershire sauce).

Next comes the spicing. The three basics are salt, black pepper and coriander. In

addition to these, you can also add chilli powder or others according to your taste preferences. Make sure that you completely cover each piece.

Now pack your spiced strips tightly into a sealable container, dash this with a bit more of the sauce you used and store in a cold room (not fridge!) for two days. After the first day, repack the pieces – those at the bottom moved to the top – and cover again for the 2nd day. This two day marinade allows the meat to soak up the sauce and spices.

Finally, you will need to hang the meat strips in a cool, very well ventilated space (with an optional fan to speed up the drying process). Each piece can be speared by a small, bent-wire hook. Here on Gough we have a dedicated biltong box with an extractor fan to compensate for our extreme humidity. Drying time can be anywhere between 2 and 4 days. This will depend on how big the strips are, but also because not all of us enjoy overly dry biltong.

RECIPE BY SELVIN VAN WYK

OUMA VONNIE'S HOMEMADE RUSKS

MAKES 60

South Africans really love their rusks, and on Gough it is no different. When G67 first noticed that the rusk supplies were running low, I reached out to my Ouma Vonnie (my 95-year-old grandmother) and asked her to share one of her delicious homemade rusk recipes with us. It is really easy to follow, and the team absolutely loves it.



METHOD

- 300 g butter
- 1 cup oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups buttermilk*
- 1¼ cups milk
- 1 cup wholewheat flour
- 3 cups All Bran Flakes
- 1 kg self-raising flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt

Melt the butter and pour it into a large mixing bowl. Using an electric mixer, beat in the sugar and oil. Now add the eggs one by one and mix well. Add the buttermilk, milk and the dry ingredients and mix well. Scrape the batter into two greased bread baking tins.

Bake at 180°C for 1 hour. Allow to cool on a cooling rack and then slice into rusk sized pieces using a sharp serrated bread knife.

Return the rusks to the oven on the cooling racks to dry out at 70°C for about 2 hours (or until dry and firm). Remember to store them in an airtight container to keep them crunchy and fresh, and enjoy with a cup of rooibos!

* If you don't have buttermilk, just add 2 tablespoons of vinegar to 2 cups of milk and let it stand for about 15 minutes, or you could use the leftover whey from your yoghurt making – see page 34

RECIPE BY VONICA PEROLD

NIGHTCRAWLER

Midnight snack...every night

ARTICLE AND POEM BY JAMES BURNS

As members of an expedition team on a remote island like Gough, it is only natural that many of the societal norms and 'rules' cease to apply. Perhaps the most obvious of these expectations is that we keep regular hours, sleeping at night and being awake and generally active during the day.

For a number of reasons, a large portion of the G67 team does not conform to this expectation. Firstly, and perhaps the only official reason, is that of nightshift by the metkassie on duty. Another valid reason is that many of the positions on the island are technically full-time, 24/7. Unless there is an emergency after dark, however, there is no reason for someone not to complete all their tasks during daylight hours. Other reasons for our unusual hours include weather and seasonality, the shorter days and

colder temperatures are inclined to keep individuals under the covers for as long as possible.

Hunger is a great motivator though, and there is one sure thing to draw the team together like clockwork: dinnertime! Announced over the PA system with an improvised jingle, dinnertime is expected to be close to 19h00 but may be served earlier or later depending on the preparedness of the chef (I personally like starting very early to avoid the last minute rush). From Monday to Friday, one member of G67 is responsible for preparing a wholesome and filling meal. As there are ten of us, this works out at one meal per fortnight which is very manageable. This meal should include, at the very least, some form of meat along with one or two options of side (starch or vegetables). Depending on who's cooking, there may or may not be a few

portions left over afterwards to be decanted into Tupperware for storage. It is not uncommon, however, for there to be no leftovers (due to strict quantity surveying) or alternatively too much left over (due to over-catering or underperformance)!

After a particularly good meal, where one has eaten far too much as a result of exquisite flavour, it is with great joy and excitement that one dishes out the leftovers with the expectations of a delicious breakfast or lunch the following day. Upon entering the kitchen after waking mere hours later, and checking the fridge in disbelief, it is obvious that something is amiss. I'm sure there was a bowl of x there when I went to sleep ... I know there were at least five slices of y ... I was so looking forward to that last piece of z! Occurrences of this sort are frequent on Gough Island and have been the cause of much disgruntled

muttering and exclamation.

Similar phenomena occur with treats such as cakes, biscuits and freshly baked goods. A generous colleague may leave a freshly baked batch of rusks or a loaf of bread in the kitchen overnight with every intention of enjoying them with tea or as a snack over the next week. Daylight often reveals only crumbs or, if one is lucky, the substantially diminished remainder.

There is only one possible explanation for this mysterious disappearance of good food from the Gough kitchen: nightcrawlers. This is the

term we use to describe the members of G67 who, under the cover of darkness and while most people are sleeping, they make their way stealthily into the kitchen to scavenge for whatever tasty snacks may be found.

While this may be frustrating and seemingly inconsiderate of the aforementioned nightcrawlers, it is difficult to find fault with this habit. As a self-professed nightcrawler, I freely admit to enjoying an unclaimed midnight snack whilst on my nightshift wanderings. The bigger lesson we should learn from this is

not to play the blame game or judge over-harshly; rather, one should make sure to put aside and label any food you wish to enjoy at a later stage to avoid the disappointment of an empty fridge.

"...under the cover of darkness and while most people are sleeping, they make their way stealthily into the kitchen to scavenge for whatever tasty snacks may be found."

Though we be far from hearth and home,
And the comforts we all know.
It was by choice to Gough we've come,
For adventure, a chance to grow.

And grow we have, in mostly weight,
For food we have aplenty.
While fridge and freezer stocks abate,
Our shelves are far from empty.

Each day of the week, cooked meals we eat,
With protein and some veg.
But if your dish contains no meat,
You're living on the edge!

And if the food tastes really good,
Can't wait for another bite?
Put some aside! (you probably should)
'cause it won't last the night.



Critically Endangered Tristan Albatross

The 19th of June marks World Albatross Day

ARTICLE BY VONICA PEROLD. PHOTOS BY ROELF AND VONICA

The 19th of June is a day dedicated to celebrating these magnificent seabirds, and to shed light on the conservation crisis they are undergoing. Did you know that, of the 22 species of albatrosses found in the world, 15 are either Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable, and that without intervention, some could face extinction? Not many people do, and that's why each year, the Agreement of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), chooses a theme for World Albatross Day to highlight major threats affecting these species. As part of the drive, albatross fans all over the world are

encouraged to bake a "themed cake" and share it on social media platforms. This year's theme was "climate change", and here is our G67 creation:

A chocolate-coffee cake, lavishly topped with butter cream icing and adorned with adorable marshmallow albatross chicks and eggs in cupcake nests. The colour gradients represent earth warming, from colder blues to warmer reds, while the slope of the cake signifies rising sea-levels and flooding from storms, both considered consequences of climate change.

It is everyone's responsibility to adapt their lifestyles, from the

foods we eat to the way we travel, and to call on policy-makers to invest in sustainable energy alternatives and strategies to curb carbon emissions and the cascading effects of climate change on our planet. Without change, future generations will not have the privilege of sharing it with these remarkable species.



World albatross day



Endangered Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross



Endangered Sooty Albatross

ANTARCTIC GAMES

Art Challenge



"In the end the words "isolated" and "together" stood out the most and became a core theme of our design."

ARTICLE BY KIM STEVENS

ILLUSTRATIONS COLLECTIVELY BY SAVVA, VON, KIM, JAMES, PETER AND ROELF

This year G67 was invited to take part in the Antarctic Games 2022 organised by Amundsen–Scott South Pole Station. Their goal was to spark excitement and a sense of community into the long winter for everyone Overwintering in Antarctica and on the Southern Ocean islands. They took on a mammoth task and organised five events – a tetrathlon race, a cross-fit competition, a dance video contest, an E-sports competition, and an art challenge.

Five of us from G67 decided that we'd join in for the Art challenge – Von,

Roelf, James, Peter, and I. We'd be randomly matched with another station and together we'd take on the challenge of designing a badge which would represent unity and overwintering this year. We were paired up with an enthusiastic comrade, Savva, at Progress Station, a Russian research station in Antarctica, thousands of kilometres away. And we were up against two other teams comprising five other stations (Team 1: Syowa, SANAE IV and Crozet Islands, and Team 2: South Pole and Jang Bogo) – let the games begin!

After setting up a WhatsApp group and

introducing ourselves, the six of us got to work. Our resident artist, Roelf, guided us through the creative process which started with a short, intriguing exercise in which each of us found the dominant shape (triangle, square or circle) in our scribbles. Next up we went through a sort of meditation in which we brainstormed words we associated with unity and overwintering. In the end the words "isolated" and "together" stood out the most and became a core theme of our design.

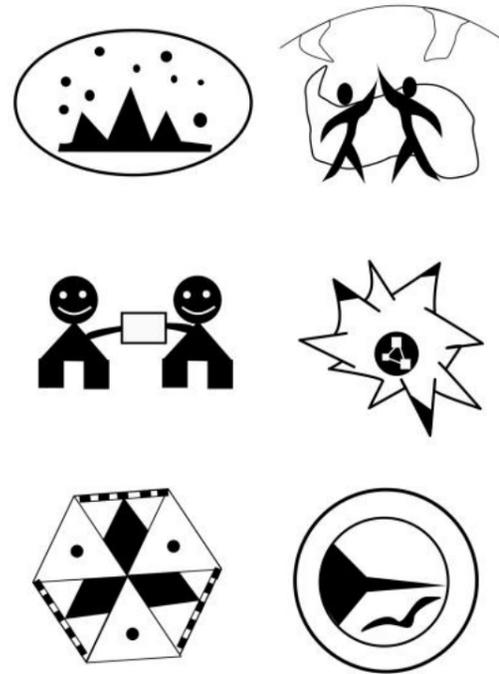
With these words and shapes in mind as a guide, we each did some basic sketches which we shared with the group. Next, we all

extracted and sketched the parts of the first drawings that resonated with us and shared these. We did this a few times and through this process of sharing sketches and incorporating the overriding elements, we worked together to unite our creativity. We settled on a single final design, deciding on colours and text, which Roelf drew up on the computer. We kept this simple to stick to the brief that it would need to be embroidered.

On submission it was entered into competition against the two other teams. Voting on these occurred anonymously and was open to all the overwintering stations – with each allowed to assign a total of 10 points distributed between designs. Both the other teams' submissions were great and had unique elements and, in the end, we came in second place!

It was a fun, collaborative, and creative challenge, and it was interesting to go through the creative process with Team Gough-Progress – particularly observing the individual thought process at first, but how, in the end, we came up with an original artwork that incorporated all our ideas.

Having been on expedition teams before, I have never experienced an overwintering event on such a large scale and the whole event sparked a great sense of community in me. We truly are together in isolation!



First round of each team members' logo ideas



Our team's final badge submission



Selvin James Nkosi Karabo Kim Roelf Sandile Vonica Peter Tshililo

A tradition honoured by all the Antarctic bases is the exchanging of mid-winter greetings cards. We were very grateful to receive the well wishes from all overwintering expeditions and were proud to reply with one of our own.

The Daywalker

Low effort, high reward hikes close to base

ARTICLE BY VONICA PEROLD. PHOTOS AND MAP BY VONICA



The view over the Admirals

As our time on Gough Island draws to an end, The Bunting editors asked us to provide some tips for the new G68 overwintering team that will soon replace us. After some reflection, I thought that my best advice to the new team is to simply get out of base, and go for a

walk. Gough is home to some of the world's most unique and beautiful seabirds, seals and plants (see Issue 2 of the Bunting to learn more about the ferns). It is an enormous privilege to share the Island with them, and I encourage the new team to make the most of this opportunity to experience

and appreciate this pristine wilderness. It is also a fun way to get some exercise and clear your head when life at base becomes a bit stifling.

For the inexperienced hikers, the terrain might seem a bit intimidating, so to help you with this, I've listed two easy day hikes that can safely be done



Sooty Albatross at Seal Beach lookout

from base. But, first things first. Have you checked your clothing and boots for invasive species?

Sagina is a word you'll hear often during your biosecurity briefing on Island. But, in short, *Sagina procumbens* is a highly invasive, small green plant

that grows on the cliffs around base and is also found around the Brown store, Food store, Crane Point and Diesel Cove. These areas are known as the "SAGINA ZONES". It has tiny seeds, invisible to the naked eye, that can adhere to your shoes and clothing, which allows it to

spread rapidly into new areas and threaten the native vegetation and invertebrate communities. To prevent the plant from spreading, it is very important that you do not wear clothing or shoes that you've worn inside the SAGINA ZONE, when going for a walk off base.

So, before you leave for your hike, ensure that you are wearing your off-base clothing and footwear and have washed your boots at the designated bootwashing stations. Ready? Let's go!

The first hike I'd like to show you is to **The Admirals**: The path starts outside the Birdlab and takes you on a gently

meandering route through lush Fern Bush vegetation and underneath mystical Island (Phyllica arborea) trees. The path is only 400 metres long, and will take an easy 15-20 minutes to walk. Along the way you can expect visits from curious juvenile Gough Buntings and see various seabird species soaring past the coastline. Once you reach the viewpoint at

the end of the path, stop, relax, and take in the sights, sounds and smells of Gough Island. You'll leave refreshed and thankful for the opportunity to spend a whole year on the Mountain in the Sea.

Seal Beach

There are two paths that take you to the Seal Beach lookout. The first path runs

coastally from base, while the second runs inland. They form a loop and both will take you about 15-20 minutes to reach the viewpoint. From here, you can watch the waves roll in, enjoy the seal pups playing in the rock pools below, observe the Northern Rockhopper penguins hopping about, marvel at the Sooty Albatrosses and their effortless flight, scan the beach for the occasional Elephant Seal or just enjoy watching seabirds soaring past. If you are lucky, you might even see the magnificent Tristan Albatross gliding past you on its way out to sea. If you join up with the inland path, you could make a pit stop at Swemgat (see issue 2 of the Bunting) before heading back to base. Both paths will take you past beautiful Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross nests. Remember to always maintain a 5-metre distance from all birds, and if you come across a bird in the path, remain calm, quiet and patient. Wait for the bird to move on before proceeding.

So, on the next beautiful sunny day, grab your field gear and head out for a lovely outing. You will never regret a day spent out in the field on Gough Island.



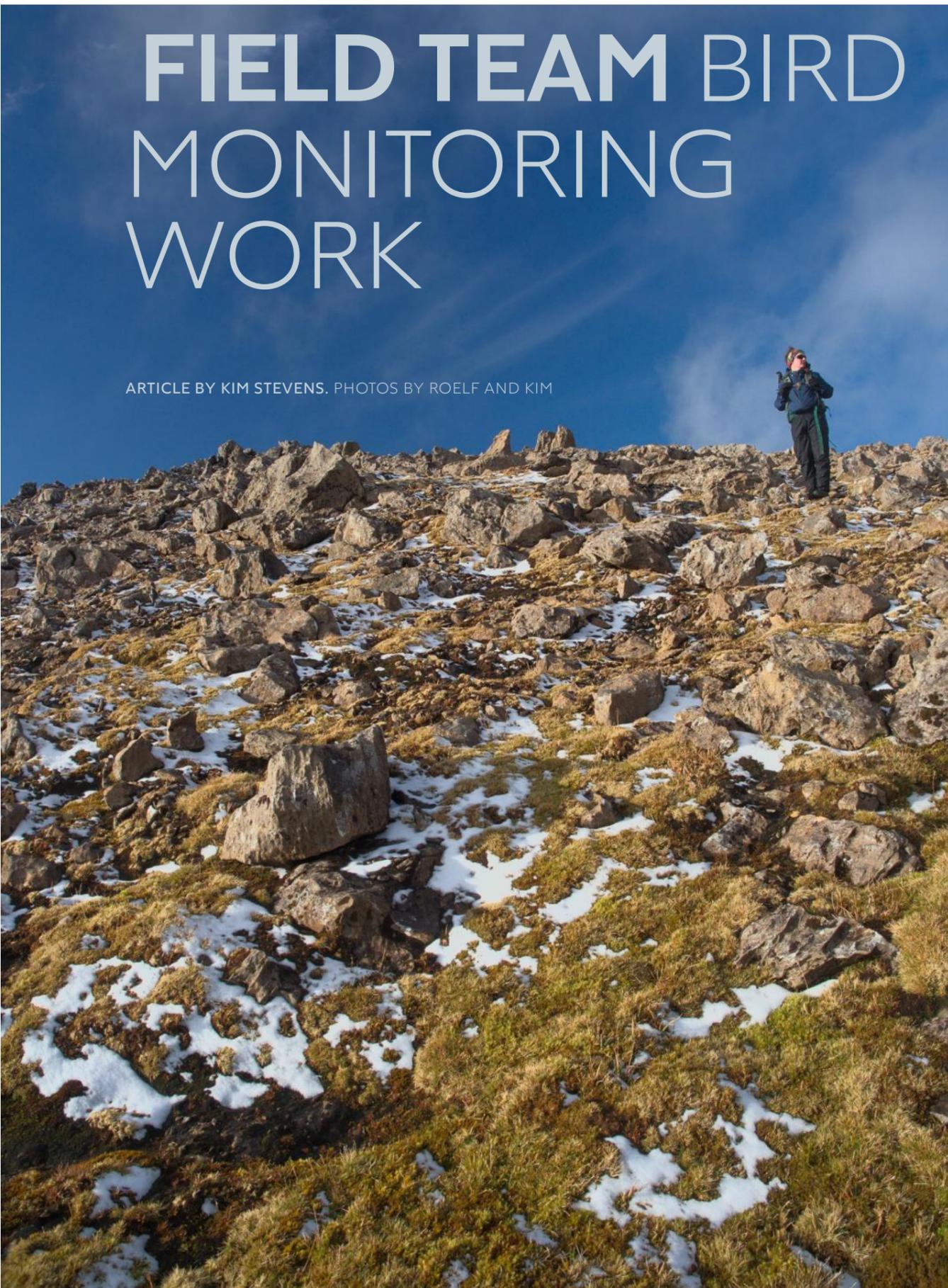
A Sooty Albatross taking off from the nest at *Seal Beach* lookout point.

HIKING TIPS

- It is safer to walk in pairs, so grab your favourite Islander and gear up!
- Always inform the communications engineer of your route and expected return time before you leave base and remember to fill in the sign-out sheet in the radio room.
- Always carry a GPS (with the Island's waypoints and tracks), water bottle, first aid kit, rain jacket and radio with you when going on a hike.
- Always stay on the paths to avoid crushing seabird burrows in the surrounding vegetation.
- Pack a pair of binoculars, some snacks, a sunhat, and enjoy the peace and quiet of the wilderness.

FIELD TEAM BIRD MONITORING WORK

ARTICLE BY KIM STEVENS. PHOTOS BY ROELF AND KIM



Gough Island might be a tiny speck in the middle of the South Atlantic but it is a haven for wildlife and is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The ongoing fieldwork we conduct as the field team for the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) is aimed at conserving this environment and the myriad of species which occur here.

A large part of our job has been to monitor ten of the 22 species of seabirds and the two land-bird species that breed here in order to assess their population statuses. There are two main ways we do this: firstly, by conducting population counts and, secondly, by recording and marking individual birds with rings.

We do population counts in set areas, year after year, allowing scientists to understand whether a given population is growing in size, is stable, or decreasing.

We also do these counts multiple times, at various stages of their breeding season - when adults are incubating their newly laid eggs; just after the chicks hatch; and just before the chicks fledge. This means that their breeding success (how many nests successfully fledged a chick) can be determined, and trends in this breeding success over time are also indicative of how well the population is doing.



An albatross showing us a clear example of the rings we use to identify it.

"...understanding of population parameters, such as survival and immigration, which in turn can help with scientific research towards conserving a species."

Marking individual birds with rings and recording these birds again whenever they are seen in the field also provides important information at the population level.

For example, if we come across an individual that is incubating an egg and it has a uniquely numbered ring on its leg, we can look it up in the database to find out where and when it was ringed (perhaps as a chick 10 years ago in the very same area!) When

this is done for multiple individuals and over many years, we can get a clearer understanding of population parameters, such as survival and immigration, which in turn can help with scientific research towards conserving a species.

The monitoring is done slightly differently for the surface-nesting species (e.g. albatrosses and Giant petrels) than for the burrow-nesting



Vonica reading the metal ring number on a Southern Giant Petrel at *Low Hump*.

species (e.g. petrels and shearwaters). The main difference being that, for the latter, we make use of a burrowscope - a camera attached to the end of a flexible arm which can be stuck down a burrow while watching a live feed on the screen it's connected to. Checking burrows usually involves some strange positions at ground level, a.k.a 'burrow yoga', in order to get the camera in the right spot and angle to see the contents of the nest.

For the Tristan albatross, a typical surface-nesting species, we set up more

intensely monitored areas (monitoring colonies) and check these regularly throughout the year. We do this at Gonydale, the Hummocks and Tafelkop. It starts in late December with us searching for the first eggs of the season and, once a nest is found, we place a marker pole at the nest and record the unique ring number of the incubating parent.

The search continues for at least a month until all nests within these areas (usually a couple hundred) are marked out and we know who both parents are at each nest. We keep

checking the nests during incubation, hatching and throughout the year as the chicks continue to grow. Once they are grown to full size, we can ring them, so that once they fledge they have an individual mark and we know who they are when they return several years later.

For some of the burrow-nesting species, Atlantic petrels and Great shearwaters, we have long term transects with 8 x 8 m quadrats in which we check the contents of each nest. We don't individually mark these smaller birds, but we do

have a subsample of nests which we go back to and check at the hatching and at fledgling stages to provide information about breeding success.

The one 'burrow-nesting' species we work with, the MacGillivray's prion, actually nest in a cave - Prion Cave - which is spacious enough to monitor the birds as we do with the surface-nesting species and without having to use a burrowscope.

The majority of species breed in summer, but the Tristan albatross, Grey petrels and Atlantic petrels breed through the winter.

Overall it is an absolute privilege to watch things change through the seasons as birds arrive back, pair up and start to

breed again. To see the tiny chicks hatch and grow up into big, fluffy chicks which start to lose their down, grow adult feathers, strengthen their flight muscles, and finally fledge.

After two glorious years on Gough it is now our turn to fledge and head back to South African waters. But fortunately

the Bird Lab will not be an empty nest as we hand over the monitoring baton to a new G68 Field Team who will carry on this important long term monitoring work.



A colony check inside Prion Cave is done with red head torches to minimise disturbance.





PHOTO BY KIM

The Milkyway making it's way over the dark South Atlantic Ocean.



PHOTO BY ROELF

Courting Tristan Albatrosses on Green Hill.

Box-Yogurt

An easy way to make yogurt at home

ARTICLE BY ROELF DALING. PHOTOS BY JAMES

As is the case with biltong, yogurt making is also a popular tradition on island. The main reason why is because this is one of the only 'fresh' foods we can eat here. Among the other fresh things are the wild Gough celery, Gough berries and then various types of ferments (kimchi, kombucha or bread). These foods provide the body with a much wider variety of vitamins, minerals, amino acids and beneficial micro-organisms than can be found in the normal island food (dried, frozen, canned and processed).

Before we jump into the 'how' of my yogurt making method, I'd first like to dig a bit into the 'what' and 'why' of homemade yogurt. So what is yogurt actually? Simply put, yogurt is fermented milk. And what is fermentation, you ask? Well, this is where things get a bit wacky.

A typical scientific explanation would probably go something like

this: "Fermentation is a biochemical, usually anaerobic, reaction where enzymes produced by micro-organisms, catalyse the conversion of one substance into another." My personal, and perhaps more poetic, explanation is: "Fermentation is an almost magical process that keeps every living animal on this planet alive and healthy. It is always at work inside all digestive tracts around the world. It involves countless weird and wonderful micro-organisms which perform alchemy by breaking down and transforming raw materials into useable and absorbable nutrients."

Before refrigeration, canning and chemical preservatives were developed and popularised, fermentation was one of the primary methods of preserving many foods. During fermentation, a food source is colonised by specific bacteria and yeasts, preventing others, like moulds, from spoiling it. This process could be

seen as a type of pre-digestion or cooking method. Fermented foods provide your gut with a fresh supply of beneficial organisms (probiotics) and specific nutrients that cultivate gut organisms (prebiotics), keeping your gut biodiversity high.

Health sciences are increasingly discovering the importance of our gut flora and the vital role it plays within the body. It is truly a shame that our westernised diet has largely ignored fermented food, and the consequences are showing; the average American gut diversity is now less than a third of that of someone from Western-Africa. Thanks to the convenience of the industrialised food system, our diets now mostly consist of corn, palm, wheat, meat, sugar and preservatives. The supermarket system not only provides us with foods that are low in nutrient density, but it also contributes to deforestation, soil degradation and the

collapse of local informal economies. Importantly, this modern diet causes a low gut microbe species diversity, usually favouring only the sugar-loving and fat-forming species.

Your health starts in your gut! Poor gut microbiome diversity is directly linked to cancer, obesity, diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome and many more diseases, even Alzheimer's. If you are alarmed by this, you should be! But let's not blame the system; we should take action for ourselves.

The first quick and most important tip I can give you is this:

"Eat the rainbow". Meaning, eat as many different colours of food as you can. This provides cultivation and sustenance to the various species in your gut. The second tip is: "Eat fermented food". This provides 'ready-made' nutrients and new species for your gut and there are a variety of fermented foods you can produce at home. Here is a list of options for you to look up either to make yourself or buy: Kombucha (see p42), Homemade Amasi, Kimchi, Sauerkraut, Miso, Kefir, Sourdough, Meads, Chinese/Indian Pickling, Fermented sauces, Himalayan Gundruk, Sinki, Kvasss, Tepache, Alua, Mauby, Root Beer, Pru, Smerka, Noni, Jun, Sweet Potato Fly, Vinegar, Shrub, Villi, Cheese, Fermented Oatmeal/Sorghum/Rice/Potato porridges, Poi, Tempeh, Koji, Amazake, Soy Sauce, Natto and loads more.

Anything can be fermented; it is natural, free and healthy. I would advise beginners to steer clear of fermenting meat though; this is a tricky business and can be dangerous. Okay, let's get back to yogurt!

Homemade yogurt is a delicious, versatile, fermented food that can provide you with the many benefits that have been mentioned above. Making

yogurt at home also has many advantages over buying the standard yogurt at a store. It is significantly cheaper, saves on plastic wastage, puts you in control of the ingredients and, most importantly, it is much healthier. Supermarket yogurt does not contain enough bacterial colony forming units (CFU's) to make it past the highly acidic stomach and all the way to the small intestine, which is where you want it. Mass produced yogurts usually contain other unwanted additives like sugar, flavour and thickeners. Do you really want to exchange your money and long-term health for short lived satisfaction and convenience? Now that you've been convinced of the benefits of making and eating your own yogurt, let's get to it ... the Box Method.

Yogurt can be made with any milk; goat, camel, buffalo or yak but most of us have access to cow's milk so we'll stick with that. Here on Gough Island we only get one litre boxes of long-life or UHT (ultra-high temperature) processed milk which I will hereafter refer to as box milk. This is what has led me to the discovery of the 'Box Method'. These are the four basic steps of yogurt making:





- 1) Pasteurisation of the milk to remove most unwanted bacteria
- 2) Inoculation of the milk with yogurt forming bacteria
- 3) Incubation at a specific temperature and duration for fermentation
- 4) Refrigeration to stop the fermentation process and become delicious yogurt. Now let's look at each step in detail:

Step 1 - Pasteurise:

If you were to use fresh or raw milk, step one will require you to heat the milk to 85°C for 10 - 20min, continuously stirring and measuring the temperature to make sure it does not burn or boil, then cooled back to 45°C.

This can be quite a time consuming step but, when using long-life milk, this step can be skipped entirely. This is because, with UHT milk, the pasteurisation process has already been done; the many naturally occurring bacteria in the milk, which causes it to go sour, were killed at high temperature. This means that we can make the yogurt right inside the box; no pots, jars or stove needed! We just need to bring the box's temperature up to the incubation temperature (between 40°C and 45°C) by sticking it into our incubator for about an hour. This warmth gives the culture a kick-start.

Step 2 - Inoculate:

The warm milk gets inoculated with around 3% mother culture. We'll see how to make the mother culture a bit later. I prefer to inoculate the milk with a mixture of mother culture, water and milk powder. The milk powder provides extra food to the bacteria and serves as a thickener; it is not essential but with this box method, the yogurt may be a bit runny without it. This pre-mixture is then poured straight into the milk carton (be sure to pour some out first to make space). It's important to minimise the open-time of the box to avoid the risk of contamination. I first make space in all the boxes before the inoculation. It is best to use a funnel to pour the mixture into the prepared cartons, opening and closing the lids as you go.

Step 3 - Incubate:

This step allows the bacteria to multiply into their billions. The best temperature for them to grow in is between 40 and 50 degrees Celsius. This optimum temperature varies between different yogurt cultures but is usually 43°C - 45°C for 8 hours. There are many ways to achieve these incubation temperatures, but it's definitely worth spending some time and money on finding a

solution that can provide you with consistent results. Here on Gough, I built an incubation box using two plastic tote bins, a kettle element, a temperature control switch and a timer plug. One of the tote bins fits inside the other to provide an insulating double wall. All these items are available at any standard electrical supply shop but you will require some technical skills for the wiring. I've also built one using a cooler box, lightbulb and a dimmer switch. Look online for more ideas and instructional details to make a multipurpose incubation box which can also be used for rising bread, defrosting, sous vide, slow cooking or soaking grains.

If you're not up for building one of these, you can use a low-temperature oven or hot water inside a cooler box. As a last resort you could buy a yogurt maker or a pressure/slow cooker with full manual control, but these can be expensive and does not allow for this 'box method' of yogurt making.

If your incubator uses water, remember to place your milk cartons in plastic bags (zip-locks work best and can be reused!)

Step 4 - Store and enjoy

Once your cartons come



out the incubator, they'll need to be cooled to slow down (or stop) the fermentation process. You can save energy by waiting for them to get to room temperature first, before sticking them in the fridge. The cartons stack neatly and will last for months while unopened.

Whenever you feel like enjoying the fruits of your labour, simply squeeze the yogurt out of the carton.

Mother Culture

To make the mother culture I refer to in the steps above, you simply add a knife tip or 1/8 teaspoon of powdered yogurt culture into a warm milk carton, shake and incubate for 8 - 10 hours at around 38°C. Powdered culture can be bought online or at health shops but need to be kept frozen

"Quite a time consuming step. But when using longlife milk, this step can be skipped entirely. ..."

and well-sealed. You can keep this mother culture in the fridge but it should preferably be used within one month of making. One litre of mother culture will make about 30 litres of yogurt, and one bag of powdered culture can make up to 1500 litre yogurt. Some people make their yogurt straight from the powdered culture, but this is wasteful and expensive.

Culture Premix

Mix full cream milk powder and boiling water with a 2:1 ratio (i.e. 2 cups

Milk	1 liter	4 liter	8 liter
Premix:	1/2 cup	2 cups	4 cups
Milk Powder	1/2 cup	2 cups	4 cups
Water	125ml	1 cup	2 cups
Mother Culture	2 tbps	1/2 cup	1 cup

powder to 1 cup water) in a sealable jar or container. Use an emersion blender or whisk to make sure everything is dissolved. Close and leave to cool until lukewarm (about an hour). Pour in the mother culture, close and swirl to mix. The boiling water will pasteurize the milk powder and the lukewarm conditions give the culture a boost.

Sterile Technique

Working with any type of fermentation will require you to work as cleanly as possible. Remember that you are creating an environment for bacteria to flourish, that's the whole point, but we don't want to create competition. There is no need to be completely sterile; just take care to minimise the risk of contaminating the culture. Wash all your equipment with lukewarm soapy water, wipe all your surfaces and have clean trays ready to place tools onto while working. I always have bottle of vinegar with some paper towels ready to keep wiping and cleaning as I

work. Be conscious of what you touch, what your tools touch and the open time of jars, containers and packets. When in doubt, wipe with vinegar or rinse with boiling water.

Notes and Variations

- A little bit of water whey will be produced, this is normal and can simply be mixed back into the yogurt.

- If you want your yogurt to be smooth and creamy, empty the carton into a sealable container and whisk until smooth.

- To make thick Greek style, you can strain the yogurt overnight through a colander lined with a dishcloth. If you strain the warm yogurt straight from the incubator it will only take about two hours. The excess whey is great for baking but can easily be whisked back into the yogurt to make it thinner.

- You can make yogurt cheese by tying the yogurt into a tight ball with a dishcloth then suspending the ball over a bowl in the fridge overnight.

Troubleshooting

TOO THIN

- You added the cultures (mother or powder) to cold milk
- Not warm enough incubation temperatures
- Old or weak mother culture
- Contaminated powdered culture
- Antibiotics in the milk

CURDLED

- Milk was too warm

OFF TASTE

Something went wrong if you can detect the following tastes: green apples, vinegar, metallic, cider, very tart and may be due to:

- Milk too hot
- Over incubated
- Didn't work cleanly enough

"You can make yogurt cheese by tying the yogurt into a tight ball with a dishcloth then suspending the ball over a bowl in the fridge overnight."

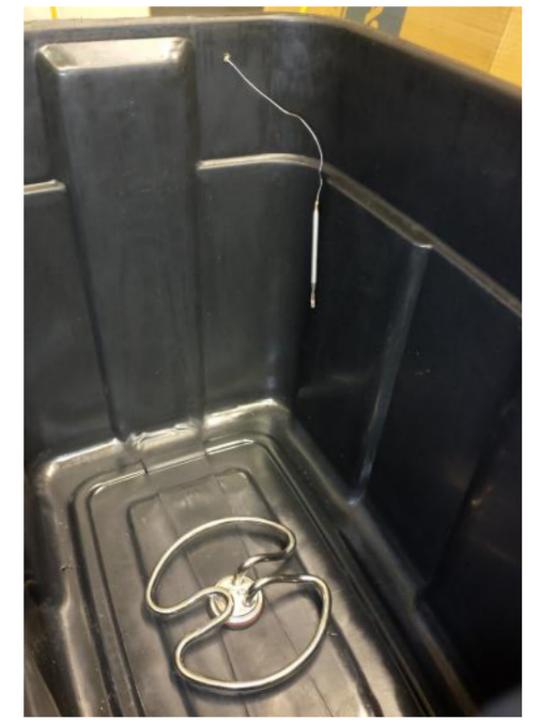
A tote bin incubator rough building reference guide



Fit a 2000w water heating element onto the bottom of a tote bin and stack into another tote.



Wire in a temperature control switch and place its thermistor halfway inside the tote.



Fashion a plastic platform to cover the heating element and serve as the new base for the incubator.





It's Saturday, laat ons braai!

South African cuisine in the South Atlantic

ARTICLE BY JAMES BURNS. PHOTO BY JAMES

As you should be aware, our cooking schedule runs from Monday to Friday each week, giving each of the G67 masterchefs a chance to dazzle us only once every fortnight with a variety of meals including those found in this issue of

the Bunting. What then, you may well ask, do we do on weekends?

The answer: we braai! As South Africans, braai-ing is an integral part of our culture and heritage and no amount of distance from our mother country can diminish our need to gooi 'n bietjie vleis op die

kole for the shisa nyama!

Although we don't have a stack of firewood handy for making our braai fires the right way, there are enough bags of charcoal in our local store to keep the wolves at bay! There are usually a few pieces of scrap wood to get the flames going nicely but the

most reliable fire starter is a box of blitz which we also have in abundance. Getting the fire right is critical, and the person responsible for this (the 'fire master') needs to ensure that there are enough coals and that they are hot enough for the chosen meat of the evening.

You may be wondering; hang on, isn't Gough supposed to be cold, wet and windy pretty much all the time? Kind of. Well not all three all the time, but mostly yes. Again, we prove our resilience and show, time and again, how not even weather can dampen our love of the braai. We may not have a fancy glass braai-room like our neighbours on Marion, sheltered from the wind and rain, but we do have our very own courtyard with enough shelter to protect us from all but the most intense gusts.

Contrary to popular belief, or opinion, the meat is not what braai-ing is all about. For thousands of years, people have been gathering around fires to exchange news and stories, laugh together and generally enjoy each good company. The Gough braai is never manned alone;

with a drink in hand and some lively music playing in the background, this is undoubtedly one of the nicer ways to spend a Saturday afternoon.

Despite the continuous game of musical chairs to avoid blowing smoke and scattered showers of rain, not much deters the hardcore braai masters. An example from earlier this year, and probably the most impressive, is one Saturday braai held in the midst of a thunderstorm with a disco of lightning flashes! (And I've been told that Gough rarely gets lightning at all!?) Anyway, for the most part the weather does play along and there is often quite a festive crowd, chatting and even dancing when they think no-one is watching.

I suppose I do have to say something about the food as this is, after all, an article about what we eat on the weekends... On Friday evening, after the dinner pots are scrubbed and the dishes done, someone will take out of the freezers a sufficient quantity of pork or mutton chops, t-bone steaks, beef or chicken fillets, hamburger patties, boerewors, pork sausages,

or any other variety of meat to defrost overnight. The following day, more often than not, the meat will be marinated or spiced in preparation for the braai. When the coals are ready, the meat is brought out and tended to by one or more of our highly trained specialists. For lucky bystanders, there is also a high probability of 'tasters', just to make sure that the meat is properly done!

When the meat is ready, the party moves inside to the dining room where the team enjoys a good feast supplemented by the salads, veggies, chips or bread that the support staff generously provide.

"Again, we prove our resilience and show, time and again, how not even weather can dampen our love of the braai."

We've got this brewing down to a tea

Kombucha

ARTICLE BY JAMES BURNS. PHOTOS BY JAMES

Originating in Northeast China nearly two and a half thousand years ago, kombucha was perhaps best known for its healing properties. Although this fermented tea has undoubtedly changed beyond recognition over the millennia, kombucha has seen a rise in popularity in the modern western cultures. In particular, the health conscious and the hipsters have been known to favour this unusual beverage.

I was only properly introduced to kombucha a few months before coming to Gough last year. I say 'properly' because the commercially bottled kombucha I had tasted a few years prior had been sufficiently awful to put me off the stuff indefinitely. But, when a neighbour offered a glass of her homemade kombucha during dinner one night, I decided to give it another chance.

Delicious! Not even remotely resembling the foul-tasting, overpriced concoction that I associated with the name. She was more than happy to provide a brief instructional lesson which kick-started my brewing journey.

Kombucha is produced by a scoby, short for symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast. This is a very odd looking half-plant/half-animal/actually-neither which grows remarkably well on a diet of strong, sweet tea. It sort of floats suspended in the top of its container and grows in layers with each new layer lying on top of the older. In a matter of days the sweet tea is converted into a tart, bubbly refreshment similar to beer in many respects. I am told frequently of its health benefits with all the microbes which improve the condition of one's gut. Probiotic! That's the word I was looking for. But I



don't need to be convinced; I just like how it tastes.

Fast forward a few months to my upcoming departure with the G67 expedition. Having by now grown quite accustomed to my daily glass of kombucha, I was worried that I might have to go without for the following year. After spreading



Bulk batch Kombucha provides you with a constant supply

feelers and making some enquiries though, I was excited to learn that Roelf was also a fan and that there was indeed kombucha on Gough Island. Although there were a couple of working scobys on island, I decided to bring along one of my own just to add some diversity to the mix (good thing too, the old Gough scobys seemed quite tired).

After we had arrived, settled in and unpacked, I was able to activate my scoby with some fresh tea and in no time at all it was producing splendidly alongside its island relative. Each scoby is kept in a large jar into which the warm (not hot) sweet, black tea is poured. The strength and sweetness of the tea is important for determining how the kombucha will taste, the bacteria feeds off the tea while the yeast takes care

of the sugar. A typical batch of kombucha could be ready in around two weeks and it's important not to leave this process to go on for too long or it will produce unpalatable vinegar.

Many months (and successful batches of kombucha) later, I decided to try something new. Instead of working with the glass jars, each producing maybe 1.5 litres of kombucha at a time, I attempted to make this drink on a larger scale (in a large bucket with a tap at the bottom). I reasoned that, instead of emptying the jars each time the kombucha was ready and making fresh tea to refill them, why not drink from the bottom and just top up as needed with fresh tea. This technique was a game changer, not only was it easier to produce large quantities of kombucha, the actual

process now takes a few days at most due to a much larger scoby. The convenience of having it on-tap has also tempted many of the sceptics to give it a try and, while kombucha is still not everybody's cup of tea, it is certainly worth a taste!

"I am told frequently of its health benefits with all the microbes which improve the condition of one's gut. Probiotic!..."

Top Tips

from G67

for future islanders

After spending a year on Gough, the members of G67 have realised that there are a number of small things which we have found make life on this island much better. Instead of leaving the new teams to figure out everything from scratch, we've put together some of our top tips as a gift to future Gough expeditions. Be warned: this is not an exhaustive list and it will include things which won't work for everyone, but here goes...

Outside and health

- Remind yourself, every day, where you are; admire the view, watch the birds, listen to the seals. There is always something to appreciate.

- Observe and learn about Gough's unique wildlife! You won't find it anywhere else in the world!

- Go for a swim at Swemgat on a warm

Summer's day. You won't regret it!

- Go hiking, but stick to the paths whenever possible and take enough drinking water!

- The Crane Point to Helipad circuit is quick and easy! Do it a few times a week for fresh air and exercise.

- Drink plenty of water, it might be brown but it's probably the cleanest and healthiest you've ever had!

- Take photographs! Take lots of photographs.

- Offer to help the birders close to base, they'll appreciate it and you'll see amazing things!

Inside and hobbies

- Try a long term crafting project, that you can work on each day to make something you'll be proud to take home!

- Build a puzzle, there is a

nice board made especially for building on.

- Read a book, the library is well stocked with all sorts of books.

- This is the best time to develop a new skill.

Kitchen, cleaning and the base

- You have a fully stocked kitchen, experiment and learn to make or bake something new. You might surprise yourself and the team!

- Make smoothies! There is plenty of canned fruit of all sorts; rinse of the syrup and chuck it in a blender.

- Remember to clean the ice machine once in a while, or you'll end up with green ice!

- Play some music during skivvy, it makes it much more fun!

- Help each other clean up after dinner. It goes so

quickly and you'll be grateful when it's your cooking turn.

- Store the tupperware with their lids on, there is enough space and you won't always be looking.

- Write the date on the lid of the tupperware lid of when the food was made or when you opened the tin of whatever.

- Use the microwave's convection function to bake if the oven is being used.

- Don't try showering while someone is running the bath.

- Don't trust the timer on the washing machine. It takes longer.

- Take the meat out of the freezer the day before and leave in water or in the fridge.

Personalities and team dynamics

- Don't take all the negative things personally, rather try to accept constructive criticism.

- Take the occasional time out to recharge. It's ok to stay in your room sometimes.

- Pick the name of a team member out of a hat and make that person a

Christmas gift, this way everybody opens something.

- Be considerate with the phone lines and internet connection. Everyone is sharing!

- Weekly movie nights are a great team activity. Create a fair system for choosing what to watch.

- Say thank you when people make an effort.

- Invest in your team by doing something for them, small kindnesses goes a long way

- Don't complain, rather give your time and energy freely





left: Peter as champion of the table-tennis. right: Roelf claimed the darts.



left: Karabo took the foosball. right: Nkosi nailed his title as best pool player.

Midwinter Olympic Games

ARTICLE BY JAMES BURNS. PHOTOS BY KARABO

Mid-winter, also known as the winter solstice, is the turning point of this cold season. It is characteristically the shortest day of the year and, of course, the longest night. From this point onwards, the sun should be rising a little earlier

each day as the end of winter draws nearer. On Gough, however, we have yet to see this change in season. It is certainly true that the days are lengthening but in all other respects, it would seem that the end of winter is still very far away. If anything, the temperatures have only

dropped since the 21st of June when we celebrated mid-winter. In order to break the slow stupour brought on by the cold winter season on the Antarctic continent as well as the sub-Antarctic islands, it has become a tradition to mark this day (the 21st of June) with a celebration of

some sorts. For Gough Island, and many others, these celebrations include an indoor sports tournament which we call our Mid-winter Games. The events held here included pool, table tennis, darts, foosball (table soccer), Mario Kart (a TV racing game) and checkers. Due to the large number of

participants who signed up for each event, a series of qualifiers were held in the days prior to the 21st which would be reserved for the semi-finals and finals. G67 approached the evening of the 21st with an air of excitement and anticipation and each of the important matches

were well supported and cheered in a games room buzzing with activity. Eventually, after all the (often tense) finals were won and lost, the award ceremony commenced and each of the winners received their respective trophies and posed for the camera.

During the longest night of the year, there was a fierce competition raging—to be crowned the the best of the best in the South Atlantic!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY SANDILE

SANDILE CELEBRATED A MEMORABLE ISLAND BIRTHDAY WITH G67. OUR SKILLED BAKERS EVEN SURPRISED HIM WITH A DELICIOUS RED VELVET CAKE. CHEERS TO MANY MORE YEARS AND AS MANY ADVENTURES! WHAT A LOVELY YEAR WE HAD WITH YOU. THANK YOU



BATTLE OF THE DJ'S G67 CELEBRATES ITS LAST SOCIAL

DJ VONDUCTCH WON THE BATTLE. PHOTOS BY KARABO



ISLAND WEATHER

DATA FROM THE **SOUTH AFRICAN WEATHER SERVICE**
COLLECTED BY OUR METEOROLOGISTS

APRIL

Temperature MIN 6.4°C
MAX 21.3°C
AVG 13.4°C

Humidity MIN 52%
MAX 97%
AVG 80%

Wind MAX 101km/h
(NNW on 18th)

Rain MAX 50.6mm
(on 25th)
TOTAL 188.6mm

Sun TOTAL 103.2h

MAY

Temperature MIN 4.4°C
MAX 19.2°C
AVG 12.4°C

Humidity MIN 54%
MAX 96%
AVG 80%

Wind MAX 128km/h
(NW on 29th)

Rain MAX 113.6mm
(on 19th)
TOTAL 529.6mm

Sun TOTAL 90.7h

JUNE

Temperature MIN 3.6°C
MAX 16.8°C
AVG 10.6°C

Humidity MIN 42%
MAX 97%
AVG 80%

Wind MAX 123km/h
(NW on 23rd)

Rain MAX 61mm
(on 26th)
TOTAL 363.3mm

Sun TOTAL 74.5h

JULY

Temperature MIN 2.1°C
MAX 16.2°C
AVG 9.3°C

Humidity MIN 46%
MAX 96%
AVG 77%

Wind MAX 126km/h
(NW on 9th)

Rain MAX 50mm
(on 18th)
TOTAL 288.6mm

Sun TOTAL 85.6h

Gough Highlands Winter Texture
Shot with Olympus E-M1MarkII
@ 12mm; f2.8; 1/640s
edited with Darktable on Linux

THE FINE PRINT

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DFFE = The South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

RSPB = Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



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