

Gough Bunting

September 2008



Happiness and sadness

There is a time for everything. It is going home time now!



Where has the time gone?

All the hills I've climbed, all the rivers I've crossed and all the places I've gone: that's where time has gone. Now time is pointing home again, and that's where I shall go. I shall certainly arrive, because time is walking with me.



Keeping a World Heritage Site tidy

A big clean-up around the base.



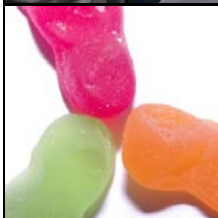
Back to S.A.

Guess what: the taxi has arrived to take us home!



The Final Goodbye

I really hate long goodbyes!



Parting: a sweet sorrow

Saying goodbye wasn't easy...it still isn't but we at least had something sweet to console ourselves.

Happiness and sadness

The arrival of the Agulhas meant that the time to return home has arrived. A new dawn for the new team who seems eager to start their year.

First all of us had to get to know each other. We the over-wintering team had to get use to a house filled with people. We the Metkassies took the new Metkassies to our own waterfall. Some of the other members decided to join us. It was a great outing. Rupert decided to swim and Jack agreed that it is now or never! It was a cold swim for them both. I tried taking a picture but the models were too shy!

Mel, Elsabé, Rory and I went to Snoekgat with Didi and Norman. When we got there Trevor and John were the first people we saw. Later we saw Richard and Henk. Didi and Norman were climbing down with ropes. I went down and enjoyed the view. The Sooties were flying around and the sea was so close.

There was a party so that we could mingle and get to know one another. It was a lekker party. Mel, Danie and I went to Seal Beach one afternoon. While we were walking we passed the Yellow nose, we also met Jack, Kholekile, Tumi, Stella and Rupert on our way there. They were on their way home. The climbing down was exciting! I cannot wait to go back to see that for the last time. There the sea is like here at your feet, you will have to climb over the rocks to get to the sea. I was looking for the seals when something that looked like a rock move very close to me. I do not know who got the biggest fright. There were also some rockhopper penguins. Getting up was a mission of its own. I really enjoyed every bit I spend close to the sea. I got very sad while I was enjoying the view, The thought of leaving this wonderful home. Do not get me wrong I miss my family and cannot wait to see them!



We are doing the last preparations for the return voyage home. Every morning I wake up with this big smile and then come the sadness. I have really enjoyed this year and can not wait for the next adventure to begin! Can only thank everybody that has given me the chance to do this and the ones who carried me through.

So for the last time good bye and hope you enjoyed sharing this year with us!

-Charlene

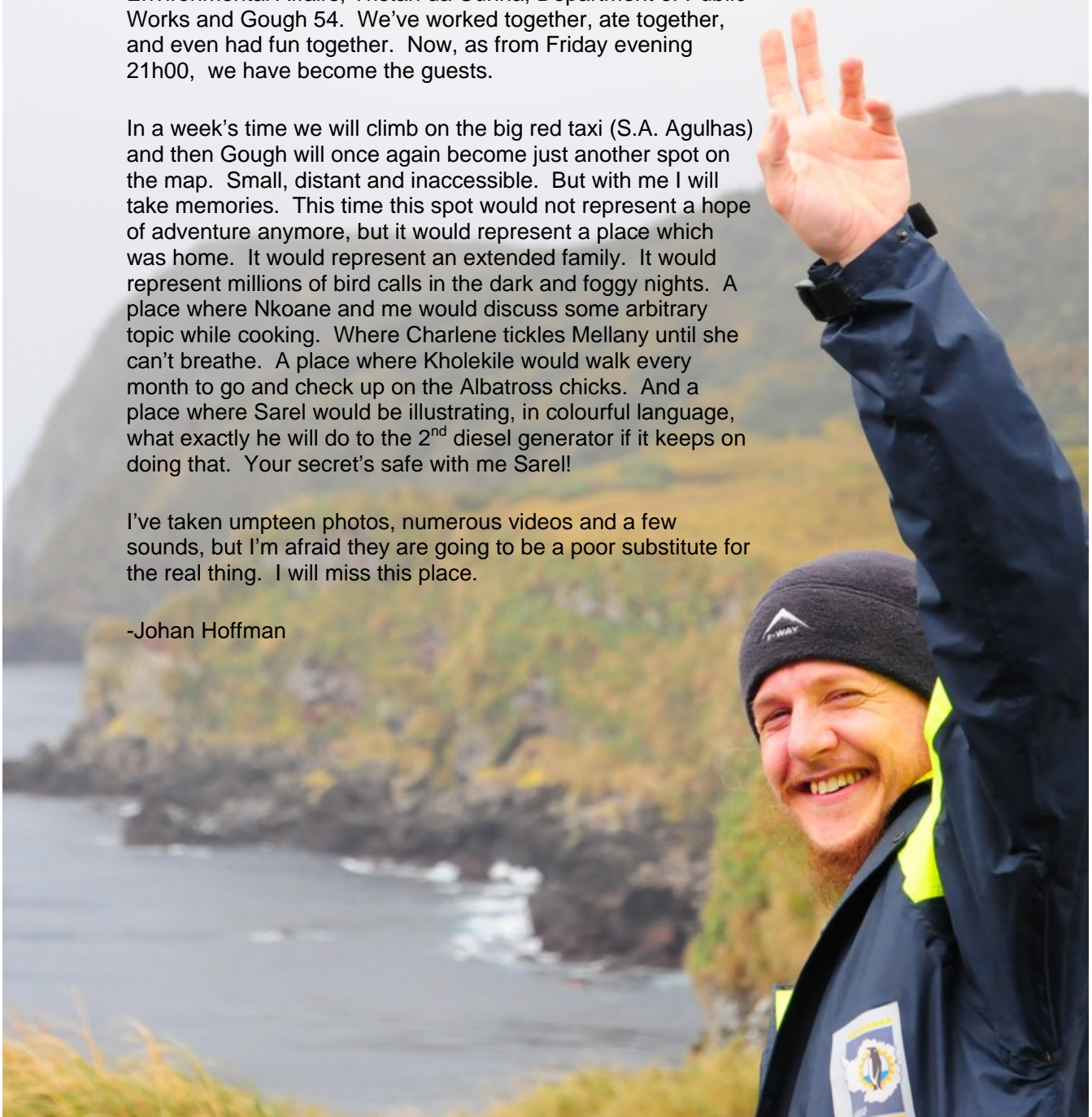
Where has the time gone?

Gough to those who know it, Gonzalo Alvarez to those who know it better 😊 has been our home for 12 months now. The last 2 weeks we've played hosts to 30 people from Environmental Affairs, Tristan da Cunha, Department of Public Works and Gough 54. We've worked together, ate together, and even had fun together. Now, as from Friday evening 21h00, we have become the guests.

In a week's time we will climb on the big red taxi (S.A. Agulhas) and then Gough will once again become just another spot on the map. Small, distant and inaccessible. But with me I will take memories. This time this spot would not represent a hope of adventure anymore, but it would represent a place which was home. It would represent an extended family. It would represent millions of bird calls in the dark and foggy nights. A place where Nkoane and me would discuss some arbitrary topic while cooking. Where Charlene tickles Mellany until she can't breathe. A place where Kholekile would walk every month to go and check up on the Albatross chicks. And a place where Sarel would be illustrating, in colourful language, what exactly he will do to the 2nd diesel generator if it keeps on doing that. Your secret's safe with me Sarel!

I've taken umpteen photos, numerous videos and a few sounds, but I'm afraid they are going to be a poor substitute for the real thing. I will miss this place.

-Johan Hoffman



Back to S.A.

It is bad news that I have to inform you that this is our last newsletter from Gough 53. The over wintering team (G54) had arrived and it was so wonderful to meet them. The takeover ceremony went very well. I wish them a wonderful expedition.

It has been a wonderful expedition with my teammates, I have enjoyed to my best that I could.

I hope you enjoyed the experience with us, and I am looking forward to chat to you from Marion Island.

To my lovely family by the time you read this, I'll be with you in S.A. Peace...!!!!

Kholekile



Keeping a World Heritage Site tidy



Gough Island, along with Inaccessible Island in the Tristan da Cunha Group of islands, forms one of the United Kingdom's few natural sites registered with the World Heritage Convention. South Africa thus has a special responsibility to keep the island as pristine and as little disturbed as possible in operating its meteorological station ashore.

In summer 2007/08 a concerted effort was made to tidy up the immediate environs of the met station by removing and piling together redundant structures and equipment for return to South Africa. The created pile contained rotten wood, rusted steel, written-off cabling, broken trolleys, old sewage pipes and the like.

On 17 September 2008 the pile was loaded into five containers for removal to Cape Town for disposal and the site swept clean. Two days later the old crane lookout structure was dismantled and will also be removed from the island as part of the annual relief.



John Cooper and Trevor Glass, Joint Environmental Inspectors, 2008 Gough Relief



The Final Goodbye

This time it is for real. We saw the Agulhas coming in with great excitement and eagerly awaited the new visitors, disembarking from the impressive helicopter at the helipad. Offloading of cargo was not a chore at all, since it was accompanied with loads of laughter and chatting to new people! Showing our visitors and the new team all the nearby sights, excitement was mixed with sadness as I realized that I might not see these sights again. I took millions of photos of all the birds and plants that I have been surrounded by throughout the year. The terrifying scream of the Sooty sounded like music to my ears and the eerie, baby-like cry of the Atlantic Petrels at night filled me with premature nostalgia. Even the horrible Skuas didn't appear quite as weasely as always.

I will certainly miss the bright moon and the stars that seem to be within snatching distance. Gough has carved out a place for itself in my heart. I leave here with many happy memories and a determination to be back one day.

-Mellany McPherson



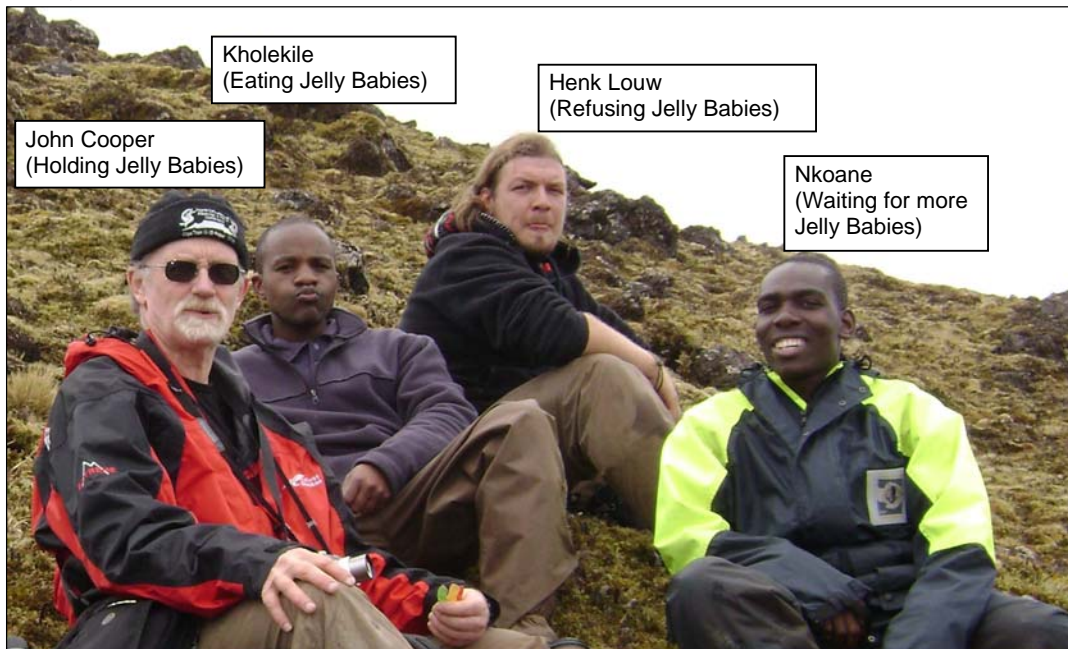
Parting: a sweet sorrow

That time has arrived, the time to bid farewell to this beautiful island, its wild life and the



scenery, time to say goodbye to colleagues who had become very close friends, to most of those we have come to know and respect and to all the readers of our newsletter. It has been a great experience, memories that will last a life time. A part of me is sad that I am leaving not knowing if I will ever come back and the other part can't wait to see family and friends after spending such a very long time without them. It's going to feel a bit weird walking the streets again with all the noise, crowds and all the traffic.

This very last month seems to be going way too fast but I am glad that I was able to see the birds one more time, the Yellow Nosed and the Sooties that have already started laying eggs and banding the Tristan Albatross chicks that we have been checking since they were still eggs. I am glad I was part of the team that did the banding, getting this wonderful opportunity of walking and working with John Cooper and Trevor Glass and last but not least Kholekile, the man who introduced me to these wonderful creatures. At Gonydale we were joined by Henk Louw who is one of the two Gough 54 Field Assistants.



I have learnt a lot from this expedition and it is time to make way for the new team and I wish them all the best.

This is it, the goodbye.
God bless!

Nkoane Jack Mathabatha



Standing: (f.l.t.r.)

Charlene Oppel (met)
Sarel Steyn (diesel/leader)
Kholekile Cita (medic/dep leader)
Nkoane Mathabatha (met)
Mellany McPherson (snr met)

Kneeling:

Johan Hoffman (radio)

The Gough 53rd overwintering team would like to thank the following people:

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
The South African Weather Service
The Tristan Government
The crew of the SA Agulhas.
The National Department of Public works
Dave Hendrikse
The crew of the Edinburgh
The people at Ovenstone Agencies
Andy Repetto (Radio Tech of Tristan da Cunha)
Capt Jonathan Wanless
CHC helicopters & Titan Aviation
John Cooper
Ceril Arendse and John Gusha
The guys at Hartebeesthoek and the Department of Foreign Affairs.
Danie van Niekerk (retired, Hy's hier uit met 'n visstok en 'n bos blomme.)
Orms for the Team photos
Creative Brands for the T-shirts
All the Antarctic Research stations who sent us Mid-winter invitations.

Special thanks to all those who helped us and supported us during our stay here.

THANK YOU

Climate Stats: September 2008

Gough 53 team members



Pressure

Ave. Max	1023.6 hPa
Ave. Min	978.4 hPa
Average	1007.9 hPa
Maximum	1024.9 hPa
Minimum	983.9 hPa

Charlene Oppel – Meteorologist

Johan Hoffman – Radio Technician

Kholekile Cita – Medic
(Deputy Leader)

Mellany McPherson – Meteorologist(snr)



Temperature

Ave. Max	11.8 °C
Ave Min	4.8 °C
Average	8.1 °C
Maximum	14.7 °C
Minimum	2.3 °C

Nkoane Mathabatha - Meteorologist

Sarel Steyn – Diesel Technician
(Team Leader)



Humidity

Average	76%
Maximum	96%
Minimum	45%



Wind

Max Gust	35.3 m/s or 127 km/h
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Rainfall

Total	186.6 mm
Highest in 24h	44.6 mm
Total days with rain	25 days
Total days >1mm	19 days



Sunshine

Total sunshine	<n/a>
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