

GOUGH BUNTING



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER

2012

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What do you get when you put a medic, a diesel mechanic, a radio technician, three meteorologists, two field assistants and a chaplain together?

The answer – Gough Team 58!

The past few months was a challenge – not only for our support team who will keep on making sure that all is “smooth sailing” as soon as we get to the island, but also for the team members. Each individual had to attend job specific training to ensure that all skills are up to date and that they are informed of the latest and greatest technology that will be available to us when we arrive at Gough Island.

On the 20th of August 2012, Gough Team 58 started training together as a group. And I can tell you this – this group ROCKS!

I’m going to take a moment to introduce the team to everyone.

Marillette Bester – Team Leader & Paramedic

I’m a Bulls chick, even though I’ve worked most of my professional life abroad. After 5 years in Dubai and 2 years in Afghanistan, I’ve decided to follow a 10 year long dream to become part of the SANAP family.

Happy go Lucky Eddie – Team Gough 58 mascot

As far as we could determine, “Happy” is an foreigner and will be traveling illegally with us to Gough Island. He must have bribed the Immigrations Officer to get onboard and was probably planning this for a long time, since he’s been with us since the first day of team training.

“Happy” started his travels with me since my working days in Dubai. I’ve rescued him from a security officer at the hotel where I used to work and ever since “Happy” has been part of my life. I’m not sure about his educational background, however, the fact that he’s been with the team and part of all the training showed that it is not always important to only have academic knowledge but also social skills and I can promise you this little guy doesn’t lack that.

Thulani Jakalashé (aka “Tools”)– Deputy Team Leader & Diesel Mechanic

Thulani is no newby to Gough Island. He was part of G52 - almost 6 years ago.

Gerard de Jong (aka Madhala) – Radio Technician

Gerard is also not new to the SANAP programme. He was part of SANAE 50 in Antarctica and entertain us with all his “war stories” from time to time.

Jasper Stone (aka Jazz)– Senior Meteorologist

Jasper is the baby in the group, but don't let age fool you. This young man are are charge of the Metkassies and can use big words to make a simple cloud sound like a new found jewel in the galaxy.

Namhla Mkiva – Assistant Meteorologist (aka Num Num)

It's Namhla's dedication to being a Metkassie that helps her with missing her big family back home, and her terror of the island birds!

Christiaan Crous (aka Trevor)– Assistant Meteorologist/Environmental Officer

Christiaan isn't only a Metkassie, he will also be in charge of all environmental issues and to ensure that we stay within the regulations. He will also assist the Sealers from the Zoology Department of the University of Pretoria, to weigh the seal pups and give feedback to them to help compiling data about our flipper driven furry friends.

Chris Bell (aka Rooinek)– Field Assistant

Chris is British born but loved South Africa so much that he has started to study the Afrikaans language. And I can tell you one thing – by the end of this year together, he'll be fluent in Afrikaans.

Mara Nydegger – Field Assistant

Mara makes history by being the first Swiss to overwinter on Gough Island. (But is the 4th Kiwi... figure that one out!) It's been a 6 year ambition of this Swiss born Kiwi to be stranded on a small island in the middle of no where...

Ben van der Walt (aka Padre) – Spiritual Leader

Even though Ben will not stay behind on the island with us, he will still be very much part of the team. He will ensure that we and our families have the spiritual support in the good as well as the tough and challenging times while we are away from home.

To select eight individuals that have to live in the same house, on an island, ??? miles away for 13 months is not an easy task. After the selection was made, interviews were done and after a lot of discussions, Team G58 was selected. But the work doesn't stop there. Now you need to ensure that the team members get to know each other, work together as a team and get some team orientated training...

First we'd started with some Team Development Training that was presented by Ds. Melanie Smit from the South African Air Force Chaplain Services. Not only did we start to interact as a team, we also got to know each other by sharing life experiences and stories.



I can say that it wasn't only just work and no play. Gough 58 also had fun. Yup! If you want to send 8 complete strangers to an island for a year, you first need to make sure they will not go hungry. And hungry we will not be – at least not after our 2 day cooking and baking training at Pick & Pay School of Cooking.



The fun hasn't stopped after Cooking School. Oh no!

Next on the program was First Aid Training.

The team was introduced to Basic First Aid skills that will equip them to administer basic lifesaving skills, should they go on a day trip, a walk or get injured where the medic is not immediately available.

Next we learned how to fight fire. It's not really that easy – ask Chris and he will tell you that carrying a breathing apparatus on your back and walking in a blacked out room filled with smoke, is no joke!

And then of course, we had to pack everything that needs to go to the island...



The last Friday before the ship departed, we had to do our last packing, get our kit (clothing, kit bags, gear) from the Clothing Store and ensure that everything was in place before we could leave to spend the weekend with our loved ones for the last time. Looking back in time now, I realize that the word “team work” really took effect that day. The work got done, everyone helped where they could and no-one complained.

SANAP



Front left to right (standing) : Thulani, Chris, Mara, Happy in Marilette's arms, Gerard and Christiaan

Front: Jasper and Namhla

On the 6th of September 2012 we set sail and started our journey to Gough Island. Even after we were delayed for a few hours, the team was excited to start the journey and a new year filled with adventures. As Cape town started to disappear in the sunset, all of us made our way to our cabins to settle in for the 7 day trip to our new home.



After the 3rd day at sea, I finally got my sea legs. But that is a status you only receive after spending some quality time feeding the ocean creatures by hanging overboard. Okay, maybe I over react a bit, but I was really struggling with motion/sea sickness. After the 5th day I start to feel like my old self.



After 7 days at sea and a 24 hour stop at Tristan du Cunha, we arrived at Gough Island.

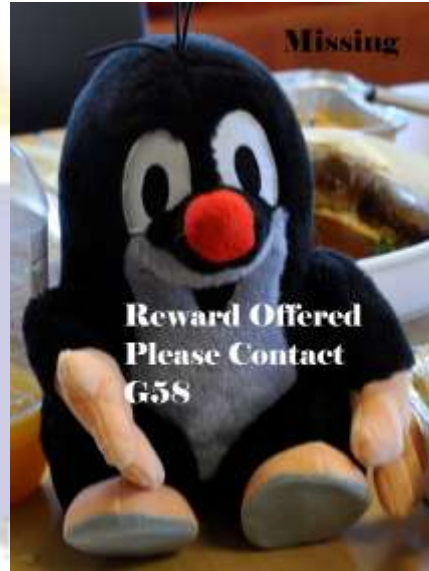




As soon as we hit the ground, we started\ to unload the containers and help around the base.



Tragedy struck us...just a couple of days before take-over... Lucky got kidnapped!



Posters was put up to notify everyone about “Happy” and soon we received a ransom note...



We asked for proof of life from the kidnapers and received it with their demands: slabs of chocolate and a case of beer. Needless to say that we made the drop as soon as we could and was waiting to hear back from the kidnapers. The next morning “Happy” was safe and sound back in our possession. The little guy went through a tough time but with all the love and support he received from G58, he was out and about and ready for the take-over party the next day...

Talk to you soon again!

Marilette & “Happy”

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

5 September – Marilette

12 September – Marilette’s friend (Nicci)

18 September – Melanie (Chaplain Services)

24 September – Sunette (Team Leader G57)

28 September – Marilette’s father (Louis Snr)



A couple of first's for G58...

7 September – 1st day after departing Cape Town

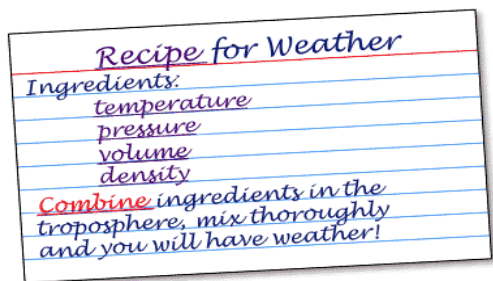
12 September – 1st time on Tristan du Chunha

13 September – 1st week away from “home”

13 September – 1st time on Gough Island!!!

FROM THE WEATHER OFFICE...

CLIMATE STATS



Ave. Max Pressure	1012.7hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	1002.0hPa
Ave. Pressure	1007.5hPa
Max Pressure	1028.7hPa
Min Pressure	992.2hpa
Ave. Max Temp	13.3°C
Ave. Min Temp	7.8°C
Ave. Temp	10.6°C
Max Temp	20.1°C
Min Temp	4.9°C
Ave Humidity	79%
Max Humidity	96%
Min Humidity	34%
Max Wind Gust	44.7 m/s or 160.9 km/h
Total Rainfall	314.6 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	58.4 mm
Total days with rain	26 days
Total days >1mm	17 days
Total Sunshine	103.2 hours



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