

GOUGH BUNTING



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY

SANAP
2013

FEBRUARY 2013 – TEAM LEADER’S EDITORIAL

Dearest friends, family and sponsors

Wow! February was a hectic month for the islanders! Visitors, a visiting vessel in our waters, failing communications and a birthday party...

For the first week of February, we had the Tristan Administrator (Sean), his wife (Marina) and the Tristan Environmental Officer (Trevor) as guests on the island. It was great to see different faces!



We also had the Sørlandet in Gough waters and onboard was the “Class Afloat”-project.



As we start to feel the changes in climate on the island, I slowly but surely start to prepare myself for winter. I'm not really sure what to expect. I guess it's true what they say about island life – expect the unexpected.

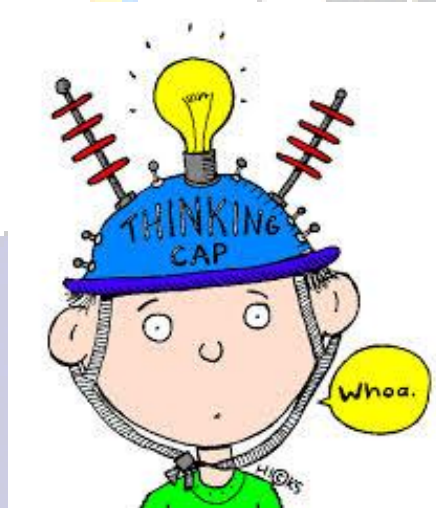
With Mara in the lead, the islanders were introduced to Yoga. We are no professionals if it comes to the finer arts of balancing yourself on the ball of your feet while (supposedly) standing on one leg and pretending to be a tree. With practice we will get there... we hope ☺

Talk to you soon again!

Marilette & "Happy"

"WE CARE" - PROJECT OF THE MONTH

On the 22nd of February, it was **World Thinking Day**... Yes, and we've made sure that we've set some time aside to sit and ponder about being on the island and what the future might hold and more.



AWARD OF THE MONTH

Adventure Award

Sean and Marina Burns were the first ever Tristan Administrators in the history of Gough (as far as we know!) to stay the night in Gonydale (and possibly the first to visit it).

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

3 February – Graham (Chris's father)

7 February – Michael (Chris's brother)

12 February – Chris

20 February – Candice (Marilette's friend)

25 February – Louis Jnr (Marilette's brother)



OTHER CELEBRATIONS

3 February - Jakob John was born (Chris's Nephew)

16 February – Karen & Sylvain got married (Research Assistants for Gough 57)

23 February – Tristan & Anja got married (friends of Chris & Mara)

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A couple of first's for G58...

18 February – 1st yoga class

19 February – 1st moon rainbow witnessed

A WORD FROM THE FIELD ASSISTANTS...

What is an Albatross without wings?

By Chris and Mara

February has been a mighty month for Chris and me, not only was it Chris birthday, and Valentine's day but Chris and I celebrated our 1st year of engagement too!



But it all started with the Edinburgh's last visit for the season, she came into Gough waters on the 28th of January and soon sent her fishing boats loaded with visitors and parcels to meet us. Once again the crane was put into use, and its swinging basket lowered with a fearful Christiaan to meet and greet our guests. As the weather was coming in and we were getting wetter, our guests were searched and scrubbed to avoid the accidental introduction of alien plants or animals. Soon we had everyone settled in the kitchen to a warm lunch, and G58 were grinning like children on Christmas day. There were parcels for everyone, some from home and for everyone parcels with team logo gear. To everyone's surprise Gerard was for once made speechless, when after weeks of drama, his wife's parcel had made it after all...

Our guests Trevor Glass (Tristan Island Conservation Officer) Sean and Marina Burns (Tristan Island ambassador and his wife and island school teacher) stayed with us for a week. Trevor taught the team how to cook Crayfish in a range of ways; on the braai, steamed, and garnishes to go with it all. Marina also taught us a few extra tricks, just ask Namhla to make you an apple pie and you will be treated with a true British apple crumble! Trevor and Thulani got up to a few things too and maybe a few parties on

the side? But by the end of their stay, all our hoses were fixed and now cleaning our Sagina gear is pure bliss! Thank you!!



For Chris and me, Sean and Marina brought a lot of 'home' with them, stories, familiar accents and even mutual friends. We were very excited to show them as much as we could of Gough Island and with the weather on our side, Sean and Marina with the help of Christiaan and Trevor saw the Admirals, Seal Beach, Tumbledown and even survived an overnight camping trip with us in Gonydale, meeting the Tristan Albatross!



Jasper has also been on adventures with a double overnighter in Gonydale, exploring Green Hill (which is very brown for those who have not seen it) and Michael's Col and of course admiring Gough Islands mightiest bird moaning, gurgling and chattering in its display, dancing with clapping bills and open wings. Don't ask him about the abyss that he may have fallen into on our return...

Christiaan, Chris and I, had several attempts to get to Waterfall Camp, but as it turned out the only good weather gap we have had in over a month, was during the stay of our Tristan guests. Since then the mountains have been wrapped in thick fog, blasted with strong winds or the whole Island soaked in rain. Maybe March will bring the much needed weather gap?



February saw the last of the Rockhopper chicks take to the sea and now the colonies are empty of life, just the edges are crowded with moulting non breeders, looking somewhere between very ugly and exceptionally glamorous.



The Yellow-nosed Albatross and Sooty Albatross chicks are starting to grow feathers and no longer look like little princes on their petty-stools, but like young birds quickly outgrowing their nests. The Great Shearwater chicks too, are becoming fat bundles of down, hidden in their burrows. I worry about them when it rains day after day, how do these burrows which are just holes in the ground not fill up with water? And once wet, how do the chick dry out again?

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Our saddest part of the month is that one of the Tristan Albatross chicks that was meant to have fledged in December has had an accident, damaging both its wings. We first saw the chick in a very miserable state at the start of January, for a time it seemed to improve, be lively and attempt to do lots of wing exercises. But a recent close examination has left us without hope. The chick is now losing condition and smells of infection, and the wings which were both dislocated have healed badly, preventing the chick from being able to spread its wings, ever again. It is one of the saddest things to see, a young full of life Tristan Albatross chick without wings, a bird that is elegant and powerful in the strongest of storms, the potential to soaring the southern seas for years on end, grounded due to bad luck.



On a positive note Jasper, Chris and I on return from Gonydale after stopping to eat berries were greeted with an unexpected sight. Down in Transval Bay we saw TWO ships, the Edinburgh and a beautiful sailing ship. We were sooo excited! But our legs were too slow to carry us down in time to see her up close and over the radio we heard the last conversations between Base, the *Edinburgh* and the *Sorlandet*. And as her tear-jerking horn echoed through the hills we watched her head out to sea due

East. As we descended we watched her silhouette become smaller and smaller until she faded into the mist and rain on the horizon.

Have a great Month!

Six months down, Six months to go!!!



It is not long ago in our minds that we were standing nervously on the pier, new to each other and the big unknown looming ahead. But then we reflect... and we remember all the adventures, the learning, the new sights and friends that have become so very familiar to us. We have had some adventures, big ones and small ones but we are only ½ though our Gough adventure!!!

So here are some stats on fetishes, soap, treats:

Mara - Brought with her 10 **Toothbrushes**, then asked her Mum to send some more, to date is using her 6th Toothbrush.

Chris and Mara – Share their bars of **soap**, they took 10 bars of soap with them and so far have used 3 (plus the two free ones given to all passengers on the Agulhas). They also share their **Toothpaste**, they took 12 tubes of Toothpaste with them and are on their third tube.

Chris – Brought with him six boxes of **English tea** and was sent 2 more by mail, but has not even used up one box, for some reason drinking Rooibos tea has become the norm.

Jasper- Brought with him 1-2 kg of **microwave popcorn**, they remain packed in his bag. He also brought with him 4 bars of **soap** for the year and is now part way through his 2nd bar!

Thulani – brought with him 15 Tubes of **Toothpaste** and has only got 6 left- oops! He also brought with him 24 bars of **soap** and has exactly 12 left!

Namhla - Brought with her 32 slabs of **chocolate** and has 6 left (her chocolate parcel from home also vanished pretty quickly) – oh dear! She also brought with her 4L of **body wash** and 25 bars of **soap**, so far she has used 5 bars of soap and 2L of body wash!

Marilette – Took with her 4L of **shampoo** and has more than 3L left! She also brought 2kg of **Jelly-tots**, but they were eaten in the 1st month, lucky a reshipment with another 2kg arrived in February, but ½ of that disappeared within 2 weeks, so the rest have been stashed away!

Christiaan – Took with him 50 bars of soap, and to date has 15 left! Oh dear! (Lucky for him, the team leader hide away some extra soap for emergencies) He also brought with him 3 sets of guitar strings, so far he has restrung his guitar 1x!

Gerard – Since Gerard went to SANAE before, he already knows how much stuff to bring. However... he did forget his towel at home this time 😊

FROM THE WEATHER OFFICE...

Jasper's

I had been itching to go to Gonydale since we first arrived on Gough. So when the morning of the 4th dawned bright and blue the birders and I seized the weather gap and packed up for a 2 night stay at the dale.



We camped next to a small knoll at the foot of Green Hill. Looking up, you can see the West and South Rowetts towering to the north, South Peak to the east and Green Hill sloping up to the west.

While setting up our tents, I became aware of an imposing skua, free of fear, strutting around our tents. Stompie, it seems, was back in town. He quickly lived up to his reputation as a nuisance. Tugging on our guy ropes and the straps of unattended backpacks. Retreating only after we packed our gear away and tugging on the ropes became boring.

But he was never quite gone.

Chris and Mara got up early the next day to do their Tristan Albatross counts. Leaving me to my own devices. I made the quick walk to Michaels Col, situated between South Rowett and South Peak. From there you get incredible views down to the glen and the sheer, rugged slopes that characterizes the eastern parts of the island.

On the final day I checked out the rocky spurs on Green Hill. From the top you get a sense of the contrast that define the differences between the eastern and western parts of the island. While the east is steep and rough, the west is mostly shallow and wind blasted.



As we hiked across the Hummocks, back to base, we noticed two ships anchored in Transvaal Bay. Alongside the fishing vessel, *Edinburgh*, was a sailboat. The appearance of both vessels and the radio chatter we picked up excited us greatly and sped up our return journey significantly.

The temperature reached a sweltering 25°C (quite high for the island) when we made it to Gough

House. And let me tell you, hoisting back that first cold beer makes everything in this world seem alright.

-Jasper Stone



In late January the administrator of Tristan da Cunha, his wife, as well as the conservation officer of Tristan da Cunha arrived at Gough. They came with the *Edinburgh*, a Cape Town based fishing ship, and stayed for one week at our base. Our visitors were keen to enjoy the natural beauty of Gough. They were fearless during their visit to the big fur seals of Tumbledown, and did not shy away from attempting the notoriously draining hike to Gonydale.

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Top left to right: Sean Burns, Trevor Glass (Administrator and Environmental officer of Tristan da Cunha). Bottom left to right: Marina Burns, Chris, Mara.

During our visitors stay, the Sørlandet arrived in Gough waters. The Sørlandet is a Canadian ship that currently hosts the Class Afloat program. They started their second semester in Rio de Janeiro en route to Cape Town. There were approximately 60 people onboard; with most of them students, teachers and support staff.



Edinburgh (left), Sørlandet (right)

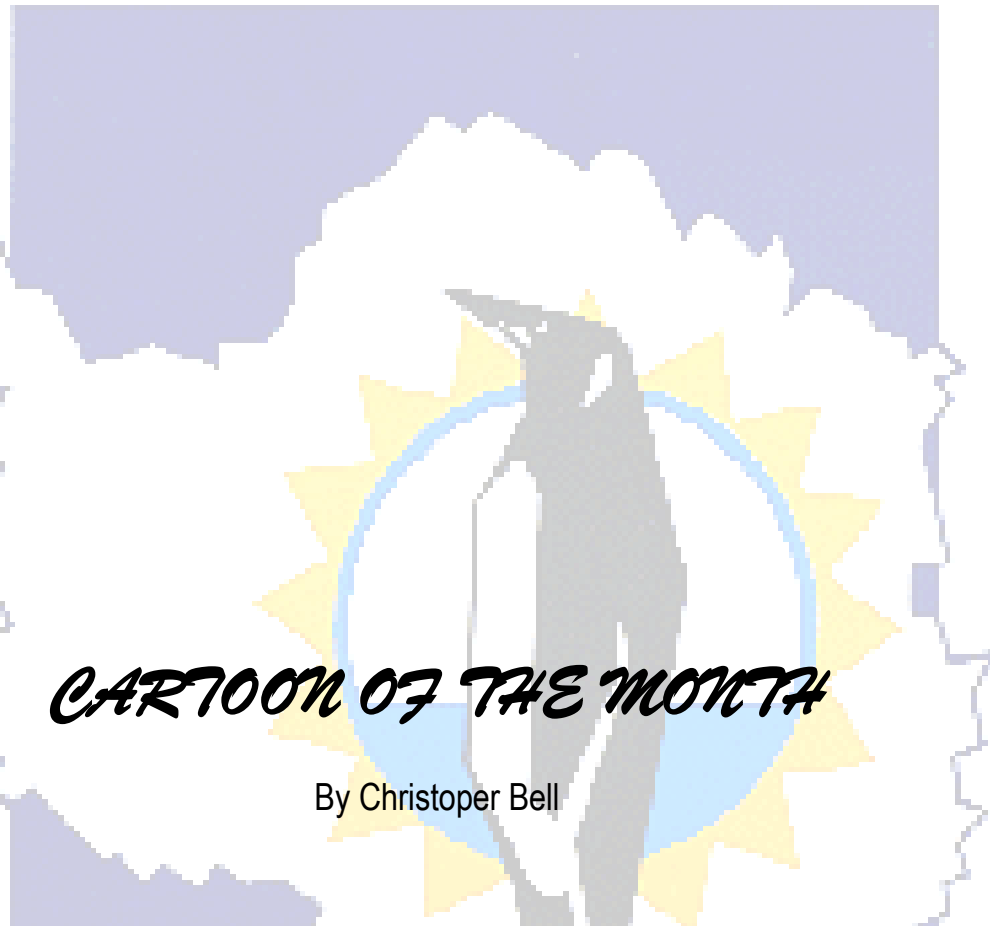
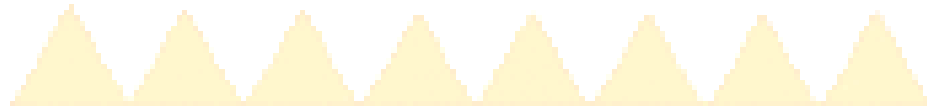
February was also the month in which we celebrated the birthday of one of Gough's native sons. It was Chris's birthday; and we enjoyed the evening with drinks, cake and fierce tabletennis matches.



Finally, it was time to weigh the sealpups again. They have gained about 1kg since the previous weighing in January. It might not seem like much, but since the method requires the weighing of a 100 pups, it leads to a considerable increase in the amount of lifted weight (as well as mandatory smoke breaks).



Christiaan



CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Christopher Bell

ALL IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE

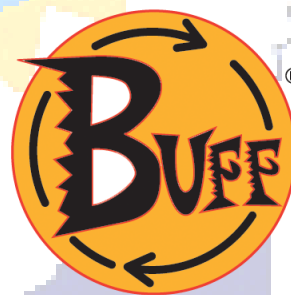




CLIMATE STATS

Ave. Max Pressure	1014.7 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	1007.2 hPa
Ave. Pressure	1010.6 hPa
Max Pressure	1026.5 hPa
Min Pressure	991.7 hPa
Ave. Max Temp	18.9 °C
Ave. Min Temp	11.5 °C
Ave. Temp	15.2 °C
Max Temp	25.2 °C
Min Temp	7.8 °C
Ave Humidity	77 %
Max Humidity	95 %
Min Humidity	34 %
Max Wind Gust	36.4 m/s or 131 km/h
Total Rainfall	175.8 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	52.8 mm

Total days with rain	21 Days
Total days >1mm	17 Days
Total Sunshine	154.8 Hours



GILBERT X RUGBY



Canon



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