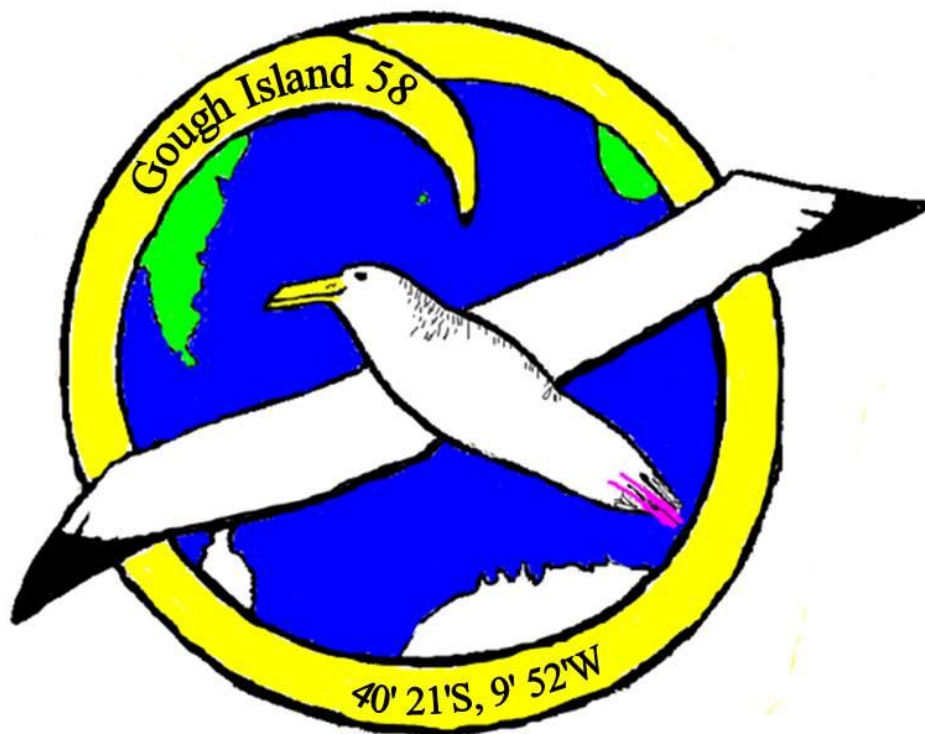


GOUGH BUNTING



NEWSLETTER

APRIL

SANAP

2013

APRIL 2014 – TEAM LEADER’S EDITORIAL

Dearest friends, family and sponsors

On the 1st of April:

166 days ‘till ship arrives

193 days ‘till Cape Town

210 days on island

A leaking bath tub, a burst pipe and two birthday parties...what a month!

It start to get colder by the day and in the morning it takes more motivation to get out of bed – a constant fight between my body and the warm, comfortable embrace of the duvet. It is even more difficult to make my way down to the gym to burn a few calories.

The craving for fresh fruit is something that I can’t control anymore. Just paging through cook books is enough to drive me to tear ☺ (Note to everyone who will come and greet us in Cape Town – bring fresh fruit...PLEASE....)

During April, Marion was buzzing during take-over. All the best of luck to the new team and to the old team – enjoy civilization ☺

Happy Birthday, Mom! Love you!!!

Talk to you soon again!

Marilette & “Happy”

“WE CARE” - PROJECT OF THE MONTH

On the 7th of April it was **World Health Day** and on the 22nd of April it was **Earth Day**.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

11 April – Léa (Mara's sister)

20 April – Namhla

22 April – Andrea (Chris's cousin)

23 April – Rosie (Chris's mom)

24 April – Linda (Marilette's mom)

27 April - Christiaan



OTHER CELEBRATIONS

6 April – Nicci and Ettienne got married (friends of Marilette)

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SOME STATISTICS

We are halfway through the expedition and here is just some statistics on our eradication of mice attempt over the past months...

October '12	31 kills
November '12	81 kills
December '12	105 kills
January '13	132 kills
February '13	164 kills
March '13	287 kills
April '13	181 kills
TOTAL TO DATE	981 kills

A couple of first's for G58...

2 April – Namhla broke the Upper Air record that was standing since 2010

? April – first plumbing problems

8 April – first Tae Bo boxing class

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A WORD FROM THE FIELD ASSISTANTS...

The days seem numbered (Chris and Mara)

The end of April is near, this past month has been rainy, and we have spent many days enjoying shorter work hours and discovering all sorts of things in our lab, office, Sagina store and on our work PC. We now have a neat row of A4 folders clearly labelled and orderly packed and filed, the odd new map has been drawn up and some of the old databases have been brought up to speed and unified. But we are not short of rainy weather work... there is still plenty we hope to achieve over the next few months. In all honesty there is already a bit of panic in my chest, as I fear we will run out of time. It all feels so short now!

View of Base

From the top of

Mt Zeus.



In the outdoors the bracken, a tall fern that towered over me only a month back has started to die off and the dried tips have starting to decompose, forming leaf litter between the burrows. The Phylica trees are still flowering and seem to be very well adapted to the increasing salt spray. The introduced Yorkshire fog in comparison, a common grass here on Gough is not so keen on the salt spray, and with the first storms has quickly wilted away.

We have all noticed the change, especially at night. The loud cries of the Great Shearwater have become a seldom occurrence being replaced by the low soft hum of the Grey Petrel. Prions and Soft-plumaged Petrels have vanished, their carcasses and errie sounding chatter used to be a daily occurrence and now has disappeared. We only see the odd one on foul days flitting though the air.

*A Soft plumaged
Petrel, one of the
summer breeders
we no longer see
around Base.*



Giant Petrels became a common sight around the Yellow-nosed Albatross (YNA) fledging mid month, they patrol the coast with their watchful eyes ready for any unfortunate youngster or weak Rockhopper unable to complete its moult. The Skuas too became actively aggressive predators ganging up in small groups at the YNA fledglings in the air. Fascinating, seeing them practically land on the poor youngster while it tries to fight its way out to sea for its very first time. I have to say I am happy that I never saw them succeed.

*Yellow-nosed
Albatross fledgling
(notice the black bill)
attempting to take
its first flight.*



In the burrows the Great Shearwater chicks have grown into birds, about half are fully feathered now and should be fledging as we speak, the other half are still covered in down and calling enthusiastically as we walk past their burrows, mistaking us for a parent with food. Though when we slip and fall into one of the entrances their call is aggressive, and we have learnt while ringing our study chicks recently that their bills are now as harp and powerful as an adults.

Up at Gonydale the vegetation is dying back as well, and the young Tristan Albatross chicks are now often left on their own, and have to defend themselves against the Skua gangs that seem to own the valley.

Proud Tristan Albatross parents with fluffy white chicks.



Chris has become a dedicated gym goer recently. Maybe it is not only to do with upcoming team Comrades Marathon event looming closer but also being compared as being a bit scrawny compared with the weight-lifters of the team. The few trips to Tafelkoppie and Gonydale are muddy now but they are our only excuses to get out of the base for the day and feel free with the cool mountain breeze (or stinging gale-driven rain) on our faces. As our work has become base bound, these trips have become even more special and important to us and we look forward to them weeks in advance.

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Chris and the view from the Hummocks, looking towards Base and Richmond Hill; if you look closely you can see the outline of Richmond Hill peak in the low cloud.

We have our telescope set up in the lab looking out to sea, and when we spot a gathering of birds either floating past in peace or fighting over some carcass, we will watch them with great care. Just before I watched over 10 Giant Petrels fight viciously over a carcass floating past Crane Point. As I watched these big birds display and tug on the flesh I noticed the very small Storm Petrels fluttering around (White-bellied and possibly a Willson's), pecking at the water around the carcass like butterflies at a bird bath in summer.

Other activities around the base have kept the rest of the team busy, there seems to be no shortage of either blocked or leaking pipes here on Gough. This month we had temporarily lost a toilet as sewage started leaking onto the floor and lost the bath all together as the piping cannot be fixed unless the whole bath is lifted out! Namhla and I are very sad to have lost our nice baths just now when winter is arriving and the cold can chill you to the bone if you sit around for too long.

There have also been two fantastic birthdays... but I am sure the others will tell you all about that!!!

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*Thulani never short of
work, either it is the
toilets, water pipes,
diesel engines or water
filters...*



With this thought we wish you the very best and send our love and thoughts to our families and friends
and dedicated G58 Bunting readers!

Chris & Mara

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FROM THE WEATHER OFFICE...

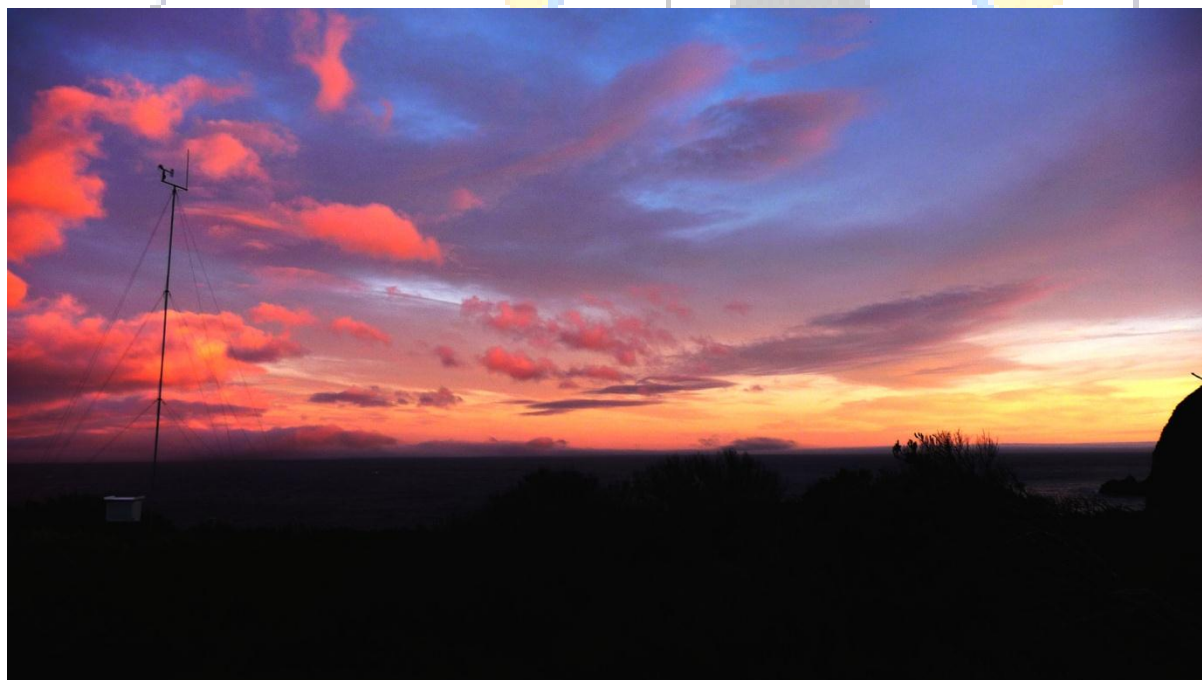
Jasper's

Here we are at last. April.

This place is beginning to sound, taste (*yup*) and feel suspiciously like home. There was a time where I would wake up in the morning, staring at the ceiling, not knowing where the hell I am. That time has long since passed. The team has nestled quite firmly within the confines of this conch and I suspect it's going to be hard to share this homely shell once takeover sweeps in.

You can definitely feel the crispy autumn air sinking in earlier each afternoon. Most of our avian friends who accompanied us during the summer, have since left. The eggs, who we watched grow into fully fledged albatrosses, have also abandoned us before the winter.

I think it's time we made the most of the remaining fair weather.



-JJ Stone

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Chronicles of Christiaan

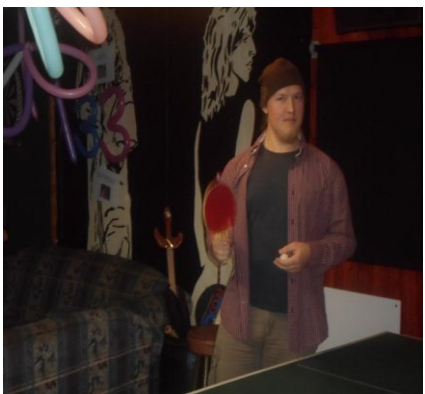
April was the month for birthdays on Gough. First-up was Namhla's birthday. The theme of her party was Gonydale, a beautiful area on Gough that she desires to visit. Instead of taking her there, the team decided to transform the bar area at the base into Gonydale. The transformation centered on making cardboard replicas of Tristan albatrosses and Skuas, 2 common bird species of Gonydale. The realism of the creations was striking – to the extent of having Chris in 2 minds about their authenticity, as can be seen below in the bottom left picture.

The theme of my birthday party was food and games. The food was excellent and the games relentless. Thanks for a great evening. I enjoyed it very much.

Reynecke baie geluk met jou verjaarsdag. Hoop jy het 'n lekker dag gehad.



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Namhla and my birthday photos.

Christiaan

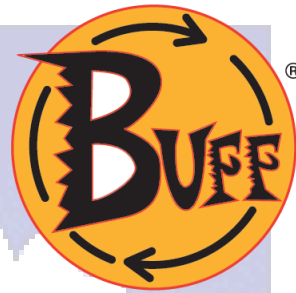
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CLIMATE STATS

April 2013

<i>Ave. Max Pressure</i>	1006.8 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	999.6 hPa
Ave. Pressure	1003.3 hPa
Max Pressure	1020.7 hPa
Min Pressure	976.7 hPa
Ave. Max Temp	15.3 °C
Ave. Min Temp	10.7 °C
Ave. Temp	13.0 °C
Max Temp	19.3 °C
Min Temp	5.7 °C
Ave Humidity	80 %
Max Humidity	98 %
Min Humidity	57 %
Max Wind Gust	29.9 m/s or 107.64 km/h
Total Rainfall	244.8 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	54.2 mm
Total days with rain	25 Days
Total days >1mm	21 Days
Total Sunshine	90.4 Hours

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