

March 2015

Issue 4 (February-March 2015)

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From the team leader's office by Thomas Mc Sherry

Excitement all the way as February and March were rather eventful! Werner Kuntz celebrated his birthday on the 29th of January and Morgan Mugeru on the 17th of March

We were visited briefly by warship 'Dragon' from the



Royal Navy. Then a visit from Tristan da Cunha Island, the administrator Alex Mitham, first Islander Ian Lavarello as well as old friends Norman, Rodney, Terry and James. They were accompanied by research divers Charlie and Rob who dived around the

Island for a whole week.

Captain Clarence brought them down from Tristan on the 'Edinburgh' and they were using their motorised RIB to reach all the diving spots around the island. Capt. Clarence also delivered some parcels for us, as well as 2 x chest freezers the department had sent down to make our lives a bit easier. A warm thank you from the bottom of our hearts to Captain Clarence!

As always Trevor and Tina Glass as well as George Swain from Tristan da Cunha Island sent us some really nice home baked goods, crisps and drinks. Words cannot do justice but thank you very much once again on behalf of Gough 60!

On Sunday morning the 1st of March I heard a call on the

maritime VHF radio by Matt Chauvel, the lone sailor of his yacht 'Obelix'. His yacht obtained storm damage and he was in need for an anchoring point in still waters in order to do some much needed repairs and maintenance on the hydraulic system etc. Matt's home country is Bretagne in France, a region which is known and famous worldwide for producing some of the best expedition sailors.

The hardest part for all of us was to say our goodbye's to all the visitors and watching them as they disappeared out of sight.

We have also now reached the halfway mark of the expedition, what a great year filled with adventure and excitement this far!

Life is as good!



Last month's cutest chick winner- The Sooty Albatross chick



Last month's photo competition winner- Salvin's Albatross by Christopher

In this issue:

- Hairy islanders
- Recipe of the month
- Gough Island sea temp and climate stats report for January and February 2015

From the editor by Michelle Risi

What a fantastic last two months we have had! Visitors, sunshine and a happy team. So grateful. Please don't forget to vote for this issue's cutest chick and photo! Send your votes to mish.risi22@gmail.com. Have a great one....



Morgan's 24th birthday



The month of March saw only one birthday on the 17th. It was Morgan's special day and we celebrated his 24th year on the planet. He decided against a theme and thus we all got together in the bar area to join him in just a normal evening with friends for a few laughs and fond memories.

Tom, our expert baker, baked him 2 cakes. Michelle and Chris decorated it for us and I, David, made the finger snacks and a small present. Gerald was in charge of the music and so the small group set of on an evening with loads of fun, lots of laughs

and enjoying each others company.

I'm sure this birthday will stand out for him as a very special one for years to come,

and may he always remember his year with special friends.



Werner's 29th birthday

On the 29 January 2015 we celebrated Werner's birthday with an 80's and 90's film action hero's party. We played lot of games after party. We played pool, kings

and poker. We do love poker here on the island, we don't have cash to play with so we are gambling with our goods like chocolate, coke cans and sweets. Gerald prepared the

birthday party and Werner received an awesome photo and a new fishing lure to help catch the elusive blue fish.



Around the island in 80 hours by Chris Jones

One of the more challenging tasks for the field team is the Tristan Albatross incubation count around the whole is-

the west often reach gale strength and there are few spots to take shelter. When bad weather does turn up,

Island has to be one of the most magnificent places on Earth. The trip was thankfully a success as we managed to complete most of the island in successive days, bar one outstanding count area which we returned to count two weeks later. Turned out to be a bumper year with nearly 2000 breeding pairs of Tristan Albatross counted!

“On a clear day with little wind Gough Island has to be one of the most magnificent places on Earth.”



land. This involves hiking around the interior of the island scan counting incubating Tristan Albatrosses with binoculars. Although Gough seems small on a map, hiking to the rarely visited north-west side of the island and back is not a simple hop skip and jump. The main concern is weather, which isn't always so friendly on Gough.

The Gough interior and especially its peaks are often smothered by orographic clouds and precipitation is on average 50% higher than the coast. Prevailing winds from

visibility is staggeringly restricted making scan counts impossible. Considering the weather dilemma the field team kept a close eye on the weather forecast to find a reasonable gap of 3-4 days of no rain and little wind. We were very lucky and had a beautiful weather gap in late January. Having set off with enthusiasm on the back of a front we steadily made our way around the interior, continuously in awe of the immense landscapes of Gough. On a clear day with little wind Gough





Picture from the original base in the Glen



This picture of the Glen from a colour slide taken by Edgar Karl Haberer 1975/6



A picture of an old typical sealers vessel

"The expression on my face did tell the story of happiness and fulfilment! "



Sealer's cave at the Glen



A visit to the historical Glen by Tom Mc Sherry

A brief Island history (http://www.sanap.ac.za/sanap_gough/gough_history.html)

Around **1505/6** Gough Island was discovered by a Portuguese seaman and named Gonçalo Álvares (after him). **1731** rediscovered by captain Gough of the British ship Richmond and named 'Gough Island'. **1790** Sealers visited the island up to **1820** and then again **1869-1890**. They were culling fur seals for their skin. **1914** a few diamond prospectors visited Gough and lived in the Glen for 3 months. **1922** a group of men of Ernest Shackleton's last expedition spent time at the Glen to make collections of birds, seals and plants and drew a chart. **1935** a Norwegian scientific visit. **1955** Scientific expedition and a base was built in the Glen. **1956** the hut became the property of SA as Gough Island was considered a good location for meteorological studies and observations. **1957** Royal visit – duke of Edinburgh. **1963** The base was moved to Transvaal bay as the meteorological data would have been better. The base as we know it now stands at about 50m above sea level where the original base

at the Glen was slightly above sea level and guarded by high ground on either side.

Our visit began with a talk around the table one night. We were talking about bucket lists and what you still want to do which is of course realistic and within reach. Needless to say; mine was a bit closer and more within reach than some of the ideas that floated around the table! So finally we made it to the Glen and I was in the great company of our team's field assistants; Chris, Michelle and Werner as well as the visitors to our Island from Tristan da Cunha Island and the UK.

Everyone's eyes were fixed on me when I walked up unto the foundations of the old base, and the expression on my face did tell the story of happiness and fulfilment! In life the dream is normally bigger than the real thing, but in this case I can truly say that the Glen was all I expected and more! Surprisingly the handmade sealers caves was similar to the ones I was privileged to visit in 2006 on Marion Island. My mind was wondering off, back in history and I could not imagine how it must have been like to sail all the way down from Nor-

way for weeks on a wooden ship through all the 'choppy roaring 40's' to one of the remotest places on earth with no backup. 'Plan B' if there ever was one would probably be the next scheduled ship filled with labourers to harvest the next pile of fur seal hides.

There is still visual evidence stretching from the 1800 to the present of visitors to the Glen ranging from the sealers caves and rock engravings, and also some names casted in concrete. The one stone I saw had a date carved out and read '1838, London' (I could unfortunately not make out the rest of it) which is a little bit in contrary with the history that there were no visits between 1820 up to 1869. Unfortunately a lot of history; and I am not only talking about the islands here, got lost due to poor record keeping.

Little did the first visitors and expedition members know that one day we will stand there, photographing the rock carvings and caves, our minds wondering off to a world of unsung heroes.

Once there was a time when men was made of steel, and ships from wood...

Dirty jobs by Werner Kuntz

Everyone knows and loves the eccentric penguin Love-lace from Happy Feet, and when I heard that there are Rockhopper Penguins on Gough I was excited. Rockhoppers are very cute and also

very hilarious to watch. They start to congregate on Gough around September to lay eggs, and then they will incubate the eggs, and eventually chicks. When the chicks reach a certain age, they start to

from crèches and all huddle up in a group. We often joke about how they look like rugby players and we want to make scrum caps for them.

Let's face it, chicks are adorable, but Rockhoppers have a dark side. They are pretty much one of the most disgusting birds to work with. The amount of biological goo produced by Rockhopper chicks is scary. This is also coupled by partly digested food from the parents too big for the chick to swallow, making the whole area a disaster area.



Dirt: Rockhoppers breed on the rocks of Gough Island, and build mounts with dirt and twigs. When the mount is completed the female lays her eggs, usually two, and then the partners take turns to sit on the egg. When it rains the area around these penguins can get pretty muddy as the soil carried in by the penguins is distributed around. For dirt I scored the Rockhopper penguin work a 6.

Smell: Penguins make up for dirt, with biological waste. They stink, I mean really stink. When the adult penguins sit on their mounts, they don't run somewhere for a toilet break. They just lift their tails, and off flies a white missile of stink, often hitting the next door penguin, already white from previous attacks. The chicks are even worse. A later stage when the chicks

have hatched the smell is further strengthened with rotting food too big for the chicks to handle. The worst smell by far happens when you take a penguin egg that is dead for a few weeks and it breaks. This is some A grade pungency here. One time the field team literally ran away from the site where an egg got broken by a penguin. So for that I boost

the penguin smell up to 9.

Biological Goo: As mentioned before, penguins love to excrete. I sometimes think they do it for fun. And the chicks are even worse. One week after the first chick hatched, the cliff on which they breed turned from brown to white. Each parent looked like a bomb exploded underneath each one of them as the chicks hurled missiles in all directions.

When handling the chicks, they prefer to solve problems with their bums first, then they will use their flippers and beaks as weapons. It appears sometimes as if the penguin is actually leaking out the bottom end, and no matter how hard you try there is always that one that gets you. So for Biological goo I give them an 8. Now getting in and out

clean is a real task. Even if you don't directly work with the penguins you end up covered in some sort of gunk. It is because the penguins live in their own filth, and everything they touch becomes filthy. Add rain, which is a good probability on Gough you have a constant muddy/poo mixture, that you can imagine smells lovely, and yes, I was very sarcastic. Chicks also armed to the teeth with biological weapons, ready to use it on the suspecting field assistant. With all this gunk, it's no wonder that penguin work scores an 8 for exposure.

With all the negative stuff I said about these penguins, they are really adorable, and the chicks too, once you've applied a clothing pin to the nose. I enjoy working with them, even though they are pretty disgusting, but they remain one of my favorite birds on the island.

Rockhopper penguins scored a dirty number **31**, largely thanks to the smells produced by these guys. So that's **24** for Prion Cave, and **31** for Rockhopper penguin work.

Next issue will cover the unique ability of the Southern Giant Petrel.



"Let's face it, chicks are adorable, but Rockhoppers have a dark side."



From braaing to fitness by Thembi Shazi



For the past few weeks I have been having braai lessons from David, I think I should do more so that I can perfect my braaing skills ;) Braaing is fun and I like the challenge anyway. Hopefully by the time I leave here I'll be able to do a braai by myself, and will have to braai on my next cooking skivvy just get a little bit of practice now and then.



For the last couple of months I started a fitness programme, and thanks to a perfect website that motivated me to start a fitness life. I have always stuck to what I do best which is running, even back in High School when I felt that I have gained some weight, I used to just put on my running shoes and hit the road, and it always did work, because within a week, I'd lose about a kilo if I run for an hour every morning. And I love running, somehow it makes me feel free and helps me to clear my head, that's why I miss it more here because I get to run indoors which is pretty boring for me but it's better than nothing.

"I have to say that I'm really proud of myself, I've come a long way and it's my awesome friends who keep me even more motivated "

Anyway a couple of women made me want to include workouts like lifting or strength training, and those women are Justine Moore, Candice Lewis, Susan Svanevik and Ashley Horner, they made me understand that lifting doesn't make you look like a man and that is the myth because it doesn't do that but it gives you more shape or structure and helps you keep those muscles alive and also gains you confidence, and what I love the most is I've gained a lot of strength and I'm hoping to lift more,



so far I'm only able to lift about 30kg's which is 66lbs, and I'm hoping that by the time I leave here I'll be having enough strength to lift 60kg's! I really love keeping fit and fitness has changed my life, there's nothing that feels like the feeling I get after a great workout at the gym and I'm never going back to the only running life. I try to eat clean as much as I can but it is difficult, when I get back home that's when I'll be able to eat clean properly and carry on with my fitness mission. One thing I love about being a mesomorph is that I gain muscles quickly and also I lose weight very quickly, some might say mesomorphs are blessed...I don't think so because if you're a mesomorph once you stop working out and eat too much junk..you gain weight quickly too! So, that's why I'm planning on being on a good diet when I get home, will see a dietician who'll draft me a good diet plan that will be perfect for me and then everything will just come down to self discipline and respect.

I have to say that I'm really proud of myself, I've come a long way and it's my awesome friends who keep me even more motivated by telling me how much I've inspired some of them to start a good fitness life. I'm really looking forward to getting back at home and train even more where I'll have to hit the road on my running days. But at the moment, I'm just going to stay focused, train hard and never stop, I think I found one thing that can make me so happy no matter how bad my day and how bad I miss home, going to the gym and doing what I love makes it all better. I guess I can say that

fitness is the new happiness for me, and if something makes you happy, just go for it no matter what.

Thanks to Kevin who has been so supportive and has told me to try martial arts simple techniques on my workouts because they tend to calm you down and I have to say all the videos that he has sent me, are totally working for me. Slowly but surely getting there, I will surely join a martial arts self defense class as soon as I get back home, it's fun. Been doing some boxing too, that punch bag is hard to punch! My muscles ache every time I squeeze in some boxing on cardio day.

Well that's just about what I've been up to the last couple of months. I really miss you all and I'm really trying so hard to stay strong and focused, and it's getting closer and closer to home time. But I don't worry myself that much because with Jehovah by my side I can never feel alone because I tell him everything that's bothering me and ask for his guidance and he's always there for me and I fear nothing but become stronger every time I talk to him everyday. I have to admit though I really miss being in a Kingdom Hall where I'll be surrounded by people who are my spiritual brothers and sisters and who truly love and appreciate me for me.

This scripture has given me faith and hope, Philippians 4:6, 7- "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let YOUR petitions be made known to God; and peace of God, Jehovah that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."

Upgrading the braai— part 2 by David Hartzzenberg

A while back, we brought you a story about the upgrade of the braai area, but that was not the last part of that chapter. One thing was still missing...Music. What is a braai without some back ground music and when your favourite some comes up, just up the volume a little.

We needed an amplifier and a external speaker box. I had brought lots of the components to build what was needed form home, and the rest I had sent down with the fishing vessel. Building the amplifier was fun. I enjoyed seeing how the loose part came together on the circuit

board and started to take shape. One or two improvises had to be made to round it all off, and then the first test. Success, It greeted me with the beautiful sound of music. Part one done.

Building speaker box that was to be mounted outside in the rain and wind, presented a challenge of another type. I had to come up with a design that would protect the speakers itself, and then building it was another headache, as my carpentry skills was comparable to a kinder garden arts and craft project. Help was at hand. During the time we had visitors form Tristan da

Cunha, Terry came to my rescue and soon we had a speaker box that would serve its purpose. Putting on the several coats of varnish and letting it dry took a long time. Having learned some skills from Terry, I could build a small wooden box to house the amplifier in and finished it off with a few coats of varnish too.

With the help of Werner, we installed the finished product and just in time for a test run. Complete with a braai and all, and boy was it fun.

May this G60 gift bring lots of happy memories for future teams.



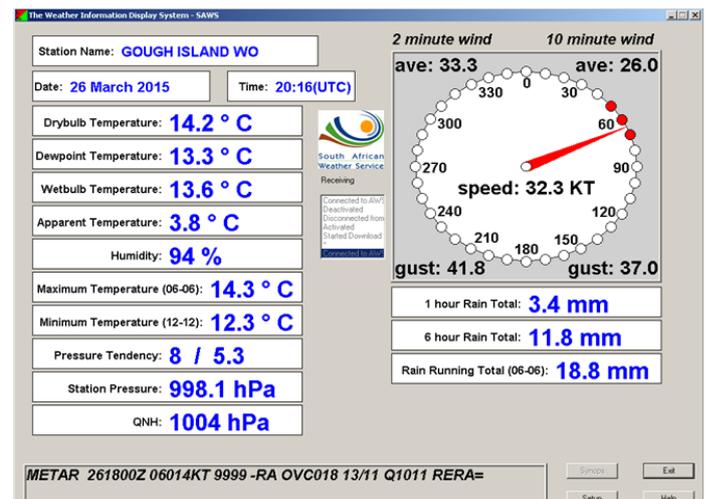
From the Met office by Morgan Mugerri

A day in the life of a metkasie (meteorologist). Our day starts at 05:45 am if you are working dayshift, one would go check the Stevenson's screen for temperature and reset, the minimum and maximum temperature, then change the rain bucket, after that check the sea state swell direction and wind waves, then the personnel would go up the roof and do cloud and weather observations. When all that data has been collected its recorded in the meteorological diary, and on Metcap system. Every 15 minutes prior to the next hour the personnel would go do cloud observations then write them down and 7 minutes prior to

the hour an observation entry form is generated, and personnel would enter cloud types, present and past



weather. At 10:15 am the Meteorologist on shift will go do cloud and weather observations, then prepare the upper air ascent, released at 10:30 am. At 11:00 am if the sea is calm, sea surface temperature is recorded, with the 12:00 Synop, then day shift will continue until 15:00 pm. At



17:45 the night shift starts and the balloon is released at 23:00 and it ends at 03:00 am. After 00:00 Synop all the five minutes data is compiled and dumped in the Metcap System, then sent to Pretoria.



Photo competition



Molly headshot



Waterfall



Somewhere over the rainbow



Skua and molly



Bunting at the Glen



Elephant seal and Obelix



Penguin life.

Cutest chick competition



Brown Noddy chick



Tristan Albatross chick



Antarctic Tern chick

Hairy islanders update

It's been four months since the last photo and Chris and Werner are looking progressively more like convicts/hippies. Tying their hair up in the field is now common as well as finding leftover parts of meals stuck in their beards....

