

# G61 - Gough Bunting back-issues

# Gough Bunting: G61

July 2016

If you have missed previous editions of the Gough Bunting from the G61 team, you can download them from the following links:

October 2015 (6Mb)

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B67RcHliALpfTUVqZ1VsUUxBRIE>

April 2016 (7Mb)

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B67RcHliALpfZGdMX2Nra1htT3M>

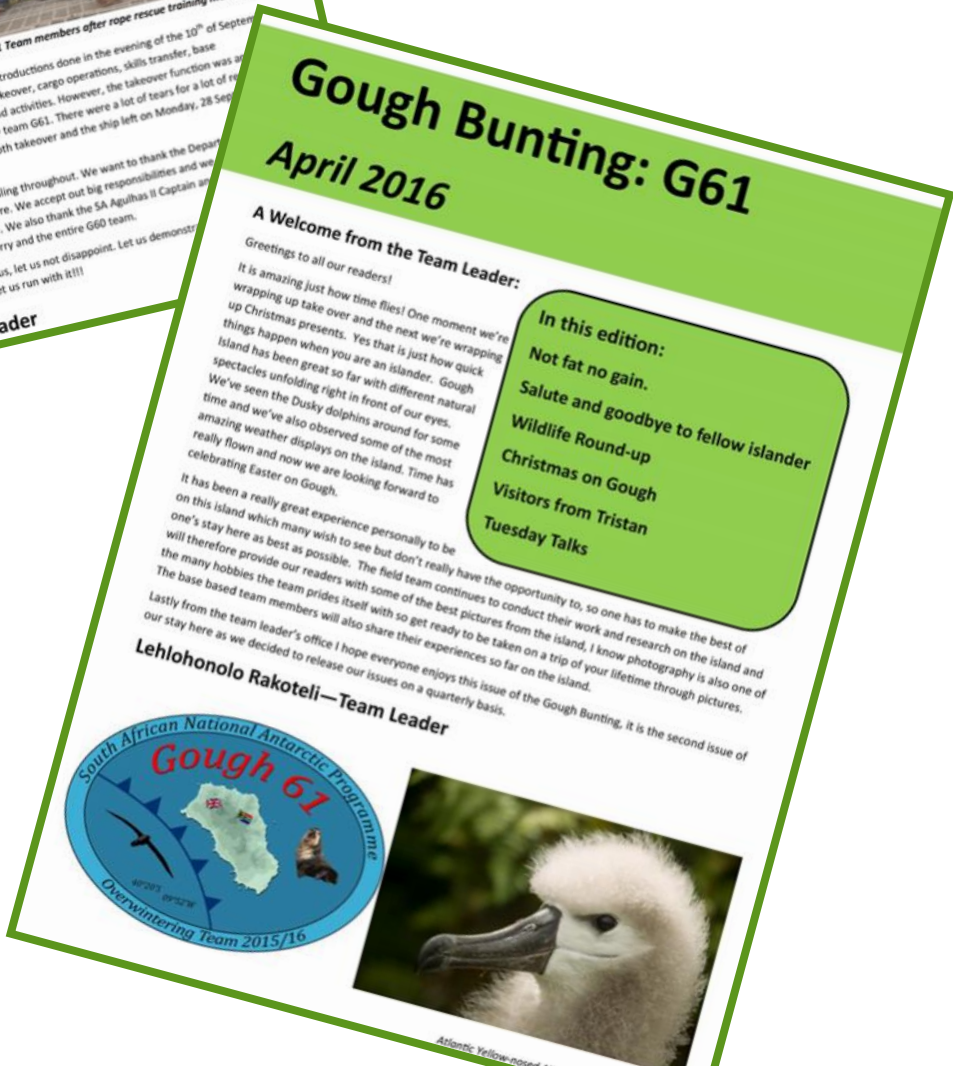
Welcome to the July edition of the Gough Bunting. The changing season of Gough has given us more unsettled weather lately and it feels distinctly more like winter. Come rain, wind or snow, the Gough 61 team spirits have remained high and work continues as normal.

I hope you enjoy this edition of The Bunting.

Hloni— G61Team Leader

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Exciting work on the ropes. For more information about the Sagina work on Gough see page 8





# First Snow of 2016

*Chris Taylor*



Late June saw the first snowfall on Gough Island for 2016. Only falling on the highest peaks, the snow made for a very different landscape for few days.

For further scenes see my video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K5iz0ON5a4>

Chris



# “The Ship Is Coming”

*By Joe Klaasen*

“The Ship is coming”

*A phrase often heard ringing round base in times of need....*



This motivational statement is something I picked up on Marion Island. It is to uplift the spirit of the people around me.

Some of us have to deal with stress and missing families back home.

If I see that when our minds are wondering around, the best thing is to remind everyone that we are almost done.

“Not so long any more **Boyzas,**  
**THE SHIP IS COMING!!”**

**Joe**

# Mid-winter celebrations

# Winter Landscapes on Gough

*Derren Fox and Chris Taylor*



A film festival (above)—if you were on cook you got to choose a film for the night. This brought out some really interesting films and some nice artwork by Derren to get people into the mood.

Mid-winters dinner in the bar (left) , much like Christmas but with rain and wind!



*The Hagg's Tooth (above) dominates the entrance to the Glen (Derren Fox)*



One of the benefits of Gough is the lack of light pollution making for some beautiful night skies (Derren Fox)



*Swinghat (above) in full flow (Chris Taylor)*



*Rocks on Taflekop (above) looking north across hidden valleys (Chris Taylor)*



# Wildlife Highlights

*All pictures by Derren Fox*



*Sub-Antarctic Fur seal pups at Tumbledown Beach (above)*

*The spectacular Tristan Albatrosses continue to feed their chicks throughout the winter months (right)*

*Right through winter a few Skuas still make the island their home (top)*



# Midwinter celebrations

To make winter more memorable, we celebrate the shortest day of the year, 21st June. This day marks the winter solstice, it marks first day of the astronomical winter and is the middle of winter in the meteorological terms.



*Traditional mid-winter photograph taken and sent around as many other Antarctic bases as possible.*



*Swimming in Swimghat had to be done for the brave Scelo, Chris and Derren*

# G61: Team personalities

By Hloni Rakoteli

Next we have **S'celo "Bafoza"**, a senior citizen too. Bafoza means big brother and I must say that's exactly what you've been to the team on the base. You've done so much DIY work here on the base, so much so that I believe the whole base would sink in the ocean if it were not for you. In return, I promise I'll make sure we keep the kitchen clean. Thanks for the engine room tour which was one of our Tuesday Talks, though I was confused as to whether to put in my ear plugs during the demonstration or not, hahaha.



Senior citizen3 S'celo—Base Engineer

We then have **Jan Bradley**, of course he spots a new look lately, a new hairdo and no beard, at some point we thought we had a visitor on the base after your complete makeover. Having taught the team a thing or two regarding rope climbing and rescue, we had a situation during a windy night where the satellite dome cover blew off. With your expert rope skills, we were soon able to replace the cover. Need I say anything about the mice on the base, or the disappearance thereof? Thanks for your efforts fellow teammate.



Jan Bradley—Field Assistant (Sagina)

I will pause here for this issue as next in line is our editor in chief, I fear he might not publish my article if he were to read 'all the nice things' I have to say about him. In our next issue I will round up the four remaining team mates' personalities and I hope our readers will be looking forward to it as much as I am.

Thanks for your time ladies and gentlemen.

Hloni

To be continued.....

# 9 Faces, 13 Months and 1 Island

By Joe Klassen

For those unfamiliar with Gough Island, I will provide a brief background on where we are, who we are and why we are here.

Gough Island is the one of two islands that form part of Tristan de Cunha Islands Group (the other island being Tristan de Cunha Island itself). Gough is part of the UK Overseas territories. It is roughly situated halfway between Antarctica and South Africa, **3100km South-West of Cape Town**. Gough Island weather station has been present since Weather observations have been made on Gough since 1956 (60 years ago) and in 1963 (53 years ago) the base moved from a secluded Glen on the east coast to a prominent "flat" area above the cliffs on the south-east corner. Gough Island has been home to annual relief teams ever since. As members of the 61st relief team (Hence G61), **most of us are appointed by the Department of Environmental Affairs to continue the meteorological observations**. Staff are also appointed for the maintenance of the base and its inhabitants (the medic!). There are also a team of 3 field assistants (currently employed by Tristan Da Cunha Government/Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) appointed to carrying out biological monitoring, mainly on the birdlife.

Gough Island, as I often describe it to my friends and family, is **like a jungle with bad weather**. The coastline is filled with the most unique mammals, birds and plants. Better known as the Mountains in the sea. The magnificent mountain peaks compliment the breath-taking clouds and rainbows that populate the sky. This newsletter (The Bunting) is aimed to inform you of island



Joe Klassen (Picture taken by J.Klaasen)



Gough Island on a the original 1956 map with the arrow marking the location of the old base and the star showing its current position



# 9 Faces, 13 Months and 1 Island

By Joe Klassen

news and to include you in the experiences and stories that we will one day tell our grandchildren.

I have been on Gough for eight months now. **I came to Gough after spending just five months at home**, returning from my first over wintering experience on Marion Island. I was appointed to Gough at the last minute as an emergency replacement. For most of us coming here, we don't know what to expect. We just prepare for the un-expected. Not many people have any idea what it would be like to live in such isolation on a small Island in the South Atlantic. You are away from family, friends and the things you hold most dear – no live sports for most of us. But at least the Bible (my shield) is always with me where ever I go. I knew I had to have a drastic change of mindset to survive. The perception and understanding I have about myself is growing. Growing spiritually has been another bonus. Different cultures and scientific backgrounds. I was excited to learn from these combinations. The G61 team are people whom I was going to spend an important time in my life with.

Living in isolation is not supposed to be easy, but this team makes it easy, motivating me, so I can now safely say I have found a home away from home. Being in isolation taught me to be tolerant towards others and appreciate people's differences, after all, **we are all different**.

None of this would be possible without the support of family and friends back home.

Joe



Bracken (Chris Taylor)

# G61: Team personalities

By Hloni Rakoteli

Having been on Gough for the past eight to nine months, and takeover is around the corner, I thought I should take this opportunity to share with our readers the personalities of the team members. I believe that most of our readers would have already seen the profiles of the team in our first issue but I just thought I should give you some insight, from my point of view as a fellow team member. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the team, I would like to thank them for their daily hard work which is making our stay here a success so far. Thank you gents and continue the great work you've done.



Hloni—Team leader

Now where do I start? Oh! Let me start with our **senior "citizens"**. I'll start with "**Bra Joe**", a team player and a top chef . It's not just because of those nice meals you always prepare for the team. It's also the passion you display when preparing them, setting the table and declaring dinner is served with your favourite phrase "game on"! Everyone enjoys them and keeps the standard high, you're the reason I silently graduated myself to the "red pot" and thanks for that!



Senior citizen1 Joe—Meteorologist

Next it's another senior "citizen" in **Mr Fox**, although I have a feeling you don't take kindly to being referred to as one hahaha, I always notice the look on your face when I do. I also wonder where I should start, it would be quicker to mention what you can't do than what you can as I would run out of space if I'd mention all you can. Anyway thanks for being our graphics guy/media librarian/chef (more pizza please)/software guy/ designer and many more. Our badge looks great I must say and keep on being our go to guy because we appreciate your help all the time.



Senior citizen2 Derren "Mr Fox" Fox—Field Assistant

# Meteorological update

By Berend Maepa

CLIMATE STATS: May 2016

Ave Max Pressure	1012.3 hPa
Ave Min Pressure	1001.2 hPa
Ave Pressure	1006.6 hPa
Max Pressure	1026.5 hPa
Min Pressure	0985.3 hPa
Ave Max Temp	15.1 °C
Ave Min Temp	09.0 °C
Ave Temp	12.1 °C
Max Temp	23.7 °C
Min Temp	02.8 °C
Ave Humidity	78 %
Max Humidity	97 %
Min Humidity	50 %
Max Wind Gust	33.7 m/s
Total Rainfall	421.0 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	118.2 mm
Total days with rain	27
Total days > 1mm	04
Total Sunshine	96.8 Hrs

CLIMATE STATS: June 2016

Ave Max Pressure	1013.1 hPa
Ave Min Pressure	1004.3 hPa
Ave Pressure	1008.7 hPa
Max Pressure	1026.5 hPa
Min Pressure	0989.2 hPa
Ave Max Temp	12.5 °C
Ave Min Temp	08.0 °C
Ave Temp	10.3 °C
Max Temp	16.8 °C
Min Temp	01.2 °C
Ave Humidity	77 %
Max Humidity	95 %
Min Humidity	88 %
Max Wind Gust	30 m/s
Total Rainfall	361.8 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	102.8 mm
Total days with rain	29
Total days > 1mm	7
Total Sunshine	83.1



Mt Zuess on the day of the snow, 26 June (Chris Taylor)

# Medic’s Update

By Patrick Mangali



Medic Patrick Mangali

We are on our 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of the Gough Bunting and things have been going very smoothly .

Firstly, I am very happy with the psychological well-being of the team. So far all the team members have been coping very well and every time we experienced signs of depression they were immediately identified and dealt with without any intervention from practitioners allocated to us back home.

**The team continues to have a low incident reporting rate of 0.2 incidents per month.** The team members are committed to “safety first” practice in all operations on and off base.

With regards to training, in the month of May I gave an educational presentation about the roles and capabilities of the Medical Orderly and a short summary of **cancer awareness**. During the month of June we conducted **resuscitation training**. We also discussed possible injuries related to operations on Gough Island, both on and off the base. We discussed methods to prevent accidents and how we would best deal with them, if such an event happened.

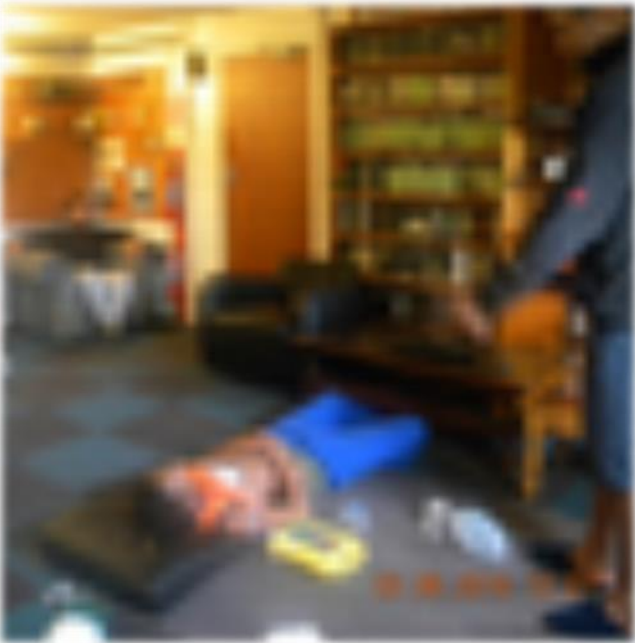
I would like to extend my gratitude to the team members for their cooperation and support throughout the expedition. Without your commitments I could not report positive feedback as I can, so thank you gentlemen. I will also like to thank all stakeholder institutions supporting us back home without you it would not be possible.

I will like to leave you with our Slogan here in Gough 61 **“Proper Stuff, We Going Home Boyzas”**

Patrick



Some medical threats are not always obvious. (Picture by Derren Fox)



CPR training, the casualty survived



# Sagina—What’s the fuss about?

By Jan Bradley

# Meteorological update

By Berend Maepa

Many recent visitors to Gough can attest to the constant talk about Sagina, the groans of fishermen as the good spots become no go areas, the constant washing of boots when you leave base and return. But what is all the fuss???

Many people’s first impressions are –

“ All this for that little plant?

.....They must be mad!”

You would be right, these people are mad, madly passionate about preserving and conserving this **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Gough Island is best known as one of the most important places, in the world, for breeding seabirds, but there’s much more. Gough Island is a paradise, with a unique and diverse selection of plant life and invertebrate species. These species form as much a part of Gough as the birdlife for which it is known.

**Sagina though is not native to Gough. It is an introduced plant species. Given the opportunity Sagina can out-compete native flora forming dense cushions/mats (See picture above). This can have impacts on invertebrate and bird life by drastically altering the habitat on which they rely.**



Sagina procumbens forming dense mats out-competing native flora (top) and a seedling on Gough

As summer has passed, we have welcomed winter with farewells to rainbows which has by now become a rarity due to continuously cloudy conditions contributing to less sunshine but with great weather spectacles.

What is interesting about our Gough winter is what lies above and around us on a daily basis, this can be picked up from our daily contributed shipping charts, forecasts and

our daily upper air ascent. In most days, we are caught between a consistent sub-tropical High pressure ridging in behind the cold fronts from the polar low, bringing about light rain and showers with the westerlies being the most dominant winds. On other days it is just the High pressure, just chilling and giving us a bit clear weather conditions and cool westerlies to south-westerly chilly sea breezes.

On the spectacular side of the weather, we have had rather untimely visit from cumulonimbus capillatus (cloud 9) bringing abroad thunderstorms with lightning on the 07<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> June. We rarely receive thunderstorms with lightning and that makes it worth waking up at 3am to listen to thunder. The thunder rumbled like it was beating rain out of the clouds. The sky was illuminated by the short glow of jagged spear of lighting crash around us. The beauty of that night is still stuck in our minds, we are wishing to see more lightening.

Berend

**See the next page for the weather stats for May and June :**



Rainbow above Transval Bay (Berend



Sheet lightening above Richmond Hill provided much excitement at 3am (Chris Taylor)



# Gough Island Power



Enough diesel to generate power 24/7 for at least a year

Generators use **polar diesel** that is delivered once a year during the takeover of the overwintering team. The diesel is pumped direct from the ship, using pipes all the way from the ship to the fixed pipe connection on the edge of the cliff.

The yearly supply is stored in ten diesel tanks. Each tank takes about 14000L of diesel. Each tank runs for two months.



The crane is used to load or offload anything from the speed boat that needs to come to the island from the ship. Its SWL ( safe working load ) is 15T, operated manually and by means of a remote. It's so nice to operate this machine.



Written by S'celo, the mechanic for the Gough61 team

### More information:

For a quick video tour of the whole base, see this video made by Chris Taylor (Field Assistant)

<https://youtu.be/rkLEawtXmC8>

# Sagina—What is all the fuss about?

*By Jan Bradley*

***Sagina procumbens*** was first detected on the island in 1998 and was thought to have come onto the island through contaminated footwear or cargo.

Sagina is a native plant to the Northern Hemisphere and parts of South America. As an introduced species, it has established on numerous sub-Antarctic islands, including Marion and South Georgia.

On Gough Island, **Sagina has mainly been spread by foot traffic, hitching a ride on boots and other outdoor gear.**

The eradication teams need your help to keep this plant from spreading all over this island.

**For more information about what you can do to stop the spread of Sagina, see the poster on the next page.**



Field assistants are often found scrambling around the coast spraying herbicide above the churning ocean

So next time you see people around base, with herbicide or hanging on ropes, you know that it is for the love of keeping Gough Island as wild and as natural as possible.

For more information about the restoration programme, including Sagina, go to:

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/goughisland>

or speak to a conservation officer near you

[gough.conservation@gmail.com](mailto:gough.conservation@gmail.com)

**The Sagina Eradication Programme** is a collaboration between the Tristan da Cunha Conservation Department and the Royal Society For The Protection Of Birds (RSPB) and falls under the **Gough Island Restoration Programme**.



# Sagina—How you can help

By Jan Bradley

## Stop Sagina from spreading.

Help us to eradicate *Sagina procumbens*



Sagina is an aggressive invader that threatens the endemic plantlife and invertebrates of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. The distribution is currently restricted to a 500m stretch of coastline around Gough Base but we need everyone's help too keep it in this range and ultimately eradicate it.

You can support the ongoing Sagina Eradication Programme by following these simple guidelines :

- Avoid contact with (touching or stepping on) Sagina plants.
- Always wash your boots before and after going on a field trip.
- Please consult the Conservation team before any trips off the base and catwalks.
- Please report any sightings off base to the Environmental Officers.

Examples of *Sagina procumbens*



For more information please feel welcome to speak to Conservation team or  
Email: [gough.conservation@gmail.com](mailto:gough.conservation@gmail.com).

# Gough Island Power

By S'celo Winston Ndwalane



Gough Island has 3 power generators that supply power to the base (plus a spare, just incase). Only one generator at a time is used to provide power to the base **24/7—365 days a year**.

A full service/ maintenance for the running engine is carried out every **250 hours** which is almost around 10 working days. All the engines run on diesel and during the summer months **we normally use 190L – 210L per day**.

Diesel consumption increase a little bit more in winter due to cooler temperatures resulting in **more tea being drunk and heaters are turned on**. Gough Island is not REALLY cold though, which means we only ever need one generator at a time. I have also worked in Antarctica in 2011 as an overwintering team on SANAE. The base was running with 2 generators full time to avoid freezing up of the water system and to warm some of the rooms. During take over period when there is a high power demand the third one kicks in to assist.

On Gough we normally **alternate between two generators** which provide power to the base. A third is used for standby power and specifically for providing power to the crane (see picture on the following page). Even during take-over period, when up to 40 people are on base, **one engine alone manages to supply all power needed to the base**.



There are three active generators in total with another spare, just in case.