

**MARION 32 RELIEF EXPEDITION TEAM MEMBERS:**

Christma J (**Chris**) Grové: Team Leader/Metkassie/technician:  
Pieter J (**Piet**) Swemmer: Dep. Leader/Radio Technician:  
Roland G (**Rolly**, “**Spook**”) Royce: Senior Metkassie/technician:  
Steven J (**Steve**) Vosloo: Metkassie/technician:  
Richard (“**Fudge**”) de V Maytham: Metkassie/technician:  
Wilfried H (**Wolf**) Gruellich: Communicator:  
Roland W (**Roly** “**Flywheel**”) Munger: Diesel Mechanic:  
Stephanus H (“**Pottie**”) Potgieter: Medic  
Michael P (**Mike**) Maurin: Ionosphere Technician:  
**Kevin** Hall: Geomorphologist, Univ of OFS:  
**Pieter** Koornhof: Biologist:  
**Han** Lindeboom: Botanist, Univ of OFS:  
**John** Mendelsohn: Biologist:  
Rudolph (**Rudi**) van Aarde: Biologist, Percy Fitzpatrick Inst, Univ of Cape Town:  
**Eduard** M van Zinderen Bakker: Botanist, Univ of OFS:  
**Johan** Watson: Biologist:

**MARION ISLAND DUTIES & RECREATIONAL PAST-TIMES:**

**OFFICIAL DUTIES:** as communicator (Radio-telex operator): (Marion – ZRS): typing weather synoptic reports, official reports & team members’ correspondence prior to transmission; telex skeds daily at 0345, 0800, 1130, 1430, 2000 with Pretoria ZRO (Weather Bureau). Also Gough Island ZOE33, Kerguelen FJY2, also Crozet F???, Sanae ZRP; Radio skeds with RSA as required; other base duties, e.g. cleaning, cooking, baking bread, general duties, help with maintenance, offloading ship, storing supplies, etc.

**RECREATION:** Things to occupy one’s time and keep oneself busy when off-duty.

Bullshit sessions in the kitchen; drinking; reading; listening to music & radio stations; watching movies (we had 25 feature films & 50 TV shorts); playing snooker (on Fri 27<sup>th</sup> Feb: Chris and I beat Pottie & Kev to become Marion32 snooker champions!) & darts; doing crossword puzzles; monitoring foreign radio stations & news agencies (Reuters, Tass, Globe, AFP, AP, DPA, Povtar [USSR], GFH, Kinshasa Press, Cairo, Azap [Fr], Sapa, Libreville/Gabon/Tananarive Reuters, ) via telex links. Monitoring ships radio (ship-to-shore) frequencies – pick up very interesting snippets e.g. Cape to Rio guardship SAS Protea on Cape Town Radio. Copied out latest news items and issued a local newsletter called MARION TIMES every 2 weeks or so. Building Airfix model ship HMS Prince. Designing telex-type picks for Mid-Winter & Christmas. Designing a big pictorial map of Marion Island. Mike and I did Morse code lessons but did not persist for very long! Using darkroom to develop black and white film and print-off prints. (chemicals and photographic paper brought along from SA). Exchanging telex Mid-Winter greetings with other bases: Takao Hosiery (leader Japanese base Syowa, Ant); Kerguelen Island; SANAE, Ant.; Benoit Tollu (Crozet Island); Halley Bay, Ant.; ship Marion Dufresne; Amsterdam Island; Mawson, Ant;  
Snowball fights (massive snowfall on Sun 27<sup>th</sup> July); fire-hose “fights”. Sledge races on slopes behind Rudi’s lab.

**Radio ham skeds** with Neville Dawson (ZS6AND - Johannesburg), Dirk Fourie (ZS6ALO - Westonaria), Vear (ZE4JO - Qwelo, Rhodesia), Brian Parker (ZS6ANE - Johannesburg), Windy (ZS5BE - Durban), Walt (ZS5DS - Pietermaritzburg), Daryl (ZE1DY - Bulowayo), Guy (ZS2PZ - East London), Sanae (ZS1MI), ZS1ANT (Borga Base, Ant); US ship Atlantis 2 (WA1NGN), Tim (KADC), Laca (UA1JJ Portable M Molodezhnaya - USSR base), Tom (ZE1AN - Bulowayo ), Gough Island (ZE9GF), Lawrence (ZE1FP - Salisbury), Frank on 25,000 ton tanker (ZS5WU Mobile Durban), Mike at SANAE (ZRP), Mawson (VLV), Marion Dufresne (FNGB), Danny (W7JCA - Seattle),

**VARIOUS TRIPS FROM BASE TO FOLLOWING LOCATIONS** (in no particular order):

Gunner’s Point - Boulder’s Beach - Trypot Beach – Gentoo Lake – Paddy Rocks - Cabbage Point - Nellie Humps – Rockhopper Bay - Duiker’s Point - King Bird Head - Skua’s Ridge – Macaroni Bay – Ship’s Cove (wreck of ship “Solglimt” sunk in 1906 & investigating remains of old sealer’s settlement there – found old bullets, cartridges, pieces of pottery, various metal objects – there must have been quite a settlement there?) – East Cape – Archway – Green Hill – Bullard Beach (half million Macaroni penguins & about 100 King penguins: macaronis in sea playing & bathing – a constant procession of them from the rookeries down to the beach and back) – Killerwhale Cove – Sealer’s Cave – Hansom Point – Kildalkey Bay (here 2½ million Macaroni & King penguins together – absolutely fantastic – penguins as far as the eye can see – what a noise and smell! Kings with chicks, macaronis on eggs – breeding and very aggressive) – Van den Bougaardt River – Tafelberg – Hendrik Fister Kop – First Red Hill – Blue Petrel Bay – Fairy Prion Valley – Long Ridge – Piew Crags – Goney Plain – Sea Elephant Bay – King Penguin Bay – Prinsloo Lake – Stony Ridge – Whale Bird Point – Sealer’s Cove – Soft Plume River – Albatross Lakes – Kerguelen Rise - Blackrocks Plateau - Arthur’s Hill - Crawford Bay - Feldmark Plateau - Watertunnel Stream - Santa Rosa Valley - Grey-headed Albatross Ridge - Rook’s Bay - Sydney Hill - La Grange Kop - Swartkop Point - Swartkop Point Bay – Kaalkoppie - Kampkoppie - Fur Seal Bay - Mixed Pickle Cove - Triejaardt Bay (sealer’s huts remains, stoves, anchor, gaff, cooking utensils, etc.) - Azorellakop – Spitskop – Cape Davis - Repetto’s Hill - Louwse-Kop – Vrystaat Point - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Sisters – Katerdraalkrans - Ned’s Kop - Delta Kop – Bald

Peak (1173m). Climbed Junior's Kop (aka McMurray's Kop) – 306m/1,000ft – an extinct volcano covered by loose red lava on a few occasions.

**FAUNA SEEN:** Southern Elephant seals, Amsterdam Fur Seals, Killer Whales, King penguins, Macaroni Penguins, Gentoo Penguins, Rockhopper Penguins, (one Chinstrap Penguin – off course from Antarctica!), Blue-eyed Cormorants, Great Wandering Albatrosses, Black-browed Albatrosses, Sooty Albatrosses, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Grey-headed Albatrosses, Brown Skuas, Lesser Sheathbills, Southern Giant Petrels, Northern Giant Petrels, Dove Prions, Fairy Prions, Great-winged petrels, White-headed Petrels, Kerguelen Petrels, Blue Petrels, Grey Petrels, White-chinned Petrels, Black-bellied Storm Petrels, Dominican Gulls, Southern black-backed Gulls, Antarctic Terns, Kerguelen Terns,

**Cats seen** around base & elsewhere: there are 4 tame cats at the base – Puss-Puss, Ribbekas, Muggins & Tommy, although plenty of feral cats all over the island. Saw the first cat on the island at Blue Petrel Bay. Macaroni Bay trip: Rudi caught a cat in a trap and killed it with an injection. At King Bird Head saw 2 black feral cats sitting inside a Gentoo chick nest and 1 tabby cat stalking the penguins! Went with Rudi & John to King Bird Head to shoot the cats – it was raining so saw none – no result. Saw 1 black cat at Rockhopper Bay. Also saw 4 cats at Kildalkey Bay - one right outside the Kildalkey Bay hut! At Soft Plume River saw 2 cats. Saw 1 tabby pussycat en route to Junior's Kop. Another 6 feral cats seen in the Kildalkey Bay area. Cats seen at Swartkop Point (at the caves). Found and caught a small kitten at the top of Long Ridge. Kitten was christened "Pushkin" (after a brand of vodka!) it is now safe in cages with the other pussycats caught to date.

**Fri 9<sup>th</sup> Jan – Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> 1976 Round the Island Trip:** **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> Jan @ 1330** - Spook, Mike, Munge and I left on our round-the-island trip - first leg to Kildalkey Bay Hut. Very hot weather – really shat off – went inland across Stony Ridge, Kerguelen Rise, arrived at Kildalkey Bay hut at 1800 – dog-tired. Supper at 2000 and in bed by 2300. Tomorrow the trip starts in earnest! **Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Jan:** woke & 0700. Radio sked with base & 0745 – QRK Nil – a real good sign for future skeds – well what is to be expected with half-efficient equipment supplied. Brekker & 0800 - left Kildalkey Bay Hut & 0930 and by 1100 we were hopelessly lost in thick mist (we had started circling back to Kildalkey Bay). Sat it out and had lunch. 1330- mist cleared and we pushed on across Blackrocks Plateau, left of Arthur's Hill, on to Crawford Bay (brilliant view, 1500ft cliffs) – over Feldmark Plateau. Radio QSO & 1700 – QRK Nil again. 1800 Pitched tent at Watertunnel Stream. Supper & 1900 and by 2100 all asleep. Tomorrow we tackle Santa Rosa Valley – shit – shit – shit – shit!!! **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Jan:** awoke 0600, brekker at 0630. Weather not too bad, though a bit windy. Left & 0700 and by 0830 we had entered the notorious Santa Rosa Valley (wicked stretch of ¼ mile of black lava slabs and ridges) and & 0930 we reached Grey-headed Albatross Ridge – nesting site of GH albatrosses – 100's of them all with chicks – very beautiful birds. Stayed there til 1300 (lunch at 1130). Rest of time taking photos like mad. Then on to Goodhope Bay (hut destroyed). Sat it out in cave on 400m cliffs from 1500-1800 waiting for rain and wind to abate – then on past Rook's Bay and camped at base of Sydney (raining, windy, hell pitching tent, all slept in 1 tent – 4 in a 2-man tent) – cramped like sardines – no radio skeds today 'cos of rain – started raining heavier in night – difficulty in sleeping. **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> Jan:** awoke 0800. Dry river bed next to tent had turned into a raging torrent during the night – everything soaked – clothes, food, bogroll, matches, pots washed away (lost 2), rucksacks in cave through which river runs – all our cameras ruined – wet through-out. Mike's camera completely washed away (missing) – all very grim. Had cold brekker. At 1100 pushed on, shitting off all the way (rain & wind) – past Vrystaat Point, across massive black lava valley, past La Grange Kop to damaged hut at Swartkop Point (hut minus roof so pitched tent, arriving at 1600.) Weather fine now so dried clothes, etc. Radio sked at 1700 QRK again nil! Then Mike, Munge and I went to Swartkop Point Bay – stacks of macaroni penguins with chicks – found 2 sealer's caves – found flintlock rifles, pots, bottles, etc). 150ft high grey lava cliffs (sandy) here – very beautiful. Supper at 1930 then to bed – now raining and blowing again. **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> Jan:** woke at 1000! Still pissing cats and dogs and wind blowing like mad – no radio sked. Stayed in tents all day at Swartkop Point (hut site). Lunch at 1300 and supper at 1900. 1700 QSO with base – QRK nil. Kipped all day – nothing else to do – very uncomfy and miserable. In evening still pissing and blowing. To kip at 2200. Stacks of albatrosses, skuas & giant petrels breeding on the plain here. Albatrosses have all got eggs. **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Awoke at 0430 & brekker at 0500. Then broke camp. Weather cold but no wind or rain; 0615 – moved on – through marshes to Kaalkoppie (arr. 0715): completely bare lava (sandstone hill with jagged edges, populated by 1,000s of macaronis with chicks – very pretty indeed – photos (only Munge's camera and my Instamatics still working!). 0745: QSO with base – QRK nil again! On past Kampkoppie on to Fur Seal Bay (0900) and then to Mixed Pickle Cove (0930). At both places 1,000s of fur seals and pups – pong like mad – on to Triejaardt Bay (sealer's huts remains, stoves, anchor, gaff, cooking utensils, etc.) Also stacks of fur seals here. Then shat-off scaling 400m cliffs (30° slope) at Triejaardt Bay to get onto the escarpment above (can't go along coast – cliffs sheer to sea at bottom). Then inland across black lava and at 1300 stopped for lunch at Azorellakop – then inland over the black lava to Spitskop (very high on escarpment) – reached snow-line – no vegetation – just fine lava (scoria) – looks like a lunar landscape! Then down towards the hut at Cape Davis. 1700: QSO & RS/5 with Rudi and Johan at Cape Davis – first successful QSO this whole trip. Reached Cape Davis at 1730 – glad to be there, today was our longest trek so far. Supper & 2000 – in bed by 2100 – nice to be in a hut again! Cats seen at Swartkop Point (at the caves), Kildalkey Bay, Watertunnel Stream, Kaalkoppie, Triejaardt Bay cliffs, Repetto's Hill and on Goney Plain. **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> Jan:**

awoke at 0730 & brekker @0900. Weather very fine – slight wind. Spook and I left Cape Davis hut at 1030 – Mike & Munge are staying an extra day. We went past Louwse-Kop, Repetto's Hill, then along edge of the escarpment to Prinsloo Meer, Goney Plain and stopped at Long Ridge hut from 1345-1445 for lunch. Then over Long Ridge, between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Sisters, across top of Skua's Ridge – arriving back at base at 1630. Glad to be back at base again. Total distance covered 50-55 miles over the 7 days.

## **SIGNIFICANT DATES & EVENTS:**

### **1975:**

Friday 31<sup>st</sup> Jan: finished up at SABC.

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb – Fri 7<sup>th</sup> March: training in Telecommunications Centre – Weather Bureau, Dept. of Transport, Pretoria. (Also Racal transmitter training at Waterkloof Air Force Base).

Mon 10<sup>th</sup> – Thurs 20<sup>th</sup> March : Marion 32 Team training: Admin; Weather Bureau film; Talks on sea voyage, take-over period, etc. Map reading; safety regulations; Photography; Psychological aspects of isolation; Recreation facilities on Marion; Communications; Organisation & history of bases; choosing library books; Cooking course: baking bread, preparation of meat, veggies, etc., baking cakes, desserts; Fire fighting at Pretoria Fire Brigade; Psychological tests; First Aid at Pretoria Ambulance Service; Films on botany, mammals, birds of Marion. Religious aspects of isolation; Protective clothing; Use of Emergency secret codes; End of Training Team dinner on Thurs 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March: train from Jo'burg to Cape Town: 1<sup>st</sup> class in a compartment for 4 all to myself!

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March: arrived in Paarl at 0515 at Huguenot Station. Bus to mom's place.

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April: reported to RSA at Quay 6, Victoria Basin, Cape Town Harbour. Issued with our kit (2 kitbags of clobber) at Leeuwen Str, Dept of Transport depot.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April: RSA departed Cape Town at 1600** – at last! After final loading of freight: cement, telephone poles, turbines, wood for erection of hydro-electric plant in November when RSA is bringing a chopper down. *Die RSA – ook bekend as die Rooi Kots Koets – is op pad!*

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April (0600): dropped anchor off Marion Island – we've arrived!** Not possible to offload or go ashore today due to high winds and rough seas – as personnel and all luggage/supplies get ferried ashore on big rubber rafts towed by ship's launch!

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April: Marion covered in snow! 1000: stepped ashore at last!!!

**Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> April – offloading and hand-over completed today. 1800: RSA departs for South Africa** – we are on our own. Fudge was blowing a farewell tune on his trumpet to speed her on her way!

**Thurs 24<sup>th</sup> April: Our First Official Day of Possession of Marion Island.** Got my year's supply of chocs (225 slabs) & 7,500 cigarettes (Rothmans).

**Tues 13<sup>th</sup> May:** winter approaching – all rockhopper penguins gone.

Winter months: Diesel & water frozen a few times - so no bloody hot water for showers, etc. also diesel for heaters – very cold. (no flowing water from Sat 19<sup>th</sup> July – Thur 24<sup>th</sup> July – no baths or showers – must go to fetch water in buckets from iced-up river at Bolug bridge to flush toilets – can't even have a crap in peace – melt snow for water for coffee and cooking. Water pipes frozen and tanks empty!

Mother's Meetings: to thrash out and discuss any issues and/or problems, allocation of base duties, (I'm also in charge of booze and library – unpacking year's supply of booze in "Checkers" storeroom.

Gentoo Lake: launch & "sea trials" of new MSS PIKKEWYN – 20ft long pink vessel built by PWD team – but leaking badly – would do as a sub! Needs a coating of waterproofing material.

Also sporadic power failures - diesel generators "*kakking in die pomp*" as they say – running on emergency power generator. (result: no lights or electricity – bloody cold).

Mon 19<sup>th</sup> May: 50-60 knot winds – building shaking like a paper bag – windows rattle – floors and walls vibrate!

Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> May: 4 killer whales seen off Gunner's Point – first ones seen.

Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> May: RSA dep. Cape Town for Marion to fetch PWD team.

Mon 26<sup>th</sup> May: RSA hove to at 12 noon at 41° 6'S 29° 7'E due to failure of turbo charger. Possibility of a warship fetching RSA and PWD from island ventured.

Wed 28<sup>th</sup> May: RSA arrived at Marion to pick up PWD team.

Sun 1<sup>st</sup> June: new supplies incl. new Deutz diesel generator offloaded. 1530 – PWD left – 1700: RSA anchor up and sailed away into the misty night.

**Sat 7<sup>th</sup> June:** (RSA back in Cape Town this morning incidentally).

0100: While playing snooker we heard an enormous explosion and the fire-alarm of "Bolug" (Upper Air) went off! We all rushed out and saw flames from "Bolug" – we ran up to the building and saw that the place had blown up. This had occurred while Chris was filling a balloon with hydrogen. Chris was slightly burnt on his face and hands. Upper Air hut is a total wreck – looks like a bomb hit the place – Chris very lucky to be alive! All walls and roof gone and the big double doors lying about 15 feet away smashed up. Stayed up all night and at 0145 sent thru emergency message to Mr. Meyer to arrange a phone-sched for the next morning. 0815: phone-call from Mr Meyer to Spook (as chief metkassie): a warship could possibly be sent down for repairs as no meteorological ascents possible until then. Later in morning we all took photos of the blown-up "Bolug" building.

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June** we tried to pull the roof off the damaged "Bolug" building but all to no avail – it is solid as a rock and won't budge! Informed via telex that RSA is coming down end of July/beginning Aug with a PWD team to erect a new Upper Air hut – this of course means more personal post and parcels – yippeeeeeee!!!

**Sat 21<sup>st</sup> June - Midwinter:** 1800: special Mid Winter Banquet: a real feast fit for a king – the meal lasted 1½ hours – party continued right thru to 0330am Sunday morning. A special cake was baked in the shape of Marion Island complete with oceans, mountains, rivers, lakes, base, even the RSA

(Monopoly set ship duly painted red!), snow on mountains (icing sugar). We all streaked to Gunner's Point and back – what a party – everybody pissed like lords – sing-song sessions well into the early hours – a great success.

Tues 24<sup>th</sup> June: temporary “Bolug” building completed – ascents possible again from midnight tonight. By next day ascents were as per normal again – which means 0145 & 1230 scheds are back on again.

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July - had a “braai” on – bloody unbelievable – in the pissing rain!

Tues 15<sup>th</sup> July: listened to launch of Apollo spacecraft on Voice of America radio station – USA joint space mission with USSR with Soyuz on 17<sup>th</sup> July. A real scoop for my edition of Marion Times.

Mon 4<sup>th</sup> Aug: RSA left Cape Town for Marion with PWD team to rebuild Bolug hut.

Sat 9<sup>th</sup> Aug: 1445 – RSA (*die ou Rooi Kots Koets*) arrived; offloading on Sun 10<sup>th</sup> Aug: building materials for new Bolug & food, we all also received mail and parcels from home via the ship.

Mon 11<sup>th</sup> Aug: RSA departed for oceanographic survey off East coast of Madagascar for 5 weeks, before returning to Marion to pick up PWD team again.

Tues 9<sup>th</sup> Sept: the new “Bolug” building is virtually finished – balloon ascents from it are due to start at midnight.

Fri 12<sup>th</sup> Sept: new “Bolug” building completely finished – looks very smart – white & light blue – about 25ft high – 2 massive quartz-halogen spots (1,000watts) on front wall.

Tue 16<sup>th</sup> Sept: 1630 – RSA drops anchor in Transvaal Cove! Off-loading starts on Wed 17<sup>th</sup> – 1630:

RSA weighs anchor and sails off to sunny RSA again. Peace returns to base with all PWD chaps gone.

Fri 26<sup>th</sup> Sept: first elephant seal pup born on Boulders Beach; wind speeds of 65-68 knots (72mph) registered today: the roof of the vibracrete store is loose – hopping up and down; hope aerials hold out as well; whole base building shaking quite hard now.

Tues 30<sup>th</sup> Sept: Pottie & Flywheel cut off their beards and moustaches and complete fooled Chris & Rudi. Rudi even showed them his lab – they (Pottie & Flywheel) had pretended to be French geologists who had come ashore at Marion from their yacht – what a laugh!!!

Tues 7<sup>th</sup> Oct: my birthday today – reached 25 – a ¼ of a century! Had a meat fondue for my birthday party – arranged by Fudge – very nice – got nicely pissed!

Mon 1<sup>st</sup> Dec: John M leaving us this month & 5 new scientists (Johan Watson, Kevin Hall, Eduard van Zinderen Bakker, Piet Koornhof, Harmen Lindeboom) arriving on the Marion Dufresne due at Marion on 16<sup>th</sup> (leaving Cape Town on 13<sup>th</sup>) - all change again! 1530: official team photo taken.

Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Dec: 85mph (74 knot/136kph) winds rocking the base!!!

Wed 17<sup>th</sup> Dec: French polar supply ship Marion Dufresne arrives at Marion. A truly beautiful and magnificent ship – black hull, white superstructure, 8-10,000 tonnes, 2 blood-red Alouette choppers – used 1 chopper for offloading freight and the 5 new scientists. John Mendelsohn left. Very impressive watching choppers offloading – efficient and speedy compared to RSA's antiquated method using rafts towed by the ship's launch. Marion Dufresne left again at 1600 (her captain and other crew also came ashore briefly to say hello.)

Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> Dec – Xmas Day: lovely Xmas dinner in evening – starters, soup, turkey, veggies – the whole trip – what a feast! Snowed all night – A White Christmas!!!

Wed 31<sup>st</sup> Dec/ Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> Jan: **Happy New Year** – a big party until 0200 – start of 1976.

**1976:**

Tues 27<sup>th</sup> Jan: informed that RSA will leave on 9<sup>th</sup> April for Marion to pick us up.

Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Mar: in 42 days time the RSA will be here to pick us up – hasn't time flown?

Week beg 15<sup>th</sup> Mar: started labelling koskassies, etc. for return voyage!

Wed 24<sup>th</sup> Mar: 1130 sked: telex from Gen Sec: 27 people coming down in April for take-over: 12 members of Marion33 team, 7 PWD and 8 observers – it will be like a madhouse here! And at 1730 – surprise! surprise! the French ship Marion Dufresne cruised past – did not stop – doing a survey – good to see her again anyway.

Thur 25<sup>th</sup> Mar: 1700: Marion Dufresne pitched up again – anchored offshore – too misty and windy for possible landing. 2000: Marion Dufresne still anchored offshore – hope something happens tomorrow – up all night in anticipation!

Fri 26<sup>th</sup> Mar: Marion Dufresne steaming about 3 miles offshore – weather very nice. Radio sked with ship – she will be landing people either today or tomorrow. 1400: 5 scientists & 2 ship's officers came ashore by launch; 1630: they returned to ship and at 1800 she sailed away. (Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Marion Dufresne seen again).

Wed 31<sup>st</sup> Mar: next Wed 7<sup>th</sup> April the RSA leaves Cape Town for Marion to pick us up! Will be sad to leave here – mixed feelings – happy to see SA and family and friends again – but sad to leave Marion – peaceful haven and beautiful unspoilt part of the world.

Wed 7<sup>th</sup> April: RSA left Cape Town at 1500 this afternoon for Marion to pick us up – very “*min dae*” now!

Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Apr: a big party and piss-up: our last razzle on Marion as Marion32!!!

Mon 12<sup>th</sup> Apr: 1330 RSA radio sked: pos 46°2'S & 36°3'E. 1930: the lights, the most welcome lights of RSA sighted approaching – she's here at last! **2015: RSA dropped anchor in Transvaal Cove!!!** A beautiful moonlight night – can't believe today exactly one year ago we arrived here – how time has flow – it's unbelievable – shot off stacks of flares in celebration – RSA sounded her horn. 2030: radio sked with Captain Funk – offloading should only take 2 days (yippee!!) – morale is at it's peak and tension and excitement running high!

Tue 13<sup>th</sup> Apr: 1000: RSA started discharging passengers and freight: new Marion team (Marion33), PWD chaps and observers came ashore – quite a crowd in base now – 45 in all! No fun at all with so many people about. Off-loading all day. Received mail and parcels from SA.

**Wed 14<sup>th</sup> Apr:** 0900 – started off-loading but then wind and swell came up, so called it a day. A day wasted actually – pity. In pm taught my relief, Chris Britton, the procedures viz radioshack telex and radio operations.!

**Thur 15<sup>th</sup> Apr:** off-loading all day. **Fri 16<sup>th</sup> April (Good Friday):** off-loading last raft of *koskassies* and then just diesel drums and still more diesel drums – there are 660 altogether! Finished for day at 1400. RSA taking 8 blokes to Prince Edward Island this afternoon. At 1500 RSA launch and raft took Tony Williams and his hut to Archway.

**Mon 19<sup>th</sup> Apr (Easter Monday):** 1700 – RSA dropped off blokes on Prince Edward Island; she is now going on survey until 29<sup>th</sup> April.

**Sat 24<sup>th</sup> Apr:** 0703: radio sked with RSA - yesterday the RSA's galley-funnel blown over by high winds – RSA riding against wind for the past 1½ days. Temperature at base & 0800 is 4°C with snow around the base – lots on mountains. 1930: RSA radio sked – she is riding out a hurricane (65-68 knot winds!) with waves crashing over the complete ship from the bows – over bridge and helideck before washing off over the stern! One life-raft from bridge-deck washed overboard – uppermost signal lamp beneath radar scanner is broken – galley smokestack broken – phew!!! Whatta storm! **2030:** Marion32 (us) officially handed over base and island to new team Marion33 – it is quite sad. Old team all got nicely pissed for the rest of the evening and to bed by 0200!

**Thurs 29<sup>th</sup> Apr:** RSA heading for Prince Edward Island to pick up biological team. 1400: RSA anchored in Transvaal Cove again. No off-loading today after all.

**Fri 30<sup>th</sup> Apr:** 0730: first raft of diesel drums arrives – offloading diesel all morning and all afternoon – almost finished now. Captain Funk also went to catch 38 King penguins and 1 Alfred (elephant seal) at Ship's Cove in pm for some zoo or other in SA.

**Sat 1<sup>st</sup> May:** off-loading diesel day long – 2<sup>nd</sup> good day in a row weatherwise. New team (Marion33) made a really good farewell dinner for us. Partying all night! To bed at 0100 – exhausted!

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May:** 0700-1300: offloading diesel - lunch at 1200 – 1330: starting loading empty diesel drums, PWD building materials and our own personal things – racing against time all pm and eventually at 1645 (virtually dark now) we all embarked on the good old RSA. I am in a cabin with Rudi, Piet S & Johan. Ship is full! Dinner at 1800 and at **1900 we lifted anchor and left Marion** – I stayed on bridge until 2115 – then to bed.

**Mon 3<sup>rd</sup> May:** on bridge all morning till 1130. RSA pitching and rolling like a drunken sailor – only making 4 knots – on bridge all pm as well. RSA rolling to 40° - average of 30° to 35° - shipping lots of water, bows dipping into deep troughs, green seas covering entire bows – waves crashing against windows on bridge – took some really hairy slides. These are the Roaring Forties after all!

**Tue 4<sup>th</sup> May:** RSA still rolling and corkscrewing madly although the seas are a little bit calmer today.

**Fri 7<sup>th</sup> May:** noon pos: 37° 27'S & 27° 34'E – total distance covered so far 849 nautical miles - ave. speed of 8.7 knots – distance to go is 520 nautical miles. ETA Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> at 2145 SAST. Spent pm sun-tanning on top of hold covers and listening to Radio 5. The only “highlights” on the ship are meal-times!

**Sat 8<sup>th</sup> May:** Noon pos: 36° 16'S & 23° 06'E – total distance covered so far 1076 nautical miles, ave speed of 9.46 knots, distance to go 294 nautical miles. ETA tomorrow doing 9 knots at 2036 SAST – at 10 knots 1725 SAST. We're now “*kapping it flow*” at 11 knots. Hope to dock at about 1700 tomorrow.

**Sun 9<sup>th</sup> May:** brekker at 0730. We are now only 16 miles from the coast; @ 0800 – passing Hermanus. At 0900 a massive tanker passed us on the starboard bow – can now see land fairly clearly – should dock at about 1600-1700 approx. 1130 – last lunch on board good old RSA. **Then on deck again and at 1430 we entered Cape Town Harbour and at 1500 docked at Duncan Dock.** Helluva anti-climax being in South Africa again. 1515-1600 – taken up by passport control, immigration and customs. 1600 – Mom, Monika & Uncle Ed arrived to fetch me – very happy to see Mom, etc. again. Back Home!!!

## END OF DIARY ENTRIES.

### CLIMATE FIGURES – all from Metkassies on Marion

Month	Ave. Temp °C	Rel. Humidity %	Sunshine - hrs.	Rainfall - mm
APRIL 75	5.6	86	69.0	259.7
MAY	4.2	89	79.7	189.0
JUNE	4.6	??	51.5	197.2
JULY	3.6	??	75.0	263.6
AUG	3.4	83	79.4	242.1
SEPT	3.6	83	34.6	190.0
OCT	5.2	84	133.2	204.8
NOV	6.0	85	138.0	243.2
DEC	6.2	85	120.4	184.0
JAN 76	7.7	84	157.8	235.1
FEB	8.6	87	132.3	209.7
MARCH	7.4	86	89.8	263.5
APRIL	missed	missed	missed	missed

**6<sup>th</sup> December 2011**