



Gough Bunting

June 2009



Welcome to our monthly **Newsletter...**

This is a **journey..... Enjoy** the read....



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Midwinter Celebrations

Hello and welcome to all our family and friends. Give me the honor to share a bit about our mid winter festivities celebrated on the night of the 20th June 09. True Island tradition this was one of the highlights of the year. We planned a lot, and it was with great excitement and anticipation similar to the experience of a child looking forward to the coming holidays.

We planned a lot of outdoor activities like the traditional boot through and a fishing competition. However, the heavens opened and we had showers and wet slippery lava rocks which made fishing just too risky, we had to postpone the outdoor sport. That gave me the time needed to prepare the roast in the kitchen. Dries and Chantal was preparing the most delicious seafood starters, fresh baked bread and a lot other delicacies. They surely know what they do in the kitchen...and later that night Dries and Chantal were delighted when I gave them my blessings for their planned marriage.

The dress up theme was to give freedom to your mind and come and surprise. However, Paul got it all wrong and thought it was freedom of your fantasies...I love your courage mate, healthy spirit! Tumi decided to come as a doctor...eish, it was fine till he started listening to our abdominal sounds with the stethoscope, say no more! Problem though, I came dressed as a patient but luckily he didn't schedule me for another examination that night. Dries and Chantal came as Mister and missus Smith I think, and Dries soon found out that his 'bling' suit was not waterproof! Rupert came as some kind of professor in deer dung biology, or was that neuro science...what's the resemblance if any? Vincent came as Big Chief 'Under the Moon', anybody got an idea what he meant by that? Must say, he impressed us with the rain dance, which worked! Loved the traditional outfit, feathers in the headband, leopard skin or wait, please use your imagination. Then there was the Columbian drug lord, scarred and heavily tattooed, looked like someone slapped him with a soaked newsletter, managed to get his 'code name', 'Henk Banister', or was that 'Hankey Louw'?

What would I have changed if we got to do it all over? Nothing...except maybe 'Big Chief under the moon's rain dance....



Sunrise: 8am, Midwinter 21 June 2009

So we had a great night, food good enough for royalties, good wine and candle light. It was the perfect venue, thank you to my team which is known in the outside world as the winning team. What a memorable experience!

PS: 'No we've been offered help and have doctor Phill's number; 'we don't need help'!!



Namibia is what I miss...



From a conservationist viewpoint, I can honestly say that I love hunting. That is because not that I like to kill animals, but actually to be in the bush. I think it came with growing up on a farm. From I can remember I was running around on the farm, shooting bird with my caterpillar. That way maybe I became a Nature conservationist.

That also why I am on Gough Island now, is because I like working in the field and also to experience new areas and learn more about nature in other areas of the world. But now I have to count my words, and say-I didn't kill anything on Gough yet, now that I layout my hunting side and just to be certain I still have my job.

The last couple of months are the most difficult, because we've been working for 10 month already and still have to keep up with the work as in the beginning.



Now to come back to the evil side as some people will think, actually hunting is good for nature if you do it in the right way. That's why hunting is so big in Africa, because you can't have too many animals in an area, because otherwise they will overpopulate the area and there will be no food later on for all the animals. The whole idea of hunting is to be out of the chaos, like the cities. That's way so many people also like camping, fishing and just being in nature where you can feel the calmness.

I miss Namibia very much, also because of my Parents still living there. Me and my friend "Sepie" always go out on fishing or hunting trips in our off time. Like certain hobbies for other people this is our hobbies.

Cant wait to get back with my friend, family and going out hunting again.

by Paul Visser...





by Paul Visser...



Another Birthday party...

I entered the bar area and found my partner in crime, Paul, busy with the last bit of decorations for the event to come later that night. Dressed smartly, the rest of the Brady gang joined us in the bar area, each of them placing a wrapped item on the little coffee table. The music picked up a notch and so did the voices. The party was officially on its way to yet another classic birthday party.

It was decided that the team photo be done early in the night as that proves sometimes to be one of the most difficult tasks among team members. And so I was made to sit in the middle between Dries and Tumi; Vince was giving orders and being difficult as always and Tom had a counter comment for everything Vince was saying. Chantal and Paul was setting up their cameras and well Rupert, I think he struggled to find the right buttons. But eventually we all got on the couch with the team logo in the back and the photo was taken. All in all the session took us at least 10 to 15 minutes...



After that it was back to the music and drinks and more fellowship around the bar, Photos were the focus of events as Chantal was asked to take facebook profile photos of some of the guys. It was unwrapping time and I placed myself behind that coffee table where I uncovered the home made caramel and chocolate covered coconut cake. The art on the cake could have fooled anyone of it being home made, definitely the most beautiful cake I've ever had. The candles were lit and it was time for that song, the happy birthday song... and this time I was not in the lead with the vocals. I gathered my breath and out it came and all that was left is the little lines of smoke climbing up



into the air, looking almost like little chimneys and the cake a huge factory. I had my one slice of cake to down and to be honest, I couldn't down the whole slice as I find myself with a heavy hand usually when it comes to dividing and a heavy foot when it comes to driving. Present time was next, and as I unwrapped the presents I could feel the uncontrollable smile splitting my face apart. The crafted Eno's bottle with an islander on it, the springbok cap, the bottle of good red wine, the Metallica album and drawing of their basist, and the "blik kitaar" decorated with memories of Paul and my adventures through out the years. It was a fantastic moment.



After the formalities it was back to the party. Some singing was also involved. I was on the guitar as always, Paul on the lead vocals and Tumi on backing vocals. The party continued late into the night until it was only Dries, myself and Tom in the bar. Dies and I got to be kids again, well more Dries than me, and Tom got to be trigger happy with his "Photomachine".

All together it was a fantastic day, one I will treasure for the rest of my life. As an old Islander told me, "an Island birthday is a privilege and special at that too". I must agree, It was indeed very special and I would like to thank everyone for contributing to it.



by Henk Louw...



Island Irony...

Five days solo mountaineering up north America's 3rd highest mountain, was perhaps not my most adventurous activity, but the peace and tranquillity beyond the reach of the sounds and visions of technology was the first true freedom I experienced in my life. Perhaps my most adventurous activity was person paragliding the Annapurna sanctuary at the foot of the 1st conquered 8000m peak in the valley seen for the first time in 1950, and seen for the first time from the air 50 years later! There were both memorable moments where the silence of nature was more powerful than the silence you get breath held diving 20m below where the sound of your heart beat becomes overpowering, more powerful than all the noise of the modern world. Although such achievements would not have been possible decades ago without modern technology! Sleeping in a bivi bag at below -25 and above 5000m and having to defrost your sleeping bag in the morning - after a good nights sleep - is testament to technological progress. It was these skills that got me the nick name "Captain Adventure" on an expedition. It was these achievement that I gave as skills to get the opportunity to come to Gough Island. So when the opportunity arose to come to Gough Island, and I was the "ideal candidate" I grabbed it.

A chance to experience the power and isolation of life, and use technology to try and share the experience and beauty of the location with the world. Realising that my positions required 2/3 of my time on the job, with no travel time to and from the office, that left me 1/3 of a year to experience and capture the beauty of the place to share with others. I was going to live with the most elegant and majestic birds of the air- albatrosses - but capture their struggle on the ground their life! I invested tens of thousands of Rands in professional video cameras and equipment, and back up equipment, equipment to survive the environment, since if one piece of the puzzle fails there is a long wait before supplies will arrive. But progress is the reduction of risk, and in an isolated environment like Gough island, when something goes wrong the consequences are exaggerated. And with that soon after my arrival safety policies were implemented to minimize that risk. So what do you do surrounded by nature, and confined to moments of when the planets and shifts align that permit you to cross the Rubicon, so much time... so little to do?... what do you do?

Well the base is equipped with all the modern comforts of the modern world that you never need leave. A fully stocked bar (well at least personally stocked) that allows you drop in after work, and never have to worry about bumping into police office on the way home! A well equipped movie centre with a projector for the big screen effect, where car crashes and gun shots ring out daily. and of course you regular computer games to blowing things up. All in a all a cacophony of weapons, machines and technology at your finger tips! This year we have the additional advantage of broadband Internet bringing the wider world to your finger tips. All in all like life back home with out the traffic and the chaos, the challenges of living. Ironically I have spent more time in a bar and in front of the TV than I have ever back in civilization, yet also a lot of time reading. But since I have been on the island I have discovered TV and how time can dissipate with TV series that I had only heard about back home.



Lawnmower...



Although I must admit I have tried to find other things to occupy my time between the free time. Since I am not certified to do other jobs on the island, I spend a lot of time reading- and thank goodness for the Internet! Since it is the International Year of Astronomy I coordinated a web page to follow the eclipse with nations around the Indian ocean. I also managed to get involved with an open-architecture initiative, which follows same principal as open source software, promoting the sharing of ideas, the two projects whose design and conceptualisations are for Open Sailing, and OS-Polar - the development of a mobile research bases operating in the Arctic circle. Although building a lawn mower with Paul run by mice was not as efficient as we where hoping. Also built a strobe system to catch Dirkie (recently discovered resident of the inland) getting up to his mischief, which I hope to use for some night time wildlife photography back home.

But as the year progresses, I miss the outdoors more and more - I am looking forward to getting back to civilization so I go communing with the birds in the air, night hikes to perfect star gazing spots, and going for a roll in a wave!

by Rupert Spann...



Dirkie in the Dark...



Medical invoice...

A healthy person is blessed. I once listened to a guy who warned that we lose our health while working hard and chasing wealth, and then spent our money when we get older to try and regain our health. Isn't it shocking to witness the extreme high costs of health care nowadays? What still puzzle my mind are the different private medical scheme options. How do you come to the understanding that 100% hospital cover is not particularly a good plan? I have recently studied a document explaining this to some extent. Within my budget I decided to opt for the 200% plan, only to find that you get 300% options! Some specialists are just not contracted within a medical scheme, asks higher tariffs and then you're 100% benefit will fall short. Accidents can happen so quickly, your health can be lost within split seconds. Still, when I fill a glass of water 100% that means its level with the brim, can't add another 1%..... What was that wise words about 'accepting the things we cannot change'?

Lets focus on the Island's medical support for the over wintering team. Here on Gough we have a variety of medicine and other emergency equipment. Thanks to South African defense force medical wing and support staff, coming a long way with Antarctica and Islands they have equipped the clinic for any possible given medical condition and/or emergency situation. In the Pharmacy we have a variety of broad spectrum antibiotics, tablet form as well as intra venous therapy. A common problem is eye irritation and allergies, due to cold winds and pollen etc. All the drops and creams one may need, and if you as the medic run out of ideas there is always the SADF support staff, a board of doctors, a dentist and various specialists just a telephone call or e-mail away. Quite impressive is the medical hardware. We have an ECG, suction apparatus, Dental X-ray machine, traction splints, medical oxygen and ventilator and all necessary suturing and theatre instruments. I am especially proud of the Medical jump bag which I urgently motivated and requested during the take over period September 2008. What a heart warming experience when DEAT acknowledged the urgent order and sent it down on the first visiting ship; the MV Edinburgh.



*Medical "Jump Bag"
and adequately stocked
clinic...*



Gough Medical Clinic

People always ask what the medic is capable of, and where are the limitations. Well, although we can't do an appendectomy we have all the specialized antibiotics to deal with these extreme conditions, and will be able to give comfortable support until the ship which is prearranged to do the CASEVAC reaches us. The same principal for the unlikely event of severe injuries like open fractures. Advantage is the extensive medical examinations expedition members undergo prior to appointment. That includes chest X-Rays, stress ECG, blood pressure and



Gough Dental Clinic

full body check up, including dental examination and dental forensics. So what can we do? Will it be an acceptable answer if I say a little bit enough to maintain good health? If a medic had a good year patient wise on the Island, he or she would have needed to do some suturing, treated a few allergies, treated muscle sprain and related injuries, a few colds and fungal infections during the take over period and handed out some supplements. Sounds like a lazy lifestyle, and it is, but you got to keep updated; finger on the pulse sense the ever advancing medical science.

For those who asked, yes it is a stressful position but within reasonable boundaries. This is due to the fact that you are friends with every team member on the island, and anything can happen any time, you got to stay sober enough to act, you need to focus and be disciplined. It's like treating a family member.

The older generations believed that there is not such a thing as stress, they believed that if you keep yourself busy, stress would not get hold of you...although not always the norm there are some wisdom in the statement!

by Tom Mc Sherry...



Seven-gilled Shark

One of the sharks found around Gough Island is the Seven – gilled shark better known to the people at Tristan da Cunha as the Roc shark.

It is also found from Southern Brazil to Northern Argentina and from Namibia to South Africa. In the Pacific Ocean it occurs from Southern Japan south to New Zealand including Australia and Canada south to Chile.

It can grow up to 3 meters in length and has seven gills a large mouth with a broad snout. Its upper body is dark grey with spots and a white lower body

Seven – gilled sharks feeds on almost anything like other sharks, rays, dolphins and seals. As for bony fish they eat salmon, herrings and anchovies. It also feeds on dead seals and whales. They often hunt in packs to capture large prey such as marine mammals and other sharks.

The females have eggs hatch and develop inside their body for twelve months . The young measures from about 16 to 18 inches in length.

References :

The natural history of Tristan da Cunha.
by Paul Tyler and Alison Rothwell.



Seven-gilled shark

(Article and Illustration by Vincent van Gough (Rademeyer))



Rockhopper Penguin (Surf's Up!)



Facts:

Size Length: 52 cm
Weight: 3 kg

Status:

Classified as Endangered (EN) on the IUCN Red List .

Description:

Previously classed as a single species, the rockhopper penguin has now been split into a northern (*Eudyptes moseleyi*) and southern species (*Eudyptes chrysocome*). Although both species are similar in appearance, the distinctive yellowish plumes extending from the yellow line above the eye are significantly longer and denser in the northern rockhopper penguin. The body is small but robust, with slate-grey upperparts and white underparts, the bill is short and reddish-brown and the eyes are red. Juveniles can be identified by the lack of adult yellow markings.

Range:

The northern rockhopper penguin breeds on a number of Southern Ocean islands, with the largest populations found on the islands of Tristan da Cunha and Gough, and additional, smaller populations on the islands of Amsterdam and St Paul.

Habitat:

Nesting occurs on cliffs and rocky gullies, and chosen sites are usually situated near to freshwater, either natural springs or puddles.

Biology:

A gregarious species, the northern rockhopper penguin breeds in large colonies that may comprise over a hundred thousand nests. Breeding pairs are monogamous, and usually return to the same nest every year. Egg-laying commences around August, with the female usually producing a clutch of two eggs of unequal size. Usually only the chick from the larger egg survives to maturity. Incubation takes around 33 days, with both parent birds taking it in turns to sit on the eggs for extended periods of a time, whilst the other





forages for food. Incubation is aided by a bare patch of skin on the lower abdomen (known as a 'brood pouch') that allows greater heat transfer to the egg. Once hatched, the male will remain to brood the chick for the first 25 days, whilst the female regularly brings food back to the nest. After this time, the chick is able to leave the nest, and will congregate with other chicks in small groups known as 'crèches' whilst the parent birds forage.

In order to maintain its waterproof coat, the northern rockhopper penguin engages in frequent grooming, which helps to flatten the feathers and to spread a waxy substance that is secreted just below the tail. Grooming is also an important social bond between pairs. After breeding the northern rockhopper penguin forages extensively in order to build up fat reserves in preparation for its annual moult. It takes around 25 days for the penguin's coat to be fully replaced, at which point it leaves the land and spends the winter months foraging at sea, before returning to shore to breed in the following spring. The diet of the northern rockhopper penguin is composed of a variety of oceanic species, such as crustaceans, squid, octopus and fish. Groups may often feed together and dives may be to depths of up to 100 metres.



Juvenile Rocky (without the hairdo...)

We love taking showers!



Threats:

A recent study of the northern rockhopper penguin population (published in 2009), has shown that well over one million birds have been lost from the breeding colonies on the islands of Tristan da Cunha and Gough. While this equates to declines of over 90 percent on both islands, on Gough this loss has occurred in just 45 years, whereas on the main island of Tristan, it has taken almost three times longer. The reasons for the swift decline on Gough are currently unknown, but the penguin may be suffering increased levels of predation, as well as competition for food, from the rapidly rising population of Subantarctic Fur Seals *Arctocephalus tropicalis*. Other factors may include increasing disturbance and pollution, introduced predators, reduced food supplies due to overfishing, and climate change.

Conservation:

While the northern rockhopper penguin population is being regularly monitored, in order to safeguard against further declines, it is imperative that the causes of the population crash be determined. This should be targeted at all possible factors, including studies of interactions with commercial fisheries, the impact of the introduced predatory house mouse on chick survival on Gough Island, and the effects of fur seal predation and competition. Without the implementation of appropriate conservation measures, this charismatic species will continue to nose dive towards extinction.

by Chantal Steyn

Ref: www.arkive.org

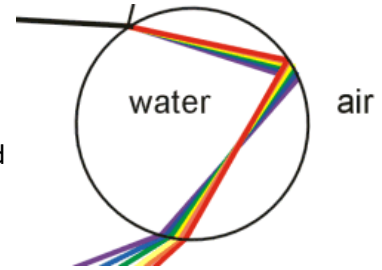


Well fed adult Rocky (on a rock...)



Rainbow 101

Ever wondered how a rainbow is formed? Sunlight hits the surface of a water drop at an angle. The shorter blue wavelengths get bent more than the longer red wavelengths which cause the colours of white light to fan out. When this colour fan hits the back inside surface of the drop it reflects and disperses some more once it leaves the drop again. So it has been dispersed twice separating the colours nicely but also upside down from that which you would see if light is dispersed through a prism, therefore, with the blue range on top and reds at the bottom.



The angle between the incident and exiting rays will usually be 42° however sometimes you will see another rainbow outside the primary one, this is a $50-53^\circ$ rainbow caused by a double reflection inside the raindrop. The colours of the two rainbows are reversed.

At Gough Island we have all the ingredients necessary for rainbow production, lots of rain with sunlight through gaps in the clouds, therefore we see a lot of rainbows since we also spend a lot of time staring blankly into the wild blue yonder dreaming of tuna-fish salad and cold Windhoek lagers.





A couple of weeks ago however we saw what for me was definitely the most beautiful rainbow I've ever seen with all the colours crisp and extremely vivid. Added to that was the great luck of standing at Crane Point, looking down into the rain the rainbow was at least 300° arc, almost a full circle. The tuna-fish salad and frosty Windhoek in the centre of this optical marvel made me all misty eyed and I fully expected angels to start singing.

As beautiful and strange was the midnight rainbow I saw a couple of months ago while staring at a giant hamburger on Richmond Hill. The moon lightly skipping of the tan sesame seed bun, glistening salad and silver moonshine dripping of the 100% pure beef patty on thick sliced tomato framed in a nocturnal lightshow. That time I drooled and slobbered my way inside to call the camera crew who proceeded to shoot the bow, pictured below.



Moonbow - Rainbow, with the moon as the light source instead of the sun.

All this made me realize, if you want to see strange sights you need to travel to far-off strange places... or Port Edward. [Dries]



Photo Competition...

May photo of the month:



We had some wild seas with impressive waves a while ago. This picture was taken when it calmed down a bit. The clouds broke just a little to let the sunset colour through, illuminating the colours of the wave... *Chantal Steyn.*

Please vote for your favourite photo:

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To see more, visit our websites: www.sanap.ac.za
www.gough.co.za



June photos:

1



2



3



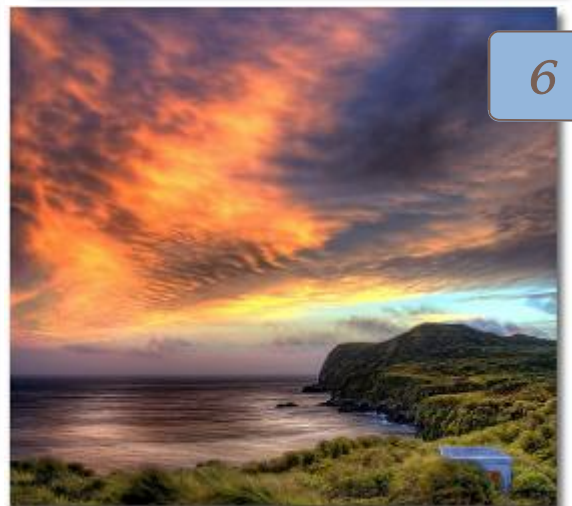
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5



6





Weather...

PRESSURE

Ave. Max Pressure	1010.7 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	1003.8 hPa
Ave. Pressure	1007.1 hPa
Max Pressure	1021.9 hPa
Min Pressure	985.0 hPa

TEMPERATURE

Ave. Max Temp	13.7 °C
Ave. Min Temp	10.0 °C
Ave. Temp	11.9 °C
Max Temp	16.8 °C
Min Temp	6.0 °C

HUMIDITY

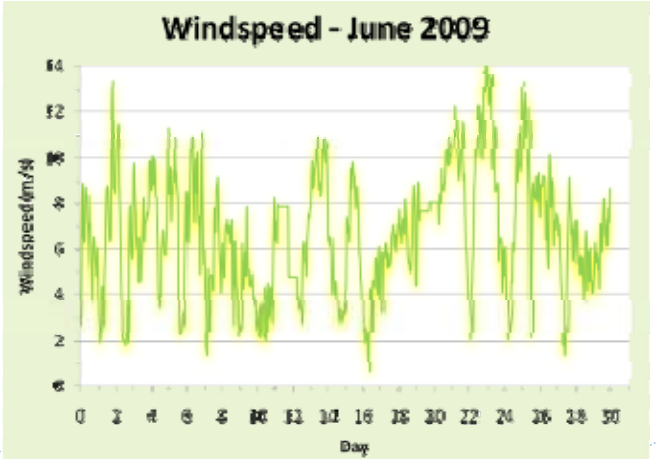
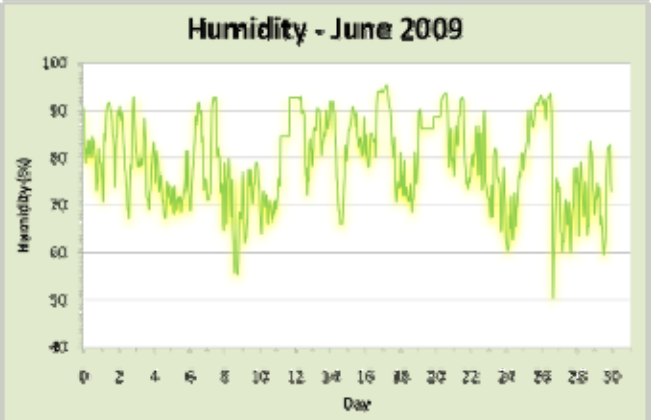
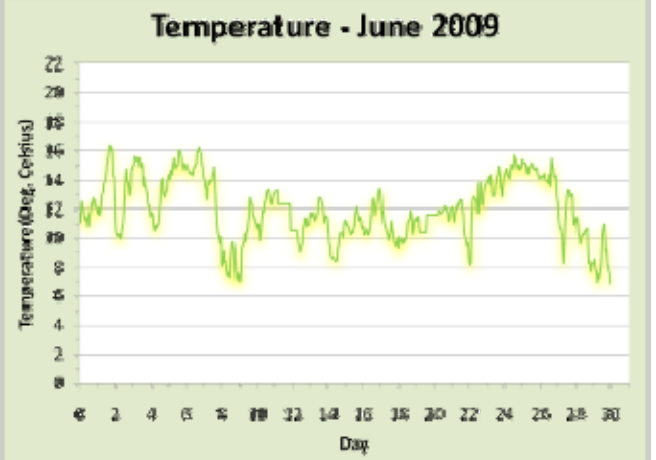
Ave Humidity	79 %
Max Humidity	89 %
Min Humidity	66 %

WIND

Max Wind Gust	30.7 m/s or 110.5 km/h
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RAINFALL

Total Rainfall	257.6 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	48.6 mm
Total days with rain	25 days
Total days >1mm	20 days
Total Sunshine	83.2 hours





Sponsors...

We just want to thank all our sponsors once again for giving us that little bit of home comforts on the island!!

If you or your company are interested in sponsoring future expeditions, doesn't matter how small or in which way, please contact us, it will be greatly appreciated...

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