

Gough Bunting

June 2007



June has been a really busy month for Gough Island, well at least by island standards. We celebrated Thulani's and Ross's birthday during the month. For mid-winter we had the traditional mid-winter games, with everyone showing off the various skills that they have acquired during the year. The various events consisted of gum boot throw, pool, darts, table tennis and table soccer. The competition was close. We won't mention the overall winner though, hmmm. Our mid-winter feast consisted of enough food for a small army, that army consisting of 8 hungry Gough Island personal. Roast lamb and pork, crayfish salad, roasted vegetables, apple pie, carrot cake and chocolate mousse.

Despite it being mid-winter we still ventured away from the base with a camping to trip to the site of the original Gough House in the Glen and a swim to arch way rock. Our two visiting biologists (Ross Wanless and Martin Slabber) where with us for the whole month, and they always seemed to be outside, either sticking their hands down holes, nuking Sagina or bringing back lots of mice to cut open. It seems that on Gough Island the work of a biologist is never finished.

Ed.



Mid winter on Gough Island



MISSING

Reward

A reward is offered for any information which might lead to the safe return of our beloved son.

Mouse Little *Have you seen this mouse?*

An interview with the distraught parents of another missing mouse.

Tell us a bit about your son?

Well he is a loving, friendly and a helpful being. Not lazy to pull his weight.

When last did you see your son?

It was yesterday morning, just before we went to work. He said he was going out to do some roaming.

Was there any friction that might have given rise to his disappearance?

We just moved from the rural areas, Goney Dale, and he wasn't very happy about the move. He had to adjust to the city life at Gough House Metropol. He really missed his friends and hanging out with the Goney chicks, but he knew that the move was for the best.

What gave rise to your move to the city?

With the start of winter food gets scarce in the rural areas and Gough House Metropol seemed the right move to secure our future.

Where you aware of high rate of missing mice at Gough House?

Yes, we want the best for our children and Goney Dale couldn't live up to our high expectations. Gough House Metropol has lots of jobs and food is plenty and the warmth of Gough House surely beats the cold in Goney Dale. The city had big promise for us, even with the high missing rate; we just wanted to make an honest living and provide for our children.

Have you been approached for any ransom?

No, no one has contacted us yet. We would just like to plea to anyone who has information about the whereabouts of our son to come forward. We miss him dearly and his safe return would mean everything to us.

Well folks another missing mouse. The police have been inundated with missing cases and all their resources are pulled to the unit for missing mice. All previous cases didn't deliver any positive results and it is doubtful that Mouse Little would be found. It is imperative for the colony to tread carefully; the spate of missing cases is increasing at an alarming rate.

Source: Mice Times

Verandering:

Change your dwelling-place often, for the sweetness of life consists in variety.
(Arabic proverb)

Een van die min dinge waarvan 'n mens kan seker wees in die lewe is dat dinge verander. Soos die meeste dinge in die lewe kan verandering 'n positiewe en/ of 'n negatiewe uitwerking hê. Verandering kan oor 'n tydperk plaasvind of feitlik onmiddelik.

Ek dink dat ek namens die meerderheid eilanders kan praat as ek sê dat die meeste veranderinge in ons lewens positief is. Ons is 'n handjievul wat die voorreg het om op een van die min oorblywende, ongerepte plekke in die natuur 'n kort tydperk van ons lewe te spandeer. Ons bly verniet, eet genoeg om effens swaarder huis toe te gaan, kleres word aan ons voorsien en dan word ons nog betaal ook hiervoor. Hoe hierdie veranderinge die mense wat by die huis agterbly kan ek maar net oor spekuleer.

Dit is nie net die dinge om ons wat verander nie maar die wie en wat ons is verander ook. Fisies toon die meeste van ons groei, maar ek dink die grootste groei vind van binne plaas. As 'n ou eilander is dit vir my baie interessant om te sien hoe persone verander op die eiland. Meninglose, skaam spanmaats ontwikkel tot selfversekerde individu wat onderhoudend oor basies enige onderwerp kan gesels en nie bang is om 'n standpunt in te neem en daarby te hou nie.

Baie persone is bang vir verandering. Om verandering te ervaar moet ek my beskermde kokon verlaat en die vreemde aandurf. Hoe anders gaan jou horisonne verbreed as jy nie jou kokon verlaat en jou vlerke spreid nie. Almal kan nie gelukkig wees in hulle kokonne nie maar is net te bang om daai eerste stappie te vat. Sommiges se vlerke is permanent gesprei, soos 'n albatros. Dit is lekker en goed om die winde van verandering onder jou vlerke te voel. Neem daai eerste tree en probeer.

Ons uurglas is besig om teen 'n vinnige tempo leeg te loop. Die jaarlikse beplanning is gedoen en ingestuur. Die minder as twee maande wat ons alleen op die eiland het sal hopeloos te vinnig verbygaan, soos gewoonlik.



A view of Gough Base during winter



A view of Gough Base during summer

Die seisoene hier op die eiland glo nie in lang veranderinge nie. Vandag staan jy op en alles om jou is alle skakerings van groen. Môre staan jy op en alles is bruin en kom dood voor. Van die duisende voëls wat op neste gesit het is daar ook geen spoor nie. Die winde is kouer en waai heelwat harder as 'n paar weke terug.

*Old wood is best to burn, old horse to ride,
old books to read, and old wine to drink.*
(Alfonso I)

Petrus

The Month of June and its activities...

Thulani`s birthday

On the 09th of June, we celebrated our dieso`s birthday. As a norm here at Gough, we always come up with ideas on what to organize for whom, with that person`s absence (we do not involve the birthday kid when we organize the party). For Thulani, we organized him a “Top dawg” party, where everyone was supposed to dress as a top dawg or a respectable person. We had a nice meal with all those “expensive cheese”, thanx to our two visitors (Ross and Martin) for bringing them. After that, as usual, we partied “tot die hoender kraai....” I hope Thuls enjoyed it as much as we did..... Happy birthday Thuls.....



Fisharo dressed up and looking very respectable.

Camping at the Glen

With Ross, Martin and Petrus who have been here before (as members of G49), they hooked up again to camp at the Glen. Knowing how Brian is, I knew that he will go too (he is the man who can do anything to go and camp anywhere). There they were, the four of them (I would have join them, but our work schedule didn`t allow me). Hopefully, they enjoyed every moment there.....I will go next time.

Mid-winter

It is always good to have something to celebrate in a month. If you have more than one reason to celebrate, it is a bonus. The 21st of June is widely celebrated as mid-winter day. We received lots of invitations from different expedition bases around the Antarctic and sub-



Dineo and Thulani playing table soccer (fussball) against each other during the mid-winter games.

Antarctic. In our own base, we had our usual sports competitions. I lined up for all the sporting codes (pool, table soccer, gumboot throw, table tennis and dancing). I did not win anything, but at least I came second on dancing, one point behind Dineo. She beat me because she did the “tsipa tsipa” dance which I can`t. We enjoyed every second of it.

If you think we are not enjoying ourselves here, think again.....

*Tshifhiwa-wa-Vho-Nthaduleni uri
Masha...*

From the Diesel Mech

The picture to the right was taken during my birthday. Brian gave me a birthday present which has knots tied on. At the bottom of those knots, it's written "I don't have a warm feeling". I think Brian quoted my words whenever there is climbing involved, I always say to the Team, I don't have a warm feeling".



I'm scared of heights and Brian is always encouraging me to practice climbing or abseiling. I always say to him it's difficult to train old dog new tricks. I enjoyed my birthday big time on the Island. Month of June is gone now and we are looking forward to July and we are only left with two months now to be home. I miss chicken with bones.



We also had some snow on the island. Here is a picture of me early in the morning with some snow on Tafelkoppie.

*All From
Thuls*

TIME !

When I look back then as a young girl, I thought things just happened, just like that. I thought u just make a wish and the rest will follow, but as time passed by, I took 5 steps backwards, and I realized that I was wrong, so very wrong it hurts. Then more time passed by, the more we grow and understand better, and realizing that in life there are



Dineo sporting yet another hairstyle at mid-winter.

same things that are beyond our control. I learnt that if u wanna do something your heart desires, just do it, avoid postponing 'coz tomorrow might not come. Being on the Island u got enough time, time to think, time to grow, time to learn, and of course time to find the real u.

We had visitors and we were starting to cement the relationship with them, and the sad part of it is that, they will be leaving us soon. On the 9th of June we were celebrating the big T's birthday and it was wonderful, on the 14th Ross (visitor) was also a birthday boy, He celebrated his special day at The Glen. On the 21st we were celebrating mid winter, this month we had lots of fun. God is been very great to this team, No sickness nor fights, we have been happy from day one till this moment here. We thank u Lord!



The team poses for a photo at Thulani's Birthday

This might sounds weird but it's true, the more time fly by, the sadder I become and you know why.....! I guess u do, and if not, then u will soon find out. Cheers!

Dineo (daughter of Toinah and Jan)

Crossing the great divide

On the islands we love our stories of past teams, and the legends that seem to grow from them. There are many stories of incredible walks and feats. There are even more stories of the dangers of the island. If we believed all the stories we would never set foot out of the base. Where is the fun in that?

This particular story is about one of those rare feats on the island, the conquering of arch way rock. Not wanting to bore you with long stories of the rock structure of the Gough cliff, let me just say that the cliffs of Gough are unstable. The rock is rather brittle. There used to be a natural rock arch way from Crane Point to a rocky island 50 m from the main cliff face. Some time towards the late 80's (As all legends go, there are never exact dates), the arch way collapsed into the sea making an island within spitting distance of Crane Point. All the old concrete structures and equipment on the arch way rock was left stranded. Since then every year teams have gazed at arch way rock and thought of walking once again on it. The following two photos were taken in 1984 (left) and 2006 (right) respectively. You can see in the blue square of the photograph on the right that the arch way can no longer be seen.



Aerial photo of Gough Island Base taken in 1984



Satellite photo of Gough Island Base courtesy of Google Earth taken in 2006

As the legend goes someone in the early 2000's walked the mouse free land of arch way rock. We too wished to walk on that mouse free barren wasteland of concrete blocks, old wooden ladders and metal wires. On 11 June 2007, three intrepid adventurers set out for arch way rock. Their names were Martin "Vetseun" Slabber, Ross "Moorhen Max" Wanless and Brian "Brahm" Bowie. The following are excerpts from Brian's diary:

Ross knocked on my door in the early morning, "The weather is good, we are going to try for arch way rock". I opened my eyes slowly, "Cricky! What time is it", I thought. "I'll be

there now”, I groaned. Once I finally got all the ducks in a row in my brain, I threw on some clothes quickly and made my way to the kitchen. The familiar view of Ross, Petrus, and Martin having their morning coffee greeted me. I pulled up a stool and poured myself some coffee.

“How’s the swell look?”

“Not bad” answered Martin while scoffing away one of Dineo’s delicious home made scones.

After a rushed breakfast, we set out to get all our waterproof gear and waterproof bags together. We were also taking climbing equipment with, since once we had swum across to arch way rock we would have to climb it to get to the top. We also needed to keep all our gear dry since after swimming in the freezing waters of Atlantic would need a change of clothes. Once at crane point, Ross put on his dry suit and Martin and I donned our wet suits. I was wearing Petrus’s camo wetsuit, hoping that the sharks would not see me. Thulani was operating the crane and Petrus was taking photos from Crane point. Thulani lifted the PC (personal carrier) with the crane and started to rotate us over the cliff edge. Suddenly the ground below us disappeared and we were hanging over the sea below. We all gave a wave to Petrus as Thulani started to lower the PC closer to the sea. Since Thulani could not see the PC once it disappeared behind the cliff edge, I was giving Thulani instructions via a VHF hand radio (In a waterproof bag ofcourse). The cliff started to rise above us.

“Lower Thulani”

“Keep going, lower, lower”

“Lower, lower, Thulani”

“Ok, slowly Thulani, slowly down”

“Slowly down”

“Stop, hold it there”

There we were hanging just meters above the swell of the sea below us.

We quickly set about putting on our snorkels, goggles, attaching our water proof bags to our ankles and finally putting on our flippers.

“Ready?”

“Ready!”

The shock of the cold water as I hit the water was instant. “Woow”. I saw Martin and Ross swimming towards the left of arch way rock, so I followed them. We had to swim around to the back of arch-way rock since that was only section that we could get out of the water onto. Even though sea was calm there was still a slight swell that we had to negotiate. Ross was right next to me and Martin was rounding arch way rock. Once Martin was around the back he stuck his hand out onto the rock to steady himself. I pulled up next to him. Martin was the first one up, followed by me and Ross.

The first thing was to get all our waterproof bags high enough on the rock out of the swell. We then changed into our dry clothes.

“That was a tiring swim”

“The bag on my ankle was slowing me down”

As soon as we had a settled base camp, we did what all climbers do before they climb a section of rock. We looked. We analyzed all the cracks in the rock, looking for the safest and the easiest route to climb. There was still an old rope running from the top stuck in a crack. We were not able to work it free, but even if we had we did not know how secure it was since it had been exposed to the harsh Gough weather for many years.

“I think we should climb to the right of the crack, it’s a bit more exposed but less of an over hang.”

Martin quickly got going at setting up a first anchor point on a piece of rock sticking out near the bottom of the climb, as I put on my climbing harness. Martin was going to “trad” climb up while I belayed him. Ross continued to take photos while this was all happening. Martin and I have been climbing together before, which I feel gave both of us confidence in the climb. Once everything was setup, and we had checked each other’s gear.

“Climb when ready”

“Climbing”

“Climb on”

Martin climbed up to the first anchor and clipped in. “Off you go”. I really feel that climbing is often a head game. The section of rock that Martin had to climb was well within his skill level, but due to that fact that he was traditional climbing (inserting his own protection in the rock) on the loose Gough island rock, it was slightly exposed and we were metres above the sea swell made us more cautious. Martin made his way slowly up the rock face inserting the relevant nut in the rock for protection, as I occasionally gave advice while belaying him. Eventually I saw him disappear past the concrete block at the top and shout “Off belay”. I knew he had made it safely to the top of arch way rock. Ross and I looked at each other excitedly looking forward to also getting on top.

Martin anchored the rope at the top and both myself and Ross jumared up to the top. It was great to get passed the concrete block at the top and stare at crane point from arch way rock. So many times in the past I had stared at arch way rock from crane point. It was a great feeling to see the cliff rising above me, with Petrus



Martin climbing up arch way rock.

clicking away on his camera from above.

We spent the next hour, exploring the very small area on top of arch way rock. It was really fascinating to see all the various bits of gear that was still lying around the top. On the concrete slab on top we found a number of names written in the concrete dating back to 1972. We also used the opportunity to look for any *Sagina* (An alien plant species on Gough). Besides our curiosity of making our way onto arch way rock, we did also have the legitimate reason of making sure that it was free of *Sagina*.

By this time we where all feeling a bit peckish. Someone had the foresight to bring some jelly babies. As we ate them we enjoyed the view, of the Atlantic Ocean lying wide open to the south, with the cliffs of Gough Island surrounding us. We collected some loose odds and ends that we could take back (including the old wooden ladder). One by one we disappeared behind arch way rock again as we abseiled down. Putting on our wet wetsuits on again was unpleasant. Ross fortunately did not have this problem with his dry suit. Once again it was back into the cold waters for our swim back to the PC. Getting into the PC with the swell was interesting. Once we were all in, I gave Petrus a shout on the radio to start lifting us. As we started to rise slowly up the cliff, the three of us were grinning ear to ear. That was legendary!

Brian



Brian, Martin and Ross triumphantly on top of arch way rock.

Sooty Albatross - Gough Island
Author and photographs by Tui De Roy

The following is an excerpt from the book *Albatross - Their world, their ways* by Tui De Roy, Mark Jones & Julian Fitter. It is due to be released in September 2008.

Tui visited Gough Island with co-author Julian Fitter during November 2006. Tui is a wildlife photographer and author based in New Zealand specialising in natural history subjects that take her to many of the world's most pristine and remote locations.

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Before I came to Gough Island in the south Atlantic never had I met an albatross *and* its island simultaneously. Landing here required clambering from a small fishing tender into a dangling rope basket and being craned up the 30 m (100 ft) cliff by the small team manning the South African meteorological station, the only human presence on the island. Part way up the cliff, to my utter surprise, I suddenly came eye to eye with a sooty albatross serenely incubating its egg on a peaty ledge. I barely recovered from my amazement when I met the six smiling faces on the concrete pad above. The beauty of the bird - velvet brown plumage, lace-thin white eye crescents and mustard pencil-line along the sides of its ebony bill - went on dancing in my eyes.



The sooty has a more northerly, as well as decidedly more restricted range than its light-mantled cousin, and Gough is one of its few strongholds. It also remains one of the least understood albatross. Like its cousin, it does not usually breed in consecutive years even though raising its single chick takes only seven months. Very little is known about what it feeds on and especially how and where it forages. It is almost never seen approaching fishing vessels and yet most (or possibly all) of its colonies are in serious decline for unknown

reasons. Even its population numbers have eluded tally because of the extremely difficult terrain it chooses to nest in, where it blends perfectly with its surroundings. Cryptic in both looks and habits, these birds personify all the mysteries of Earth's extraordinarily wild places.



I soon discovered several small colonies nest in clusters of about half a dozen just below the station, blending into dark volcanic crannies overhanging the sea. While incubating birds sit comfortably on their crater nests, with rain sprinkling diamonds on their velvet heads, others are busy prospecting nest sites for seasons to come. Their "pee-ooow" calls, similar to the light-mantled, ring out from hidden ledges like clear bugles over the roar and crash of the surf below, attracting a steady stream of potential mates circling low in the mist and joggling through the squalls with ease.

Much higher up, others were scribing their flight path across the lowering sky towards the far interior of the island, their slim dark silhouettes outlined neatly against the scuttling clouds. Gough is an island of stark visual contrasts, and likewise are its three resident albatrosses. Many of the sea cliffs consist of chocolate-cake layers of reddish, greyish, and blackish volcanic scoria and basaltic lava, usually fringed with pale wispy tussock. Yet the slopes above glow in shockingly vivid emerald green carpets of water-ferns, bristling with the neat palm-like shapes of rigid bog ferns (the same diminutive tree ferns as on Tristan) growing almost as high as a person in places. Tea-coloured streams and waterfalls cascading down numerous valleys are flanked by lichen-clad, wind-twisted copses of the island's only tree, *Phyllica arborea*, its dense grey-green foliage looking almost juniper-like. These garden-like vales and slopes are the realm of the colourful yellow-nosed albatross, as well as innumerable nocturnal petrels riddling the ground with their burrows, from tiny diving petrels to greater shearwaters.

Exploring the higher ground, the scene changes dramatically as the lush vegetation is replaced by waterlogged bogs that easily swallow your boots up to the knee. The colour scheme here changes completely, alternating between broad swatches of olive-green cushion plants, dark emerald reed patches, coffee-coloured peat bogs and quilts of floating sphagnum moss, further ranging from dayglow green to strawberry-tint. This variegated palette, riddled with dark pools and meandering streams, makes only fleeting appearances between rolling banks of ground-hugging clouds. Bands of predatory skuas gather here to digest their nightly banquets of hapless prions, and large chicks of the rare Tristan albatross punctuate the less sodden grassy slopes.

Higher still, wind polished basaltic dykes, plugs and crags disappear bleakly into the self-generating mists that almost continuously form over the island. Only ground-hugging mosses, lichens, tufty grasses and sprawling heather-like didledee cling to the weather-buffed ground. This seems a most unexpected place to meet the island's only land bird, the

long-legged, greenish and beige endemic bunting happily picking tiny orange drupes and quasi-invisible seeds. And here too the sooty albatross reappears, sailing through cloudbanks and swooping down into gaping canyons towards ledges accessible only thanks to its superior flying skills.

Day after day I search and probe this wild country, occasionally reminded of the two young men who died of exposure disoriented by the mists. I scramble over wind-blasted ridges, down slippery faces, through dark clefts and into breathtaking canyons in search of these mythical birds. Each time I come upon a small group under a dripping mossy lip or in the shelter of dark ferns, my surprise and excitement is renewed. Sometimes they are curious, even nibbling gently at my sleeve, though more often they remain completely unperturbed by my presence, dozing contentedly on their nests without a care.

The going is rough at best, and sometimes exhausting to the point of questioning my sanity. Occasionally, when the wind is just right for their aerial acrobatics, I spend hours in fascination watching them perform their exquisite mid-air *pas de deux*. The soaring couple emulate each other's every move, their flight an describing an ethereal - perhaps even spiritual - bond.

Then one day, as rain pummels the high cols, I finally discovered the object of my imaginary quest: A splendid tiered canyon where clear waterfalls tumbled down a giant volcanic-scale natural staircase acting as perfect backdrop to the sooty's wondrous theatre. Dozens of the mythical birds sweep in and out of gaps between lacy cloud banks, some in duo flight formation, others lured by the beckoning calls of those perched on unseen balconies far below. Digging fingers and toes into soft mossy walls, I slithered down into these plunging, mist-shrouded depths until I draw level with the singing cascades and hushed fern-world where courting sooties land, flicking their beaks and nodding to one another while they select their ideal building sites for new nests. Suddenly finding myself at the heart of their secret sanctuary, and so as to anchor the memories of these magic moments forever, I named this place simply 'Sooty Canyon'. I don't think in a lifetime could I ever tire of such soul-lifting grace and beauty as I discovered on that day.



A Grand Day Out

Author Ross Wanless

Ross and Martin Slabber visited the island during June 2006

On Thursday, 28 June, with our departure from Gough looming, Martin and I had a look at our list of objectives for the trip. Glaringly omitted thus far was a count of the Gony nests in Albatross Plain, as well as the collection of invertebrates from Gonydale. A personal objective that Martin had foisted on to me was to “Shag the Hag”, or climb Hag’s Tooth. We also wanted to visit the huge lava cave on Pummel Crag. We reckoned that the scientific objectives alone would justify a jolly into the highlands. A quick examination of the synoptic chart revealed that the high pressure system that was over us was due to remain for another day. Also, with our departure set for 1 July (or so we thought at the time), there was but one option: a day-trip the following day.

A minor complication is the fact that Friday was supposed to be Skivvy day, when the base gets cleaned. As guests, it would have been poor form not to do our share. Further, it was our turn to cook on Friday night. After dinner that Thursday evening, we negotiated to swap duties around and sprang into action, taking on the kitchen (easily the worst of the cleaning skivvies at base). We then packed our bags in preparation for a 6 am start. Somehow Martin contrived to not hear his alarm, and I awoke at 7 am. Fortunately it was still dark, and after rousing the slumbering alarm clock, we had a quick cup of strong coffee, breakfasted and made lunch for the day. We got kitted up and set off at 8 am, with Martin taking the bulk of the weight because I was too slow and tired too quickly with the backpack. That was a supremely good move, because we made Gonydale by 9:30! With time on our hands, we dawdled along taking pics in the fabulous sunny conditions, and spent a happy half hour on our hands and knees digging up earthworms. At 10:30 we set off, having polished off our lunch of salami and mature cheddar toasted sandwiches, to summit South Rowett, without doubt one of the nastiest uphill slogs available on Gough. The route along the Rowetts gave me the chance to count the Gonies in Albatross Plain, where after, at midday, we set off for the Hag. The route in requires a traverse to the northern end of the Rowetts, and then a contour all the way back to Middle Rowett and down a long ramp to Hag’s Tooth. We made it there at 1 pm, and the summit route was, frankly, a dawdle. This is a good thing, because despite the great weather it is damned cold up there, and wet, and anything more than a scramble would have been beyond me.



Ross climbing the Hag, the Rowetts can be seen in the background

It felt awesome to be on top of this fabulous piece of rock, which I had always observed and photographed from as many angles as I could, but never come close to touching. After the obligatory time-delay ‘team pic’, we scuttled down again. Again, we had made excellent time and it was not yet 2 pm when we decided to push through to South Peak and down to Pummel Crag. This was

turning into an epic day, and the weather was making the scenery as fabulous as it gets. The trudge up to South Peak was characterised by an injection of energy thanks to the essential hiking food: enerjelly babies! From South Peak I counted what nests I could at the Tafelkop colony, and we then moseyed down the ridge towards Pummel Crag. At 4 pm we gave up trying to guess where to find the cave, and radioed down to base, which was actually line-of-sight from where we were perched. Brian obliged with giving directions, and soon we found the yawning cavern. It extends probably 20 m in depth, and is about 20 m high at the mouth – quite a fun remnant of what must have been a huge lava tunnel – and a first visit for both of us. Martin had already shagged the Hag in our year together on the island, in 2004, so I was one up on him in terms of new places visited for the day. But the traditional route home, via Tafelkop, was going to take another hour of schlepping back up hill again, and we concluded that the risk of bashing our way down through virgin bush, and coming up against a precipice that we couldn't cross, was worth it if we didn't have to backtrack. This meant that our homeward route would take us, with a bit of judicious wiggling, straight over the summit of 960, a peak that Martin had yet to bag, but which Andrea and I had done already. That settled it, and with glee we set off down the untrodden hillside. Our luck was in, for although it was past 5 pm and the sun already set, the going was easy and we encountered no serious obstacles. 960 was 'summitted' (if such a gentle stroll may be used in this way) with just enough light for us to gauge the most sensible route home. We radioed in to base to let them know where we were, and then set off with very heavy legs but light heads (yes, two meanings there), stumbling, lurching and staggering down the pathless hill while the gathering Atlantic Petrels groaned as they flew past, or called plaintively from their burrows as our crashing footsteps woke them from their day's stupor. The Grey Petrels, strong and silent, just whizzed past a few metres from our heads, and the rapid metronomic thumping of a Kerguelen Petrel added palpably to the beauty of the night, which was rounded out by the full moon casting shifting shadows on the ocean below us.



Martin poses in the lava cave

We made it home at 6:30 pm, in almost complete darkness, after 10 hours of almost non-stop charging around the island. We had achieved two valid research objectives, as well as taking in 7 peaks (S, Middle and N Rowett, Hag's Tooth, South Peak, Pummel Crag and 960), a great shag of the Hag, and missioning to the lava cave. There was just enough time to cook dinner for the team: spaghetti and home-made basil pesto with freshly grated parmesan cheese, washed down with good red wine. Days don't come more epic than that. They just don't.

Personality of the Month
Petrus Kritzinger
Medic

Where do u call home?

Where my hart is.

You came as replacement for the medic who went home after 4 month, how did you settle in a team of people who had been together for 5 months?

Easy & quickly.

It your second time coming here, what do u like most about Gough Island?

The weather, food, company.....

If you have the power to upgrade something at Gough, what will it be and why?

Get a chef – then I don't have to cook.

Whom and what do u miss the most at Mzantsi?

My family & my dogs.

If you could go anywhere, where would that be?

The bush – doesn't matter where.

Beskryf in nie meer as 5 woorde watter tipe persoon jy is?

Intelligent, hardwerkend, hardegat, hou my woord & enkellopend.



How young are you?

39

When was your first expedition and where did you go?

1995 - Marion

Where to from Gough?

Bouvet / Marion

What is your favorite meal?

My mother's cooking.

What is your favorite sport?

Shooting.

What are your strengths?

Quick brain, calm & decisive, survivor.

What are your weaknesses?

Cars, bikes, guns, knives, women – not necessarily that order.

Will you be at one of the Islands in 2010 even if there are no DSTV?

No idea, too far in the future.

Sponsor of the Month

We would like to thank the following sponsors:

- Bondi Blu (Sunglasses, T-shirts, Sun cream, deodorant, back packs)
- Cadbury (Chocolate)
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- Uniross (Rechargeable Batteries, Peak Caps, Lanyards)
- World Space Radio (Satellite Radio, Peak Caps, T-shirts)
- YUM (KFC Chicken, KFC chips, KFC sauces)



Thulani making good use of the Colgate-Palmolive range of products.

From the Weather Office

CLIMATE STATS: June 2007

Ave. Max Pressure	1012.0 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	998.9 hPa
Ave. Pressure	1005.9 hPa
Max Pressure	1022.4 hPa
Min Pressure	975.7 hPa
Ave. Max Temp	12.1 °C
Ave. Min Temp	7.2 °C
Ave. Temp	9.8 °C
Max Temp	16.4 °C
Min Temp	2.8 °C
Ave Humidity	77 %
Max Humidity	94 %
Min Humidity	49 %
Max Wind Gust	34.3 m/s or 123.5 km/h
Total Rainfall	437.5 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	112.4 mm
Total days with rain	30 days
Total days >1mm	24 days
Total Sunshine	80.2 hours

This Space For Rent

Email gough@sanap.org.za for details

Gough 52 Chess Team

Pawn
Brian Bowie
Bishop
Thulani Jakalashé
King
Jonathan Kotze
Queen
Dineo Matsana
Knight
Bigfish Mashau
Castle
Petrus Kritzinger

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The place with lots of sun
and hot chicks!



Marion Island
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