

Gough Bunting

March 2007



March has been a month of two parts. Our 6 visiting biologists were still with us for the beginning of the month, so they were very busy with their clearing of Sagina, an alien plant species during their last two weeks on Gough. They also made use of their time to continue their work on their various study colonies set up on Tafelkoppie and in Gonydale for the Tristan Albatross. Us as a team also took advantage by joining them on their various walks. The visitors left on 14 March.

We certainly did notice that the base was a bit emptier and bigger after our visitors left, but we quickly settled back into our old routine. The highlight of the last two weeks of the month was Bigfish's birthday which we celebrated with him on 23 March. We had a WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) party. As you can see from the photo below there were rather colourful costumes, and there was the inevitable "smack" talk and mock wrestling matches. Never have men in pyjamas looked so good.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter.

Ed.



From left to right: Captain Cartoon, The Big Show, Stone Cold Steve Austin, Stacey, UVA (Ultra Violent Assassin), King Rat

Snacks at the dam

Just after the rains Dineo and I thought it would be a good idea to visit our water resource since she hasn't been there. We decided to make it a picnic outing.

The soil and vegetation was still wet after the previous day's rain and walking was a bit muddy. The river was in flood and it turned out to be a bit tricky walking up the river. We were slip sliding over slippery rocks, knee deep in water, up and down the river banks and jumping and crawling. It was actually good exercise.



Jonty moving the filters at our "dam"

We reached our destination in one piece, a bit tired though. On our arrival we found that the secondary filter was pushed to the edge of the dam by the force of the flow and it caused the pipe to be kinked. We moved the filter back to its original position and sorted out the kinks. After some hard work we enjoyed our drinks and snacks and started chatting the afternoon away. Sitting there with the riverbanks on both sides and no reference point it was as if we were somewhere else. No care in the world, it was a refreshing feeling.



Dineo at our "dam" where we get our water supply

With clouds moving in and daylight getting less we made our way back the base. The walk down was actually better compared to the on upward. An afternoon well spent.

JK

The 23rd of March.....

The month of March was filled with lots of activities for all us here. During the month we said our final goodbyes to our visiting team of biologists. Before they left, there were some bird's nests which they still had to check. Myself, Brian and Dineo decided to go along with them. We left the base early, we wanted to walk as slowly as possible because it was Dineo's first time to visit Gonydale, so she needed to see all these nice places on our way like Prion caves, baboon rock etc. The biologists left us behind as for them, it was work as usual compared to us who were just exploring Gough Island. It was a good walk for both of us.



A bunting inspecting Dineo's hair

Then came that time which we did not want: saying goodbye to the biologists. Even though they spent most of their time out in the field doing their work, we were used to having more than six people around the base. All the cooking and cleaning skivvies were more simple and relaxed because of them. It was great to have them here.....

The 23rd of March was my birthday. It was celebrated with style and fun. The guys organized a WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) party. Everyone was supposed to dress as his favourite wrestler. I was dressed as, (guess who?).....STONE COLD STEVE AUSTIN. We had fun with all the fights and everything. At the end I won (even though Stone Cold is no longer the champ, I was.). Dineo and Thulani do not know wrestling that much, so, I'm still trying to remember their favourite wrestlers and their outfits...hahahahaha.

Till next time, and for those who will be driving long distances to see their families and friends during the Easter holidays, please! DRIVE SAFELY AND ARRIVE ALIVE, we still need you...

*Tshifhiwa-wa-Vho-Nthaduleni uri:
masha.*



Stone Cold Steve Austin popped in for a visit.

Die kuns om 'n vis te vang:

Give a man a fish and you will feed him for a day

Teach a man to fish and you will feed him the rest of his life.

Om op 'n eiland te bly beteken dat daar goeie geleenthede is om vis te vang. Sommige van ons spanlede maak tenvolle gebruik van hierdie tyd wat ons op die eiland woon. Dit is egter nie so eenvoudig op Gough eiland soos by die meeste ander plekke nie.

Visvang op die eiland word bemoeilik deur 'n paar faktore: Die plekke om van te vang is beperk, hoë rotswande en dan ook om hierdie plekke te bereik. Niemand het ook nog 'n visvangwinkel op Gough geopen nie, dus moet alle gebruiksartikels vervaardig word. Die spesie wat almal poog om te vang is snoek en op enkele geleenthede was sommige van ons gelukkig genoeg.



Jonty giving the Jakobewer the kiss of death

Snoek is 'n roofvis en soek dus bewegende prooi. 'n Stukkie bacon aan 'n hoek is nie voldoende om 'n snoek te vang nie. Vyfvingers en Jakobewers gee glad nie om nie. Ons

beskik nie oor lewendige prooi/ aas nie en ook nie kunsaaas nie.



The various homemade lures

Brian het bietjie navorsing op die internet gedoen en sodoende het ons 'n paar goeie idees gekry. Materiaal vir die vervaardiging van die kunsaaas is ook nie agter elke Tussock pol uit te krap nie. Eilanders is bekend daarvoor dat hulle uiters kreatief kan wees met tye en ek dink ons het dit weereens bewys. Ons het verskeie kunsaaas prototipes vervaardig en is tans besig om hulle aan 'n baie streng keuringsproses te onderwerp.

Petrus



Brian showing off his five finger

From the Diesel Mech



Deutz Genset which operates the Crane + supplies the whole base with electricity.

The Genset above is one of the engines on Gough Island which we have never had complaints about. It is an Air-Cooled Engine which was made in Germany. My planned maintenance is done on every 250 hrs of operation. I replace the oil, oil filters, fuel filters; check air filters, check fan belts, check injector pipes for any leaks. As I have mentioned above, I do not have to worry about water because it's an air-cooled engine.

Thuls – Operations Manager for the Genset above.

I went to the dam with Jonathan & Brian and only to find out the auxiliary pipe was kinked.



The Picture above is where we get our base water. As you can see above the PVC pipe is kinked due to heavy rain.



This Picture above is after I solved our base water problem.

WALK.....HIKING!

Early this month, the visitors went back to Mzantsi and the base is been so lonely without them, but anyway we are coping.

One day the weather was good, then I asked Jonty to take me to the river, even though I was lazy, I manage to force myself 'coz I wanted to see where the water we use comes from.



A pic while I'm at the river

A walk to *Gonydale*

The visitors were still around by then, Brian asked if I wanna go with them and I agree 'coz I wanted to be there. The weather was good and I was so excited to be there even though I heard that is a long walk. On our way there, we enjoyed the view of the mountains, the shape of the rocks, songs of birds and the sound of waterfalls.

Before I knew it we were there, I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the gonies (Tristan Albatross) I've never seen such cute, big birds like that in my life....wow they are so

beautiful, I also like the way they walk, It's funny.

Brian suggested that we climb Michael's Col and I was so tired by then, the curiosity of wanting to see what's behind it kept me moving, with a blink of an eye, I was there. It was a long walk but it was worth it. When I see how beautiful nature can be, I just stood there motionless and speechless, I nearly cried. It was like I'm in paradise.



Dineo and Fish enjoying their lunch at Michael's Col

On the 23rd of March we were celebrating fish's birthday, we were dressed like wrestlers, Guys were fighting, and I just stood there, laughed and enjoyed the view. It was very funny.....

Dineo

Photographers on Gough

On a beautiful island such as Gough it is sometimes easy to experience it from behind a lens. Photo opportunities are literally everywhere. Our cameras are also quite varied, from small “mik en druk” cameras to SLR’s with additional filters and lenses, but one thing they all have in common is that they are digital cameras. Often only a full memory card will signal the end of photography for the day or perhaps a flat camera battery.

Photography on the island has changed a lot since the first expedition that came to the island. No longer do we talk about the amount rolls of film we have taken but more the amount of Gigabytes our photos take up. No longer do the words “slide photography” enter our vocabulary and currently we use the old dark room as a telephone booth. I would like to think that digital photography has also made us better photographers due to the fact the we can preview each photo we have taken almost instantaneous. Some people would argue that we are possibly also lazier.



Petrus



Dineo



Bigfish



Brian

Although at times we are mindful of aperture settings, shutter speeds, exposure, white balance, iso settings etc, sometimes it’s just easier to shoot on Auto. We can easily take over 200 photographs in one day and after we have downloaded and deleted the bad ones, we are sometimes only left with 50. I guess we sometimes go on the theory of if we take enough photos there are bound to be at least one or two good ones.

I think however that the mindset of the photographer never changes. We still tend to crawl and climb to the oddest places just to get the perfect shot. We will sit still for ages hoping for a bird to walk just a little closer to us. At times we even have to be mindful of low flying birds, which we don’t notice since all our attention is on our cameras. And above all that feeling of satisfaction when you get that perfect shot, were the light is perfect, everything is in focus and the angle is just right. That makes it all worth it.

Brain

Personality of the Month
Mashau Bigfish Tshifhiwa
Assistant Meteorologist

How old are u?

Some people are very sensitive when it come to their age (I wonder why), but anyway, I am 31 years old. (I just finished the calendar on the 23rd of March.....hahahahah aha)

Where do you call home?

There are two places I call home: Hamasia Tshikwarani in Venda, Limpopo Province. This is where I was born and raised, (I love this place). Then I have my flat in Pretoria, Sunnyside. (Everybody would like to be in Pretoria, be it for work or just visiting.....)

What's the story of the beanie?

Ok, Marianne (one of the visiting biologists) knitted it, and because it was the only one, we have to fight for it in the game of pool. We play a competition every Sunday evening, so the winner gets the chance to wear this beanie for a week (unless you can defend it like I did). I have been wearing it for the past two weeks.....and I WILL keep it for the rest of this winter season.

Who is Stone Cold Steve Austin?

He is the man.....my favourite wrestler. If you follow wrestling well you will know why I like this character.

You've been here before right? What do u like most in this Island?

Of course I've been here before. This Island is amazing, I like everything about it, the birds, the vegetation and all the



natural geographic sites which looks like man made such as the baboon rock, saddle rock and the well stacked rocks at green hill....the list is endless. You will

never see a Gough bunting or a moorhen in South Africa, will you? Not even a Tristan albatross.....
.....amazing ne?

What and whom do you miss the most in Mzanzi?

Yerrr.....I miss my family and my partner. I miss my friends, the sound of moving cars in Sunnyside, going to the stadium to cheer my team (Sundowns) play. I definitely miss

shopping because we don't have shopping malls here. I miss lots of things but I don't regret coming here at all.

What plans do u have after Gough?

I want to study further....or maybe I'll get that post occupied by Mr Henry Valentine. Who knows?

Any chance for a third expedition?

I am still thinking about it but not ruling out any possible chances though.

We hear that you are a prince, is that true?

I am not a prince as such, my father is a headman of our village so.....

What is the story behind your name Bigfish?

My mom said that when I was young, I was so big that I couldn't fit in my elder sister's clothing.....so my dad called me Bigfish. I can't remember myself being that big though...so, the time when I was big, I was still operating in the unconscious level.

Sponsor of the Month

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- YUM (KFC Chicken, KFC chips, KFC sauces)



*Jonty and Brian enjoying playing **Nintendo Gamecube** against each other*

From the Weather Office

CLIMATE STATS: March 2007

Ave. Max Pressure	1015.1 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	1005.7 hPa
Ave. Pressure	1010.2 hPa
Max Pressure	1023.7 hPa
Min Pressure	980.7 hPa
Ave. Max Temp	17.7 °C
Ave. Min Temp	11.1 °C
Ave. Temp	14.8 °C
Max Temp	21.4 °C
Min Temp	8.0 °C
Ave Humidity	77 %
Max Humidity	95 %
Min Humidity	45 %
Max Wind Gust	31.3 m/s or 112.7 km/h
Total Rainfall	289.4 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	62.0 mm
Total days with rain	23 days
Total days >1mm	16 days
Total Sunshine	157.7 hours

This Space For Rent

Email gough@sanap.org.za for details

Gough 52 Wrestlers

Captain Cartoon

Brian Bowie

The Big Show

Thulani Jakalashé

UVA (Ultra Violent Assassin)

Jonathan Kotze

Stacey

Dineo Matsana

Stone Cold Steve Austin

Bigfish Mashau

King Rat

Petrus Kritzingler

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The place with lots of sun and hot chicks!



Marion Island
46°S 37°E marion@sanap.org.za