



Welcome to our Monthly Newsletter...

A Happy 2009 to all our friends,
family and colleagues...



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The Heartbeat of Gough base...

Hello and welcome to all our readers. We here at Gough Island trust that you all had a wonderful festive season, and we wish you all a prosperous new year!

I often get requests of people asking us to give more information of the base and lifestyles of the Islanders, questions like: who is cooking and cleaning, do you have your own room, is there a garden and how do you generate electricity? I hope to give you some clarity on the day to day living conditions of team members.

Electricity: Our electricity is generated by diesel generators. We have two Perkins diesel engines and one Deutz backup generator. The Deutz is primarily being used for the crane. These machines are burning quite a significant amount of fuel per year, and we therefore have 10 diesel tanks which get refuelled once a year during take over from the SA Agulhas.

The grass and vegetation around the base needs to be cut and trimmed roughly every 3 months, we have petrol weed eaters to ease the task. However, it will take a team of 8 roughly 2 days to cut all the grass due to difficult to reach and soggy places, you firstly need to lift all the steel grids of the 'catwalks', put them aside and slowly get into the rhythm of grass cutting! Our garden is therefore the astonishing nature around the base!



Diesel pumping—Note that the fuel line is being towed to shore by a power boat.



Perkins Diesel Generators



10 Diesel tanks



Hazardous store room—
Weed eaters and oil.



Living conditions are much like home; everyone has his/her own room with a bunk bed, built in cupboard and desk. However you will need to share your room during take over, normally with the relieving team member of same profession. A bonus is wireless internet, which makes communication a real pleasure with family, friends and of course the Head Office! No television reception so far south, but as a bonus we have a comfortable lounge with an overhead projector and big screen and a popcorn maker! We have two industrial washing machines, and a dry room for wet clothing.

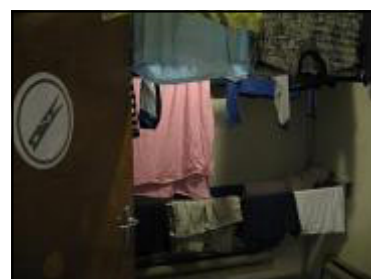
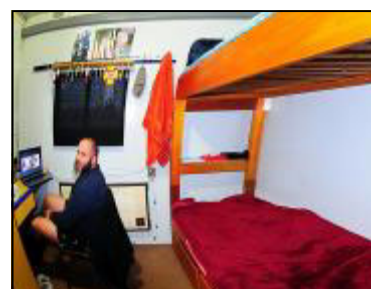


The Kitchen



The Can press

We have a well equipped kitchen and pantry as well as two walk in freezers named Tom and Dick and a third chest freezer by name 'Harry! Every Monday is 'base skivvy' (cleaning), and we are divided in teams of two, taking care of a designated area and every member gets a cooking 'skivvy' roughly once a week. All waste products get sorted, glass, tins, plastics and paper. There is a designated container for all these products which will be sent back to the RSA and recycled. Vincent built a manual can press in order to flatten the cans and save some space. Lastly the clinic! We have a very well equipped clinic, all trauma equipment complete with ECG and O₂, a range of the best antibiotics, pain relievers, from aspirin to morphine! (See why we need a responsible medic?!) A range of ointments, vitamins....name it! Lastly a dental clinic for dental emergencies, equipped with all necessities. Dr Charles van Rensburg from the SA Navy gave me a most enjoyable week of dental emergency training in Simons town. He has a great team, all friendly and willing to assist, an unforgettable experience!



Bedroom and Dry room



Dr. Charles, Dr. Sing and Melissa - assistant (patient: Cpln. Elsabe Francis)



Clinic

See the layout of the base on the next page...

By Tom Mc Sherry...



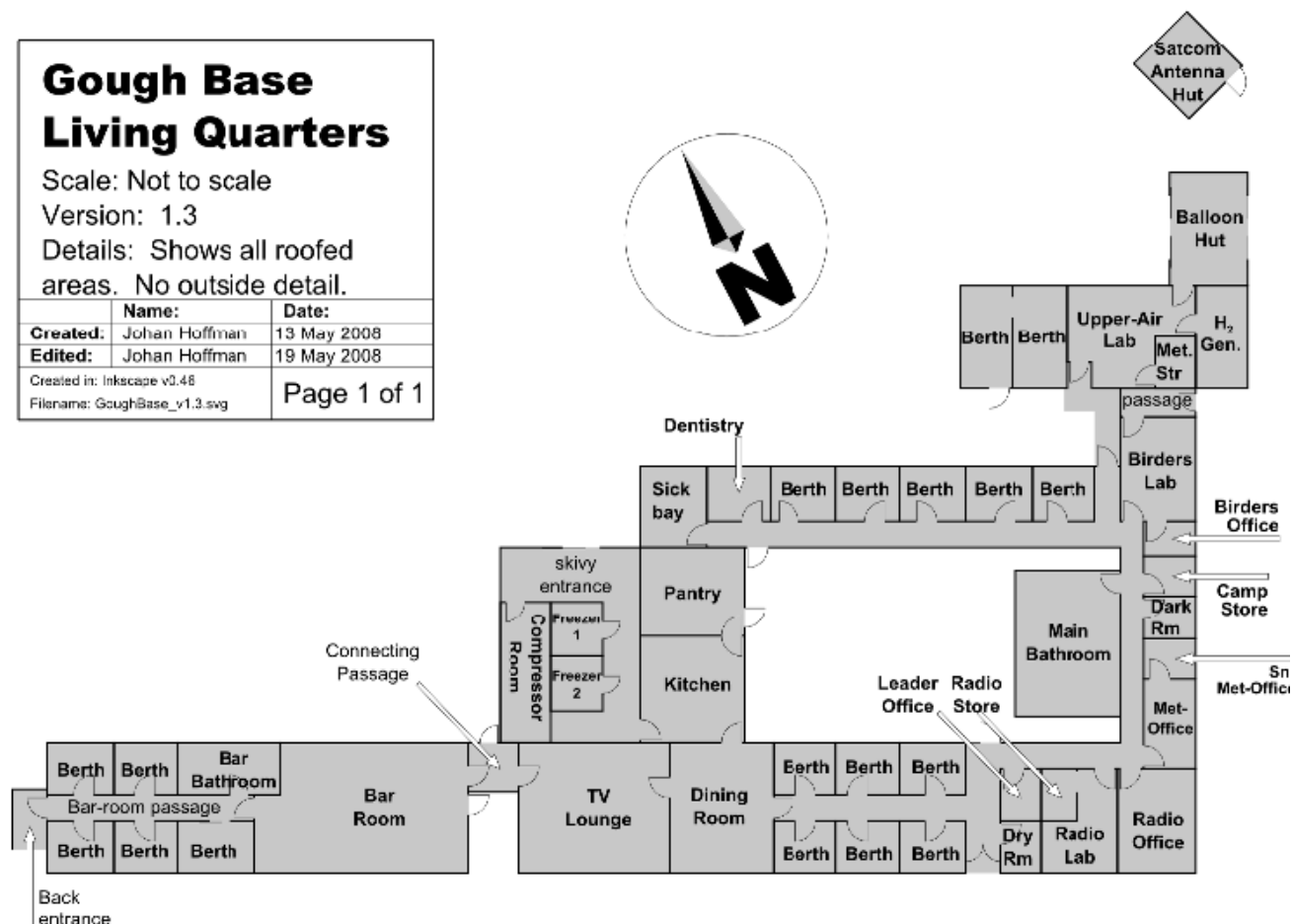
Gough Base Living Quarters

Scale: Not to scale

Version: 1.3

Details: Shows all roofed areas. No outside detail.

	Name:	Date:
Created:	Johan Hoffman	13 May 2008
Edited:	Johan Hoffman	19 May 2008
Created in: Inkscape v0.48		Page 1 of 1
Filename: GoughBase_v1.3.svg		



*Just give me
the stuff al-
ready!!!*

Vincent Eating weed!





The Mysterious month called December...

What is there in the month of December that makes it so mysterious? Comes November you can hear a certain buzz in the offices and passages. People start to go into the "relax mode" and nothing gets done. Everywhere caravans are pulled out and washed for this mysterious month. Cars are packed and the children play around.

The other day, as I was sitting in my car watching the people at the shopping mall, I saw a little girl playing in front of a store with her little wooden horse that her father bought for her. She was riding her horse as if it was a real horse. Her family was laughing and enjoying the moment with the little girl. Everybody in the family was creating a space for one another to be happy and relaxed. Certain thoughts went through my mind. If it was any other month, would the family still be so content and relaxed? I remembered the days when I was still in Primary School. No other holiday was as glamorous as the December holidays. I remembered that a few days before the school closed, all the children were washing and scrubbing school desks with glad hearts. Teachers were doing some last minute admin work. Then the big day came, when the school closed and I could get rid of my school clothes.

Now it was happy days that were lying ahead. Buying the items needed for our holiday at the South Coast of Kwazulu Natal. There's been so much excitement while packing the car and preparing the food for the road. Eggs, sausages, mince balls and bread rolls. We woke up early morning to hit the long road to the seaside. Sleeping in the car and just once or twice picking up your head to ask "Are we there yet". As children we always played a game in the car to see who can see the sea first! This was a competition played by all the 'inland children'. I enjoyed those days, the closeness of family members around me.

That brings me back to reality and the month of December. I think December is called the mystery month because of the fact that most of us are on holiday. It gives people the ability to reflect on the past eleven months and to get perspective in life for the New Year ahead. It is a time to kick off the working shoes, to hang out in the malls, to buy an ice cream and to spend quality time with family and friends. The only bad value about this is that December only comes once a year and what about the other eleven months? Are we just going to spent time with family and friends in December, or are we going to make every month a mystery month?

Makes you think! Let's undertake to make every month a mystery month. Let us give our best to family and friends all year round, especially the team members working and living closely together on the Islands. Let us be relaxed in each other's presence and create space for living and loving.



By Chaplain Elsabé Francis



Virgin saves Gough...

We have been saved or at least our health has. While everyone back home is stuffing their faces with all the festive season food, we are busy rebuilding our bodies. We have taken to a serious routine here on the Island of bringing Virgin Active to us. Let's break it down on an individual level.

Firstly lets take Paul, this is the guy whom I think instigated the whole let's get healthy routine. His reasons are simple..he loves rugby hence he needs his body at its peak, by that meaning he has to look like a guy who can scrum and have powerful hands for throwing the ball and propelling him when he is on the run. Well so far so good he is developing all the characteristics of a rugby player, so all those rugby scouts. This guy really loves his rugby and is determined to partake in it no matter the cost, so hook him up.

Secondly we have Henk....oh Henky boy now here is a music lover, just like any artist his instruments are above anything. By his instruments I am referring to his guitar, he does occasionally visit the gym just to keep his heart well but I believe if it was possible to manufacturer some kind of a guitar shaped barbell sets, Henk would spend most of his time at the gym. Nonetheless he is keeping healthy and that's a plus for him, because we don't want a rock star who lacks vigour and stamina for their on stage performances.

Next up is Tom a.k.a T.V.B now this is the person we should literally drag to the gym, I have seen him there one time but by the look of things he was just there to spectate I might be wrong but who knows?

Now just like Henk, Tom has his own exercise routine, this guy loves fishing to a point were I believe we should consider organising a fish tank at the gym so that he could exercise while fishing, but I believe his heart is receiving all the vital exercise as he goes up and down Snoekgat or Dieselpoint for his fishing. So he is on the safe side when it comes to healthy living.

Fourthly there's Vincent now this is a very slim tall guy, maybe not that tall but still slim, this guy for me can now take on the Ethiopians and Kenyans dominating the marathon scenes. Vincent has took the exercise bike and placed it near his room for accessibility, now I have seen him peddle it, trust me the Kenyans have nothing on this guy he can take them any time any place. The way he paddles, since it is facing one of our beautiful peaks on the south side, shows that he is mentally going around the mountain at an unbelievable speed. So I suggest that upon return to our country Vince should join the comrades and outrun any competitor.

Rupert is next, well so far I don't think he even knows there's a gym on the island or maybe he does; we do take our food and sea temperature thermometer near the gym. Or maybe he thinks we just flock there for some religious clan worship and praise. I have mentioned above regardless whether individuals use the gym or not, their health is still at their peaks. Rupert loves hiking and walking all over the island and that is some kind of exercise, hence although having no ideas as to what might be happening at the gym, I believe his health is well enough to keep any doctor away.



There are psychological theories which maintain that people are better able to exercise in a group situation so they can compare themselves to others. I do not understand why it was necessary to come up with such a theory as human beings are by their own nature competitive and love to compare themselves to each other.

Anyways maybe this theory is necessary for others, now this is where Dries comes in, yes Dries. He has also taken to exercising and you guessed it, there is a positive influence to that. Now Dries, beginning of our stay here was like any other guy, he loved his meat and could not understand why human beings are subjected to eating vegetables or a healthy balanced diet. Now deriving from a positive influence, not only does he eat veggies he confidently organises balanced diet meals. Your mom would be loving this a lot and it is all thanks to Chantal...what is that Dries?... men are what to women?...of course they are.

Chantal's case is self explanatory especially when referring back to Dries's case she is the psychological influence to Dries's endeavours at healthy living.

Lastly it is the author. Well for me, gym has always been my thing. I have done it to build my strength and stamina as they are necessary for everyday living and feeling good about myself. Its therapeutic and some kind of self-esteem builder and necessary for an agile mindset.

Therefore regardless of your preferred exercise, healthy living is important, so to all those back home, take up some type of exercise and be healthy. Please do not join a gym club or buy equipment to hang clothes on just because you need a new year's resolution. We at Gough do not need a New Year's health resolution, we only resort to accelerate and maintain our healthy lifestyles. Oh you are wondering about the title, Virgin.... as in Virgin Active!

By Itumeleng
Lefakane...



The Virgin...



The reflection of Gough...

For most of the people a December holiday are in the bush, on the beach or in the bundu's. People want to go to places to relax and see family and friends or just be somewhere else where you don't do and see the usual things in your life.

For us on Gough you can say you're in the bush, on the beach or in the bundu's. We are lucky to say that we work in a place people want to be for the holidays, but here you can't see your family or friends.

When you're outside and you look at the view, mountains or sky, you can't really tell people the beauty of it, the only thing which can surpass the beauty, is the experience of being here. That's what makes the Island special for us!!

We had a nice Christmas on the Island and everyone got a present. As usual we ate a lot and then sat outside for the rest of the day, chilling and missing people. For most of us a second or third Christmas on an Island. Hopefully my next Christmas and New Years will be with Family and friends.

The Tristan Albatrosses are paring up to mate and start breeding. Because they mostly live on the sea, it is like a vacation for them to see there partners again on land.

Me and Henk saw two Humpback whales and here was a lot of Dolphins for three days or so around the Island.

Now there come days in some places where you have to pray for rain when it is very dry and it don't want to rain, but on an Island like Gough where it rains almost every day you would never thought that you're going to run out of water. For 5 days the river, where our water comes from, dried up and we almost ran out of water, but it was around new years so we started drinking beer when we were thirsty, that helped a lot with the saving of water. Luckily the rain came again, otherwise we would've run out of beer.

Hope everyone enjoyed they're holiday and hope you all have a nice 2009 with lot of joy, faith, hope and dreams.



By Paul Visser...



The Reflection of Gough on Sunglasses in December...

By Paul Visser...



Gonzo Zombie...

Acting civilized is a major cause of unnecessary stress. Stress releases Cortisol in the brain which, in large doses impedes the brain from forming new memories or retrieving existing memories. This could lead to the dangerous situation were a person could forget that there are always hope, thereby spiraling down into an opaque hell of Alzheimer depression. Furthermore, civilization is clearly overrated since very few people actually participate in it. I have it on good authority that trying to be civilized in an otherwise uncivilized environment amplifies stress levels, leading to massive memory loss, possibly a self defence mechanism, maybe a talent.



There are very little stress here on Gough Island, now that we have all accepted the fact that Enos does not work as a substitute for baking soda although scones that actually treat heartburn is an interesting concept that should be investigated further, possibly extending the investigation to sausage rolls. Medicated confectionary could usher in a period of resurgence for the tea party phenomena. However, this empirical study will need to be conducted at another time.

In our stress free environment, our well-formed memories often remind us of those poor unfortunate souls stuck on the N1 in traffic jams caused by nothing, those sad persons watching rugby games with Stewart Dickenson as referee or the massively unfortunate ones trying to close or open or pay a Telkom account. Those miserably civilized stress gluttons feeding the machine their spleens under the impression that civilization is worth the sacrifice.

In sympathy for the distant tormented masses, Gough54 decided to strike out at stress. An uncivilized Gough Island Zombie mass action was scheduled.

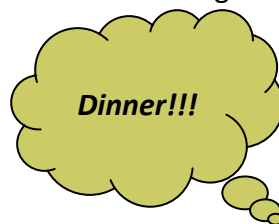
In preparation for the great event, inspirational and educational films were shown. These films mostly employed the well known cinematic effects of gratuitous violence and mindless carnage decorated with kilolitres of tomato sauce and cubic meters of soya mince, like war, only more tasty... and tasteful. Zombie movies present the irony of civilized people acting like monsters while monsters merely act true to their nature. Although the civilized contents did increase the stress levels of Tom and Henk, the overall entertainment value of their stress reaction amounted to a general reduction in stress of the collective thus inducing the desired effect.



After weeks of preparation, character assassination and obligatory deprivation the day of the living dead arrived, zombies roamed the island. Uncivilized madness was on the menu. The moment Paul held the blade to Henks carotid artery, grinned and sliced a deep cut into the adventure policy the warm arterial spray of our imaginations blasted bloody clouds into the half light. Obviously in a competitive mood, Chantal tore chunks of muscle from my flexor carpi ulnaris with her incisors snarling dares of dominion at the others. I whimpered low, thankful that it was not my palmaris longus. Dr Vincent transformed into his alter ego, the cause of all wrong on the island, Citizen Dirkie, and promptly stabbed himself with an arrow. He spent the rest of the night alternating between b-rated soap opera death throws and untamed laughter. I thought I heard Rupert and Tumi discuss high explosives, but they deny any involvement in the unfortunate fate of the hydrogen generator and that half of the base. Citizen Dirkie has no alibi. We have not found the hydrogen tank yet but we do have a new skivvy-gat... Eventually, when things got really strange, I turned up Swaarmetaal and let Kobus! drown out the screams... peacefully.



Now, as I sit and watch the rain wash the drought from the island, snug in the knowledge that baking powder and dry yeast is on its way to our heartburn cured island with compliments from THE MAN, I remember every moment and I wonder how we ever functioned in civilization, and why anyone would want to... and whether a functioning civilization is an oxymoron.[Dries]



Eeeeeee....I got
BAD taste!!!





Mysterious Eno Man

The mysterious Eno man
is very mysterious indeed
Crawling around both day and night
he manages to stay out of sight

On an Island of only eight
it is always someone's fate
to see his coffee climb out of that mug
and some bloke laugh with a shy smug

The mysterious Eno man is among us all
and he too will one day fall
into the trap of a mysterious mystery man
Cause an islander, well he always has a plan...

By Henk Louw...

This poem was inspired by Eno
(anti-acid) mysteriously end-
ing up in the sugar bowl. You
can imagine the effect it
will have on your morning
coffee!?!



Art and Entertainment...

There was a great deal of arts and crafts done this month as all the islanders had to dig into their creative sides to produce Christmas presents.



1. Yellow-nosed Albatross for Rupert, by Andries—oil pastel.
2. Gough Island Model for Chantal by Paul—Little foot bones of penguins and other materials.
3. Decorative Wine glass for Andries by Tom—some sort of putty.
4. Innovative Christmas card for Vincent by Tumi—paper. Ribbon, photos.
5. Very creative entertainment service station for Tumi by Rupert—Welded Iron.
6. Guitar stand for Henk by Vincent—Wood and other materials.
7. Sketch of Honda CR1000 for Tom by Chantal—Soft pastel.
8. Hand crafted gift box with chocolates etc. for Paul by Henk—Wood and other materials.



Movie Review...



Our review for the month of December will not concentrate on the usual Christmas movies, but rather on something different yet still relevant to this season as is the season of giving. This is an old movie with Keanu Reeves (before he became Neo) and James Spader it is on VHS.

It is about a serial killer and a cop investigating him, the movie has all the makings of serial killer, downtrodden cop movie characteristics we have come to expect from Hollywood. I choose this movie because there was something interesting with regards to human behaviour. Now the serial killer watches his victims for a certain period and when content sends a picture to the detective and gives him 9 hours to find the victim before he kills them.

Now the human element kicks in, pictures are handed out and broadcasted on the media to aid in the search for victims. I was shocked but maybe not as to how we have turned into individuality orientated society, where we find it normal

to ignore others. Maybe because of our prejudices or just pure ignorance thus avoiding responsibilities for our fellow human beings well beings. Since it is easier to abdicate responsibility and award such abdication to ignorance.

Many face hardship everyday because we believe they are not our responsibilities, I know we can't change the world but wouldn't it be easier and helpful just to make a difference. As the New Year sets in lets stop been passive spectators and get in the game of making a difference.

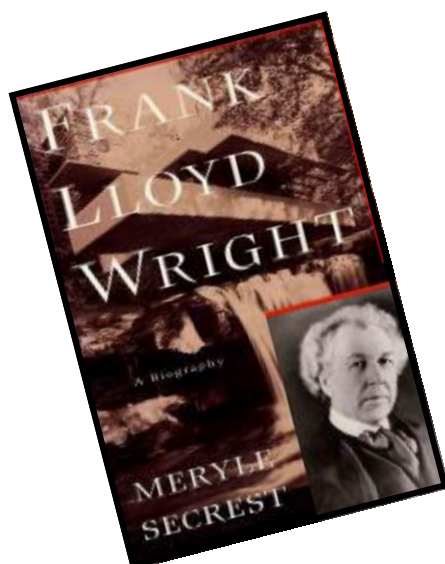
The title of the movie is **The Watcher** and for the human factor it receives 8 skuas....



by Itumeleng Lefakane...



Book Review...



Frank Lloyd Wright by Meryle Secrest

The biography of Frank Lloyd Wright by Meryle Secrest is a very long book. It has 564 pages excluding the index and it takes a long time to read. Very long, excluding the index. Frank was an insecure narcissist. Which is not surprising since he also was a genius at borrowing money and hopeless at repaying those loans. Furthermore he was a groundbreaking architect and if the tutu wearing director of the FBI at that time had his way, a communist to boot.

I think the author spent too many pages telling about Franks skill at extracting money from any living liquid person within range.

She could have said all of that in one or two sentences. If she really thought it was that important she could have used a bigger font or maybe bold letters. This is why Native Americans should be biographers, they say enough without talking too much.

No doubt Frank had a very interesting life. With a world famous Unitarian preacher grandfather, an Oscar winning grand daughter, many famous friends, an axe mass murder, at least one crazy wife, many fires and some useful original architecture in his lifetime, definitely not boring. It should make a good movie, no longer than 2 hours, David Lynch should direct.

One of the reasons why I read biographies may be to draw inspiration from other peoples' extraordinary lives. This biography inspired me to read shorter biographies or biographies of people who led shorter lives. Who killed Kurt Cobain?

[Dries]

Frank's famous "Fallingwater" house

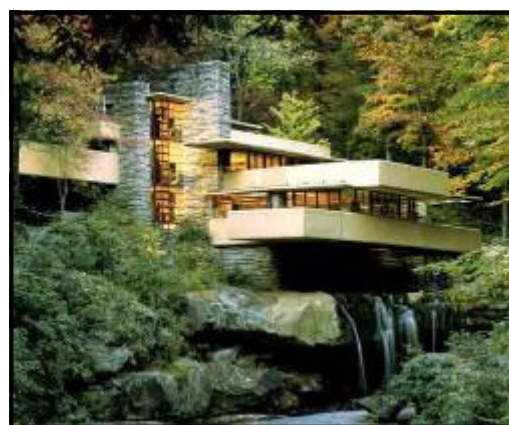




Photo Competition...

Winning shot for November:



Photo taken by **Chantal** during a trip to seal beach. The penguins are quite territorial which is brilliant for capturing close up shots. (the seal is just a bonus, but the photo is all about the penguin!)

Please support our efforts by voting for your favourite photo:

Phone: 021 405 9470

Fax: 021 405 9474

Email: gough@sanap.ac.za



1



2



3



4



5



6





Weather...

Pressure

Ave. Max Pressure 1013.9h Pa

Ave. Min Pressure 1007.9 hPa

Ave. Pressure 1010.5 hPa

Max Pressure 1022.8 hPa

Min Pressure 993.8 hPa

Temperature

Ave. Max Temp 17.2 °C

Ave. Min Temp 10.5 °C

Ave. Temp 13.9 °C

Max Temp 22.6 °C

Min Temp 7.1 °C

Humidity

Ave Humidity 74 %

Max Humidity 97 %

Min Humidity 43 %

Wind

Max Wind Gust 28.5 m/s or 102.6 km/h

Rainfall

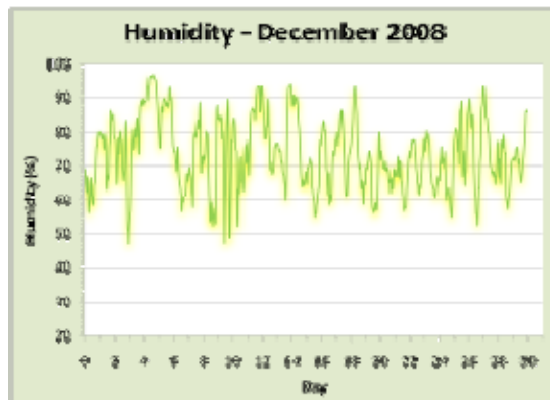
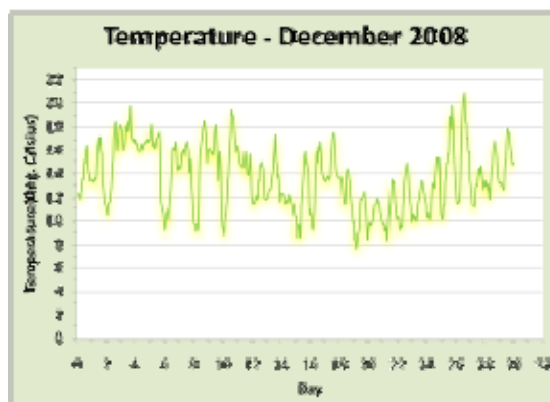
Total Rainfall 179.8 mm

Highest in 24 Hours 75.8 mm

Total days with rain 15 days

Total days >1mm 9 days

Total Sunshine 185.7 hours



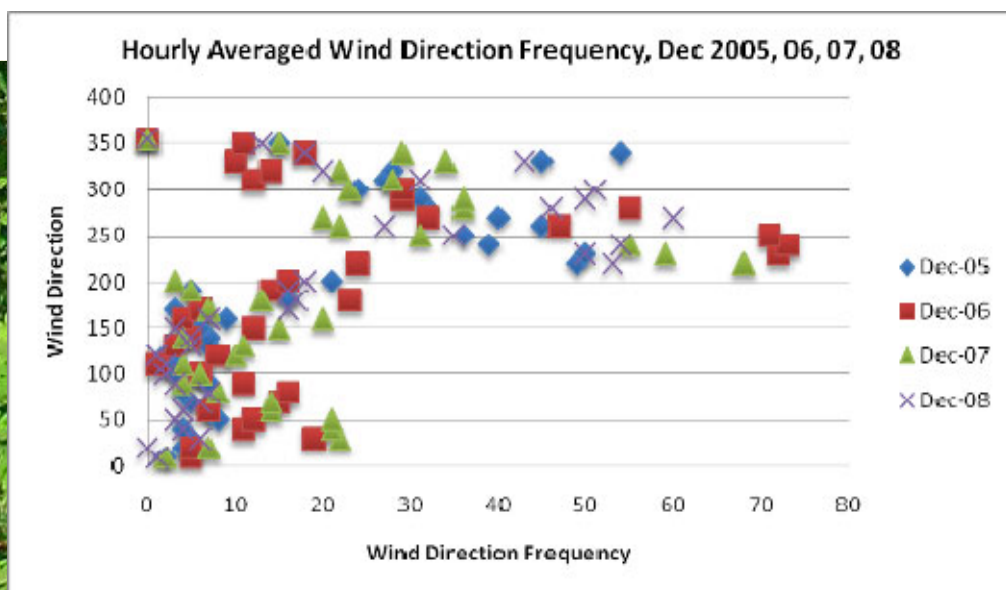
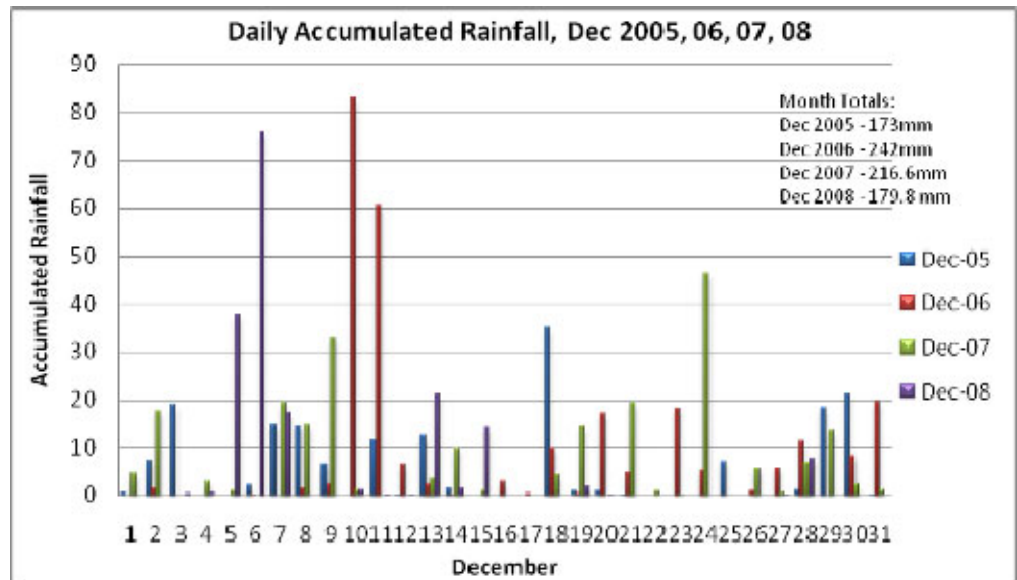


Water shortage on the Island...

From the accumulated rainfall graph it's readily apparent that the drought experienced on Gough Island in December 2008 was due to a lack of rain... Compared to an equally dry 2005 when the monthly total was slightly less than 2008s', we can see that most of 2008s' total was accumulated in only 3

days from the 5th to the 7th where as 2005 had smaller events evenly spaced throughout the month. On Gough there are no large dams, only small pools, thus, excess water flows into the ocean.

A striking feature in the frequency graph is the absence of NE winds in the dryer Decembers (2005, 2008). NE flow occurs when a trough is situated just to the west of the Island with associated high pressure to the east. In the preceding December this high pressure was further west, over the Island, giving us great weather but no rain.[Van the Weatherman]





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