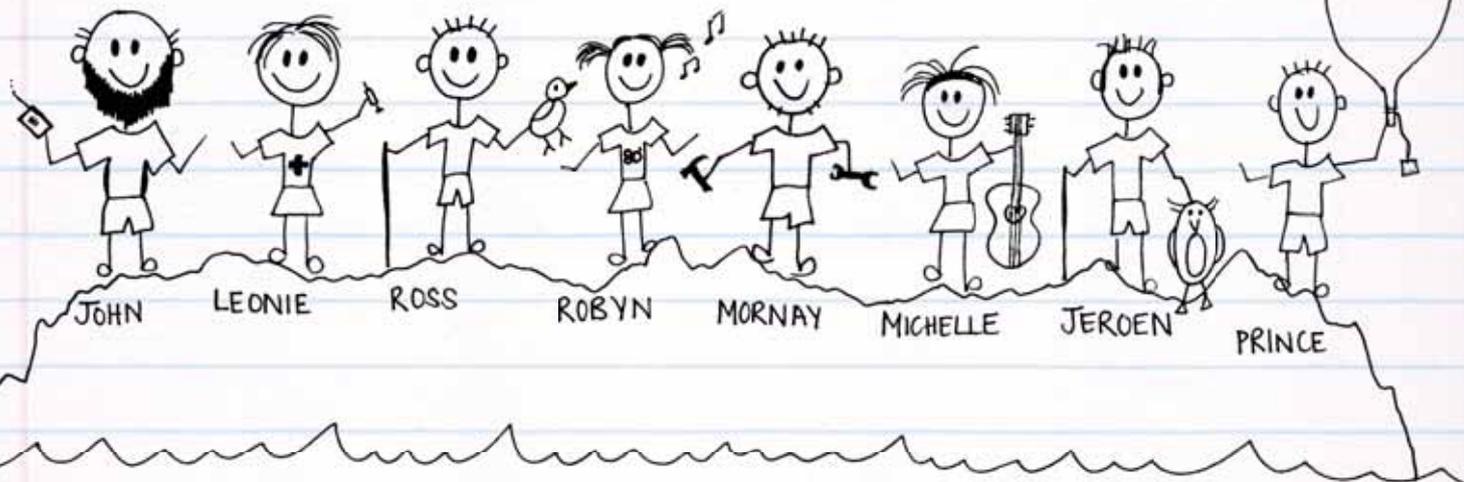


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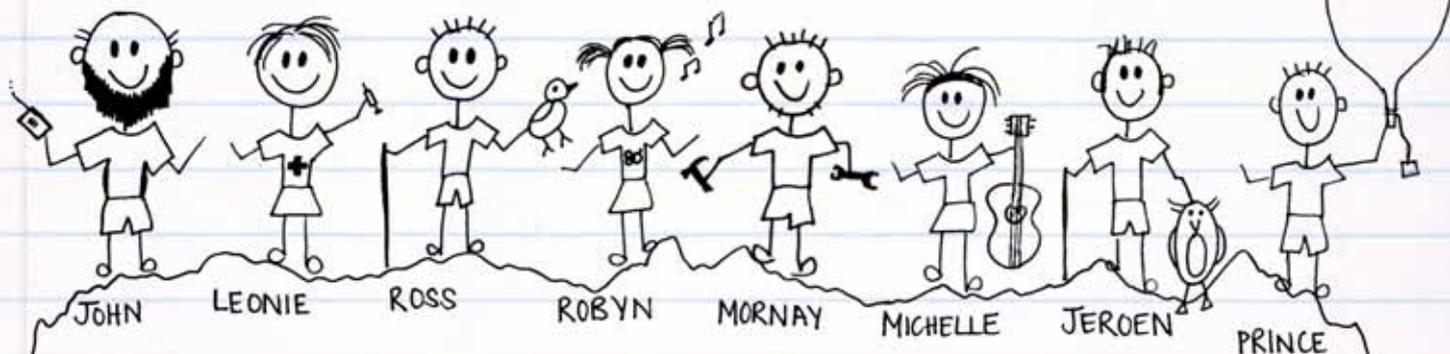
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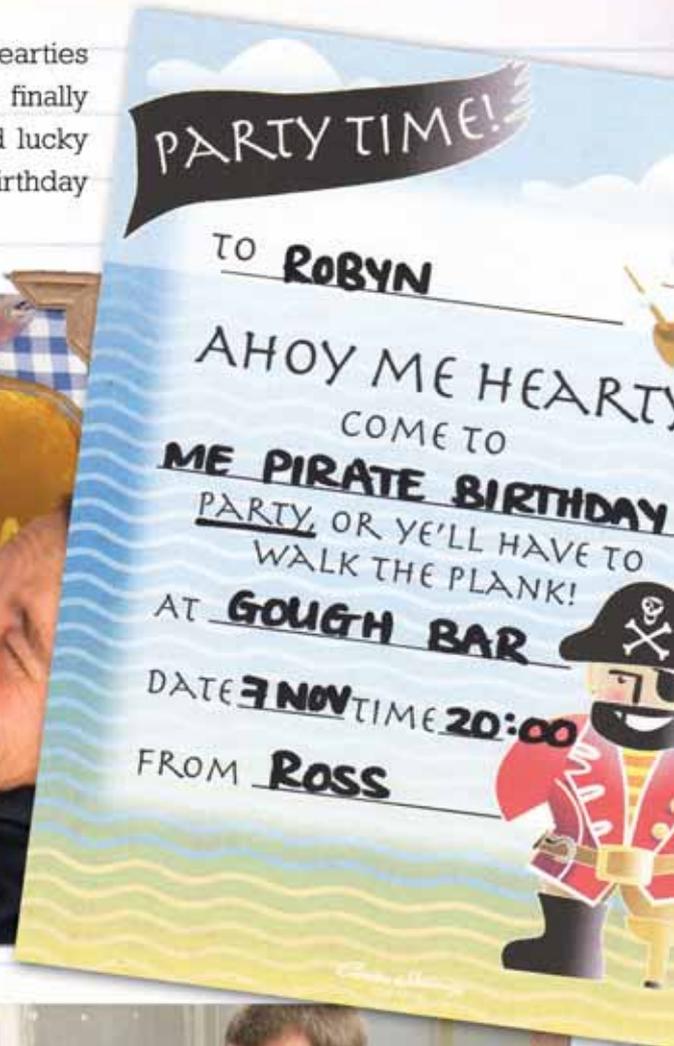


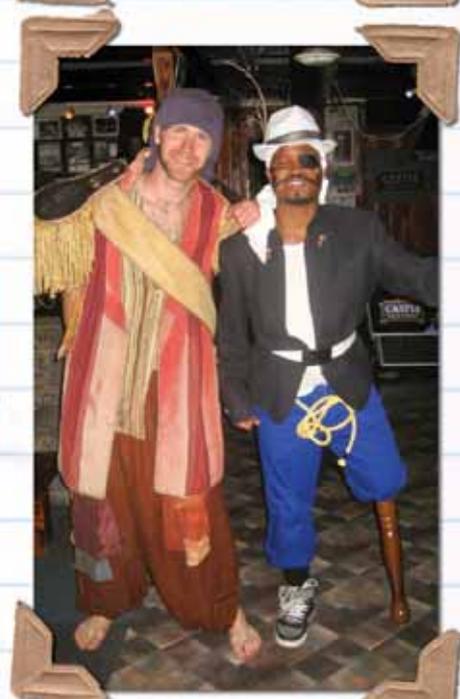
Birthday Boerewors and Booty

by Robyn Knight

On the 7th of November, in true birthday tradition, the Gough kitchen was abuzz. Any roll-oriented meal isn't an easy meal on the island, what with the lack of supermarkets and bakeries, but Michelle, who was on cooking duty, kindly made some of Ross's favourite food to celebrate his birthday, and the team sat down to a delicious lunch of boerewors rolls and milk tart outside in the sun. Who needs Pic 'n' Pay when you have Michelle! And in amongst the chaos of boerewors-frying, flour clouds and rising dough, a cake quietly baked away in the oven. Jeroen and Robyn, creative juices flowing, later transformed the contents of the cake tins into treasure for the taste buds! That night shouts of *Aaaarrrrggghhh!* and *Ahoy me matey!* could be heard from the poop deck, calling all swashbuckling seadogs and scallywags to join the rumpus. All etiquette was abandoned, as much swigging from the bottle and elbow-swinging went down. A jolly good time was had by all until our timbers

were shivered, our hearties were pooped and we finally became plank-like. And lucky for Ross, none of his birthday loot was pillaged.





ALMAL WIL 'N HUISIE BY DIE SEE HÊ!

And that's exactly what we've got here... Most Wednesdays after "Skivvy", the Red Ferrari (Mornay's patented 4x4) is loaded for the holiday house down at E-base, where there will be festivity *soos in die ou dae*. Three rules are made to ensure a get-together like this is a success:

1. No talking "shop"
2. No problems or challenges regarding the base or island are to be discussed
3. No politics or religion will be discussed.

Stories are relived around our gas-braai (jammer Pa Piet Visser: geen Hardekool hout of vlamme nie); stories of each of our life experiences, back in the day when we "common civilians" were still in the RSA, and the "good old days" – as if days on the island aren't good days of their own.

While John entertains us with stories and history of the Second World War and the Gulf War, Leonie tries to solve the mysteries of how Princess Diana really died and Mornay spends the evenings scaring himself with the ghost stories of the late Joe Roos. Ross and Jeroen often join the party and provide educational entertainment regarding the night birds and their behaviour.

For those of us that spend the night, we get trapped in the blackness of the night, the noises of the birds and the hum of the faithful diesel engine. It's the small things in life that keep us humble and thankful. And then I hear my father say, "*Doen n ding op so n manier dat jy dit weer kan doen, my kind*" - *ek doen, Pa, ek doen!*

STORY & PHOTOS
BY LEONIE OLIVIER



Gone fishing...

by MICHELLE STEENKAMP

There is a Chinese proverb that says, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Here on Gough, however, it is not about feeding ourselves but rather about the luxury of having something fresh to eat, and the only way that is a possibility is by catching it yourself.

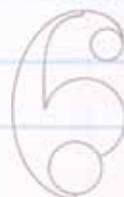
After a bit of rock climbing and a careful walk not too far from the base we'd arrived at Snoekgat. While Jeroen and I were still learning the techniques of hand lines, Prince had cast within a meter of us and nearly caught us twice; we weren't sure if he was even aiming at the sea! The afternoon passed while only catching small jacobevers (*Sebastes capensis*) and five-fingers (*Acantholatris monodactylus*). It seemed that the boys were out of luck on their first day fishing. Luckily the only girl who'd gone with for the outing caught two decent sized five-fingers that could fill up the pan for the night.

On the next sunny day some team members went back to try



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their luck at fishing. "Teach a man to fish at Gough and you'll have a sunburnt body to deal with; teach a woman to fish here and you'll always have plenty". Leonie and I quickly mastered the art and were soon pulling out some of the big ones. Mornay tried a new cowboy-style hand line slinging. Let's just say that we're lucky that the water was too cold and that one of the team mates could accurately "fish" out the not-so-effective "cowboy" hand line. By the end of the day there was still no clarity as to who enjoyed their sleep in the sun more, Mornay or the seal! The following day told a whole new story: Sun 1 - Mornay 0!

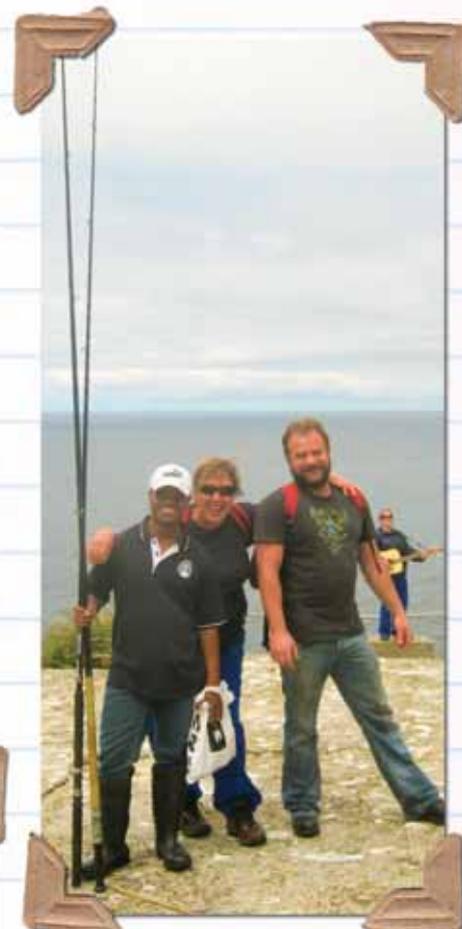
It was then time to leave Snoekgat and see what Diesel

Point had to offer. Mornay, Leonie and Prince spent all day down there, and their catch proved that they are now well-practiced fishermen. We were close to needing our crane to get the catch back to the base. Finally the men had proven themselves.

Nothing goes to waste here on the island and the leftover bait was quickly used to test our crayfish nets. A couple of patented ropes and knots to keep the cage upright and by nightfall our team watched in excitement as we had our first fresh crayfish. The first-time allergic reactions to crayfish will be a story to tell around a fire one evening along with that really, really big one that got away.

Where else in the world are you guaranteed a catch everyday, even if it is just the little jacopevers that get thrown

back. This is where you fish with a view; a view of giant petrels, albatrosses, Atlantic terns and skuas all at once, with an additional show given by the penguins and seals only meters away. And if your timing is really good, you may even have a live music show at Crane Point while you scramble down the ropes on the cliff ready for the big day.

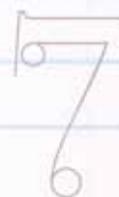


PHOTOS by MICHELLE STEENKAMP & LEONIE OLIVIER



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The Girls go to Seal Beach

with PHOTOS by
MICHELLE STEENKAMP
and ROBYN KNIGHT

by Michelle Steenkamp

Earlier this month Ross needed some help with penguin diet sampling down at Seal Beach, and the girls volunteered; it was about time we got away from the men and the base. We expected a fun day in the sun, with snacks and a small picnic... we were mistaken!

After a short walk and some cliff-hanging we had our first seal-encounter. Luckily Leonie knew karate, kung fu, judo, tae kwon do, jujitsu and twenty-eight other dangerous words which helped fight off the seals. Robyn had previously demonstrated her Seal Escape Dive which entails her scaling a huge boulder in 0.021 of a second, including a solid ninja kick to whoever finds themselves between her and the seal. I can say from firsthand (or in this case first-foot) experience that it is not recommended for the fainthearted; you'll be left to fend for yourself!

So to the people back home themselves wanting to wander



amongst seals, this is the advice I can offer from our practical experience (from "Running from Seals 101"):

Stay far away from Robyn; you may be the next victim of her ninja kick.

Stay even further away from the seals; they may look cute, but they smell of wet dog and have big scary teeth.

Rock hopper penguins are not the punks of the penguin world for nothing - don't let their cute and fluffy looks deceive you.

You can never have too much chocolate.

It's only over once you've made it to the top of the cliff, via the "fruit and veg" (for which shopping may only be done on the return journey) and all the way back home.

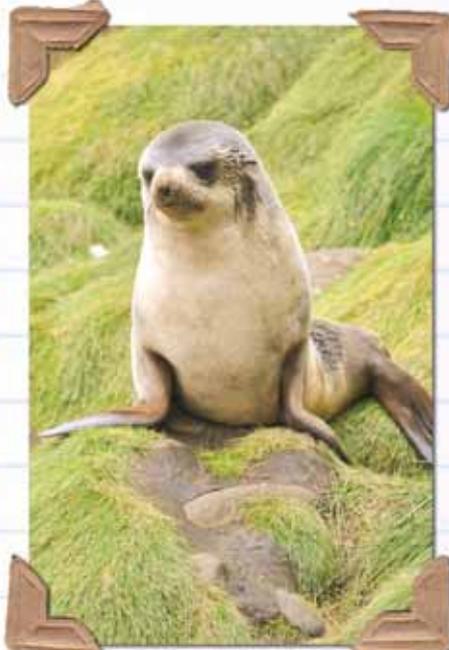
Enjoy your time away; back home you'll be greeted by five bearded beer-drinking men.

It was a good day away from the base with a bit of on education on how to catch and sample the penguins' diets, draw blood and feathers, and watch them feed and snuggle their newly hatched chicks. For a girls' day out we had enough chocolate to last throughout all the lessons and experiences of life, love and distance. And just when we thought we'd heard it all, there



was more... Nothing like a bit of "girl" talk and advice from Ouma Shmonie.

Gough Island is where we swap our manicures for muddy hands, soft couches for a grassy bank, high heels and fancy clothing for overalls and gumboots and perfume for the smell of penguins and seals. But it is also where we get to be part of the few people in this world who can confidently say they've hi-4'd a penguin!



Salon Van Gogh

STORY and PHOTOS by ROBYN KNIGHT



Haircuts cost an arm and a leg and an ear these days, so who could blame Jeroen for asking the girls to attack his mop for him? But Jeroen seemed quite attached to his ears, so the honour was given to Michelle, the girl with the steadiest hand in the business. The best equipment was extracted from the box of old clippers and, after a bit of trial and error, she set to work. No other hairdresser would have let their client have so much say, with constant mirror-checking and directing from Jeroen, but both cutter and client seemed satisfied with the end result, so much so that Michelle is considering hairdressing as a profession on her return to civilisation.



BEFORE

AFTER



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RUGBY via RADIO

STORY by ROSS COWLIN with PHOTOS by LEONIE OLIVIER

It was a big month for South African rugby – and we haven't been holding back just because we're 3000 kilometres from home. There was some intense rivalry between the Sharks supporters (Leonie, Robyn and Mornay) and the Western Province supporters (Ross and Michelle) during the Currie Cup final at the end of last month. The

humiliation of defeat was a lot for Michelle and me to stomach, but we managed – just. Leonie's Sharks t-shirt definitely didn't help, though. The Bok's tour of the UK has provided us with some tense moments, too. Although they missed out on their "grand slam", we're still proud of them and are holding thumbs for a win in December's game against the Barbarians.



Rosstling up some dinner

by ROBYN KNIGHT

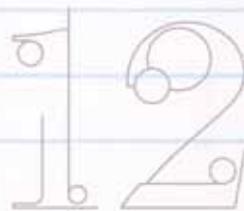
With the aromas and flavours of KFC, Steers, Wimpy and Debonairs a vague memory now, more than three months in, never did we think we'd get to experience fast food again until we are back on the mainland. No, not until one evening in early November when I entered an unusually quiet Gough kitchen.

By 6:30pm every evening the clangs and hisses and whirrs of equipment preparing an almost-ready dinner are usually heard throughout the base, but not that evening. It was Ross's name on the ros(s)ter; Ross, who is known for his general organisation and timeliness (and unfamiliarity and easy panicking in the kitchen). Needless to say I figured I couldn't leave him spinning in the midst of this chaos, knowing

that I would've been in a flat panic had it been my mind that it had slipped. But Ross handled it brilliantly, deciding quickly. Within an hour of me breaking the bad news to him, and only half an hour after the usual 7pm dinnertime, the team sat down to pasta, accompanied by a choice of either a tomato-and-mushroom or white tuna-and-sweetcorn sauce, and it was delicious! Nicely done, Ross!



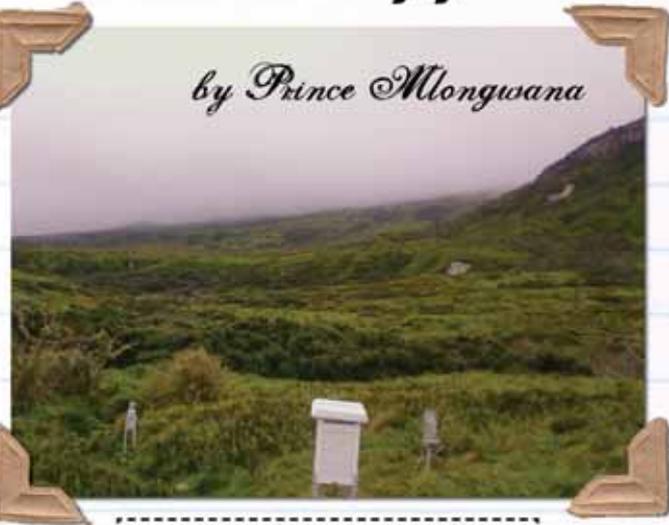
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From the Met Office



Fig. 1. Gough' Island, luxury weather



by Prince Mlongwana

Fig. 2. Gough Island, typical weather

Above are photos depicting the purpose of the meteorological services on the island.

For the month of November Gough's weather was mostly partly cloudy to overcast (refer to Fig. 2). Even a little sunshine at Gough is a luxury and we definitely make the most of it (refer to Fig. 1). For instance, for November we have had only 9 days where the sun shone for more than 6 hours and most of those days were when Robyn was on duty. However, when the other meteorologists, myself

and Michelle, are on duty the weather is often disappointing. It's really a sad sight to see all the sun-lovers indoors! But when it is sunny there are various ways to keep ourselves entertained. In the photo adjacent (refer to Fig. 3) there is a man sun-bathing, enjoying the wonders of the sunshine. Can you spot him?

If not, add a little of our luxury sunshine to reflect the colours in the image and now it should be easier (see below):



Fig. 3. Can you spot the man?



(If you still can't see him please put on your glasses and turn to Page 19 of this issue where his location will be revealed...)

FROM THE LAB

by **ROSS COWLIN**

November was an eventful month for biology on Gough Island. This was our first full month without our valued safety

net: Richard and Erica. It was a little bit scary at first, but we got through it without too much drama. The month began with another trip to the southern giant petrel colony about 8 km northwest of the weather

station. Michelle, our honorary biologist, accompanied me on this trip and helped me check



A southern giant petrel chick begs for a meal. Photo: Ross Cowlin

on the hatching success of these charismatic birds. I am pleased to report that the chicks are hale and hearty, several showing their indignation at our presence with some "ferocious" beak clacking. It's difficult to feel intimidated by what looks like a ball of cotton wool with a beak, but we did try – for their pride's sake. Overall hatching success is looking good for the colony. Michelle and I will be paying these birds another visit in December to check up on their progress. We'll keep you informed.

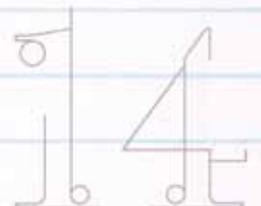


Michelle getting a shot of a brooding southern giant petrel. Photo: Ross Cowlin



Michelle on her way back from the giant petrel colony. Photo: Ross Cowlin

Closer to home, Jeroen and I spent a significant portion of this month working on the northern rockhopper penguin (*Eudyptes moseleyi*) colony at nearby Seal Beach. We have been collecting some fascinating data, although it did involve some long hours and hard work. Surprisingly little is known about the recent population declines of this endangered species and the



RSPB is interested in remedying this obvious deficiency. In the hopes of shedding some light on this subject, we started collecting data on the feeding habits and foraging behaviour of this fascinating bird. Unfortunately for us, "rockies" are not always the easiest of creatures to study. Not only do they share their rugged nesting sites with grumpy subantarctic fur seals, but they are probably the feistiest of all the birds on

birds and although I can't yet tell you too much, it appears that these diminutive penguins are diving *much* deeper than



Northern rockhopper penguin pair and chick. Photo: Ross Cowlin

Gough Island. The three Gough 56 ladies got a taste of this one sunny Sunday this month – see "The Girls go to Seal Beach". I hope they enjoyed the experience or, at the very least, developed stronger stomachs. We managed to collect feather, blood and stomach samples from a number of birds this month. Isotopes in the blood and feather samples will be analysed and will hopefully give us an idea of what the penguins have been eating over the last few weeks. We also managed to deploy a number of dive depth loggers on soon-to-be foraging



Dive depth loggers waiting for deployment on penguins. Photo: Ross Cowlin

we might have expected. Let's hope that the next month of study will reveal more.

Despite all the time we spent on penguins this month, day-to-day work on the island also had to be done. There have been molly nests to check, Atlantic petrel burrows to scope, prions to collect, shearwaters to tag and a myriad of other jobs to do. It is a busy time of year for life on this island. In brief: the great shearwaters have returned to Gough and have started laying their eggs, broad-billed prion chicks are about to fledge, we're waiting impatiently for the first Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross chicks to hatch and the skua chicks are getting bigger and bolder



A skua chick waiting for her sibling to hatch. Photo: Ross Cowlin

with every passing day. We've even had a few visits from the immense southern elephant seal (*Mirounga leonina*) and we hope to see more of them before the summer is out.



Adult male southern elephant seal. Photo: Ross Cowlin

Unfortunately, not all our news is good. Sadly, we will be saying goodbye to Jeroen this December. His untimely knee injury proved too great a setback for an island with such challenging terrain. We will all be sorry to see him go and we hope that Nic, Jeroen's replacement, is managing his journey across the South Atlantic *en route* to Gough Island.



WEIGHT WATCHERS



November 2010 kicked off with the "Weigh Watchers and Fitness Program", ranging from late-night yoga in the passage to training for the Comrades Marathon (Treadmill Edition). The spinning bike is being peddled and by the Argus in March 2011 the team members will be ready at the starting line. Added to all of this we have been introduced to our very own Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jean Claude van Damme, who spend their days pumping iron with the necessary sound-effects and a lie-telling mirror.

Aerobics is done to the rhythm of the live Nicholas Louw show,

ranging from ballroom dancing to rock and roll. And then there are the lucky ones who eat constantly and the calories just burn away and turn into natural muscles. What else would you expect from scaling cliff faces every day! All in a day's work, I suppose.

So the day comes around once a month where the team queues for their medicals. It's a privilege to inform all of you that the Gough 56 team is fit and healthy and that everyone still has their original white Colgate smiles. However, what is revealed once a month by the Dreaded Scale Monster will always remain a secret.

WORDS AND PHOTO BY LEONIE OLIVIER

This month the normal maintenance was done as scheduled around the base, and the HF antenna and mast were repaired. This system is needed when we lose communication via the satellite system, and it is then that the old radio system comes into its own. It took most of the team members to get the mast back up into position, but the system is now working very well and it has improved our emergency communication capabilities. We also did some much-needed grass-cutting under the catwalks leading down to the food store from the main building.

HOMIE IMPROVEMENT

BY JOHN McLINDEN

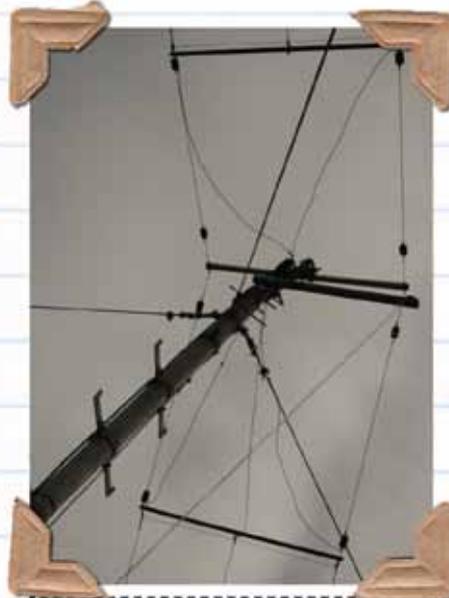


Photo: John McLinden

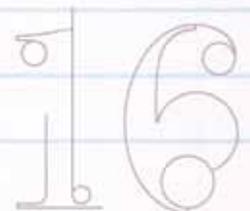


Photo: Robyn Knight



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THE WALL OF ~~FAME~~ SHAME



COSTUME of the Month:

Prince - Pirate outfit

MOUSE-HUNTER of the Month:

Shmonie - 33 mice

MEAL of the Month:

Ross - Hamburgers

DESSERT of the Month:

Michelle's Secret Ice-cream

"Left-Overs" Pudding

"TART" of the Month:

Michelle - Ross's birthday milk tart

FLOP of the month:

Prince's burnt pap

SHOW of the Month:

The Michelle Show (Wednesdays, 6:30 - 7:30pm)





THE ^{next} WALL OF ~~FAME~~ SHAME

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"No one likes a baby - I've got three of them to handle when I get back home" - Jeroen

"Ek soek nie jou vuil mond op my toon nie" - Michelle

"Touch jou eie wood" - Shmones

"In soos 'n piesang; uit soos 'n pynappel" - Shmones

"Have you met the right girl yet?" - Mornay

"There're lots; I love them all" - John

"I haven't got blood on my hands like you guys do" - Mornay, regarding the mouse-hunting

THE DARWIN AWARD

"MORNAY VS THE SUN"

Mornay takes the award this month for getting burnt on his fishing expedition, and then lying shirtless in the sun the very next day, as if he'd never seen the sun before, getting burnt on top of existing sunburn.

Tsk tsk, Mornay!



GOUGH WEATHER

• NOVEMBER CLIMATE STATS •

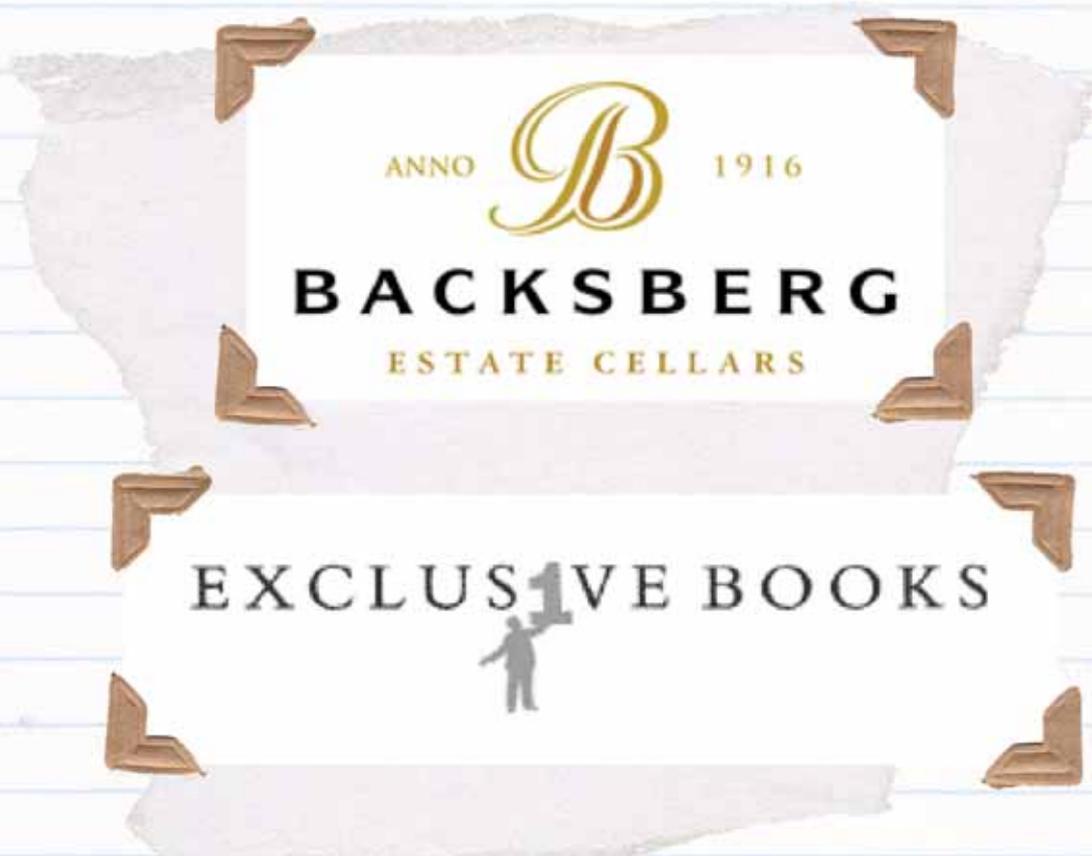
Ave. Max Pressure	:	1016.6 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	:	1011.0 hPa
Ave. Pressure	:	1013.1 hPa
Max Pressure	:	1028.4 hPa
Min Pressure	:	992.3 hPa
Ave. Max Temp	:	14.9 °C
Ave. Min Temp	:	10.3 °C
Ave. Temp	:	12.6 °C
Max Temp	:	21.5 °C
Min Temp	:	7.3 °C
Max Sea Temp	:	13.1 °C
Min Sea Temp	:	11.0 °C
Ave Humidity	:	78 %
Max Humidity	:	96 %
Min Humidity	:	37 %
Max Wind Gust	:	27.0 m/s or 97.2 km/h
Total Rainfall	:	110.4 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	:	38.8 mm
Total days with rain	:	15 days
Total days >1mm	:	7 days
Total Sunshine	:	110.3 hours



(The man from Page 13)



SPONSORS



G56 would like to thank Exclusive Books for their kind donation of three large boxes of books, as well as Backsberg Wine Estate for the wine we received from them. Their contributions have definitely helped make us feel that much more like we're at home away from home.

If you have any comments or queries about any of the content of this newsletter, or any suggestions for following issues, please contact us:

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Designed and edited by Robyn Knight
Translations and cover illustration
by Michelle Steenkamp



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