



Gough Gazette

Edition 47 Volume 4



Gough Sunrise (© S.Podile)

December is a month of celebration all over the world, so why not on Gough as well? Events included a wonderful Christmas lunch, Lehlohonolo's birthday celebration, and New Year's Eve; all attended by our good friend B.O.B (Bring Own Bottle!).

CHRISTMAS

Chris compiled a suggested menu a week before the time, and everyone was given a chance to add their choices. Tshidi, Chris and Shady volunteered to be the chefs for the actual day. A lot of the food was prepared the day before, to lighten the workload on Christmas day. Lunch

was served at about 16h30 to suit everyone. The table was set with a sparkling white tablecloth, Christmas decorations and everyone wearing smart casual.

MENU

Mutton leg – Shady

Roast leg of pork, Salads and deserts
- Chris

Vegetables, savoury rice and custard -
Matshidiso

Special fruitcake from South Africa -
Chris' mom

BRAAI ON THE 31st

I hadn't realised how one's isolation on the island can sensitise you to all sorts of noise, crowds and accidents. During this time of the year I know that South Africa was going through a rough time again with road fatalities rising, but our God saved many people in a very appreciable manner.

The braai was successful. I felt so sorry for the birds, penguins and seals because of a very loud music till late. Guess the pace picked up slowly but surely as 2002 kept on crawling closer. I suppose it was a good thing our satellite system was out of order, or we might have had some irate telephone calls from our neighbours on Tristan de Cunha! Unfortunately I had to disappear from the party earlier than I wanted to, because I was starting the shift the following morning.



FV Edinburgh (© C de Beer)

Goodbye to old friends

The fishing vessel, Edinburgh, has been with us for about three months. After their departure to South Africa last month the base tended to be so quiet. They used to chat with us daily on the VHF radio. We also had something to watch on the sea when they traveled southwest in the early

CHANGING WEATHER

The first morning of 2002 dawned bright, with four octas cloud, a light northerly wind with calm sea. I couldn't wake anyone to come and share the beautiful morning with me. They were still enjoying the party induced slumber! I can't forecast Gough's weather but I can observe it. It started raining in the late afternoon, a lovely day to end the first day of the New Year.

‘Sefela se re: Tsela e thata jwang e ke e tsamayang, loeto le tla fela leng ke kene kananeng. Se ile sa tsaya maikutlo a me mosong oo’
(The hymn says: The route I took is so difficult, when will the journey end, to be home. This hymn touched my soul that same morning)

Thanks to My God.

(Matshidiso Moremi)

hours of the morning and returning back to north east of Gough later. After their departure the only sound that doesn't come from the base, is the seals barking and their bad smell blowing up from Seal Beach.

The festive season was enjoyed to the fullest. In short; thanks to everyone who made my birthday a success. I know that my colleagues, relatives and friends out there wanted to send best wishes, but our lines were down. But I'm still happy and heart to heart - thanks a lot.

Here's a short humorous tale to share. We all know that Mondays is our skivvy day. I asked Chris if we get half a day off, like the rest of South Africa because it's the 31st? Then I told him I want another half a day off because it was my birthday! That would've meant no skivvy for me, but unfortunately he didn't fall for it!

Anyway we are looking forward to our new visitors, the fishing vessel Kelso, who will be arriving towards the end of January.

(Lehlohonolo Khesa)

The beauty in nature.

Gough Island, actually the whole world, is a wonderful place. This island I call home at the moment is a very beautiful place. The variety of bird life is amazing, both by day and night.

At the moment some of the birds have chicks, while others have just started incubating their eggs. The Skua chicks have all but fledged, the Yellownose chicks are getting very cheeky, and the Goneys (Tristan Albatross) have just started breeding.



Recently while walking on the island I've had the opportunity to see the following birds: Yellow nose albatross, Sooty Albatross, Tristan Albatross, Skua, Moorhen, Giant Petrel, the elusive Gough Bunting, and terns.



Gough Bunting (© C de Beer)

Other life around the island lives below the surface. According to the fishing vessels in the area species found are: Octopus, crayfish, bluefish, "five fingers", jakopewer, etc.



Tern (© C de Beer)

The Master artist truly created a magnificent canvas when He worked on the Island. All around the island are the most amazing rock formations. These beautifully sculpted pieces of rock take on an amazing array of shapes, amongst others, a "rock cathedral" aptly named Church Rock, complete with bell tower and arches, and "Face Rock" where, if you take a good look, you will see the face of a man – with dreadlocks!



Face Rock (© C de Beer)

I have truly been blessed to have the opportunity to see all these things. And to think a year ago, I had the good fortune of being in Antarctica, and there I saw the Southern Lights (Aurora Australis). This must be one of the most spectacular natural phenomena one can witness. It lights up the dark winter skies in soft hues of green, purple and red, ever changing curtains of colour arcing across the heavens.

I have truly been blessed!

(Michael Rabotho)

I'm happy to tell you that our old year ended on a high note, and the new one also started that way.

Christmas day was very exciting, settings, decorating and installation of Christmas tree. We had early supper, which was prepared for that day, and one could say we wish we could to eat like this everyday!

Coming to office work it was a busy day on Christmas because the automatic weather station was acting up and we managed to change some of the sensors with the help of the radio technician.

The new year's celebration was combined with a birthday party for Lehlohonolo, our radio technician. I was the organiser for his party, and it was splendid. The Trinity gang arranged a braai before the party.

(Titus Mosweu)

Summer weather

During December we experienced lovely weather. On a couple of occasions we had lovely sunny blue skies, with sufficient wind blowing for a workout on the Helipad. This is accomplished with the help of my Parafoil kite. A few of the other team members expressed their interest in giving kite flying a go, so when one of those perfect kiting days arrived, we moved to the helipad en mass.

Some team members had to swallow their pride ("It's EASY, I can make it do all kinds of things!" after which the kite promptly flew straight into the ground) and go and pick the kite out the bushes.



Up Up Up!!!

But everyone had fun, and those who didn't believe that flying a kite can be hard work, felt it in their muscles the next day.

(Chris de Beer)

***Monthly Weather Statistics
December 2001***

Average Temperature : 14.7°C

Maximum Temperature : 25.2°C

Minimum Temperature : 7.0°C

Highest Pressure : 1028.4hPa

Lowest Pressure : 1004.1 hPa

Total rainfall : 108.6mm

Days with rainfall : 16 days

Total sunshine : 197 hrs

Maximum wind gust : 103.3 km/h

Sponsors

I would like to thank all these companies and individuals, who through their donations, have contributed greatly to our comfort and enjoyment during our stay. We ask wherever possible our supporters support them as well.

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Chris demonstrating aerobatics