



July seemingly evolved into a month of respite on Bird Island. Post the frantic preparations and celebrations of midwinter, following the final closure of many science activities and reports until next summer, and experiencing an exponential increase in the number of skiing days available gave all living on the island a chance for some real leisure time.

After removal of the one of the Wanderer Ridge Study Area hides back in April, Alex turned his vandalistic tendencies to removing the old hut located on Molly Hill. This miniscule wooden box, around four feet square, was used extensively throughout the 1980's holding tracking equipment for devices deployed on South Georgian Shags, but has since been left to enjoy its superb outlook on the island.



The 'average' view from Molly Hill

No longer is that the case as some sturdy work with a crowbar and a power-saw from the afore mentioned fellow proved. It must be noted that he did enlist the aid of a few sherpas in retrieving the debris, with the promise of many BBQs using the resulting junk wood.



Obviously the wanton destruction of such fine property must have causing a few feelings of guilt, because shortly after this the new Seal Study Beach Hut was commissioned for action. The sherpa system was again employed and the team working like a fine piece of intricately interconnected machinery, moving the new structure and replacing the old unit with record speed. To celebrate a BBQ lunch was laid on with the serenity of the quiet beach combining most excellently with the fine food. Unfortunately the misbehaviour of some of the labourers prevents me from showing pictures of the extensive buffet!

Winter is a particularly enjoyable time on Bird Island for many reasons, one of which is the vast improvement in the weather. Summer can often

Sarah's new home

be quite gloomy with many misty days and drizzling rain broken by infrequent sunny spells. In contrast the cold months regularly see alternating snowy and sunny periods, always pleasing to get a good skiing base and then have sunshine to enjoy it in! July has been our best skiing month so far and two runs have been pegged out on the base of our largest peak, La Roche (356m).



LaRoche and a lovely sunrise

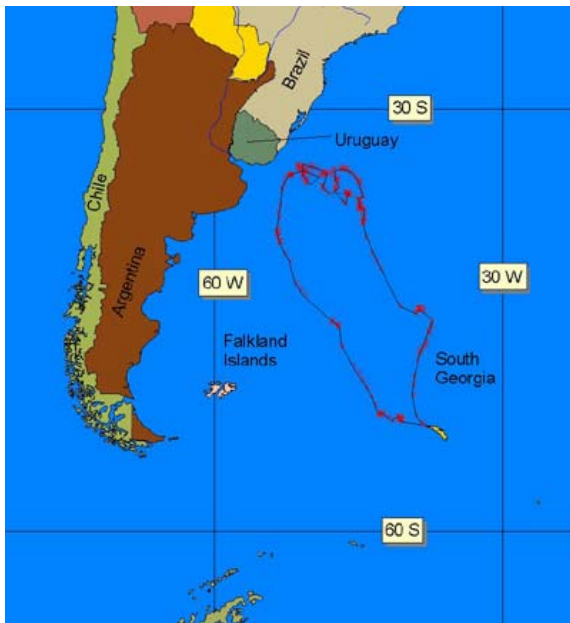
Alex and Sarah are without a doubt the two experts on the planks with Chris and myself the bumbling amateurs.

Nevertheless with careful instruction (any vicious rumours of skiing related accidents



Chris ready to attack the slopes

are vastly exaggerated I assure you) we are managing to stay upright most of the time and occasionally appear almost competent. Anyway I'm told as long as you look the part you're 80% of the way there!



Sadly not is all well in ski paradise at the moment. A sudden thaw has reduced our base to the bare minimum, but the weather appears to be getting colder again so our hopes remain high for more days on the slopes.

A little active science work still continues in the depths of winter. My GPS tracking of the Wandering Albatrosses is aiming to discover whether they use different foraging areas during the winter period to those over summer. The map on the left is of

a female who flew 7887 kilometres in 17 days. During one 24 hour period she clocked an astonishing average speed of 87 kph. We're all pretty envious here, a quick two week trip to Buenos Aries or Montevideo would be most enjoyable.

Other impressive occurrences this month have revolved around the kitchen and living room with the spare hours being devoted to baking and musicianship. Alex is rapidly perfecting his pork pie recipe, Sarah has designs on becoming an Italian momma with her fabulous range of fresh pasta, Chris continues his love affair with bakewell puddings whilst I have to bring up the also-rans with few specialities. One cosy evening saw a musical and literary extravaganza take place with the recital of several Chopin and Lizst numbers with some improvised Jazz on the keyboard, a virtuoso flute performance and some ballads of adventure told to eager ears.

That's really the extent of our adventures on the little island this month. Amazingly enough the 26th of July marked my first complete year of employment by the British Antarctic Survey, and I wonder how the next year will compare when it feels like I stepped onto the plane departing Australia for the U.K. only yesterday.



Love to Family and Friends

Isaac

P.S. A big congratulations to Richard Phillips and Janet Silk, B.A.S. scientists for their marriage during July!