

**Subject: Scholes cabin 5 (p): Exercise on board
1 February 2010 1241 UTM -69.8717, -7.4951**

Dear Stirling,

How did the rowing camp go? Sport is meant to be fun, but schools also encourage you to participate for other reasons - to learn teamwork and to stay healthy, to name two. Getting enough exercise on a small ship is a bit of a challenge, especially when the weather is bad, the working hours are long and you eat three big meals a day.

There is a small gym on board, and some people are good about visiting it every day. As you know, I hate going to gym at the best of times, and sweating it out in a windowless box does not excite me at all. I can't go for a run like I do at the CSIR. I do try to scamper up the five flights of stairs to the bridge several times a day, but that really isn't enough.

Fortunately, with the two helicopters based in Antarctica during the buoy run, the hanger is mostly empty. So the bosun rigged up a volleyball net there, and we play for an hour when we can. It is a bit hazardous! The floor of the hanger is made of steel plates, covered with rough non-slip paint. It is hard and unforgiving if you take a tumble. The hanger is not entirely empty - the two rescue boats are still there, and if you step out of the court on the aft side you will crash into them. Finally, the ship is rocking and rolling this way and that - you jump for a ball, and come down in entirely a different place! But it is a good way to build up a sweat without the drudgery of doing exercise.

It is also a good way to get to know the crew and officers. We mix up the teams, so you get tough old seamen playing alongside young students, bosses with employees, women with men. It gets quite competitive, and there is a great deal of appealing to the ref, whose word is seldom final! The rules are a bit flexible too - do you get a second service if you hit the crane cable?

The weather remains lousy, so I have hardly been up onto the monkey deck since leaving South Georgia. The several middle-of-the-night hours I spend on the poop deck and the two hours in the CTD docking room, which is open to the sea, are quite enough fresh air, thank you!

The buoy run is over. We are picking our way through broken pack-ice again, some tens of kilometres north of the ice port at Akta Bukta. We have collected a wonderful dataset, but are all a bit burned out from the long hours, and looking forward to a break. I am not sure we have enough energy even to hold a party tonight.

Love,
Dad