

Northwest Passage

Aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* | 08 - 22 September 2022





Cambridge Bay

DAY 1 | Thursday 08 September

Position at 0730 on 08 September

Latitude: 69°07' N

Longitude: 105°04' W

Course: Anchored at Cambridge Bay

Speed: Anchored at Cambridge Bay

Wind Speed: 30 knots NE

Barometer: 1000

Air Temp: 0°C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

We knew we'd arrived the moment we stepped off the plane. A keen wind from the north whipped across the tarmac, adding a chill to the air temperature that barely rose above 2°C.

We were transported by van in small groups into Cambridge Bay. This is a town with no frills, built for a harsh environment. We were met by an array of guides, led by Angela. They showed us around the town and told us about its history and role.

Life here runs to the rhythm of the Arctic char. In the spring the char leave the local lakes and flood into Cambridge Bay and the surrounding sea. For a brief few weeks in summer, the town's population explodes, lured by the fish. Float planes shuttle workers out to camps to catch and process the fish. Cambridge Bay meanwhile is like a ghost town. As quickly as they arrived, the char retreat up the river to spawn, hopefully to guarantee an income next year.

Occasionally a polar bear appears in the area, but they're usually further north on the ice. Grizzly bear are present as well as wolves. Arctic foxes and seals are prized for their fur. This is a subsistence environment, and it shows.

As we learned about the town and warmed ourselves with a coffee in the Red Fish, our Captain was busy keeping the *Greg Mortimer* safe. Winds were blowing 30 knots and gusting much higher. The floor of the bay is rocky, which meant the anchor kept dragging. The Captain repositioned the ship four times deploying nearly 200 metres of chain in just 20 metres of water. Inevitably this created a delay; it's not safe for Zodiacs to approach the ship while the props and thrusters are running.

As soon as it was safe, we started to shuttle from shore. Fortunately, we were going with the wind and we stayed dry. Canadian regulations demanded that all luggage was inspected, which created further delay, especially as every case had to be unlocked and checked.

The Safety Drill, a mandatory briefing for any vessel going to sea, was pushed back. Ian led us through the process over the PA and the crew checked the manifest. We donned our life jackets and followed the crew from the muster station to the lifeboats.

Finally it was time to eat. We got a sample of the fine food we will enjoy aboard *Greg Mortimer*.

Half an hour after dinner, the bar and decks were empty. Bed was welcome after such a hectic day.

Today marked the end of an era.

Queen Elizabeth II died peacefully at Balmoral Castle in Scotland. Many of us were moved by Bob's brief words at the passing of this incredible lady. She had truly fulfilled the promise she had made on her 21st birthday "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be short or long shall be devoted to your service." God Save the Queen.



Queen Maud Gulf, King William Island

DAY 2 | Friday 09 September

Position at 0800 on 09 September

Latitude: 69°08' N

Longitude: 100°53' W

Course: 50°

Speed: 11.5 knots

Wind Speed: 20 knots from NNW

Barometer: 1002

Air Temp: -1°C

Life is the essence of a never ending adventure,
Exciting never boring,
Otherwise,
There is no life.

—Anonymous

This first morning at sea was largely taken up with a muck boot exchange down in the mudroom and an expedition jacket swap in the Lecture Theatre. Then there was a mandatory AECO and Zodiac briefing which took care of most people's morning. It is the usual pattern for the first day aboard the *Greg Mortimer* as we prepare for our first landings of the expedition.

But the morning also witnessed two very special visitors to the ship.

Several people saw a peregrine falcon flying around the outside of the ship, it seemed to have roosted with us overnight. At one stage it zoomed past the windows of the Observation Lounge on Deck 8 at high speed. Then, startling evidence came to light of a bloody murder on the ship. Scattered feathers were found at the back of Deck 7 which on closer examination came from a migrating wader. Many birds are moving south at this time of year and the poor wader was minding its own business migrating over the sea when it got a very nasty surprise and became breakfast for our peregrine falcon.

Just a couple of hours later a magnificent snowy owl landed briefly on the deck hand rail right outside the observation deck and provided an amazing photo opportunity.

Although it seems strange to think of an owl flying far out over the sea it is not unusual for snowy owls which are also beginning to drift south. The owl didn't stay for more than a few minutes before continuing on its way, but it left memories of a meeting with one of the most beautiful denizens of the Arctic for all who saw it.

In the afternoon we had a great lecture from our photographer Michael "An Introduction to Photography" and a little later guest lecturer Bob Headland delivered a fascinating lecture "Unveiling the Arctic"

In the evening we had the captains welcome with canapes and champers in the Elephant Island bar and Lecture Theatre.

Together we toasted to a successful voyage in true expedition style of the Northwest Passage.



Coningham Bay, Bellot Strait, Zenith Point

DAY 3 | Saturday 10 September

Position at 0530 on 10 September

Latitude: 71°47' N

Longitude: 96°46' W

Course: 46°

Speed: 25 knots

Wind Speed: 23 knots N

Barometer: 1000

Air Temp: 0°C

A first walk in any new country is one of the things which makes life on this planet worth being grateful for.

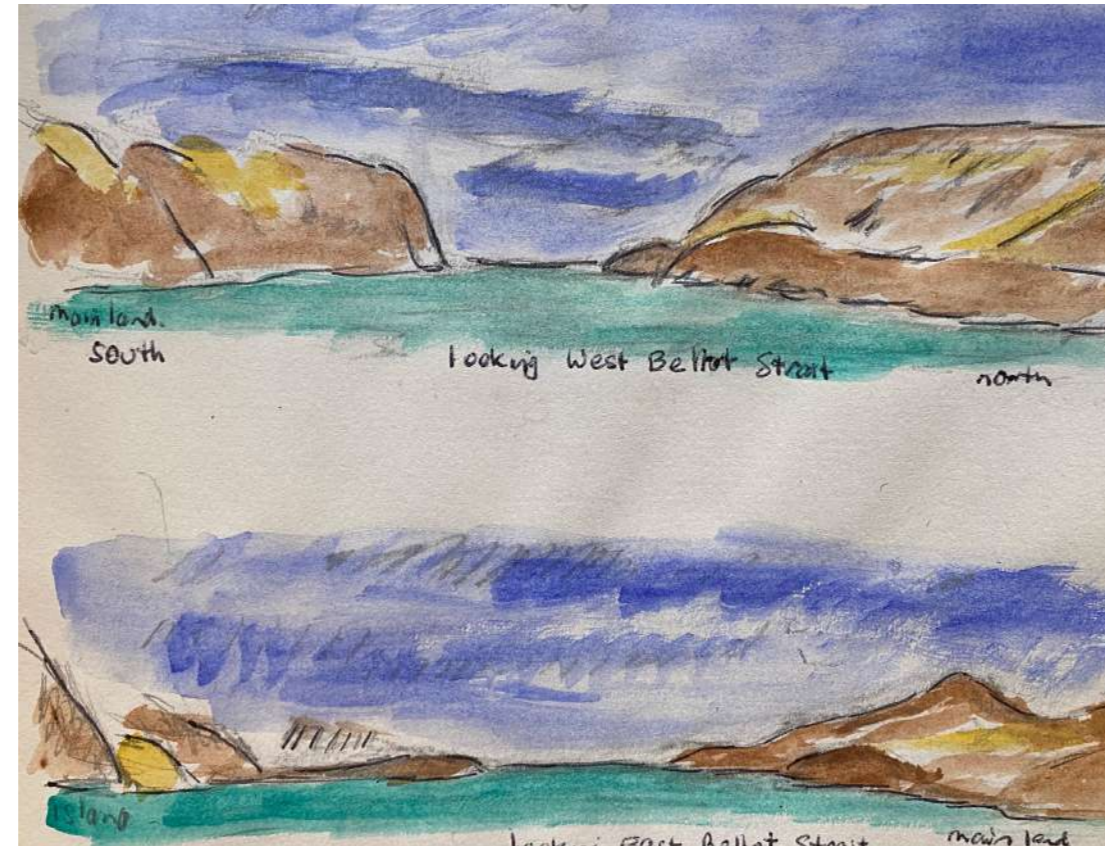
—Charles William Beebe

Welcome to your expedition! After a restful yesterday adjusting to ship life, this morning we kickstarted our adventure with a 6am wakeup from Bob encouraging us to hop out of bed and see what nature has to offer. She certainly delivered a rousingly bracing experience, as we ran towards the shallow bay through strong winds and choppy seas. It certainly was a good way to test our waterproof gear. Approaching the shore keen eyes could discern a white spot moving along the beach, which resolved into a polar bear on the move. Its flattened haunches indicated its condition wasn't the best, reminding us that the season is advanced and the bears are waiting to resume their winter hunting season on the sea ice. We then spotted another white spot, but this time clear white as opposed to the yellowish tinge of the bear fur... a snowy owl! The bear showed some interest, but the owl flew safely out of reach. Leaving the pair to their business we continued back towards the entrance of the bay, scanning the shores for more points of interest.

After commenting on the likelihood of finding a stash of building material alongside the narrow inlet we came across another bear ambling along the uplands. In distinctly better condition, with a rounded rump and nonchalant stride we watched as eventually the first bear came back into view, leading to a theory that we were watching a mother and older juvenile bear perhaps taking its first strides into solitary life. A few Zodiacs powered further into the bay and were rewarded for their thorough soaking with a view of two Arctic fox and another snowy owl. Exiting the bay, we noticed many beluga skeletons strewn along the shoreline, standing witness to seasonal patterns and the flow of life that we are here in the Arctic to observe.

Getting back to the ship we grabbed a bite of chow to replenish our efforts of the morning and stood by for our afternoon plan to cruise Bellot Strait.

We entered the narrows, flanked by amazing geologic formations and even a few musk oxen in addition to the squadrons of northern fulmars flying low along the water's surface all around the ship. The water was calm, a welcome change from the morning and an auspicious sign that our landing at Point Zenith could happen. Then the call came to get geared up and we were shuttled ashore to stand at the cairn marking the northern most point of contiguous North America. That wasn't the only notable feature of the landing, as the geology, lichens, and outrageous plankton diversity of the shoreline were all capturing our interest.



Finally, we headed home to the cozy *Greg Mortimer*, to enjoy our evening briefing, a drink with friends new and old, and dreams of what tomorrow might bring.



Fort Ross, Hazard Inlet; Qatariaqiuk

DAY 4 | Sunday 11 September

Position at 0730 on 11 September

Latitude: 72°00.2'N

Longitude: 94°13.3'W

Course: 0°

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: 10 knots N

Barometer: 998

Air Temp: 1°C

There is, one knows not what sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently awful stirrings seem to speak of some hidden soul beneath.

—Herman Melville

The sea and the sky merged seamlessly through the morning fog all around the ship. It took a second glance to see the very faintest outline of land, and peering deeper into the mist one could just make out two deserted structures that added to the mystery of the morning.

Our plan to land ashore and investigate Fort Ross was put on hold until the fog improved as fog and humans wandering on land in polar bear habitat isn't a great combination.

The significance of Fort Ross stretches back to the Franklin search era, when McClintock established a camp at a place he dubbed "Depot Bay". It was from here, on a land-based expedition that McClintock found a note with the news of Franklin's men in the cairn at Victory Point. The spot remained desolate until 1937, when the Hudson Bay Company founded one of their most northern trading posts and the last to be established for the fox-pelt trade. The silver fox was trapped in its best pelage, at the end of winter / beginning of spring. The trading post was only operational for 11 years before severe ice conditions rendered it uneconomical and difficult to access.

Fortunately, the morning fog seemed to lift enough for our scout team to have visibility and feel comfortable that there were no surprises in the immediate vicinity, and to allow a controlled landing of limited passengers.

With astounding respect for the people who were posted here for years at a time, we were able to explore the vestiges of the former trading post. Only two buildings remain, but relatively intact - the factor's residence and the store, but there were signs of other buildings and tent rings. And nearby, there is also a bronze memorial plaque placed in 1979 by descendants of Francis McClintock, commemorating his involvement in the search for Franklin's missing expedition and the discovery of the Northwest Passage. We also came across a dead white fox in reverence to what the origins of the trading post had been. The kayakers were also lucky enough to spot a short-tailed weasel scampering around the rocks.

After lunch back on the ship, the afternoon expedition menu had an outing planned to visit the pre-historic Thule settlements at Qariargiuk in the aptly named Hazard Inlet. The scout boat made it 5 kilometre into Hazard Inlet to the landing but (un)fortuitously guarding the site was a very large polar bear in excellent condition. Plan A of



Port Leopold, Prince Leopold Island

DAY 5 | Monday 12 September

Position at 0700 on 12 September

Latitude: 73°48.5'N

Longitude: 90°17.5'W

Course: 0°

Speed: 5.4 knots

Nunavut is the largest yet least populated of all the provinces and territories in Canada, with a total area of over 2 million km² (>800,000 mi²) and a population of approximately 33,000 people (one person for every 65 km² (25 mi²)).

Today was spent at the northeast tip of Somerset Island, in Qikiqtaaluk region of Nunavut, in the Canadian high Arctic. Guest lecturer Bob Headland described his definition of the high Arctic to me as "above the line where mosquitos are seldom found"

The day had a perfect combination of learning about and visiting Arctic history at Port Leopold and viewing the immense wildlife living on Prince Leopold Island.

In the morning we saw another part of the rich history the Northwest Passage explorers left behind. At Port Leopold our kayakers and hikers landed at the site of a single desolate hut, constructed by the Hudson Bay Company. It was built in 1926 and then abandoned in 1927 as a failed attempt of establishing a trading station. The other important historical feature in this barren landscape is the famous rock engraved with "1849" "E", "I". The crew of HMS "Enterprise" and "Investigator" marked this rock when they were forced to overwinter during their search for the lost Franklin expedition on behalf of the Royal Navy.

Not far from these features, a cairn also stands where Ross's rescue expedition left supplies and fuel in the event Franklin and his men would happen on this bay, still today remains of the food can be seen.

The hikers and kayakers headed south, down the coast towards a few archaeological sites from times of the Thule culture. We observed well preserved dwellings of the Thule people and imagined how they lived and survived in the inhospitable arctic.

While we were enjoying a delicious lunch, the ship made its way further north to Prince Leopold Island. As we approached and got closer to the cliffs on the eastern side of the island we started to hear the symphony of nesting kittiwakes. We had a Zodiac cruise here following the islands cliffs that rose 200-300 meter high and were bustling with life. Thousands of kittiwakes, fulmars, brunnich guillemots (yheck-billed murre) were flying above our heads. After an adventurous two-hour Zodiac cruise and an amazing encounter with canadian wildlife we made our way back to the ship.

We then enjoyed a drink from the bar and another interesting recap from the expedition team, however the day

Wind Speed: 12 knots NW

Barometer: 1004

Air Temp: -2°C

was not over. As our daily recap finished the evening light shone bright orange through the windows on Deck 5 our expedition kayak guide Peter, spotted two polar bears on shore, glowing in the evening light. The ship drew closer and we had an amazing view before finishing the day with wine and another delicious meal served by our crew.



Beechey Island, Radstock Bay (Caswell Tower)

DAY 6 | Tuesday 13 September

Position at 0700 on 13 September

Latitude: 74°40' N

Longitude: 91°45' W

Course: 330°

Speed: 5.7 knots

Wind Speed: 8 knots NNE

Barometer: 1007

Air Temp: 2°C

Civilization began to lose its zest for me. I began to long for the great white desolation... the long, long Arctic day, the silence, the vastness of the great white lonely North. And back I went.

—Robert Peary

This was a major day for historical sites, relatively modern and quite ancient. Conditions were very favourable; light wind and tranquil sea, temperatures slightly above freezing, sporadically sunny, and dry. *Greg Mortimer* anchored in Erebus and Terror Bay where Sir John Franklin spent the 1845-46 winter. The vertical cliffs of Beechey Island and its undulating flanks, with mountainous topography of Devon Island, surrounded us as landing preparations and kayaking began. It is a relatively easy place to scout for bears thus a guarded perimeter was soon established. There are two major historical sites on the island: the graves and the cenotaph. After explanation of precautions landings were made at both sites which allowed a changeover during the morning. Each was on a storm-tossed beach with a brief scramble up scree. In addition, a long walk was offered, ascending to the summit plateau too see Franklin's signal cairn.

Several features were seen around the cenotaph which was an octagonal post with a deeply scored sphere atop (from bear claws). It had plaques naming the 129 men who did not return from the expedition and, on its back, a Post Office box. A large marble inscribed slab, provided by Lady Jane Franklin, and other plaques were adjacent (transcriptions were provided). Many of the expedition's food containers, filled with stones and still exhibiting their soldered seams, formed a cross lying a couple of metres in front of this. Down the slope the remains of Northumberland House, with its once voluminous contents, lay widely scattered. These included many barrel hoops and staves, a large coal depot, a spar which was once a flag-pole. A pyramidal wooden survey mark, deployed by HMCGS Labrador in 1956, was nearby. Several other monuments were also in the vicinity – but of minor, if any, historical significance.

The trek between the sites involved a good walk across stable scree. One group took the higher inland trail and the other walked along the beach exchanging positions in about 20 minutes. The entire area is best described as bleak, even though our visit was during the last days of an Arctic summer.

The site, with four graves and a memorial, was a poignant reminder of the fate of Franklin's last expedition.

Three men had arrived from the Atlantic Ocean and one from the Pacific Ocean aboard HMS Investigator. Thus, their remains connected the Northwest Passage. Several other relics of the expedition were in the vicinity.

Back aboard for lunch while *Greg Mortimer* navigated to Radstock Bay, on Devon Island, for the next landing.

Caswell Tower was a major shore feature, a prominent monolith. Recent large boulders on the beach and elsewhere showed it best not to remain close. This site had ancient historical remains of Thule semi-subterranean houses. Many of these were indicated by lush vegetation around them, as were adjacent meat caches. The hut ruins occurred in three eras: very old, much eroded, remains not far from the beach; younger ones further inland; and the youngest beyond them. Some of the last had been in use as recently as half a century ago before the advent of the Little Ice Age caused their inhabitants, ancestors of present Inuit, to migrate further south leaving the entire Arctic north of Parry Channel uninhabited until the 20th century. The situation was fascinating showing adaption to the harsh climate. Entrances were low and down-hill forming a cold sump and keeping heat inside. Walls were stone excavated to about a metre deep. Some remains of sleeping platforms could be discerned. Rafters of whale ribs and jaw bones with other skeletal remains formed the structure. Roofs were skin; mainly of walrus and seal. The site was protected with a 3 metre perimeter established by Parks Canada. The visit was another opportunity for an easy walk across the tundra with some exercise ashore. The very fit made a longer trek up the steep slopes of Caswell Tower for some magnificent views and to visit an observation post once used for polar bear research.

Around Radstock Bay flora was more abundant than on Beechey Island and more fauna was evident. There was evidence of caribou and musk oxen on the tundra. Birds were sporadic, including a patrolling raven.



Plaques on the *Franklin Memorial*, Beechey Island

TO THE MEMORY OF

FRANKLIN

CROZIER, FITZJAMES

AND ALL THEIR
GALLANT BROTHER OFFICERS AND FAITHFUL
COMPANIONS WHO HAVE SUFFERED AND PERISHED
IN THE CAUSE OF SCIENCE AND
THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY

THIS TABLET

IS ERECTED NEAR THE SPOT WHERE
THEY PASSED THEIR FIRST ARCTIC
WINTER, AND WHENCE THEY ISSUED
FORTH TO CONQUER DIFFICULTIES OR

TO DIE

IT COMMEMORATES THE GRIEF OF THEIR
ADMIRING COUNTRYMEN AND FRIENDS,
AND THE ANGUISH, SUBDUED BY FAITH
OF HER WHO HAS LOST, IN THE HEROIC
LEADER OF THE EXPEDITION, THE MOST
DEVOTED AND AFFECTIONATE OF
HUSBANDS

-----o-----
"AND SO **HE** BRINGETH THEM UNTO THE
HAVEN WHERE THEY WOULD BE."

1855



Dundas Harbour, Croker Bay

DAY 7 | Wednesday 14 September

Position at 0700 On 14 September

Latitude: 74°32' N

Longitude: 82°26' W

Course: 110°

Speed: 4.0 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots N

Barometer: 1008

Air Temp: 0°C

The impression which the floe-ice of the Arctic seas makes upon the traveler for the first time he sees it is very remarkable. Most people will find that what they actually see is not a little different from what they have expected. A world of wonders and enchantments, a complete horizon of wild fantastic forms, ever changing, ever new, a wealth of brilliant rainbow hues playing and glowing amid the cold purity of the crystal ice, such are the features of the picture which the ingenuity of the imagination so often fondly creates.

—Fridtjof Nansen, The First Crossing of Greenland

We were all pleasantly surprised this morning to wake up to calm winds and some moody, beautiful skies. This fine September day started out just one cove over from the historical Dundas Harbour with another jam-packed day of adventures ahead!

We started off after breakfast heading out for a landing on a beach just to the west of Dundas Harbour. We couldn't land at the harbour itself due to too much ice apparently... Ice??? Having only seen a few random ice bergs it seemed hard to believe. Well, from the landing site it was a short walk up a little hill and the rumour became reality. The bay in front of the old RCMP outpost was absolutely chocked full of a mixture of sea ice and glacial ice with some large ice bergs out in the bay. Simply spectacular.

During our approach to Croker Bay the water was glassy calm making it perfect for wildlife viewing. The observation lounge on Deck 8 was bustling where people saw seals, there were rumours of narwhals, and even a few polar bears on shore! When we arrived at the magnificent glacier face, we all jumped in Zodiacs and kayaks and set off in search of some beauty. A couple of photography Zodiacs had amazing light for shooting ice with stunning blues popping in contrast to a powerful sky. There's been a lot of plankton talk on the ship lately and you could tell that people were starting to notice a little more today with some strange floating critters in the water as well. All was peaceful until over the radio everyone heard from the kayakers that they had just seen 30 to 50 Narwhal! These whales are known as the unicorns of the sea, so they are NOT to be missed when the opportunity arises. Unfortunately, after a mad chase most Zodiacs came up empty handed. Only a lucky couple of boats got a quick glimpse of what the kayakers experienced. You can really see why kayakers were designed as silent hunting vessels for sneaking up on animals when dealing with an elusive species like the Narwhal.

Back at dinner everyone seemed extra chatty telling tales from the day and the non-stop action we've been having for the last week. As people enjoyed their dessert, the day was capped off with an absolutely stunning sunset and a presentation from Rosemarie and Pat about "Arctic Light". What a day!



Pond Inlet, At Sea

DAY 8 | Thursday 15 September

Position at 0700 on 15 September

Latitude: 72°42' N

Longitude: 78°04' W

Course: 090°

Speed: 10 knots

Wind Speed: 3 knots E

Barometer: 1007

Air Temp: 2°C

And yet, there is only one great thing, the only thing, to see in huts and on journeys: the great day that dawns, and the light that fills the world.

—Inuit poem

During the night we passed Bylot Island sailing through Navy Board Inlet. We arrived at Eclipse Sound in the morning and after a hearty breakfast, dropped Zodiacs in preparation for our Mittimatalik hamlet visit. Mittimatalik - an Inuktitut hamlet, was named Pond Inlet in 1921 when Canadian Hudson Bay Company opened a trading post nearby.

Upon landing we were welcomed by a group of local Inuit guides. We divided into four groups that set off on a hike through the town of Pond Inlet and learnt stories and facts about living in this remote Arctic community. Shortly after, members of the crew and Expedition Team dropped off food donations for the local community food bank which was very well received. Towns and settlements like Mittimatalik suffer from food shortages due to isolate locations, harsh climate and rare shipments.

Our groups walked on a main street passing RCMP post, Parks Canada building and headed towards the sod house. Our guides told us stories from the past, of how it was to live in a house made from turf, and how those houses were constructed using whale jaw bones and seal skins. Turf houses are now replaced by regular houses which are built on poles above the ground due to permafrost. During the walk through town, we had a chance to experience the welcoming and hospitable attitude of the local people. We heard "Welcome to Pond Inlet" many times as people walked by our groups and children gathered in windows of houses to wave at us. At the end of our guided tour, we made our way to the library and community centre where we were welcomed by local artists and craftsmen. At the centre a real treat awaited us. We were welcomed with a fire lightning ceremony of a soap stone lamp followed by drum dancing and singing by one of the Elders. We were introduced to the traditions of the Inuit, we learned about drum dancing and its meaning, we also had a chance to see various Inuit sports competitions. Healthy rivalry and fair play rules were essential to sports in Inuit culture which helped to maintain a high level of fitness and strength of the fishermen and hunters. Inuit Women resorted to less active forms of competition. Throat singing was a form of competition between women in order to gain favour and affection of men. After the performance we slowly made our way back to the ship for another delicious lunch onboard.

Leaving Pond Inlet behind we took off sailing east out into Baffin Bay heading along the coast of Baffin Island.



Scott Inlet, Sillem Island

DAY 9 | Friday 16 September

Position at 0730 on 16 September

Latitude: 71°14'N

Longitude: 71°01'W

Course: 220°

Speed: 11.5 knots

Our ability to perceive quality in nature begins, as in art, with the pretty. It expands through successive stages of the beautiful to values as yet uncaptured by language.

—Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

We entered the very foggy Scott Inlet in the morning and slowly the snowy jagged, frost-shattered summits on either side started to come into view, showing blue skies above. The questions in the expedition office were, will there be less fog further into the 50-mile-deep fjord and if so when will this happen? Will there be enough visibility for safe polar bear scouting at the landing?

Scott Inlet is an arm of Baffin Bay with Scott Island at the entrance. Qukikqtaaluk, formerly called Sillem Island, is an uninhabited island further in the inlet that we circumnavigated. Sillem is the second largest island (482 square kilometres) after Bylot Island in Baffin Bay. At its south end, it splits into Clark and Gibbs fjords. The highest peak is 1590 metre.

A stunning landscape awaited us, steep cliffs mostly polished and bare. Some have grassy-turfed ledges with many glaciers coming to the sea. The cliffs on either side are reminiscent of California's Yosemite Valley. The inlet is incredibly deep at over 650 metre. At the base, huge fans of scree were evidence of active ice erosion. The stability of the scree shows that there is little tidal range, otherwise the scree would be undercut and shrink the fans. At water level volcanic intrusions were evident in large black streaks breaking up the polished buff coloured rock faces.

The kayakers decided to possibly forgo lunch in order to paddle, being let off to catch up with the ship when she anchored. They experienced the waterfalls with pure cold water pouring into the sea and ledges covered in wild blueberries and willow in fall colours and splashes of Arctic bell heather. The Citizen Science study, Secchi Disk showed us that visibility was 12 metre through the water column and the water temperature at 4°C.

After lunch we prepared for a landing. The fog cleared and a shore party scouted the unnamed small island to the southeast of Sillem Island with a cairn at 169 metres. Sixty-two expeditioners jumped at the chance to stretch our legs and get our hearts pumping. Clambering over the rocky landing, we headed over the moss and surprisingly grippy rock. A few brilliant white Arctic Hares eyed us keenly before taking off, bounding up the slope to the summit. For us, it was more exerting, but many of us reached the summit, our way marked by the Aurora Expedition guides who had scouted the island. Most passengers were able to view the hares at the summit. While the majority were climbing to the peak, six kayakers paddled north to south in Clark fjord between two glaciers,

Wind Speed: Calm (NW 1-2 knots)

Barometer: 1017

Air Temp: 3°C

one making its way to the sea producing icebergs.

With everyone onboard it was time for the Arctic Plunge in 4°C water with 20 crazy passengers and four crew taking the 'breathtaking' plunge.

Over dinner a BBQ, on Deck 8 with lots of dancing, we finished off the circumnavigation of the island. It was an incredible day and we retired shattered but feeling good.



Polar Plunge

DAY 9 | Friday 16 September



BBQ Night

DAY 9 | Friday 16 September



Sam Ford Fjord

DAY 10 | Saturday 17 September

Position at 0730 on 17 September

Latitude: 70°50'N

Longitude: 70°32'W

Course: 212°

Speed: 10 knots

Wind Speed: 8 knots NE

Barometer: 1017

Air Temp: 2°C

Believe me my young friend, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats... simply messing.

—Water Rat to Mole from Wind in the Willows

Low mist hugged the base of the cliffs as Christian woke us at the entrance to Sam Ford fjord.

A balmy 2°C degree air temperature encouraged the mist. Small icebergs drifted past stoking our imagination – one looked like a copy of The Sydney Opera House. Wind, coming over our stern gradually shifted the mist, tantalisingly revealing the grandeur of Broad Peak on our starboard for a few seconds. A call was made to start a kayak operation. A few got ready and left by Zodiac to begin their paddle. The call was made for a Zodiac cruise. We crept into a small inlet with a compact glacier at its head. The glacier was 50-60 metres high with crevasses stepping down to its face. The face showed signs of weathering, an indication that the glacier was slow moving, but we kept our distance anyway.

Brian put out a radio call to explain that the rocks were part of the Laurentian craton, an ancient part of the earth's crust that has been squeezed and heated for billions of years, metamorphosing any existing rocks. Broad Peak comprises of the remnants of a large pluton, a magma chamber which slowly cooled and crystalized into granite.

The difference between the two rock types was clear on the sheer cliff faces that were now bathed in sunshine and towering above us. The gneisses exhibited exquisite banding while the granite was one amorphous mass. It was difficult to get a perspective on the height of the cliffs as we didn't have trees for handy reference.

A katabatic wind got up and with it, conditions quickly changed. Swell built up in the tidal stream and Zodiac drivers started making their way back to the ship, which was some distance away. Christian requested that the ship came closer, which it did, reducing our time in the swell.

The kayak safety Zodiac developed an engine failure. The kayakers, kayaks and the Zodiac had to be recovered safely, adding a touch of excitement to the morning.

During lunch we progressed further into Sam Ford fjord until we reached the Walker arm, locally known as Qilanaaqtuut. A planned landing was abandoned the moment we spotted a couple of polar bears. That was just for starters. We saw a mum and two cubs, another mum with one cub, and caught a brief glimpse of another three bears, possibly eight bears in total.



Isabella Bay

DAY 11 | Sunday 18 September

Position at 0730 on 18 September

Latitude: 69°31'N

Longitude: 66°54'W

Course: 195°

Speed: 8 knots

Let us probe the silent places, let us see what luck betide us; let us journey to a land I know. There's a whisper on the night wind, there's a star a gleam to guide us, and the wild is calling calling...let us go.

—Robert Service

Last night we left Sam Ford fjord and made our way south towards Isabella Bay (about 190 miles) to arrive early in the morning, hoping to find bowhead whales.

Some E Team members were scouting as early as 6am to try to spot them. Flo's voice gently woke those who were not yet out on deck witnessing a beautiful sunrise amongst the clouds and the imminent breakfast.

A few whales were spotted around the ship as we were sailing deeper into the bay. Christian then spotted some dark shapes further into Arctic Harbor and the captain agreed to take us closer. The destination looked promising as it was in a sunlit area. While approaching, we realized the dark shapes were the backs of two bowhead whales, surprisingly cruising by in very shallow water (less than 30 metres!). This was quite impressive, given the size of some of these individuals. Females can reach up to 18m and weigh up to 100 tons, making them the second biggest animal on earth after the blue whale. They also have the longest baleen plates of all whales, sporting between 200 and 400 of these, the longest reaching 4 metres! Another record for these whales is their lifespan: it is believed that they can live more than 200 years, an adult specimen having been found with a harpoon head that was more than 120 years old.

The *Greg Mortimer* stopped for a couple of hours in the bay where we were able to observe four bowhead whales and lots of birdlife around, including black guillemots, king eiders and snow geese. All of this was enjoyed under very much appreciated sunshine.

We then resumed our navigation as citizen science kicked in. A cloud survey and bird survey were conducted on Deck 8 with Russell and Ian as our science leaders.

After lunch, Bob offered a lecture about the Conflicts & Conundrums in Arctic Sovereignty, a heavy subject covering the various claims of the countries bordering the Arctic and where we stand nowadays. We continued sailing towards Greenland, in magically calm seas and beautiful sunshine until around 5pm, when a minute of silence was observed for the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Wind Speed: 4 knots NE

Barometer: 1008

Air Temp: 2°C

Recap and briefing time is the usual rendezvous for everyone to receive Flo's Plan A for the next day and the subjects the team wish to cover. Tonight Ashley explained a lot of the technical aspects of the *Greg Mortimer*, Ian described the bowhead whales and introduced the humpback whales we hope to see in the next couple of days and Cécile resumed the search for the lost Franklin expedition (to be continued :).

After dinner, a chorus of passengers gathered in the Mawson's Bar on Deck 8 to sing songs related to the Northwest Passage. It was beautiful to hear them sing a capella Stan Roger's 'The Northwest Passage'.



At Sea, Qeqertarsuaq

DAY 12 | Monday 19 September

Position at 0700 on 19 September

Latitude: 69°16' N

Course: 90°

Longitude: 57°28' E

Speed: 12.5 knots

Wind Speed: 20 knots N

Air Temp: -2° C

Barometer: 1002

Trivia regarding the Greenlandic Flag:

Introduced in 1985, the colours chosen for Greenland's flag are representative of that of its parent country, Denmark. In its center are two half-circles: the upper, red half represents the sun rising over Greenland's ice cap, which is the second-largest body of ice on earth and forms the bulk of the island.

Our morning at sea across the Davis Strait began in fog and the day finished in fog in Disko Bay. Mid-morning, we started to see glacier ice from the Jakobshavn Glacier which is one of the main outlet glaciers from the Greenland ice cap and the fastest flowing glacier in the world. So fast, its movement can be seen by the naked eye. At it's terminus, the ice flows at speeds of 1 metre (3 feet) per hour, producing over 20 million tons of icebergs per day and over 20 billion tons of icebergs a year.

Davis of Davis Strait? We sailed through the waters of the Davis Strait, which separates Southern Greenland from Baffin Island. Named after a fantastically successful English explorer of the 16th century. John Davis sailed west from Dartmouth in June of 1585 with the Sunneshine and the Moonshine. On this first expedition he would eventually cross the strait that was later to bear his name and be the first known European explorer to encounter and chart Baffin Island. Notes from his expedition log, upon reaching landfall, highlight some of his experiences with the wildlife of the region. "When wee came neere the shore, wee found white beares of a monstrous bignesse."

He managed travel deep into what would become the Cumberland Sound but was forced to turn around in August to out-sail the encroaching ice. However, upon his return to England, Davis's reports were hugely optimistic. He cited, "The Northwest Passage is a matter nothing doubtful," and also that the sea was "voyde of yse." With his positive reports, Davis was granted funding for a second trip to the Arctic in 1586 in which he explored a great deal of the coast of Labrador. And although he endured far more difficulties on this expedition, he once again returned to England with encouraging economic news: the waters were simply swarming with whales and fish. Just one year later, Davis embarked on what would be his third and final voyage to the Arctic, on which he traced the western shores of Greenland and, upon reaching 72°46' north, found himself to be well and truly blocked by ice (unfortunately for Davis he was travelling throughout the very difficult years of the Little Ice Age.) He would not succeed in his mission to discover the Northwest Passage (nor would any other explorer for the

next three centuries.) Nevertheless, Davis remained adamant that a passage through the Northwest did exist and that its execution should be "easie." While Davis never embarked on any further exploration of the great north, he spent a considerable amount of time in the Southern Ocean and is credited with discovering the Falkland Islands. Unfortunately for Davis, his travels ended abruptly in the Strait of Malacca when he was killed by Japanese pirates at the age of fifty-five. Despite all of Davis's achievements and his admirable disposition, he lacked a certain self-promoting quality that kept him from the type of promotion enjoyed by many of his peers. Davis, of all the West Country mariners, was the one never knighted.

Unfortunately, the fog stopped us from Zodiac cruising the cliffs of Qeqertarsuaq – "The Big Island! The island is volcanic and is much younger than the rest of Greenland.

Inuit legend of Qeqertarsuaq: According to legend the island was pulled north from the south by two strong kayakers using a single strain of hair from a newborn baby. The kayakers were going strong until they reached Disko Bay, where a witch from Ilulissat spotted them and put a curse on them, stopping them from going further north.

We had a total of five lectures and a recap to keep everyone busy. The lectures included a wonderful musical slide show introduction to Greenland by Pat and Rosemarie Keough our special guests. Brian our geologist educating us about ice sheets, ice caps and glaciers in time to see the fastest flowing glacier in the world at Ilulissat. Cecile finally finished the last two parts of her long running story on the search for Franklin and the finding of Erebus and Terror only this century. Michael explained the intricacies of using smartphones as cameras which 90% of people do these days. And no one could forget Russell's introduction done with ultimate enthusiasm on the mind-blowing world of plankton.



Ilulissat

DAY 13 | Tuesday 20 September

Position at x 0700 on 20 September

Latitude: 69°15'N

Longitude: 51°10'E

Course: 105°

Speed: 4.3 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots SE

Barometer: 998

Air Temp: 2°C

Sirius Patrol:

Sirius Patrol originated as a result of meteorological stations which operated in North-East Greenland prior to and during World War II. In 1941 the defence of NE Greenland became the responsibility of a sledge patrol that consisted of nine Danes, one Norwegian and two Greenlanders, who patrolled by dog sledge with support of American ships and planes

This day involved visiting a World Heritage site and Greenland's third largest town (population about 4800) which was established in 1741 as a mission and trading centre. In contrast to yesterday the weather was more typical of the region in autumn: low cloud with mist and light precipitation, although it became clearer during the afternoon. The exception was the amount of icebergs which surrounded *Greg Mortimer* as the anchor was dropped near the entrance to the small harbour. Seaborne Venture was anchored in the vicinity.

The first activity, by Zodiac and kayak, was to see these, and associated ice features, closely. This began soon after breakfast with approaches to a vast variety of shapes and sizes of ice from brash and bergy bits to enormous icebergs of many shapes and forms (while always maintaining a safe distance as all are melting and any are liable to capsize or calve with no notice). The sights were varied in the misty ambience, but the sounds from ice were unexpected, intriguing and variable. Silence rarely prevailed as snaps and cracks from compressed bubbles in ice, combined with creaks and groans, as well as occasional 'Arctic thunder', from larger features. The prolific tidal glacier extends about 40 kilometres inland from the Greenland Ice-sheet (the second largest on Earth, after that of Antarctica) and emits some 20 million tonnes of ice daily. It is responsible for the majority of icebergs in Baffin Bay some of which drift into North Atlantic regions. About 10:30am some other unexpected sounds were heard; much howling, which came from the sledge dogs ashore as their feeding time arrived.

The afternoon was in and around the town. From the landing platform a gangway led through two whale jaw bones to the quay. As well as a stroll round the settlement, or by shuttle bus, there were possibilities of one kilometre walk along a broad boardwalk, which led to cliffs providing magnificent views of the moving glacier. On the way autumnal coloured tundra vegetation was apparent as well as archaeological remains of an indigenous settlement from millennia ago.

Walks of variable length were colour-coded and welcome for many after some days aboard. Most of these began, or ended, near a very new museum with excellent glaciological and historical displays. The road approaching the

boardwalk was the dog centre, housing almost half as many sledge dogs as people in Ilulissat. They howled rather than barked – wolf was not very distant in their ancestry. For summer they were on span with water and food provided, this was also a time for puppies. In winter many would be working dogs hauling sledges across tundra and sea ice. Advisory information and a sign indicated that they were distinctly working dogs, somewhat different (wilder) than tame pets.

In town was another fascinating museum which was originally Knud Rasmussens' house. Displays of the region's history and current circumstances demonstrated much change during a comparatively brief period. Outside the museum were several interesting features from a sod house, sledges, types of water craft, and a reconstructed try-works for extracting oil from blubber. A 'local food shop' had signs indicating seal and whale meat was on sale. The town is an important base for fishing and shrimping as was shown by vast numbers of small craft moored in, entering and leaving the central harbour. A large, ice adapted, transport vessel was discharging much cargo. Huge oil tanks were apparent near the waterfront, not only for boats and ships, but also fuel for winter, a time when tanker access may become impractical.

Back aboard in the evening there was the accustomed briefing and recap, then dinner, as *Greg Mortimer* moved towards Sisimiut for tomorrow to another Greenland settlement.



At sea, Sisimiut

DAY 14 | Wednesday 21 September

Position at 0700 on 21 September

Latitude: 67°22' N

Longitude: 54°15' E

Course: 171°

Speed: 10 knots

Wind Speed: 14 knots NE

Barometer: 1006

Air Temp: 0°C

Often I feel I go to some distant region of the world to be reminded of who I really am. There is no mystery about why this should be so. Stripped of your daily routines ... you are forced into direct experience. Such direct experience inevitably makes you aware of who it is that is having the experience.

—Michael Crichton, 1988

Today we prepared for our last full day onboard the *Greg Mortimer*, our home away from home for the last 2.5 weeks through the Northwest Passage.

Breakfast kicked off at the reasonable hour, followed by a lecture and an informal but very important disembarkation briefing. Christian explained step by step how tomorrow's operation would work as we make our way back to Canada.

After a few last questions, it was back to the coffee machine before heading to our cabins for some preemptive packing.

As the morning at sea drew to a close, our final stop of the trip, Sisimiut was in our sights.

In central-western Greenland, on the coast of Davis Strait, Sisimiut is Greenland's second largest city and an important fishing hub because of its ice-free harbour during winter, with belly's full we donned wet weather gear and made our way ashore.

The Zodiac ride in was like no other as we passed by smiling locals who looked proud of their morning quota of meat to feed the family.

Arriving at the jetty, more smiles welcomed us, followed by a short brief by the team, who then sent us on our way.

The beautifully coloured buildings felt carefully laid out as each colour represented a meaning of significance. In colonial times, a colour-coding system was introduced to assist the vast majority of the people who could not read.

Below, the key to the color palette of Greenland houses:

Red: Churches and stores, including the houses where the priest or shop owner lived. The most commonly used color.

Yellow: Hospitals, including the houses where the doctors or nurses lived.

Green: Radio communications, or later, telecommunications buildings in general.

Black: Police.

Blue: Factories, fish plants.

During the afternoon, we each had the option of joining a local guide on a short bus tour of Sisimiut, learning firsthand how the locals live here.

For most, it was the museum that was the town highlight, located across several buildings dating from colonial times. The buildings are protected, dating from the 18th and 19th century, and reflect the history and development of Sisimiut. The early log-built and timber-framed structures were first constructed in Denmark or Norway, before being taken apart and shipped to Greenland, where they were re-erected.

Back on the ship, we were spoilt with a kayaking exhibition by a local Sisimiut man.

He paddled his sealskin kayak alongside the ship to demonstrate his championship skills for us. Wearing a complete sealskin suit (sealskin is waterproof), he executed many complicated and different "Eskimo Rolls". The cold Arctic seas and weather can be lethal, making it essential that a hunter not only be properly dressed in a waterproof animal skin but also know how to execute the many "Eskimo Rolls/Greenlander Rolls" in case the kayak capsizes or overturns.

We eagerly watched from the outer decks as he impressed us with his many techniques and jaw dropping five rolls in row!

Returning to the warmth of the ship, we gathered in the lecture theatre for the Captain's farewell cocktails. We shared a toast, in memory of the history that made this journey so unique and for our own successful expedition through the Northwest Passage.

After another delicious dinner, we gathered one last time for the end of voyage slideshow. Countless photos will remain as lifelong memories that we all shared and will keep in our hearts forever.



Kangerlussuaq

DAY 15 | Thursday 22 September

Position at 0700 on 22 September

Latitude: 66°57' N

Longitude: 50°56' W

Course: At anchor Kangerlussuaq

Speed: At anchor Kangerlussuaq

This we know: the Earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the Earth. All things are connected like the blood which unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

—Unknown

Overnight we arrived just north of the Arctic Circle in Kangerlussuaq, "the gateway to Greenland". The village of Kangerlussuaq, which means "big fjord" in Greenlandic, is home to approximately 500 residents and Greenland's major international transport hub.

Our final morning onboard was spent preparing our luggage, enjoying a hearty breakfast and waiting for our group to be called to the mudroom. Wet weather was donned for our last Zodiac ride to shore as we waved the *Greg Mortimer* and its crew goodbye.

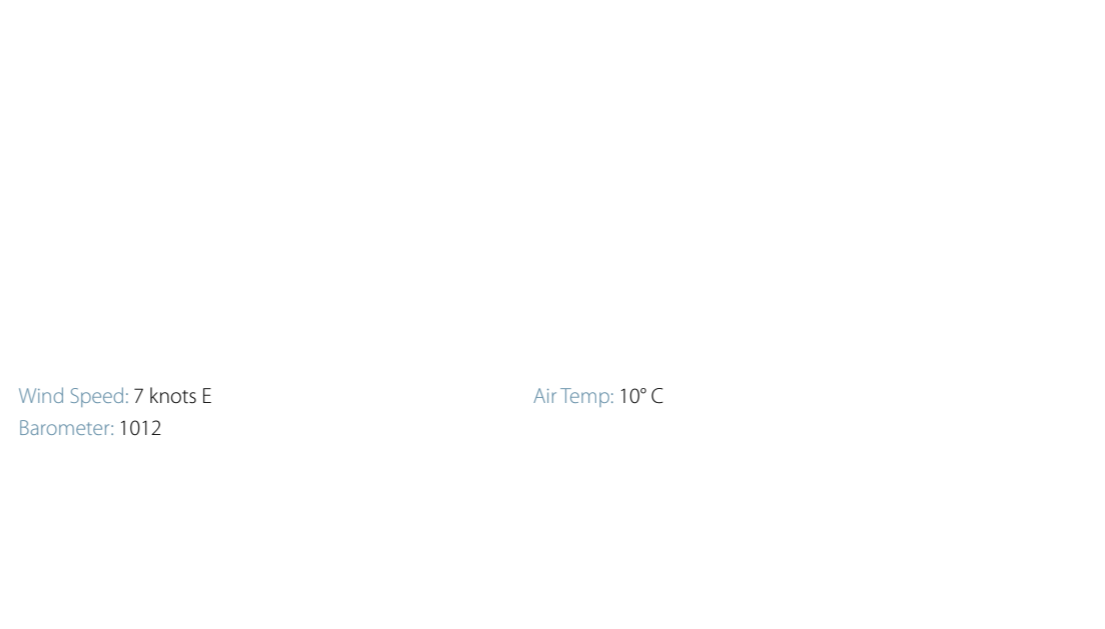
To our delight, calm conditions made for an enjoyable and scenic Zodiac ride to the jetty, before we were shuttled away in buses for a full days' exploration of Kangerlussuaq fjord. We started with a delicious BBQ lunch by Lake Ferguson followed by a visit to Reindeer Glacier. Spotting wildlife along the way was a bonus!

Before long it was time to start making our way to the airport in preparation for our flight to Hamilton. During check-in we were joined by members of the Expedition Team who were finishing up their season along with us.

Lucky for us our flight with Canadian North was running on time and at 17:40 we were on the runway and in the air shortly after. We enjoyed a pleasant flight with a short 40-minute stop and landed safely onto Canadian soil before the day was out.

Out of the gate we were greeted by Aurora's smiling ground crew and transferred by coach to the Westin hotel at Toronto airport for a well-deserved sleep.

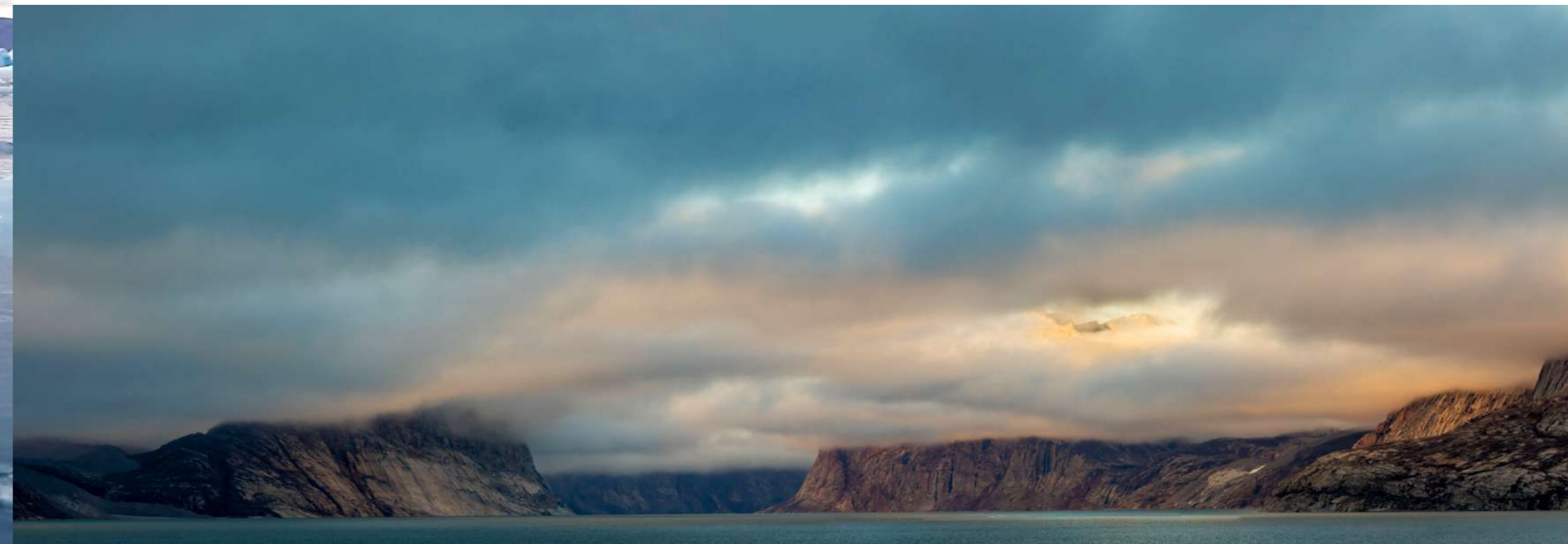
Aurora Expeditions thanks you for joining us aboard MV *Greg Mortimer* through the Northwest Passage. We hope to see you on the high seas again someday!



Wind Speed: 7 knots E

Barometer: 1012

Air Temp: 10° C



Kayaking Log

By Peter Wainwright

Kayak Guides: Peter Wainwright, Russell Henry, Blake Hornblow

Number of Paddlers: 16 Total Paddle Outings: 10 Total Distance Paddled: 67.5km

Paddlers:	Emma Evans	Edwin Kirk	Louise McCann	John Short
Chris Anderson	Donald Hall	Morag Liddon	Sue O'Reagan,	
Rosemary Burd	Leigh Hudgins	Tim Liddon	Anne Quinn	
Leanne Elverd	Wren Hudgins	Gordon MacKenzie	Dominic Sasse	

Day 4 am: Fort Ross / Depot Bay - Distance: 7.0km

Due to morning fog partially obscuring the landing site, the scout took a little longer than normal, and with limited numbers allowed on shore at any one time we decided to launch from Zodiacs at the back of the ship. In slightly lumpy seas we rafted up and gave our on-water safety briefing before paddling over to the shelter of Fort Ross. We hugged the coastline, manoeuvring the kayaks through very shallow shoals with currents of sea butterflies - pteropods floating past. At one point we saw a short-tailed weasel scampering along the shore. Before too long we turned around as the wind on our backs had started to increase.

Day 5 am: Port Leopold - Distance: 6.6km

For quite a barren and desolate location, this actually provided a very pleasant paddle for the five kayakers that joined us. Due to the low height of land to the north it is not really protected from the wind, just the swell. But luckily the winds were fairly light and we were able to paddle mostly downwind. We started at the relic of the Hudson Bay Company building that was only occupied for one year, and the rock carved with the initials of the Enterprise and Investigator in 1849, past numerous evidence of Thule whalebone dwellings. There were thousands of copepods (sea butterflies) in the water, attracting hundreds of kittiwakes to feed on them. We landed the kayaks on the spit of Whaler's Point amid another cluster of Thule whalebone houses and many bowhead whale skulls.

Day 6 am: Beechey Island - Distance: 6.1km

This was a sublimely calm paddle. We were the first to leave the ship headed for the graves of the British admiralty sailors that had died and were buried here mostly during Franklins expedition. The early morning Arctic light was burning Beechey Island a fierce orange between the low clouds. There was not a breath of wind and the water clarity was unbelievable - it was perfect paddling conditions. We landed below the graves and paid our respects to the valiant sailors buried in this barren and desolate land, thinking how far they must have felt from their native land, and how tough that winter must have been for them. On leaving the graves we paddled further round the bay and island, over to the remains of Northumberland House and the Franklin memorial. From here we paddled further south around the island under the spectacular mudstone cliffs. Here the water turned an inky blue and we found a lone iceberg with some young guillemot and several harp seals nearby. To our surprise and amazement

there was a pair of juvenile white gyrfalcons sitting on the iceberg - a wonderful sighting. Historical kayaking doesn't get any finer than that!

Day 6 pm: Radstock Bay - Distance: 4.6km

Our plan had to been to Zodiac tow the kayaks into a bay to the north of Caswell Tower to get into the lee of the cliffs and more sheltered water, but on closer inspection we spotted a sow polar bear with one cub, so we needed a change of plan. Luckily the wind almost completely died as we got on the water, and given the bears were still a long way off we were still able to tow a little way to the north before getting in the kayaks and paddling to the south past the impressive rock cliffs of Caswell Tower and make a landing at the well preserved Thule semi-subterranean whalebone houses. The rich pre-history of the area, the colors of the lichens and the flowering heather, the interesting geology and the signs of musk oxen all enriched the paddling experience.

Day 7 am: Dundas Harbour - Distance: 6.3km

This was our first real paddle among some ice! We launched from the platform behind the ship's marina and rather than head to the landing with the other passengers, we paddled out of the sheltered bay and into the exposed waters of Lancaster Sound. With a 4 foot swell running and a fair bit of rebounding clapotis we bounced our way around the peninsula, occasionally almost losing sight of each other between the troughs of the swell. We passed by some spectacular icebergs and eventually rounded the corner into the bay in front of the old RCMP station. Our suspicions were confirmed that there was too much ice packed into the landing bay to be able to even navigate our kayaks through. But we rafted up and retold the history of the RCMP outpost and subsequent HBC trading post before paddling along the outer edge of the mass of ice. It was like a live sculpture park heaving and creaking in the swell.

Day 7 pm: Croker Bay - Distance: 8.4km

This was an unforgettable paddle. Narwhals! We decided to use the Zodiac to put some distance between us and the ship and the other Zodiacs and it really paid off. We dropped off among a sea of icebergs in the northerly and deeper arm of Croker Bay with 3 or 4 kilometres still before the second glacier front. It wasn't long before by chance we spotted small whale blows and could see dorsal-fin-less dark bodies surfacing in groups not far from us, and then suddenly all around us there were multiple groups of 3 to 10 narwhals cruising past. Occasionally we saw glimpses of calves and tusks. It was such a magical 10-minute chance encounter to see these mythical unicorns of the sea, we were all stunned and buzzing with amazement and excitement. Eventually we regrouped and began in glee paddling back southeast towards the closer glacier front. We marvelled at the open cross-section of the glacier face beside us and paddled back towards the ship in blissfully calm conditions. This must rank in everyone's top ten wildlife experiences.

Day 9 am: Gibbs Fjord - Distance: 9.9km

We hustled to take advantage of a quick decision to drop the kayaks on the fly and do an impromptu paddle from the middle of the fjord to the planned afternoon anchorage. It was disorientating to be dropped off in the middle of the fjord with fog all around us and just the mountain tops sticking out. It was impossible to fathom the scale of the gargantuan rock walls either side of us, but we paddled across to the southern side of Sillem Island and under the colossal towers and oceans of gneiss and granite above us. It was mesmerising to see how dwarfed

we were in this landscape just disappearing as tiny specks, and to explore up close the colours, textures and patterns in the rock and try to wrap our heads around such impressive scenery. Luckily we had the assistance of the wind on our backs and some ebbing tide that swept us along to the anchorage in relatively short time. A truly spectacular paddle.

Day 9 pm: Clarke Fjord - Distance: 3.8km

With the ship at anchor just off Sillem Island and the rest of the passengers doing a landing and walk on Qiqqtakuluk, we decided with our small band of 5 kayakers to head north into neighbouring Clarke fjord. We had spied a hanging glacier that cascaded down from the ice cap through a weakness all the way to the water 1300 metres below. We climbed into the kayaks from the Zodiac right below the glacier and protected by the two arms of the lateral moraines on either side. We paddled through the edge of the brash ice - presumably from a recent calving event. From here we paddled west deeper along the side of the fjord, passing an Arctic hare and getting followed by a lone seal. A few miles along we paddled into the arms of another set of lateral moraines left behind by the receding glacier above. From below the waterfall, cascading down the rock slabs from the glacier, we loaded the Zodiac and headed back to the ship passing an Inuit hunting cabin with whale skeletons on the shore. All in time for the polar plunge where the kayakers were very well represented.

Day 10 pm: Sam Ford Fjord - Distance: 5.4km

Wow, what a mythical and mysterious place. A realm of unparalleled vertical and overhanging walls rising straight out of the ocean.... a world far more fit for giants, than humans. As the fog broke up around the wonderfully sculpted Belvedere Ridge, the full scale of the enormous rock walls became apparent and we couldn't resist the urge to launch the boats and kayaks and get closer to the gargantuan towers of rock. The wind decided to match the drama of the landscape, and with a long fetch behind us, the waves began to steadily pick up. With no shelter afforded by the sheer rock walls we rode the surf, occasionally rafting up to gaze upward with less risk of feeling giddy and tipsy until we decided it was safer to get in the Zodiac. Of course, this would be the moment we would also get engine trouble. The following sea meant we gratefully needed the assistance of several other Zodiacs to get all the kayaks safely back to the ship. The conditions reminding us of the unforgiving and serious nature of this environment. This must be one of the most impressive places in the world to paddle, and we felt so lucky to get to do so.

Day 13 pm: Ilulissat - Distance: 9.4km

We launched from the back of the ship while anchored outside the narrow and busy harbour at Ilulissat. With moody foggy skies, bright and cheerful characteristic Scandinavian red, yellow, black board-and-batten buildings dotted the shores. We paddled south weaving our way through the maze of icebergs and remnants sea-ice. The bergy bits were too numerous to completely avoid and we paddled through brash ice but we steered well clear of the giant icebergs that dominated the bay. We edged our way towards the giant bergs that were grounded and choking the fjord and marvelled at the spectacular backup of ice trying to spill out from the icesheet. We shared a spiced hot chocolate on the Zodiac and toasted to an amazing trip with a seriously lovely group of people. A fitting finale.





Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species

09 - 22 September

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Great Northern Diver		•											
Northern Fulmar	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
Snow Goose										•	•		
Common Eider		•		•		•	•						
King Eider										•	•		
Long-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw)			•								•		
Dunlin				•									
Purple Sandpiper					•								
Arctic Skua					•	•							
Long-tailed Skua (ib)						•							
Great Skua												•	
Iceland Gull													•
Glaucous Gull	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Black-Headed Gull													•
Great Black-backed Gull													•
Kittiwake				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ivory Gull			•										
Little Auk								•		•			
Brunich's Guillemot	•			•	•	•				•			
Puffin												•	
Lapland Bunting			•										
Meadow Pipit (American)			•										
Snow Bunting			•										
Raven		•		•	•	•			•				



Mammal Species

09 - 22 September

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Arctic Fox		•											
Arctic Hare					•			•					
Musk ox		•											
Polar Bear	•	•		•					•				
Stoat			•		•								
Ringed Seal						•	•						
Bearded Seal						•							
Harp Seal					•	•	•						
Hooded Seal					•								
Minke Whale											•		
Narwhal						•							
Bowhead Whale										•			





Expeditioners:

Brenda Adams	Carole Grassby	Brigitte Kuenzle	Heidi Rackley
Christopher Anderson	George Green	Madonna Lengerich	Deborah Reynolds
Pam Arnold	Lynette Green	Timothy Liddon	Sarah Ross
John Arnold	Leigh Hall	Morag Liddon	Dominic Sasse
Beryl Badcock	Margaret Hall	Dwayne Lucas	Renate Schalbruch
John Badcock	Donald Hall	Theresa Lucas	Robert Schenker
Orlane Barriere	Donna Hall	Gordon MacKenzie	Talia Schwartzman
Rosemary Bell	Elisabeth Hallewell	Neil Manning	John Short
Anne Best	Darlene Hayes	Louise McCann	Mark Stratton
Joseph Blackstone	Dirwyn Hayes	Julia McLaughlin	Valerie Tipling
Peter Bowker	Alan Hinde	Janet Moore	Peter Tipling
Thomas Breen	Michelle Hinde	Diana Moore	Bruce Trudel
Rosemary Burd	Joanna Holdsworth	Anne Morrison	Alexis Trudel
Jeremy Clarke	Donald Howell	Donald Morrison	Graeme Turnbull
Andrew Clarke	Lisa Jones	Andrew Murray	Rhonda Turnbull
Philip Cronin	Carol Jones	Karin Ninburg	Caroline Varley
Paula Cronin	Rosemarie Keough	Ligia Orduz	Margaret Whalen
Katharine Day	Pat Keough	Susan O'Regan	Paul Whalen
Meredith Day	Rod Kinkead-Weekes	John Palo	Margaret Williamson
Nicholas Day	Edwin Kirk	Raye Pearson	Bradford Wright
Julie Denaro	Rachael Kohn	Barry Philippson	Angela Wright
Leanne Elverd	Thomas Kosel	Adele Philippson	
Emma Evans	Mary Krueger	Penelope Powell	
Ilia Flax	Phillip Krueger	Anne Quinn	

Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Florence Kuijper
Assistant Expedition Leader: Christian Genillard
Onboard Expedition Manager: Justine Bornholdt
Firearms Manager: Jeff Nagel
Archaeology Specialist/Botanist: Joselyn Fenstermacher
Historian: Cecile Manet
Geologist/Glaciologist: Brian Seenan
Special Guest Lecturer: Bob Headland
Expedition Guide/Naturalist: Ian McCarthy
Expedition Guide: Piotr Damski
Lead Kayaking Guide: Peter Wainwright
Kayaking Guide: Russell Henry
Kayaking Guide: Blake Hornblow
Photography Guide/Zodiac Driver: Michael Baynes
Special Guest Photographers: Pat & Rosemarie Keough
Medic/Citizen Science Coordinator: Ashley Perrin
Zodiac Master: Sergei Hincu
Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Gabriel Hernandez
Mudroom Support/Wellness Therapist: Dasha Vasiljeva

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Oleg Klaptenko	Sous Chef: Nellan Lewars
Chief Officer: Alexandru Taraoi	Head Waiter: Narendra Seeram
Safety Officer: Goran Goles	Hotel Controller: Rohmat Nurhidayat
Second Officer: Sergii Voina	IT Officer: Ihor Yesmieniev
Bosun: Oscar Antonio Castejon Torres	Receptionist: Kateryna Tauzhnianska
Deck Cadet: Sander Magi	Receptionist: Marie Annecy Reynoird
Deck Cadet: David Bote Martin	Head Stateroom: Elieser Nunez Almendarez
Ship Doctor: Ivan Savic	Spa Manager: Alena Antonova
Ship Nurse: Susara Hendrika Mostert	Able Seaman: Khenette Verzosa
Chief Engineer: Sergiy Melnyk	Able Seaman: Petko Vladimirov Petkov
First Engineer: Warlito B. Verzosa	Able Seaman: Yevgen Kotuz
Hotel Director: Franz Wusits	Able Seaman: Maksym Khlivniuk
F&B Manager: Miguel Cabanillas Alvarez	Able Seaman: Joel Valdevieso Noble
Chief Purser: Liza Merillo	Able Seaman: Giovanni Dela Torre
Executive Chef: Pierpaolo Fadda	

Artwork thanks to:

Graeme Turnbull
Rhonda Turnbull

Photography thanks to:

Michael Baynes
Peter Wainwright
Blake Hornblow
Russell Henry

Out of the Northwest Passage (NWP002G)

08 to 22 September, 2022

MV Greg Mortimer

