

South Georgia & Antarctic Odyssey

Aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* | 22 October – 8 November 2022





Stanley, Falkland Islands

DAY 1 | Saturday 22 October 2022

Position at 0700 on 22 October

Latitude: 51°04.45'S

Longitude: 57°49.5'W

Course: Docked at Fypass

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: F6 WNW

Barometer: 1018

Air Temp: 5°C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

Here we are in the lovely town of Stanley, home to most of the population of the Falkland Islands.

For 74 of us, this is the start of our adventure. For 44 of us, this marks our first stop after sailing down from Montevideo together.

The wharf was abuzz this afternoon with arrivals and shuttle buses. Our new expeditioners were met by the Aurora team and had their photos taken. Drinks and a buffet awaited us in the Elephant Island Bar, then our hotel team helped us navigate the decks to our cabins and settle into our "home away from home". It had been a long day of travelling, and many of us probably wanted to crawl into the comfort of our beds, but there was no time to rest just yet.

After a welcome briefing from our Expedition Leader Flo and a quick intro from Dr Andres, Hotel Director Bertrand introduced his heads of department. Rosie then gave us some handy hints about life onboard. We moved on to the IAATO briefing, then learnt about the "Zodiac 3-step" and the sailor's grip, all things that are designed to keep us safe whilst we explore.

Finally, the all-important safety drill. The sound of the ship's horn signalled us to don bulky orange lifejackets and muster in the lecture theatre. We followed our crew up to Deck 7 where the polar class life vessels sit (they can hold 136 people each, for 5 days!). With the safety drill completed, we were cleared to begin our journey.

Just after the *Greg Mortimer* set sail, we made our way to the dining room to enjoy a delicious buffet dinner, prepared by our talented galley team and served by our smiley and welcoming waiting staff.

The last task was a muckboot fitting, and a few final jacket swaps, so that we can cope with whatever weather the Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica throw at us.

So, we'd had our last glimpse of town life, knowing that from now on we are more likely to see a colony of penguins than a crowd of people.

Together we total 116 passengers (52 Australians, 29 Americans, 18 from the UK, 8 New Zealanders, 3 Vietnamese,

2 Irish, 1 Austrian, 1 German, 1 Slovenian and 1 Malaysian) along with 78 crew from all around the globe.

Our 23 Expedition Team have variety of specialities including polar exploration, mountaineering, skiing, glaciology, weather, climate science, geology, history, marine and terrestrial biology, photography, medicine, and kayaking.

After the many hours of travel to reach the Sub-Antarctic, it's time to kick back, breathe in the sea air, and enjoy the marvels of this magical region.



Grave Cove & West Point

DAY 2 | Sunday 23 October

Position at 1600 on 23 October

Latitude: 51°20.729'S

Longitude: 060°40.534'W

Course: Anchored

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: 7.7 knots NW

Barometer: 1012

Air Temp: 11°C

I now belong to the higher cult of mortals, for I have seen the albatross.

—Robert Cushman Murphy

Our first day of expedition, and we find ourselves exploring two extraordinary habitats managed by two extraordinary couples in the far north-west corner of the Falklands archipelago.

Before going ashore, Marie-Paul, owner of the Dunbar farm with her husband Hughes, came on board to introduce us to their life as sailors and now as organic sheep farmers there. Having sailed their yacht for years around the South Atlantic, even overwintering on it in the Peninsula, and having brought up their children on it, they fell in love with the abundant wildlife, open spaces and freedom of Dunbar Farm, and settled there. They use dogs and motorbikes to manage their 13,000 hectares and 4,000 sheep, produce their electricity from wind and solar panels, and grow their own vegetables.

In beautiful, glassy-calm conditions, we landed on the beach at Grave Cove, named after the unfortunate early 19th-century sealers who had been buried there, and walked across the neck of the Hope Peninsula to the largest gentoo colony in the Falklands.

It was fascinating to watch the penguins busily engaged in courting, nest building, and sitting on the early eggs of the season. We were surprised to note how far the colony spread uphill and inland from the shore, and enchanted to watch the birds selecting strands of muddy tussock grass to add to their nests while their mate incubated.

Down on the shore, others had been feeding out at sea, and our cameras clicked joyfully as they came porpoising home and landed before us on the beach.

Meanwhile, an abundance of other birdlife included upland and kelp geese, striated caracara, oystercatchers, kelp gulls, and the gorgeous long-tailed meadowlarks with their dazzling red breasts.

A short re-positioning over lunch took us to the adjacent West Point Island, where another heart-warming welcome awaited us from Kiki and Thies. Crossing the small island on foot or by iconic Landrover, we were privileged to be able to sit and observe the colony of black-browed albatross in the dramatic setting of the Devil's Nose. These majestic birds whose lives are spent cruising the ocean come ashore only to breed, building their



cylindrical nests to protect their growing chick. Dotted amongst them were rockhopper penguins with their distinctive golden crests, also busily occupied with the task at hand.

On returning across the island, past rocky outcrops and old peat cuttings worked for fuel in the old days by former residents, we were invited into the farm's delightful gardens for afternoon tea (served in china teacups), an incredible spread of cakes and treats, and tales of adventure and love of nature from Kiki and Thies.

We leave the Falklands, deeply impressed by the range and extent of birdlife, both seabirds and landbirds, predators and songbirds, the stark beauty of the landscapes, and with the most affectionate memories of the people who welcomed us.



At Sea

DAY 3 | Monday 24 October

Position at 0700 on 24 October

Latitude: 51°47.6'S

Longitude: 054°47.2'W

Course: 104°

Speed: 13.1knots

Wind Speed: 5 Knots NW

Barometer: 1014

Air Temp: 4° C

The demand of science, that no part of the globe shall remain untouched by the hand of investigation was the force that drew our little band to the land of the farthest south.

—Otto Nordenskjöld

In the morning we had an overcast sky and a slight sea as we headed east from the beautiful and hospitable Falkland Islands, which will forever stay in our memories. The sun is barely visible between the clouds. Although we were going to spend this day at sea, it was still quite a busy day.

It started with COVID tests and fortunately it all went well - hopefully COVID is overboard!

After a beautiful breakfast served on Deck 5 we had a lecture on expedition photography by National Geographic certified instructor Max Seigal, whom we are happy to have as our photography guide.

At the same time a group of dedicated sea kayakers had their meeting in the library, where they were discussing the outings, equipment, interaction with the wildlife and safety, building plans for South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula.

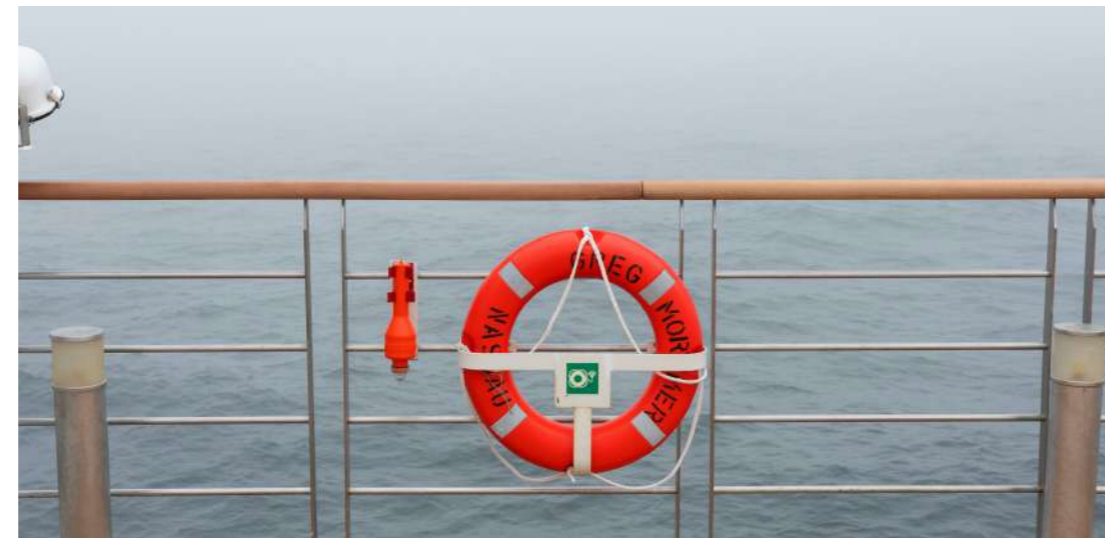
At 11:00am we had a big briefing with our Expedition Leader Florence, where she talked about our trip itinerary and introduced our big Expedition Team. Right after that Dani Abras, our Marine Biologist, talked about citizen science and how can we all participate in the conservation of the beautiful wild nature that surrounds us on our way. It appears that we have so many possibilities – from observing sea birds and plankton and tracking whales to sharing weather information with NASA.

As we were getting closer and closer to South Georgia, we started to think about biosecurity procedures. Right after lunch everyone took care of their outdoor gear and made sure that their clothes, boots, and backpacks carry no seeds or plants which could invade pristine nature of that beautiful island.

At that point the waters around our vessel got covered with impenetrable fog, visibility decreased to 20 metres. In such a mystical atmosphere Carol Knott, our Historian, gave us a lecture about Swedish Antarctic Expedition which occurred under command of Otto Nordenskjöld and Carl Anton Larsen in 1901-1903. It is hard to imagine

the hardships those brave people had to face. We are so fortunate to have the possibility to travel to the same places without such a struggle. The story of this expedition is full of miracles and coincidences. Here is another one – Jose Maria Sobral, the only Argentinian member of that expedition is a distant relative of our Zodiac manager, Ignacio «Nacho» Marino.

This beautiful day ended with dinner and a cocktail party at which we met our Captain Maxim Makarovskiy and his team. The party at the Elephant Island bar did not subside until midnight. We are all so excited to get closer to South Georgia!



At Sea

DAY 4 | Tuesday 25 October 2022

Position at 0700 on 25 October

Latitude: 52°47.6'S

Longitude: 048°24.5'W

Course: 103°

Speed: 12.4 knots

Wind Speed: F4 SW

Barometer: 1011

Air Temp: 3°C

We had lived long amid the ice, and we half-unconsciously strove to see resemblances to human faces and living forms in the fantastic contours and massively uncouth shapes of berg and floe.

—Sir Ernest Shackleton, South, 1919

Waking up this morning, you would have never guessed we were over 500 kilometres from any land. The ocean was once again unbelievably calm all day, making for a very pleasant relaxing day at sea. Starting the full day of presentations and lectures off was one of our naturalists, Jill talking about pinnipeds. Add that word to your repertoire. It was an entertaining talk where everyone was taught the differences between true seals, and eared seals, and that elephant seals are absolutely ridiculous creatures. What was that word Jill taught us? For when they're doing the worm? Phocidulate. Wow!

Next up was Carol with her Shackleton lecture. This was presented in an off-beat way where Carol did her best to expose the untold, less loveable side to Ernest Shackleton and his epic Antarctic expedition of 1914.

Then it was time for burgers at lunch. After that, a gap in the busy schedule allowed a quick breather for people to relax, have a nap, hit the gym, sauna, or look for birds.

Three o'clock and it was off to hear Snowy talk about the birds of South Georgia: albatross, petrels, shearwater, prions, and of course penguins just to name a few. South Georgia is truly a birders paradise.

A treat awaited everyone after this with our Chef Ron serving everyone waffles and ice cream. Makes you wonder if they're trying to fatten us up for something...?

Special guest photographer Richard l'Anson was up next with his talk on all things photography. We have some keen camera men and women on board so everyone ate this up, much like their waffles and ice cream.

From there we moved into a briefing for our day tomorrow - arriving at South Georgia! As well as a quick recap.

Our fantastic dinner was served a little earlier tonight to make some space in the evening for everyone to gather in the lecture theatre for one part of the newly released Frozen Planet 2. All these films and lectures on South Georgia and Antarctica are creating some serious excitement on board.

Throughout the day all those involved in special activities were busy getting prepared for their adventures. The kayakers all got kitted out in their drysuits and other gear, the snowshoers got into harnesses and talked technical stuff, and those doing the Shackleton Crossing prepared their overnight gear and hopefully rested their legs.

Tomorrow, we arrive at one of the most magical places on the entire planet. Booyah!



Arrival at South Georgia

DAY 5 | Wednesday 26 October

Position at 0700 on 26 October

Latitude: 54°007.7'S

Longitude: 039°35.7'W

Course: 102°

Speed: 13.8 knots

Wind Speed: F5 WSW

Barometer: 1009

Air Temp: 0° C

There are many other beautiful seabirds, but the most beautiful of all are the snowy petrels, which approach nearer to the fairies than anything else on earth.

—Aspley Cherry-Garrard.

We are in our fourth day of expedition and what an amazing day ahead we have. Arriving at magnificent South Georgia in the morning, the weather seemed to open a small window for us to enjoy the view and wildlife from the decks. We are now in a wild place of enormous richness in history and natural beauty which not often allows visitors to approach. Located 1400 kilometres from South America and 1500 kilometres from Antarctica, the island was discovered, as Carol mentioned in our daily recap, by accident in 1675 by Anthony de la Roché, a merchant from London, but the first landing was actually made by Captain James Cook in HMS Resolution in 1775 when he surveyed and mapped the island.

During the morning, we enjoyed a great talk given by Max about smartphone photography, which he considers as a great tool. He shared great tips and resources to make the most of our extremely portable cameras; how to use them, and new ways to be creative and get the best shots. Perfect timing for those tips, because just a few moments after we went up on the decks for some bird watching and Citizen Science with Dani and Snowy. Around twenty guests joined them on Deck 8, where Snowy explained how to identify some birds and some peculiarities of each species. They identified several species, including south georgia shags, as well as cape petrels, white-chinned petrels, northern giant petrels, and antarctic prion. And how lucky we were to see three snow petrels, which are very rare to see.

Shortly after, we start visualizing the remote south-west of South Georgia, towards our next destination in King Haakon Bay. This historical place is an inlet on the southern coast of South Georgia named for King Haakon VII of Norway by Carl Anton Larsen, founder of Grytviken. Cave Cove, which forms part of the bay, is best known as the landing place of Ernest Shackleton in May 1916 as he sought help for his shipwrecked crew marooned on Elephant Island during the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition.

We arrived at Pegotty Bluff where they camped using the upturned James Caird, and this is where two of our expeditioners and three of our experienced mountain guides were taken ashore to start the Shackleton Crossing. This is a 35 kilometre crossing through glaciers, mountains and snowfields towards the northern side of the island. They were dropped, as Tarn explained, with a full gear for ice expeditions, GPS, satellite phone and crevasse rescue equipment. So, on their way they went, and we will catch them up very soon.

During the afternoon, the climate suddenly changed, as usual around here, and wind started to spike up to 35 knots with 50 knot gusts, which made landings no longer an option.

Upon arrival to Bird Island at the far west of South Georgia, we had the chance to enjoy Ian's lecture about currents and icebergs of the Southern Ocean, to understand better what we are sailing though.

Coming to the end of our day, the daily recap was full of information and surprised us with some exciting plans for tomorrow. As Flo says, call your weather gods tonight.



Salisbury Plain & Whistle Cove

DAY 6 | Thursday 27 October

Position at 0700 on 27 October

Latitude: 54°003.2'S

Longitude: 037°19.1'W

Course: 282°

Speed: 12.3 knots

Wind Speed: 6 knots WSW

Barometer: 1015

Air Temp: -1° C

The majority of us woke gently to Florence's cheerful call over the PA system. Meanwhile, our mountaineers (James and David, with guides Hilary, Kevin and Marius), had been hunkering down all night in small tents on the Murray Snowfield... more about that soon.

As we cruised closer to Salisbury Plain, what first struck us were the dramatic snow-covered peaks, and at the foot of the mountains, thousands upon thousands of king penguins, broken up by the huge blubbery bodies of the elephant seals.

It was hard to believe that we were actually going to be walking around amongst these critters very shortly.

We should probably buy a beer for whoever contacted the weather gods, because almost miraculously, the clouds cleared. Blue sky and sun appeared just in time for our landing. Despite mentally preparing for a rough sea and a surfy beach, we gently coasted in for a comfortable and relatively dry disembark from the Zodiacs.

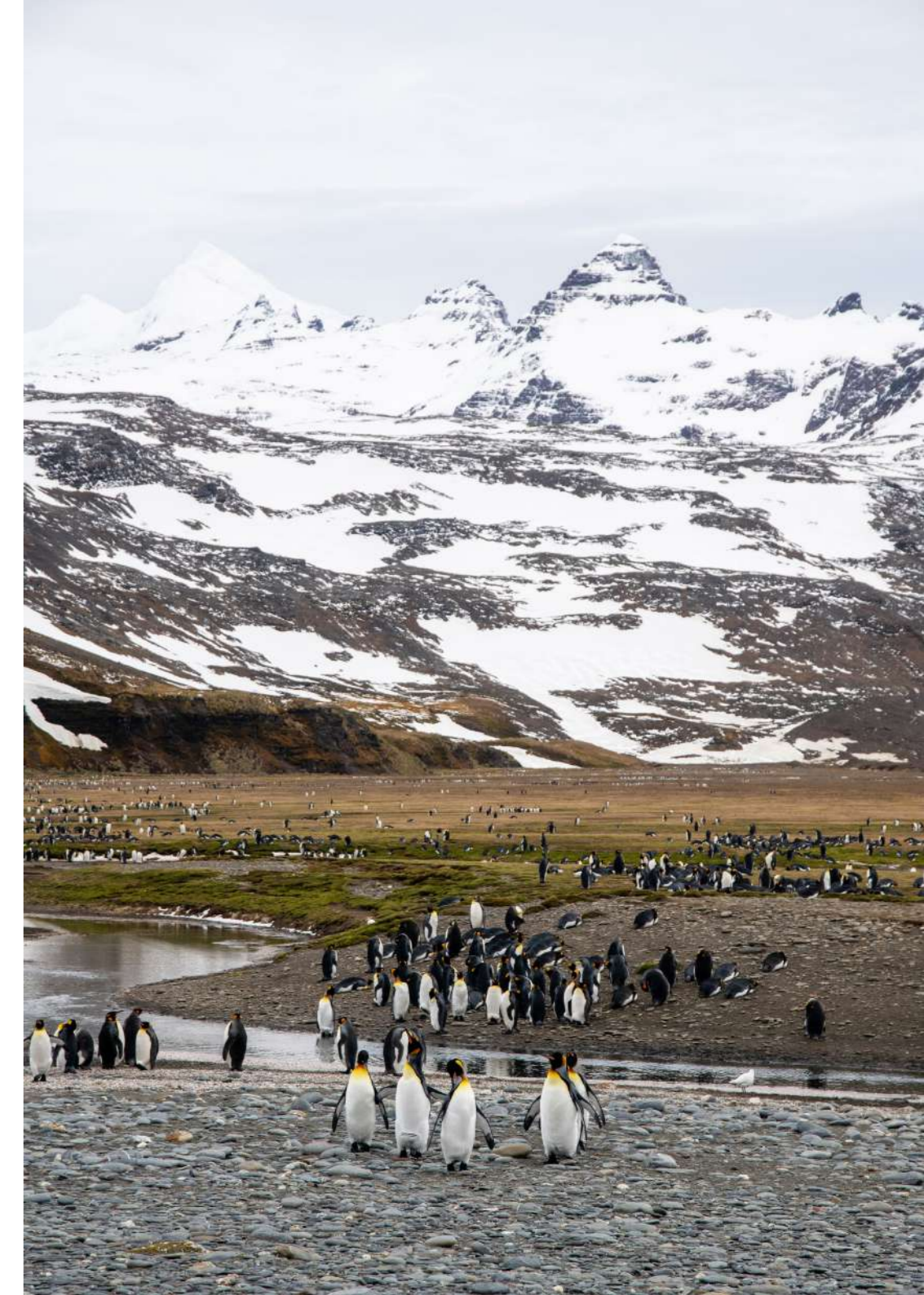
It's quite overwhelming to step ashore in Salisbury Plain, and we were immediately spoilt for choice of where to feast our eyes. We walked carefully past the slumbering male fur seals, who thankfully mostly ignored us, or merely opened one eye before dozing off again. King penguins waddled past us as if we were "just another penguin" on their way up to the creches of fluffy brown chicks on the hillside.

The most formidable of all were the male elephant seals, keeping an eye out for any competitors who could challenge their position as "beachmaster".

After returning to the *Greg Mortimer*, we sailed to Possession Bay, where Captain Cook made the first known landing in South Georgia. Our mountaineers had detoured there after a noisy night buffeted by high winds. This morning they had hoped to continue their planned hike to Stromness, in the footsteps of Shackleton, Worsley and Crean, but a gap in the weather never came. They back-tracked across down to Possession, where finally the clouds lifted and revealed spectacular views of the bay. There, they set up their tent and waited with penguin and seals for company, until we arrived to retrieve them. They were happy to see a hot breakfast ready for them back on board.

The late afternoon landing was at stunning Whistle Cove, where we were treated to calm seas, beautiful blue skies, mountain vistas and of course yet more king penguins, fur seals and elephant seals, which we can never get enough of.

Now to get some sleep before tomorrow's early start!



Grytviken & St Andrews

DAY 7 | Friday 28 October

Position at 0700 on 28 October

Latitude: 54°015.0'S

Longitude: 06°26.5'W

Course: 200°

Speed: 7.4 knots

Wind Speed: F3 N

Barometer: 1009

Air Temp: 0°C

It seemed quite like home to return to King Edward Point where we anchored in the Endurance two and a half years ago. The glaciers were dazzling in the glaring sunlight and the mountains stood out like scenic cardboards against the blue sky. It was a day such as these latitudes rarely boast of.

—Frank Hurley's journal, 3 April 1917

Grytviken came into view through the cloud and rain as we rounded King Edward Point on a slight sea and a keen breeze. For all of us onboard, visiting this historic whaling station is an important point in our journey to South Georgia. Despite its dark history it is one of the locations we associate with Ernest Shackleton and the voyage of the Endurance – it was the departure point for what was to become one of the most famous maritime survival stories of all time.

The surrounding precipitous rocky peaks and remnant winter snow added a dramatic element to this very special place. The rain and low cloud made the view onshore a little gloomy but did not deter our enthusiasm to get off the ship and explore the buildings and surrounds. Elephant seals and king penguins could be heard calling from the shoreline and added to the anticipation of finally getting ashore.

Earlier than expected the friendly South Georgia government official came aboard to commence biosecurity inspections. As we exited the mudroom, our boots, clothing and backpacks were rigorously inspected to ensure there was no trace of organic matter that could be taken onto the island inadvertently. A big thanks to all of us for ensuring that we met the standards of the South Georgia Government and we were doing our part to protect the unique environment and wildlife. The prevention of the accidental introduction of rodents and exotic flora is a key focus of the government officers here. It is only recently that South Georgia was declared free of rats after three years of an intensive eradication programme spearheaded by the South Georgia Heritage Trust.

The first stop ashore was the historic cemetery and for many of us, visiting Shackleton's grave marked an important landmark in our own personal journey. Carol was on hand to offer whiskey, a toast and a few poignant words graveside to set the historical context and pay respects to those who lay underground.

Exploring the rusty processing buildings and plant, the church and museum with the guided tour was an insightful glimpse into what was once a vibrant industry but a reminder of the dark days for the local whale populations. The shop and post office did a roaring trade and it was satisfying knowing that proceeds were aiding the Heritage Trust in funding ongoing conservation efforts on South Georgia. Some of the intrepid paddlers enjoyed a shoreline paddle past King Edward Point and back to the ship despite the rain and breezy conditions.



Drygalski Fjord, and setting off for Antarctica

DAY 8 | Saturday 29 October

Position at 0700 on 29 October

Latitude: 54°54.4'S

Longitude: 036°00.1'W

Course: 050°

Speed: 5.8 knots

Wind Speed: F3 S

Barometer: 974

Air Temp: 5° C

There is only one short link in the food chain between a diatom and a one-hundred-ton blue whale – between one cell and the largest of all animals – and that link is the Antarctic krill.

—David G. Campbell, *The Crystal Desert*, 1992

What a day! It was quite the surprise to wake up and look out the windows at the sunshine gleaming off the snow capped peaks and glaciers as we sailed slowly up and down the shoreline. By 9am we were turning into Drygalski Fjord, past a couple of icebergs, and cruising slowly through the narrow channel edged with rock walls, ice cliffs, and towards the massive Risting Glacier which tumbles into the sea at the far end. The Captain was able to reach a spot only 1 kilometre from the glacier, and as we paused for the ship to turn (quite the move!), we could feel the cold katabatic winds flowing down from the glaciers, and watch small chunks fall off into the sea. The colour of the sea was the bluest ultramarine, and matched the colour of the thousands of years old ice cliffs towering above us. Antarctic minke whales were spotted swimming around below us, this is very far north for this species. Dani and Snowy led keen birders with some citizen science on the deck, where we were still able to enjoy sunshine and had some shelter from the winds. As we sailed back out the fjord past the icebergs, lots of wildlife was spotted on the shores, and we could hear the now familiar call of the elephant seals. A very pleasant (and STILL sunny and only moderately windy) sail past Hamilton Bay and Cooper Bay was enjoyed, and the lovely greenness of Cooper Island with the waves breaking on it will become a distant memory when we head for the white of Antarctica. Before departing South Georgia, we continued along the coast and round Cape Disappointment, which was named by James Cook in 1775, as he realized that South Georgia was an island and not a continent. We left South Georgia having navigated around all but 72.5 kilometres of its amazing coastline.

Southward bound for Antarctica! The seas and winds immediately picked up as the Captain pointed us towards the open ocean, and a pod of whales slowed down the rapid antigen testing. "One hand for the Ship" became the motto, as we left our last sight of land for two-three days. The afternoon was filled with a lecture by Ian on the geology of South Georgia, which was enjoyed by some from the comfort of our rooms due to the increasing seas. During recap, Flo showed us some weather charts, with the very pretty colours of pink and red on them. Braving these stormy seas is all part of the mystic of Antarctica, it's good to know there's still places left in the world that take time and determination to get to.



On the Scotia Sea

DAY 9 | Sunday 30 October 2022

Position at 0700 on 30 October

Latitude: 56°47' 27.6"S

Longitude: 40°13'14.9"W

Course: 226°

Speed: 9.6 knots

Wind Speed: F7-8 N

Barometer: 984

Air Temp: 5° C

‘Colonising the deep blue Pacific by sun, star and island blocks, from the cloud-ring to the brave westerlies: Their motives were their own, and their skill and daring have enriched all humanity.’

—A slightly modified quote from David Lewis in 1964 on the Polynesian seafaring feats from the tropics to the Southern Ocean

The day probably started for many when a rogue wave struck the ship around 3am and sent loose items soaring through the cabins. A moment to collect ourselves and then back to bed and succumb to the rocking and rolling of the Scotia Sea. Dawn revealed that we were in the world of the ‘Grey Beards’ those spuming seas and breaking swells. Raud O’Brien, a solo sailor described the Southern Ocean waves as the ‘passing of a thousand horsemen’ rumbling across the ocean. For some, myself included, the energy in the ocean is always a welcome sight if travelling in a sturdy ship such as the *MV Greg Mortimer*. The ship motion is subdued due to the inbuilt hydraulic stabilisers. The only thing disappointing about the X Bow design is that the forepeak and bridge don’t get regularly doused in flying spray as the boat surges through the waves. A must for photography. Our southwesterly route to Antarctica takes us almost dead into the wind and the sea state. On the nose so to say! No fair winds and following seas today. Up and down the roller coaster, tempered by our slower speed of 8-9 knots.

A day inside was well spent learning about the history of marine mammals in the Southern Ocean with Jill in the morning. A somewhat contrasting story of natural evolution and human intervention with barbaric whaling slaughter. But it was another time and it is difficult to cast our modern views on rewinding the ocean back a century when society was in a different frame. ‘Dave from Dunedin’ made his maiden talk about his journey in fire-fighting and an open door to the Antarctic world. An entertaining and raw insight into the life and lure of the Antarctic. I particularly, liked Dave’s naïve comment that we all have thought at some point: someone is paying us to work in Antarctica! Dave highlighted what a privilege it is to live a winter in Antarctica, and to be a snow block sign writer.

Today we are travelling through the birthplace of ocean energy and waves on the planet. The discomfort we feel from the tempestuous conditions will provide pleasure for surfers around the Southern Hemisphere over the week. These chaotic and building seas will give birth to long lines of groomed swells that will arc their way across the hemisphere following the great circle routes in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, to break on beaches and rocky points. These swells also provide an important resource to harness electrical energy to power our towns and cities.

Cocktails and recap were well attended events. Our mountaineers story (told by Kevin) of crossing the Murray Snowfield in their attempt to follow the Shackleton Crossing of South Georgia from King Haakon Bay to Stromness kept everyone on the edge of their seats. This was followed by a change of pace with the poetry of the wind: defining the wind with the Beaufort scale.

To finish, ponder a thought for the small boat single hander in the Scotia Sea. Nowhere to hide. From David Lewis’s book *‘Ice Bird’*: This was the dread eye of the storm; the deceptively quiet hurricane vortex, whence few small boats had emerged. The night’s strong northerly gale would be as nothing compared with what must abruptly terminate the temporary lull – the ‘dangerous semicircle’ cold front coming in on the wings of a Force 12 to 13 hurricane, with unimaginable ferocity from the opposite quarter. The huge waves, released from the weight of the wind, reared skyward in toppling pyramids that almost stood the boat *‘Ice Bird’* on end. The momentary stillness was uncanny. Crash! My world was submerged in roaring chaos as a mighty hand rolled *‘Ice Bird’* over.



Halloween on the Scotia Sea

DAY 10 | Monday 31 October

Position at 0700 on 31 October

Latitude: 58°59'5" S

Longitude: 044°08'0"W

Course: 252°

Speed: 8 knots

Wind Speed: F7 SW

Barometer: 993

Air Temp: -6° C

Antarctica is the windiest place on earth. Wind dominates all activity, sets schedules, imperils lives, makes one a hostage indoors.

—David G. Campbell, *The Crystal Desert*, 1992

We awoke to a cold morning, -6°celsius. Ice from the sea spray coated many of the lower decks. Overnight we had been rocked in our beds by some heavy seas – up to 7 metres at times. As Flo elegantly mentioned in her morning wake-up call, the rough conditions only instilled a greater sense of reverence for Shackleton, Worsley and their four companions who sailed for 16 days aboard the *James Caird* across this vast and unforgiving Southern Ocean. Our journey aboard the *Greg Mortimer* between South Georgia and Elephant Island will, in comparison only take 3.5 days, and while the distance is the only real similarity, the experience deepens our appreciation of that phenomenal undertaking and the extreme hardships endured.

After breakfast, Snowy gave a highly informative talk on the penguins of the Antarctic continent, with particular focus on the three main species we are likely to see in the upcoming days, their life-cycles and morphological adaptations to the cold environment.

During the mid-morning, Max and Richard l'Anson held a photographic critique session. Fellow Expeditioners submitted one photo each with the rare opportunity for feedback and coaching from two professional photographers, each giving their own perspective. There were some stunning photos from some very talented photographers on board.

Despite the heavy seas and strong winds slowing our progress at times down to about 8 knots, we overtook the *MV Plancius* in the late morning. The increasing number of large tabular icebergs signalled our steady passage to the Antarctic continent, under the almost constant companionship of cape petrels.

In the afternoon we were treated to a lecture by Melina - on the rocks, geology and historical origins of the Antarctic continent over the last several hundred million years. Melina also shared her fascinating experience working for the Argentinian Antarctica Division, describing their daily life, and her discovery of various ammonites on the Peninsula.

At 5pm we convened in the Elephant Island Bar for a unique Halloween costume party in the middle of the Scotia Sea. It was an amazing turnout with some very inventive and creative costumes, especially given the limited

resources onboard. Our bar stewards were equally well adorned, some fearsome and ghoulish. Among the rest of us there were ghosts, a cereal killer, witches, a mummy, and plenty of antarctica themed costumes including lots of penguins, a humpback whale, an iceberg, and an antarctic fur seal. I think everyone agreed the best costume went to Nacho for his imitation of Shackleton and his brilliant reconstruction of the *Endurance* complete with an anchor, Mrs Chippy and a little James Caird.

The ocean swell subsided with perfect timing to enjoy a few drinks in the bar, and a beautiful dinner with significantly fewer crashes and plate smashes than the previous evening. All the E-Team and crew have been suitably impressed with the sealegs and seaworthiness of this group of wonderful Expeditioners.



Arrival in Antarctica

DAY 11 | Tuesday 1 November

Position at 0700 on 1 Nov

Latitude: 60°52'5" S

Longitude: 050°44'9"W

Course: 237°

Speed: 10.6 knots

Wind Speed: F6 SSW

Barometer: 990

Air Temp: -3° C

POINT WILD

The hut grows more grimy every day. Everything is sooty black. We have arrived at the limit where further increments from the smoking stove, blubber lamps, and cooking gear are unnoticed. It is at least comforting to feel that we can become no filthier... from time to time we have a spring cleaning, but a fresh supply of flooring materials is not always available, as all the shingle is frozen up and buried by deep drifts. Such is our Home Sweet Home.

—a crew member writing about living conditions at their Elephant Island camp

After a great night of Halloween celebrations, many of us on board the *Greg Mortimer* had a slow start to our morning. It was yet another day at sea, but the winds have started to slow down and the ride has become much more comfortable with less swell. The engineers worked through the evening to get the coffee machine in the lounge up and running again, a welcome sight for those of us coffee drinkers when we woke up this morning. A quick look out the window revealed that the temps were still sub-zero as the sea spray has frozen to most of the decks around the ship, and we still have our incredible seabirds soaring all around the ship, most notably the cape petrels and southern fulmars. These amazing birds spend the vast majority of their lives at sea, feeding on tiny food particles that make their way to the surface – a truly remarkable story of survival in the vast Southern Ocean.

Our day was packed with fabulous lectures from our talented staff onboard including a morning talk about the seals of Antarctica with Jill that covered all the facts about the pinnipeds we will encounter throughout the rest of our voyage. Did you know that seals can slow their heart rate to less than 10 beats per minute when they dive? Our next lecturer was Ian, talking about the Antarctic ice sheet and informing us about other abiotic features of Antarctica including a wealth of information about ice shelves. After lunch we had yet another fantastic lecture from Carol about the history of how Belgians discovered Antarctica. It was a day full of learning opportunities as we prepare ourselves for our arrival to the Antarctic Peninsula.

This afternoon we also did another round of biosecurity checks, which involves vacuuming clothes, pockets, backpacks, and velcro to make sure we don't introduce any non-native species down in Antarctica from our previous landings. After a long three days at sea, we finally spotted land around 4pm (Elephant Island). The captain did a wonderful job of bringing the ship within half a kilometre of Point Wild, the famous location where Shackleton's crew spent four months waiting for his return after his treacherous journey to South Georgia on the *James Caird*. It was well below freezing and for those of us who stepped outside to take photographs, we quickly came to the realization that spending any length of time in this desolate and inhospitable place is simply unfathomable.

Our final activity of the day was the auction that benefits the South Georgia Heritage Trust. A number of items were auctioned off, including some special activities with the expedition team like a private scouting Zodiac ride or the opportunity to announce the morning wake up call. The auction was a great success and a special thanks to all who participated and contributed to the cause.



Brown Bluff, Weddell Sea

DAY 12 | Wednesday 2 November

Position at 0700 on 2 Nov

Latitude: 63°21'9" S

Longitude: 056°52'5"W

Course: 176°

Speed: 12.4 knots

Wind Speed: F6 NNW

Barometer: 1002

Air Temp: -3° C

Ice is the dominant environmental factor of the Antarctic shallow-water marine communities. Not only does it abrade the ocean floor, scraping away benthic organisms and mixing layers of sediment, it also affects salinity, temperature, currents, and the amount of light that penetrates the sea.

—David G. Campbell, *The Crystal Desert*, 1992

For many, today was a day they will never forget. A day we would look outside and know we are in a place like no other, Antarctica. Mountain peaks and distant landscapes added to the growing anticipation and got us excited about what's to come over the next few days.

The morning sky displayed stunning light accompanied by subtle patches of blue sky as we made our way towards Tabarin Peninsula.

Flo's gentle voice welcomed us into the Antarctic Sound at 63 11'S and 56 54'W. To the starboard side we could see the Argentinian base, Esperanza in Hope Bay. A place linked to Nordenskjold's Expedition and where the first child in Antarctica was born.

Sticking with "Plan A" we continued through sheltered waters, with Brown Bluff as our first port of call. After breakfast wind speeds exceeded beyond safe conditions to operate, so Flo and the team decided best to cancel the landing. From afar we admired penguins on shore while Melina educated us on the geological features which give Brown Bluff its name.

As we made our way to the Weddell Sea "Plan B" the wild ocean outside was impressive to watch as tabular icebergs and porpoising penguins welcomed us to Antarctica.

Shortly before 10am, the *Greg Mortimer* had hit its first ice sheet of the season. All rugged up, we made our way to Deck 8 for a spectacular view from the top. Snowfall had covered the outer decks creating a fairylike winter wonderland. As the ship sliced through the ice, crabeater seals and adolie penguins gathered on ice floes, snow petrels and antarctic shags occupied the sky above us. Everything we had learnt from the team during each lecture was now unveiling before our very eyes.

After another delicious lunch, Carol invited us into the Lecture theatre to hear how she spends her summer holidays: "Six seasons in the heart of Antarctica", while Ian and Dani gathered some keen citizen scientists in the Observation lounge to learn about the cloud survey project and how you too can work for NASA.

Next on the menu was our hotel department sharing some their many talents. A delicious spread of afternoon tea was followed by a sugar sculpting demonstration in the lecture theatre. Our pastry chef Sapto made his creations look easy and I'm sure we'll all give it a go when we get home.

On our way into recap, we were treated to one more surprise by Lori who had spent the afternoon behind the scenes in the galley making delicious cookies for us to enjoy.

The E Team and Flo delivered another informative recap and briefing which led us straight into another scrumptious dinner.



Neko Harbour & Port Lockroy

DAY 13 | Thursday 3 November

Position at 0700 on 3 Nov

Latitude: 64°30'3" S

Longitude: 062°26'9" W

Course: 229°

Speed: 14.8 knots

Wind Speed: F6 SSW

Barometer: 1000

Air Temp: -4° C

They are extraordinarily like children, these little people of the Antarctic world, either like children, or like old men, full of their own importance and late for dinner, in their black tail-coats and white shirt fronts - and rather portly withal.

—Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World*

After four days at sea, we were all very excited for our first Antarctic landing this morning. In Flo's wake-up call, she let us know that we were a bit behind schedule; this did not bother us one bit because the ice that had slowed the *Greg Mortimer's* navigation overnight was absolutely stunning to photograph. Surrounded by clouds and snow, we anchored after breakfast for a continental landing. First people off the ship were the skiers and snowshoers, helping to make a path in the pristine snow for the rest of the ship. With equipment that enabled passage on top of the snow (rather than down into it, like the rest of us in muck boots) they climbed up into the clouds to enjoy some peace above all the excitement at the shore. Down below, it seems that we had arrived to the beach at Neko Harbour at the exact same time as the gentoo penguins. When the ship pulled in, there were a handful of penguins sitting on perfect mounds of untouched snow; once we landed, hundreds of penguins were landing just a few beaches down, creating a superhighway to the site of their colonies. Because of the dense snow, these penguins won't be able to make their nests just yet, but there was plenty of entertaining courting and mating to witness. Those that went paddling farther into Andvord Bay in kayaks were also able to make a landing right at the end so that everyone onboard has officially touched the continent of Antarctica. As if that wasn't accomplishment enough, some expeditioners (including members of the E Team and one crew!) were crazy enough to do a Polar Plunge as sea ice was actively forming around them. Considering that seawater solidifies only below freezing, those brave plungers were in water almost -1° celsius!

For the afternoon, we sailed 32 nautical miles across to Port Lockroy, the first British base in Antarctica. Now a museum rather than an operational government base, those that will be looking after the museum will not be arriving for another couple of weeks. Our fearless Expedition Leader, Flo (who was base commander at Port Lockroy a decade ago), spent an hour digging into the snow while we went on Zodiac cruises around Gourdiar Island. After enjoying a cruise through some of the largest snowflakes any of us had ever seen, some Expeditioners were able to get on shore for a torch-lit tour of the museum. Kayakers played with a leopard seal to start their afternoon adventure, and skiers were up to their knees in fresh powder. To warm us up, the Hotel Team had prepared an indoor barbeque, complete with mulled wine to end our first full day of landings here in Antarctica.



Polar Plunge

DAY 13 | Thursday 3 November





Paradise Harbour

DAY 14 | Friday 4 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 4 Nov

Latitude: 64°50'3" S

Longitude: 062°52'4"W

Course: 133°

Speed: 6.4 knots

There was great beauty here,
in the way that things which
are also terrible can be
beautiful.

—Richard Byrd

Although the weather forecast threatened high winds and rough seas, there was just one spot which offered our best hope – Paradise Harbour. And what a delightful haven it was, so named by the whalers of a century ago who also found shelter here. Approaching in the early morning from the De Gerlache Strait through seas filled with sea ice was a mesmerising experience, the wind dropping away to a mere 10 knots, which allowed us some very special Zodiac cruising and our second Continental landing.

Magical! The calm, glassy bay of Paradise and Skontorp Cove awaited, strewn with icebergs small and large, and fringed with towering faces of ice from glaciers descending to the water from the high mountains all around. The birds were busily nesting: antarctic shags with their striking blue eye-rings flying to their cliff ledges with large clumps of nesting materials in their beaks; and a colony of cape petrels likewise occupied. Down on the water was also a paradise for photographers, as the light lifted, illuminating a landscape of snow-covered peaks in all its atmospheric beauty. The kayakers thrilled to paddle amongst all kinds of sea ice, at one point followed by a crabeater seal taking advantage of their leat, and always the distant but deeply impressive calving of a glacier, sending a wave out into the bay.

Brown Station, a seasonal Argentinian base, was the site of our landing, but it was deeply buried in snow. Our intrepid team went ahead to cut ice steps up from the landing, fix a rope line to aid our ascent (and descent!) and snowshoe a loop that we could follow around. Only the tops of the buildings were visible above the snow but everyone, despite occasional qualms, successfully completed the circuit, rewarded by stunning views over the bay. Down below, the water was alive with gentoo penguins splashing, porpoising and diving, waiting for the moment they too could come on land and begin nesting.

Next we headed towards the Melchior Islands in Dallmann Bay across the De Gerlache Strait, in increasing winds and lively waves, dodging icebergs as they emerged from the surrounding mists into our patch of sunshine. It was a dramatic crossing, but only pleasure as witnessed from the extraordinary comfort of the *Greg Mortimer*.

Wind Speed: F3 SE

Barometer: 980

Air Temp: -4° C

Humpback whales were spotted, and one of them treated us to an excellent view of its near-white fluke. The conditions precluded an excursion from the ship, but this provided the opportunity to ship-cruise the beautiful ice-filled Fournier Bay, a rarely-visited indent into Anvers Island near the foot of Mount Français, at 2760 metres one of the highest mountains in Antarctica. As evening drew on, we said goodbye to the Peninsula, sailing along the coast of Brabant Island, past glaciers flowing down to the sea, shimmering in the exquisite Antarctic sunshine.



Whaler's Bay, Yankee Harbour & Halfmoon Island

DAY 15 | Saturday 5 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 5 Nov

Latitude: 62°56'7" S

Longitude: 060°27'2" W

Course: 329°

Speed: 9.8 knots

Wind Speed: F3 SE

Barometer: 1011

Air Temp: -4° C

The interior of the Peninsula is a spine of volcanos one hundred and fifty million years old. In their youth, these peaks were magma cores, the hot ooziings of heat generated by the collisions and subduction of tectonic plates.

—David G. Campbell, *The Crystal Desert*, 1992

We find ourselves now in the last day of our amazing expedition before heading again to the sea and the famous Drake Passage. This day already had a beautiful itinerary waiting for us, but it became even better after a surprise third landing at the end of the afternoon.

After the most hilarious wakeup call from Charlie (thank you, by the way) we started the day at the magnificent Neptune's Bellows at the entrance of Deception Island. The bellows is named after the Roman sea god Neptune because of the strong gust that blows in this narrow channel (American sealer, 1822). Entering here is a challenging navigation due to Raven's Rock that lies 2.5 metres below the water in the middle of the channel.

The morning was full of activities at Whaler's Bay, with skiing, snowshoeing and kayaking going on along with the landing. The bay is located east of Port Foster and was named by the French Antarctic Expedition led by Charcot in 1908-1910 for its use at that time by the whaling industry. The site is now a Historic Site or Monument (HSM71) included in the Antarctic Treaty. Home to pre 1970 remains of the whaling period, this mysterious place includes artifacts and old structures of the station, now partially or completely devastated by the severe weather and volcanic activity of the area. Deception Island is the exposed portion of an active shield volcano with a 30 kilometre basal diameter. This volcano (largest in Antarctica) is associated with the "recent" Bransfield Strait seafloor spreading over the last 2.6 million years. The caldera collapse of Deception Island Volcano, was comparable in scale to some of the largest eruptions on Earth over the last several millennia. Despite its magnitude and potential for far-reaching environmental effects, the age of this event has never been established, with estimates ranging from the late Pleistocene to 3370 years before present. The newly constrained caldera collapse is now the largest volcanic eruption confirmed in Antarctica during the current epoch. The widespread footprint suggests that this eruption would have had significant climatic and ecological effects across a vast area of the south polar region.

Almost at midday we started our way out of Deception Island. The *Greg Mortimer* was now en route towards Yankee Harbour of Greenwich Island, also part of the South Shetlands. The site has been identified as an



important bird area, and we were able to see why. It supports a large breeding colony of gentoo penguins, and we had the enormous pleasure of seeing several of them building their nests and others already holding eggs. The activity groups also enjoyed some amazing skiing and snowshoeing in the afternoon.

Now the surprise came, with the third (!) landing of the day, and the last one of our incredible journey. Half Moon Island, a remote and beautiful place that holds a colony of chinstrap penguins, and basaltic/andesitic rocks bursting with lichens and mosses. We also observed an Argentinian station named Camara, which is open during the summer for scientific activities. By dinner time, it was time to go back to our ship and start our cruising to Ushuaia. Drake Passage, here we go.



Drake Passage

DAY 16 | Sunday 6 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 6 Nov

Latitude: 61°04'8" S

Longitude: 061°18'3" W

Course: 329°

Speed: 11.2 knots

Wind Speed: F6 W

Barometer: 1011

Air Temp: 5° C

Little do you know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.

—Robert Louis Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, 1881

A mellow morning was appreciated by most after our very busy “three landing day” on the 5th, and our first for many days without our gentle wakeup call from Flo. Most folk made it to breakfast on time, and looked out to see “average” swells for the Drake Passage, which certainly wasn’t a “lake”, nor the “dreaded shake”. The combination of lots of fresh Antarctic air and the gentle rocking of the sea will be missed for lulling us to sleep as we head back north towards Ushuaia today.

After breakfast Richard the photographer gave an Introduction to Lightroom lecture. I think a lot of us will come off this ship really appreciating the hours both Richard and Max have put into teaching us little tricks to make us better photographers. It will also take most folk hours and days to sort through the thousands of photos we’ve all taken, and tweak them into the memories we can share with our friends so they too can appreciate the pristine beauty and moody weather we have been lucky enough to experience on this trip.

After lunch Ian gave us another fantastic lecture on Traversing the East Antarctic Ice Sheet. Ian has spent many, many seasons down in Antarctica, and his experience, knowledge, and enthusiasm for sharing this has deepened our understanding of the processes which take place down here and the work he undertook on the initial discoveries.

Bertrand, our resident “cookie monster”, complete with giant spectacles, was up next in the lecture line up. His version of Quantum Physics, targeted towards “what we are made of” was quite the change from his usual job on the ship as Hotel Director.

Cocktails and canapés in the Elephant bar were followed by our last recap of the trip. It was fun to learn from Carol about the history of the Drake channel as we sail across it, when it was discovered and how it was named, and imagine being out here in these “average” seas in a small wooden sailboat a few hundred years ago. Imagine being out here with Sir Francis Drake himself on a three year adventure to undiscovered territories! Learning about our Zodiacs from Justine, and how they were named was a good reminder of how important these small, tough boats and their talented drivers have been to us on our expedition to Antarctica.

Ending the day with a trivia quiz, a few new facts about our own ship the *Greg Mortimer* and a few fun facts about the Expedition Team, and back to bed to be lulled gently to sleep by the rocking of the seas.



Drake Passage & Cape Horn

DAY 17 | Monday 7 November

Position at 0700 on 7 Nov

Latitude: 57°25'9" S

Longitude: 065°40'8" W

Course: 327°

Speed: 11.4 knots

Day two on the Drake Passage and the final leg of the voyage, and the route north to Cape Horn. The swell increased over night from the north-northwest, and the wind had increased to Force 6. An uncomfortable sea for most onboard. The rocking and rolling has been relentless on this voyage. Grey skies with low stratus cloud to the surface. The *Greg Mortimer* plods on at 10.6 knots. From the observation deck the white caps appear to extend to the horizon. Typical Southern Ocean conditions; grey with a building northwestern swell crossing over with a long-period southwestern swell, the product of the passage of a deep low pressure system over the past two to three days.

Life on board was focused on cementing friendships, viewing the voyage slideshow, more eating, and the occasional bird observations. The latter included black-brow, the elusive grey-headed and last but not least the wandering albatross. For most it was a day to take stock of the adventure they had experienced amongst the mountains, glaciers and fjords of the Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia. The quaint Stanley village and the blue sky day at West Point Island in the Falkland Islands were a distant memory. For the 'Montevideo Crew', tango dancing and Eva Peron vocals could have been from a trip years ago.

By lunchtime the cloud had lifted to stratocumulus with patches of blue sky. Even the sea state was cooperating as calmer waters lay ahead. By about 2pm false Cape Horn was just visible through a veil of cloud. We were now about 25 nautical miles away. We edged towards Cape Horn at 8 knots. By about 5.30pm we were within 3 nautical miles of Cape Horn and the decks were crowded with photographers and viewers alike. It was hard to believe that so many have been lost to the sea at this junction of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. The visibility was not ideal, very hazy, which gave poor definition of the lighthouse and the albatross sculpture: a memorial to those lost seafarers. 'Lost sailors now flying with the albatross in the last vestige of the Antarctic winds'.

As if on cue the winds rose to 45 knots and Cape Horn took on the mantle of legends. Sunset came upon us quickly as we headed east past Isla Wollaston towards the Beagle Channel, which we reached about six hours later. Distances are always deceiving in the waters of Tierra del Fuego.

The evening was spent with the Captain's toasts and a recap on the voyage, before last cocktails and a sumptuous feed.

Wind Speed: F6 W

Barometer: 1012

Air Temp: 3° C

I am the albatross that waits for you
at the end of the earth.

I am the forgotten soul of the dead sailors
who crossed Cape Horn
from all the seas of the world.

But they did not die
in the furious waves.

Today they fly in my wings
to eternity

in the last trough of the Antarctic winds

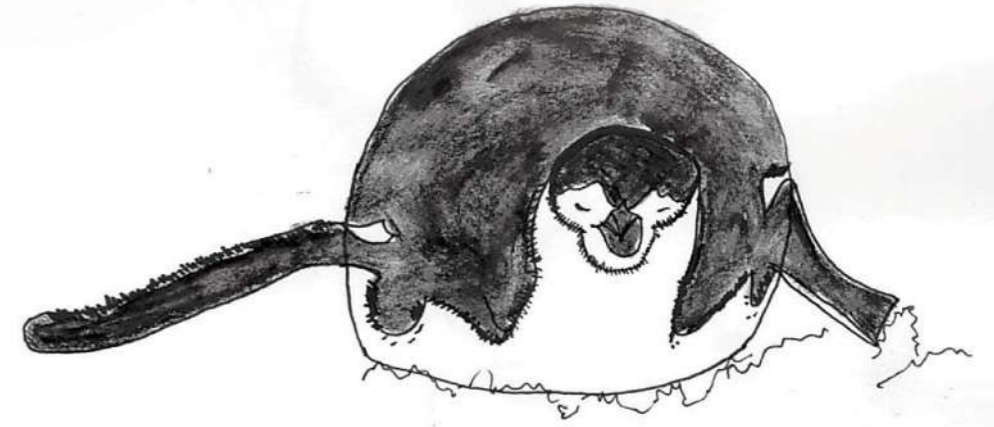
—Poem by Sara Vial inscribed on the Cape Horn Albatross Monument
(translated from Spanish)



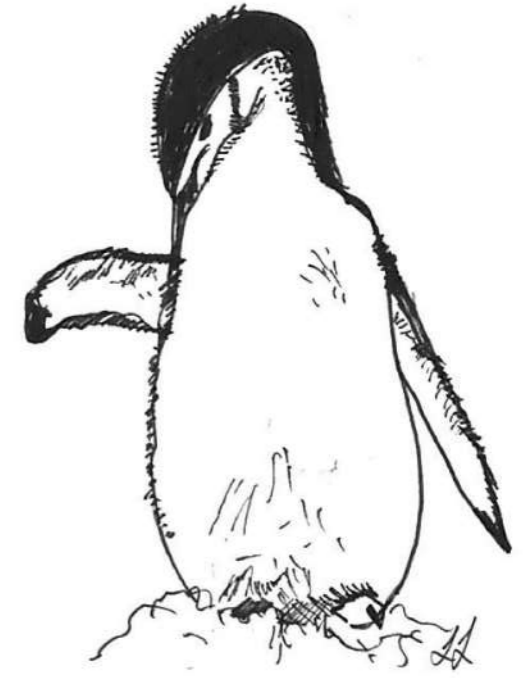
Disembarkation day at Ushuaia, Argentina

DAY 18 | Tuesday 8 November

The entire Aurora Team thanks you for joining us on this adventure, and we hope to see you on the high seas again!



H
Halfmoon Island Nov 2022



Snowshoeing Log

By Hilary Cave

Snowshoe Guide: Hilary Cave

Number of Snowshoers: 10

Snowshoers:

John Beukema
Peter Burgess
Roslyn Burgess

Maurice Buchalter
Wendy Gonsher
John Holmes
Sharon Hopkins

Susan Martinez
Anna Rzepecki
David Williams

Day 12: 2 November 2022

After three days at sea we arrived at the Antarctic Peninsula from South Georgia. We were ready to stretch our legs at Brown Bluff and experience both snowshoeing and Antarctica for the first time. The weather had other ideas and the wind blew in 60 knot gusts a landing at Brown bluff was obviously off the cards. Instead, we stayed on board and the ship cruised into the Weddell Sea, the *Greg Mortimer* crunching through thin sea ice and bergy bits as she went.

Day 13: 3 November 2022

We made our first continental landing at Neko Harbour. No evidence of the gruesome history of this place as a whaling station remains, instead the stunning scenery captures us. This was our first experience both on snowshoes and of roping up for glacier travel. We climbed steadily up a broad ridge to 180 metre, this height allows for spectacular views of the glacier plunging into the sea. We have time to observe the noisy gentoo's as they begin to find their mates and make their nests before returning to the ship for a polar plunge.

Day 14: 4 November 2022

It was still snowing heavily on so we Zodiac cruised in Paradise Harbour with the other passengers before a short visit to the Almaranty Brown station. The staff had carved exquisite steps rising steeply from the landing rocks and created a snowshoe trench for us to follow, circuiting from the snow buried station to a glacier outlook.

The heavy snow continued to fall during the afternoon as our Zodiac crunched through the bergy bits in the bay at Port Lockroy. We were supervised by some curious weddell seals as we made our landing at Jougla Point. For most of us the huge snowflakes that fell were the largest we'd experienced. We stayed close together as we made our way through deep snow to the far side of the island overlooking the Peltier Channel, the grey sky and falling snow creating a foreboding atmosphere.



Day 15: 5 November 2022

Overnight we crossed the Gerlache Straight and spent the day visiting the South Shetland Islands. On our landing at Whalers Bay, Deception Island we made a loop through dust blackened snow to climb the Ronald Peak – great views up the harbour, a caldera created by the volcanic activity many years ago. Time to visit the historic relics of the whaler's station and walk the black sandy beach back to the Zodiacs.

Our final snow shoe was at Yankee Harbour where Ali and Tarn led us up firm snow to a tremendous ridge view point high above the penguin rookeries, the ship a tiny dot in the sea below.



Shackleton's Crossing Log

Guides: Kevin Nicholas, Marius Bron, Hilary Cave, Tarn Pilkington, Alison Cardinal

Expeditioners:

David Williams
James Chaffin

Joined on the Peninsula for skiing by:

Maurice Clifford
Jim Zuberbuhler
Max Zuberbuhler

Overview:

This year's crossing attempt was challenged by very unsettled westerly weather patterns. King Haakon Bay was reached in moderate winds with the crossers making it to the far side of the Murray Snowfield. Due to challenging winds and poor visibility and an unfavourable forecast for the next 24 hours it was decided to abandon the crossing and retreat to Possession Bay. The final leg from Fortuna to Stromness was completed in the afternoon in reasonably good weather late on the second day.

Day 1: 22 October 2022

We all met aboard the *Greg Mortimer* in keen winds in Stanley. A casual drink was enjoyed after the formalities of lifeboat drills and introductions. Kevin laid out the plan for the next few days including gear checks and briefings as we approached our expedition destination of South Georgia.

Day 2: 23 October 2022

Falklands - Good weather meant spectacular landings at Grave Cove and West Point. This was some of the best weather of the entire expedition with the water and temperatures combining to make us think of swimming. The Albatross at Grave Cove was a highlight and the short walk was welcomed to stretch the legs.

Day 3-4: 24-25 October 2022

At sea and heading for King Haakon Bay, South Georgia. We completed trip preparation tasks including equipment checks, trip briefings and biosecurity checks. Some fared better than others during the days at sea but gear checks were completed and the crossers (James and David) were keen to get started.

Day 5: 26 October 2022

We arrived at King Haakon Bay at 11.00am to a smaller than expected swell, light rain, 20 knot winds and limited visibility. The forecast for the following day indicated a brief weather window! We were confident to proceed to the first contingency point on the upper Murray Snowfield and reassess weather before continuing. We kept dry at the landing and snowshoed to three quarters across the Murray Snowfield to pitch camp. Winds were 20 knots gusting to 30mknots throughout the day with variable visibility requiring white out navigation at times. Pitching the tents was time consuming and tricky as gusts blasted down from the heavens. Dinner was prepared and enjoyed by most except Hils and Kev who were just hunkering down. It was bit of a sleepless night as the tents shook violently into dawn the following day.

Day 6: 27 October 2022

Despite a reasonable forecast we awoke to strong winds and low cloud. It was decided then to abandon the crossing and re-route to Possession Bay via Shackleton Gap. The wind dropped through the morning and visibility improved. We greeted the Zodiacs with enthusiasm as it meant we were to board the ship back into the lap of luxury.

The final leg of the Shackleton traverse from Fortuna to Stromness was completed that afternoon in reasonable weather. The views were fantastic from high on the route and the descent to Stromness was enjoyed as we were on our own as a small group. We had a very late pick up and a late snack on the ship after enjoying a couple of hours sheltering in a bothy bag.

Day 7: 28 October 2022

Visiting Shackletons' grave at Grytviken was a highlight despite the rain and wind. A whiskey toasted the "man" and we explored the environs of the old whaling station in to the late morning.

St Andrews Bay was exceptional but a tad damp! The overwhelming number of king penguins was incredible as were the large number of female elephant seals overlooked by the "Beachmaster" male.

Day 8: 29 October 2022

Drygalski Fjord was a ship cruise and we took in the incredible glaciated peaks and rock walls dreaming of coming back to perhaps ski and climb in the area another time. Late in the day we headed across the Scotia Sea towards Antarctica with plans to visit Elephant Island.

Day 9-11: 30 October 2022 - 1 November 2022

The endless sea days, stopping only for a view of Point Wild, Elephant Island on the first day of the new month. Unfortunately landing was off the cards but we were able to take in the feel of the lonely place that Shackleton had left his men to wait upon his return.

Day 12: 2 November 2022

Entering Antarctic Sound and exploring the beginnings of the Weddell Sea was incredible. Despite not landing at Brown Bluff due to strong winds, Plan B was just like Flo said – "often better than Plan A". The ship moved slowly around bergs and all manner of ice forms. It was an incredible spectacle and illustrated how extreme this part of the Peninsula can be.

Day 13: 3 November 2022

The ship pulled into Neko Harbour in the morning for both ski and snowshoe activities. Our continental landing was on! It was fantastic to get on land finally and stretch the legs again. There was plenty of snow making the skiing and snowshoeing very enjoyable. David and John enjoyed the chance to show off their skills in what

was pretty good powder snow. And for those crazy enough the polar plunge was held in very snowy and icy conditions.

In the afternoon the snow intensified as we arrived at Port Lockroy. Undeterred, and joined by Max and Jim, we used the zodiacs to get across to Domier Island. The snow was deep and heavy and made for slow trail breaking up the first slope. The skiing was nigh on impossible as it was 40-50cm deep and very heavy. Max pulled off the best turns while the rest of us switched to survival skiing or just fell over and flailed about. It was truly a humorous adventure despite the lack of success.

Day 14: 4 November 2022

Paradise Harbour was reached and hopes were pinned to another ski outing. Alas our plans were curtailed as the snow continued to fall and the snow was as deep as Port Lockroy. It was safer and more enjoyable to snowshoe and enjoy Almirante Brown Station.

In the afternoon the plan was to ski at the Melchior Islands but as we approached the wind line was obvious and the knots on the ships instruments climbed ever higher forcing a quick rethink by Flo. Her "Plan B" to Fournier Bay made for an excellent Ship Cruise in a spectacular setting of bergs and ice floes.

Day 15: 5 November 2022

Whalers Bay on Deception Island turned out to be the most magical of days. Finally we had some great weather and the chance to enjoy a full ski tour. We climbed from the Whaling Station to the summit ridge of the caldera to enjoy views of an amazing vista down to Bailey Head and across to Livingston Island. The ski descent to the landing was firm and icy but John and David made the most of what was as exceptional outing!

And as a bonus we successfully landed at Yankee Harbour in the afternoon for another quick ski in "Yankee Bowls".

Flo was quick to add a bonus visit in the evening which saw the expedition to visit Halfmoon Bay and see the chinstrap penguins. Dinner was late but the best day of the trip was behind us and drinks in the bar were enjoyed into the night.

Day 16-17: 6-7 November 2022

At sea, bound for Ushuaia.

Day 18: 8 November 2022

Disembark Ushuaia and head for home (with certificates).



Kayaking Log

Kayak Masters: Peter Wainwright, Russell Henry, Ivan Klockhov

Number of Paddlers: 19 Total Paddle Outings: 7 Total Distance Paddled: 37.2 km

Paddlers:	Aynsley Guerin	Linda Todd
James Chaffin	Lucy Henry	Beth Turner
Yoh Fong Chan	Steve Kaplan	Max Turner
Antonia Clark	Martyn Lindsay	Jim Zuberbuhler
Chris Cocks	Anemone Schweizer-Kaplan	Max Zuberbuhler
Danny Cocks	Leah Stockford	Sierra Zuberbuhler
Tim Grams	Geoff Todd	

Day 6 – Thursday 27 October, 2022

PM: Whistle Cove, Fortuna Bay - Distance: 4.5 kms

After our mesmerizing first landing on South Georgia, in the morning a group of us felt ready to get in our kayaks and see the wildlife from the water. It was still blowing 20 knots even in the shelter of Whistle Cove so we had to bee-line over to the relative shelter of the lee shore. After a quick coaching session on sweep strokes and forward paddling we paddled north along the rocky reefs and shore-line. We marveled at the young fur seals all jostling and jockeying for their stake on the beach between the behemoth male elephant seals. We saw gentoos climbing up impossibly steep grassy slopes to morainal ridges. Once we reached a point beyond which there was little shelter we turned our kayaks and ran with the wind behind us back to the ship surfing the small wind-swell. It was a true privilege to get to paddle in South Georgia's waters.

Day 7 – Friday 28 October, 2022

AM: Grytviken - Distance: 3.7 kms

A seriously rainy day here on South Georgia. The kayakers all headed to shore via Zodiacs to go check out the ruins of the Grytviken whaling station, make a toast to Shackleton, do some Christmas shopping at the souvenir shop, and send postcards off to loved ones. Partway through the time on shore a small group of kayakers keen for a paddle met and set off in two separate groups. The winds had calmed right down so they paddled out and around King Edward Point to the more open waters beyond. The beaches were full of elephant seals which were really cool for everyone to watch from the water. The paddling was perfectly calm between the kelp beds and the large cliffs, and we were surprised by several very large bull elephant seals just laying in the kelp. We then turned around and paddled back to the ship!

Day 13 – Thursday 3 November, 2022

AM: Neko Harbour - Distance: 6.6 kms

After being completely winded out the previous day at Brown Bluff this was our first opportunity to sea kayak down on the Antarctic Peninsula. We launched from the ship and then paddled west along the giant glacier face next to Neko. We witnessed one avalanche come cascading down the slope from the upper ice cliff. It was a cold day the snow was settling on our kayaks and us, slowly turning us into kayaking snowmen! We paddled out among some of the larger bergy bits until we could no longer see the ship and the stillness and quietness was breathtaking. As it was such blissfully calm conditions we took advantage of the opportunity to do some progressive coaching on forward paddling technique. We then paddled over to the beach to make a visit to the resident gentoo colony before paddling back over to the ship.

PM: Port Lockroy - Distance: 5.1 kms

A foggy day in the ice. We launched from the ship and headed down wind in a light breeze. Almost immediately we found two leopard seals that had been hunting weddell seals on an ice-floe. For a brief instance one of the leopard seals seemed a little too curious in us and we called in the support Zodiac just in case. From there we paddled over to Doumer Island and along the glacier faces heading south from Port Lockroy, it was a veritable blizzard – huge flakes snowing sideways and lots of slush was actively forming on the water surface. It was a stormy paddle but everyone had a lovely time. Once the wind began to kick up and people started to get a little cold we all jumped into the support Zodiac and zoomed back to the ship.

Day 14 – Friday 4 November, 2022

AM: Paradise Harbour - Distance: 7.4 kms

Paddling at Paradise Harbour was one of the best moments of the trip. Finally, we got the whole team on the water at the same time! We paddled towards the Argentine Almirante Brown station, which was almost completely covered with snow, looked at gentoo penguins and then headed west along the beautiful cliffs with nesting imperial shags. After several minutes we entered the brash ice – it was so much fun to push our way through it. Our kayaks became small icebreakers! At some point we noticed that we were being followed by a very curious crabeater seal. The landscape around us was covered by low clouds and snow that fell as huge fluffy flakes. As we arrived in the middle of the bay, surrounded by the glaciers and icebergs, the clouds lifted and we were rewarded with views of the beautiful scenery all around us. The sun shone on distant mountains creating unbelievable shades and colours. What an amazing moment!

Day 15 – Saturday 5 November, 2022

AM: Whaler's Bay, Deception Island* - Distance: 5.5 kms

The wind was blowing at a steady 20 knots from the northwest, so we were close to, but just within, our operational limit – thank goodness because paddling inside the caldera of a volcano is such a unique experience and Deception is so different from everywhere else in Antarctica. We kayaked from the ship along the base of the wonderful volcanic cliffs, with cape petrels and antarctic terns circling above. The northwest winds were accelerating through the gap of Neptune's Bellows and the crashing swell on the outer coast of the caldera was quite intimidating, so we split into two groups, the first to head to shore and spend some more time exploring

the whaling station and the others to stick the noses of their boats just a bit into the open ocean on the outside. We paddled out to check out the giant sea-stack guarding the entrance and then paddled across to a small beach on the other side with a small cluster of chinstraps and a few seals lounging about. All the while we were careful to avoid any oversize waves that might suddenly break. We paddled upwind through the strong gap winds before ferrying back across the entrance and over to the beach to explore a bit of the history of Whaler's Bay. A stunning paddle.

PM: Yankee Harbour, Greenwich Island - Distance: 4.4 kms

Our second outing of the day had a smaller team of dedicated paddlers. The wind was blowing from the west, so we decided to tow our kayaks by Zodiac upwind into a cove in the lee of a small peninsula. We were able to land on a small, protected beach where we spent some relaxed time wandering around several little colonies of gentoos and watching a weddell seal lazing around. Russell tried to imitate the weddell seals' breeding call – which was hilariously entertaining! Then we got into our kayaks and had an amazing downwind paddle along the shallow waters, trying to maintain a safe distance from the glacier face. We had to paddle through some small waves crossing the terminal moraine reefs on our way back to the ship. What a perfect outing – we had our own private little landing and adventurous paddling!





Bird Sightings



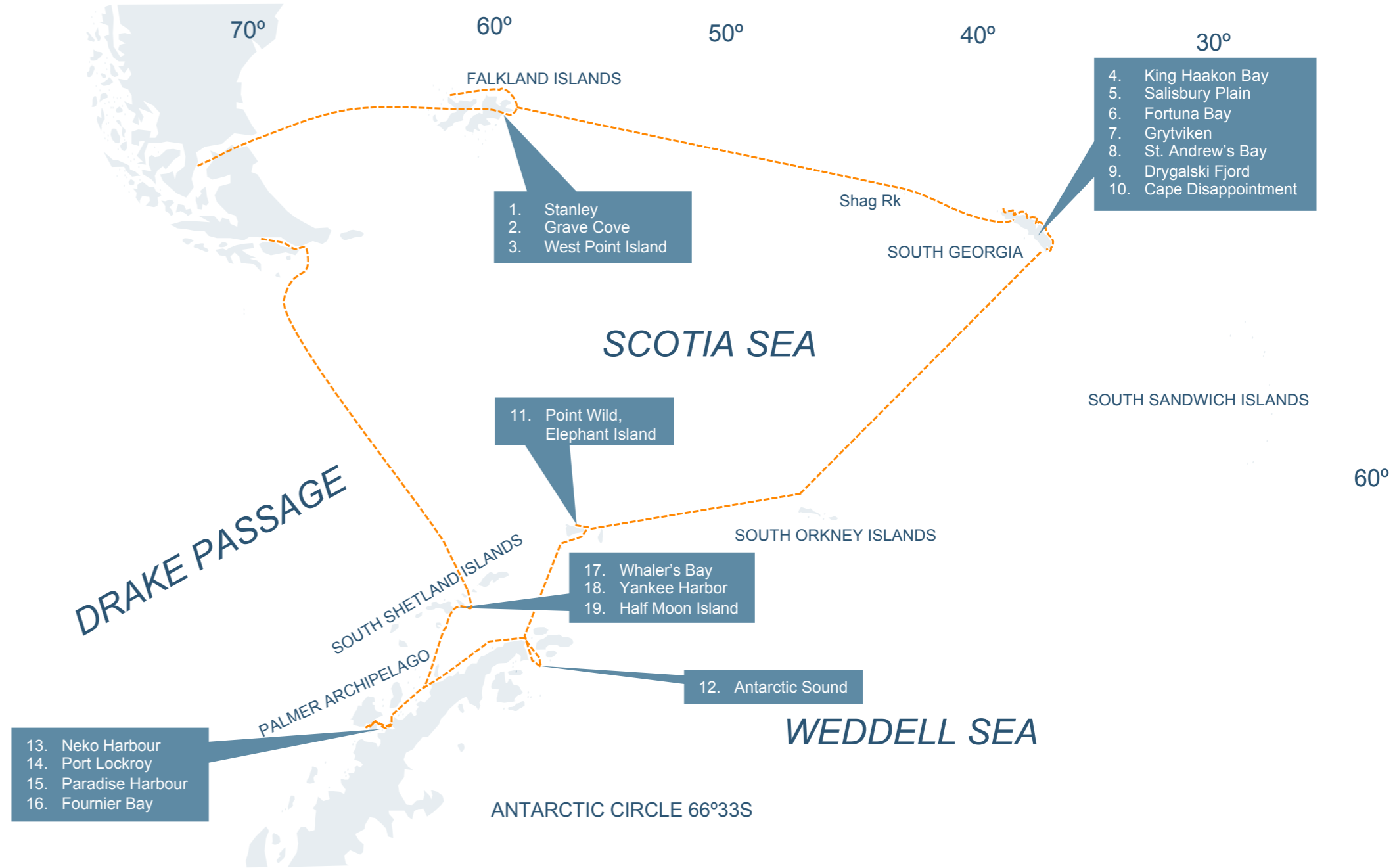
Bird Species	October										November							
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Gentoo Penguin		•			•		•	•				•	•	•	•			
Adelie Penguin												•	•					
Chinstrap Penguin								•			•				•			
Rockhopper Penguin		•																
King Penguin					•	•	•	•										
Magellanic Penguin		•																
Macaroni Penguin								•										
Wandering Albatross			•	•	•												•	
Grey-headed Albatross					•													
Black-browed Albatross	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•						•	
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross					•			•										
Southern Fulmar										•	•	•		•	•	•		
Northern Giant Petrel	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•									
Southern Giant Petrel			•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•		•	
Cape Petrel			•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	
Snow Petrel					•	•		•	•			•	•	•				
Blue Petrel					•			•		•	•					•		
White-chinned Petrel					•	•	•	•								•	•	
Black-bellied Storm Petrel					•													
Wilson's Storm Petrel												•						
Antarctic Prion			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•							•	
Antarctic Tern					•	•	•	•					•	•	•			
South American Tern	•																	
Brown Skua					•	•	•	•				•		•				
Dolphin Gull	•																	•
Kelp Gull	•	•			•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•				•
Sooty Shearwater	•				•												•	

Bird Species	October										November							
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Snowy Sheathbill		•					•	•	•	•			•	•	•			
Antarctic Shag												•	•	•	•			
Imperial Shag																		•
South Georgia Shag							•	•	•	•								
Rock Shag	•	•																
Turkey Vulture	•	•																
Striated Caracara	•	•																
Blackish Cinclodes		•																
Dark-faced Ground Tyrant		•																
Falkland Thrush	•	•																
Falkland Pipit		•																
South Georgia Pipit													•	•				
Long-tailed Meadowlark	•	•																
Black-chinned Siskin		•																
House Sparrow	•	•																
Black-crowned Night Heron		•																
Upland Goose	•	•																
Kelp Goose	•	•																
Ruddy-headed Goose		•																
Falkland Steamer Duck	•	•																
Flying Steamer Duck	•																	
Crested Duck	•	•																
Yellow-billed Teal		•																
South Georgia Pintail													•	•	•			
Magellanic Oystercatcher	•	•																
Blackish Oystercatcher	•	•																



Mammal Sightings

Mammal Species	October										November									
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Antarctic Fur Seal				•	•	•	•	•											•	
South American Sea Lion	•	•																		
Crabeater Seal												•	•							
Weddell Seal								•			•	•	•	•						
Leopard Seal		•												•						
Southern Elephant Seal				•	•	•	•													
Hourglass Dolphin																				
Peale's Dolphin																				
Commerson's Dolphin	•	•																		
Dusky Dolphin																				
Long-finned Pilot Whale																				
Killer Whale																				
Antarctic Minke Whale								•												
Humpback Whale					•	•					•	•		•	•	•				
Fin Whale																				
Sperm Whale																				
Sei Whale																				
Southern Right Whale																				







Expeditioners:

Nicola Allen	Kelly Fletcher	Alvin Ing	Richard Mosses	Leah Stockford
Ross Allen Jr	Loraine Fletcher	Michael Innes	Graham Murphy	Susan Terry
John Arnold	Alan Flitcroft	Joy Jaeger	Brad Murphy	Mahendra Tirimanne
Pam Arnold	John Franks	Neil Kane	Charley Nadin	Nelun Tirimanne
Les Beletsky	Wayne Fyffe	Dorothy Kane	Greg Nash	Geoff Todd
Jane Beukema	Dave Gibson	Steven Kaplan	Andree Nash	Linda Todd
John Beukema	Eileen Goersdorf	John Kidman	Peter O'Brien	Anton Tomazic
Brian Bodger	Wendy Gonsher	Marlene Kidman	Sarah Pavlik	Owen Trevor-Jones
Christine Bodger	Tim Grams	Penny King	Tom Pavlik Jr	Julie Trevor-Jones
Keith Bond	Roger Gregory	Kim Kinne	Andrico Penick	Karen Trowbridge
Ricky Buchalter	Hilda Gregory	Rod Kuo	Martin Plummer	Max Turner
Peter Burgess	Michael Griffiths	Elaine Kuo	Catherine Poulter	Beth Turner
Ros Burgess	Wendy Griffiths	Pauline Lakefield	Allan Poulter	Anne Van Loon
Alison Bush	Aynsley Guerin	Sy Hao Le	Catherine Reilly	Van Chinh Vu
James Chaffin	Lucy Henry	Garth Lewis	Melanie Rug	Cynthia Wang
Yoh Fong Chan	Brian Hilgen	Martyn Lindsay	David Rush Jr	David Williams
Antonia Clark	Phung Hieu Hoang	Eugenia Lindsay	Anna Rzepecki	Allison Wright
John Clifford	Glennys Hocking	Andy Ly	Karl Schurr	Vanessa Yee
Christine Cocks	Howard Hocking	Lynette Mace	Anemone Schweizer-Kaplan	Jim Zuberbuhler
Danny Cocks	John Holmes	Susie Martinez	Justin Shapiro	Max Zuberbuhler
Keith Coleman	John Homewood	Annie McCluskey	Alissa Shapiro	Sierra Zuberbuhler
Andy Domeracki	Yvonne Homewood	Michael Mead	Michael Singam	
Trish Evans	Sharon Hopkins	Brian Meier	Ann Smith	
Jesz Fleming	Sarah Hucker	David Merriott	Tina Steele	
Madge Fleming	Richard l'Anson	Lynne Morley	Graham Steele	

Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Florence Kuijper
Assistant Expedition Leader: Cat Ardagh
Onboard Expedition Manager: Rosie Leaney
Expedition Support: Justine Bornholdt
Historian: Carol Knott
Ornithologist: Graeme Snow
Geologist / Glaciologist: Ian Goodwin
Marine Biologist: Dani Abras
Marine Biologist: Jill Niederberger
Geologist: Melina Pelzmajer
Zodiac Manager: Nacho Marino
Lead Kayak Guide: Peter Wainwright
Kayak Guide: Russell Henry
Kayak Guide: Ivan Klochkov
Lead Mountain Guide: Tarn Pilkington
Mountain Guide: Hilary Cave
Mountain Guide: Kevin Nicholas
Mountain Guide: Alison Cardinal
Mountain Guide: Marius Bron
Expedition Medic: David Palmer
Photography Guide: Max Seigal
Special Guest Photographer: Richard l'Anson
Spa Manager: Darja Vasiljeva

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Maxim Makarovskiy	Hotel Controller: Richard Cayeta
Chief Officer: Alexandru Taraoi	IT Officer: Ihor Yesmienieiev
Safety Officer: Sergii Voina	Receptionist: Jeremiah Castillo
Bosun: Bobby Penuliar	Receptionist: Jelyn Merilo
Deck Cadet: Miguel Delgado	Head Stateroom: Liza Ortega
Ship Doctor: Andres Peralta	Able Seaman: Muhammad Karier
Chief Engineer: Dimitar Vasilev	Able Seaman: Ramanda Vitrian
Hotel Director: Bertrand Petyt	Able Seaman: Hardik Rao
Chief Purser: Willie Lirio	Able Seaman: Ajay Fnu
Executive Chef: Ron Reyes	Able Seaman: Andrii Mezentsev
Head Waiter: Allan Liscaro	Able Seaman: Giovanni Dela Torre

Artwork thanks to:

Lucy Henry

Photography thanks to:

Max Seigal

Dani Abras



