



aurora **Shipping News**

EXPEDITIONS

Aurora Expeditions Newsletter – October 2006

Vol. 10, No. 2

CRUISING TO THE HEART OF NATURE

A huge sigh of relief wafted down the stairs from the reservations department last month! The 'blood, sweat and tears' that go into the little wallet full of travel goodies that arrives in your mail box culminated in the final documents for the High Arctic being completed at last. Our passengers were heading north to join us for either a highland fling about Scotland or a turn around Spitsbergen and Greenland.

Our new voyage from Aberdeen to Spitsbergen via Norway has created a flurry of passengers booking back-to-back trips. Visiting the indented Norwegian coastline will be a civilised contrast to crossing the Barents Sea to remote Bear Island. Who knows what we will find there – don't you just love the adventure of it all?

Which brings me to our new plans for Papua New Guinea. Now this is what I call adventure! Greg and I still roll our eyes when we think of our wild ride along the Highlands Highway in the back of a pick-up truck to climb the highest mountain in PNG, Mt Wilhelm. The most endearing part of that trip was making friends with the local folk, who always greeted us with a welcoming smile.

We won't, of course, be bumping you along highways; we will be at sea exploring remote islands and coastal villages that have only been seen by a privileged few. By all accounts the snorkelling is some of the best in the world, and we will go for walks among hidden waterfalls in the jungle and take in the lush volcanic island scenery ... all from the comfort of Shokalskiy, a sister-ship to our beloved Polar Pioneer. We chose this ship because of her experience operating in the area, and we prefer the simple style. We like to take advantage of every opportunity to make discoveries rather than luxuriate on board and look through a window. I hope you can come along and help us explore these magical islands.

Margaret Werner

Aurora Expeditions



ADVENTURE TRIPS AWARDED

Aurora has recently received accolades from two of America's most prestigious travel magazines. The adventure magazine *Outside* scoured the globe looking for the year's most groundbreaking and innovative trips and awarded Aurora's 'Antarctic Peninsula for Climbers & Photographers' first place in the 'Trip of the Year – Polar Category'. Meanwhile, *National Geographic Traveller* has compiled a list of the world's 'Next Great Tours' that push beyond the traditional boundaries in favour of more authentic, adventurous and exotic travel. Our 'Antarctic Peninsula for Climbers & Divers' has been included on this exclusive list.

Having pioneered ship-based climbing and diving expeditions to Antarctica, we are honoured that our unique adventure itineraries have been recognised by such esteemed publications.



Conquering an unclimbed peak in Antarctica

HOWARD WHELAN

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Aurora Expeditions is very thrilled to announce the introduction of our brand new program to Papua New Guinea. With such few visitors, PNG is seen by many as the wildest frontier in adventure travel and we are very excited at the prospect of exploring this complex land in 2007.

Limited to just 46 passengers, our comfortable little expedition ship *Akademik Shokalskiy*, sister to *Polar Pioneer*, is a great vessel for an in-depth exploration of the remote areas of PNG. On land, we will discover a wealth of magnificent tropical scenery and cultural diversity. We'll aim to visit active volcanic islands and walk through pristine rainforest alive with unique wildlife. Our fleet of Zodiacs will enable us to search out the myriad of hidden bays and striking coral reefs that abound in the Solomon and Bismark seas. PNG's warm waters hold more aquatic species than anywhere on the planet - snorkelling magical reefs off white sandy beaches and isolated atolls will give us the chance to learn more about this incredibly diverse marine ecosystem.

With over 800 languages and 1,000 distinct cultures, Papua New Guinea is the most culturally diverse country on Earth. Our visits to remote coastal and island villages will give us a genuine insight into a traditional lifestyle that has changed little in centuries. From witnessing colourful sing sings in the Trobriand Islands to appreciating the intricate art of the master carvers of the Sepik River, our experiences with the smiling people of Papua New Guinea are sure to be rewarding.

Led by Aurora co-founder Greg Mortimer and staffed by a team of guest lecturers with expertise in the region, our two 11-day expeditions will be departing May 25th and June 4th 2007. Our experienced reservations staff can organise a personal itinerary for you, including airfares, accommodation and pre and post voyage travel options throughout Papua New Guinea.

We hope that you can join us to share this adventure. Email auroraex@auroraexpeditions.com.au or call us on 1800 637 688 for a copy of our new PNG brochure.



Snorkelling with locals on a remote PNG island

DAVID KIRKLAND - PNG/TA



A sing-sing on the Trobriand Islands

DAVID KIRKLAND - PNG/TA

NEW NORWAY VOYAGE



The fishing village of Reine in the Lofoten Islands, Norway

JOHAN BERGE

Experience the thrill of cruising up narrow fjords, walking on soft tundra and looking out for unique wildlife among some of the most spectacular mountain scenery in the world. We are very excited to announce a brand new voyage for July 2007, 'Across the Arctic Circle: Scotland, Norway & Spitsbergen'. A few months back, it suddenly hit us that the perfect way to link our Scotland voyages with our Arctic program would be a trip via Norway, so here it is! From the wild islands of the Scottish coast to the stunning fjords and islands of Norway and Svalbard, this voyage promises adventure and discovery for those keen to join us on our inaugural trip.

For more details call us on 1800 637 688 for a copy of our new High Arctic brochure.



STAFF PROFILE – HENRIK LOVENDAHL

Henrik first worked with Aurora Expeditions in 1998 as a dive guide when we introduced Aurora's optional scuba diving program to our Antarctic Peninsula voyages. He has since moved on to become an expedition leader and dive guide in both polar regions. Henrik has worked in the diving industry for many years as an instructor and most recently as an educational consultant for PADI Asia Pacific.

Henrik's adventurous spirit and love of travel caused him to leave his native Denmark some ten years ago. Having travelled to the other side of the world through Europe and Asia, Henrik was so taken with Australia's wonderful lifestyle and opportunities for adventure that he decided to stay.

Having led our expeditions to the Arctic for the last 6 years, Henrik has a real soft spot for venturing among the hidden realms of Spitsbergen and Greenland and is constantly looking for new territory to explore. The lack of pack ice this season in the north of Svalbard allowed Henrik to take passengers on board *Polar Pioneer* for a rare circumnavigation of Nordaustlandet as well as exploring the remote island of Kvitøya, where they found a large number of polar bears.

As well as leading our new Norway and Arctic expeditions in 2007, Henrik is looking forward to introducing our new Arctic diving program on the first Spitsbergen voyage next year.



NEWSLETTERS/BROCHURES?

Aurora believes that travel to remote destinations can create lifelong ambassadors for environmental protection. Sensitivity to environmental considerations is a core part of our culture both in the field and in our office. As part of this commitment, please let us know if you do not wish to receive this newsletter or any of the brochures that we send you throughout the year. Simply call us on 1800 637 688 or send an email to auroraex@auroraexpeditions.com.au and we will take you off our mailing list.

WEDDELL SEAL RESEARCH

With the help of a research grant from Aurora Expeditions, PhD student Kym Collins recently completed a study on voice recognition of Weddell seals. Our donation was used to build equipment that recorded video and audio of interaction between mother and pups in McMurdo Sound.

Weddell seals are among the most vocal pinnipeds. Throughout lactation, mothers and pups call to each other constantly. It is believed that during temporary separations, these calls may convey critical information during reunions. The data obtained by Kym suggests that, in addition to voice recognition, these vocalisations may convey the caller's emotional state and geographic origin.

NEW JOYS IN SCOTLAND

Expedition Leader Peter Malcolm reports on one of the highlights from our recent Wild Scotland voyages

We constantly check out the coastline for new possible landings and experiences. One night our historian, Carol Knot, and I discovered an incredible 13th-century castle, on Scotland's Ardnamurchan Peninsula. Snooping around, we managed to find the owners, Kirsty and Donald. They offered us wine and listened to our slightly incredible story. In no time at all we had hatched a devious plan for an amazing landing.

Two evenings later, now with a new group of expeditioners, we headed for the same beach, with *Polar Pioneer* anchored close offshore. Donald had opened the castle for us, and when Carol and I checked it out inside for the first time, it was like a dream come true – totally untouched since the last renovations several hundred years back. Carol spun her magic outside the castle, telling the tale about this edifice and its design. Then, one by one the expeditioners walked into this miraculous building, a place that until then only a handful of people had ever seen. Most were silent as they soaked in this ancient place until someone spotted a barn owl that proceeded to casually watch us whilst remaining clearly in view for the whole visit.

Kirsty suddenly appeared with a tray of 50 tumblers, followed by an enormous deerhound, and Donald in his poacher's jacket plus a family friend, the 'very reverend Harry'. Donald then whipped out a few bottles of whisky distilled (legally!) on his land. They had put a picture of the castle on the label and called it 'Mingary Castle' especially for us. They then poured out a very generous tot of the blend, whilst Donald and Harry explained the sensitivities of distilling whisky. What a way to end such an intriguing and fascinating landing! Various bottles were then bought from their 'shop' with several expeditioners returning to the ship clutching their treasured whisky. We are already looking forward to a return visit on our 2007 voyages.



Passengers enjoying lunch off the Scottish coast.

COLIN MONTGOMERY

AURORA EXPEDITIONS 2007/2008 JOURNEY CALENDAR

Dates	Destination	Ship	Options
25 May – 4 June 2007	Papua New Guinea	<i>Akademik Shokalskiy</i>	
4–14 June	Papua New Guinea	<i>Akademik Shokalskiy</i>	
4–14 June	Kimberley Coast Broome–Broome	<i>Coral Princess</i>	Kunmunya hike, helicopter sightseeing
15–25 June	Kimberley Coast Broome–Broome	<i>Coral Princess</i>	Kunmunya hike, helicopter sightseeing
23 June – 3 July	Wild Scotland	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
25 June – 5 July	Kimberley Coast Broome–Darwin	<i>Coral Princess</i>	Kunmunya hike, helicopter sightseeing
3–13 July	Wild Scotland	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
13–26 July	Across the Arctic Circle; Scotland, Norway, Spitsbergen	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
26 July – 5 August	Spitsbergen Circumnavigation	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Diving, kayaking
5–15 August	Spitsbergen Circumnavigation	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
15–28 August	Spitsbergen, Greenland, Iceland	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
28 August – 10 September	Iceland, Greenland, Spitsbergen	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
9–27 November	Falklands, South Georgia, Antarctic Peninsula	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
27 November – 7 December	Antarctic Peninsula Spring	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Climbing, camping, kayaking
7–18 December	Antarctic Peninsula Climbers	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Climbing, camping, kayaking
18–28 December	Antarctic Peninsula Christmas	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Camping, kayaking
28 December – 7 January	Antarctic Peninsula New Year's Trip	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Camping, kayaking
7–25 January 2008	Falklands, South Georgia, Antarctic Peninsula	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	
25 January – 5 February	Antarctic Peninsula & Weddell Sea	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	
5–16 February	Across the Circle	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	
16–27 February	Across the Circle	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Diving
27 February – 19 March	Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia, Falklands	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Alpine crossing



DAVID KIRKLAND - PNGTA



aurora
EXPEDITIONS

182 Cumberland Street
The Rocks, Sydney, NSW 2000
Tel. 02 9252 1033 or 1 800 637 688
Facsimile 02 9252 1373
Email: auroraex@auroraexpeditions.com.au
www.auroraexpeditions.com.au
ABN 65 002 925 313

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA