

## STAFF PROFILE – CHRIS DIERKE

This year we were privileged to have Chris Diercke on board our inaugural voyages to Papua New Guinea. Chris was born in a small village near Rabaul on the island of New Britain and resided in PNG for 24 years. Chris has a fascinating family history. He is a direct descendant of Samoa's royal family and the fabled Rabaul legend Queen Emma, who established the first commercial enterprises in New Britain in 1884. Queen Emma's sister married Richard Parkinson, Chris's great-grandfather and a member of the Danish royal family who wrote *Thirty Years in the South Seas*, a famous scientific work. Chris's other great-grandfather is Carl Diercke, a German cartographer who established Diercke Atlases in 1883 and still widely in use throughout Germany.

Now retired after 38 years in education, including many years as a history teacher and 30 years as a school principal, Chris lives in Newcastle, Australia. He regularly returns to Papua New Guinea and is currently a team member for Lark Force Wilderness Track, an exciting new trekking project in East New Britain. He also regularly volunteers as a teacher mentor in Rabaul and speaks many of the major languages in New Britain including Pidgin and Tolai. With such an intimate knowledge of the culture of Papua New Guinea and a knack for telling wonderful stories on the country's unique history, Chris was a popular member of the expedition team in 2008 and will once again be joining us for our two PNG voyages next year.



Chris Dierke

STUART MURRAY

## KAMCHATKA REVEALED

After recently returning from our inaugural voyage to Kamchatka, Aurora passenger Roger Balch published a feature story in the Australian Financial Review about his experiences. Below is an extract from Roger's article.

Early one memorable morning the Marina Svetaeva eases into a fjord and those on deck are rewarded with the sight of a bear swimming from one side to the other, which turns out to be a good omen. Later that day as we explore an inlet we are treated to a young male bear from central casting who frolics along the beach and entertains us by clambering around, over and through the hulk of a beached ship. As the Zodiacs idle just a few metres offshore it is an ideal, and very safe, photo opportunity.

In addition to bears we see walrus hauls out of the sea in sheltered coves, hundreds of sea lions and fur seals gathered along beaches, and playful sea otters whose bewhiskered heads bob up in the sea just long enough to be noticed but rarely long enough for anyone to grab a photo. We also observed a variety of whales, including a pod of killer whales.

The abiding memory of Kamchatka though is the landscapes and scenery, painted from a palette of greys and greens and steely blues. Lush vegetation that springs up after the long winter is deep and spongy to walk on, dotted with yellow, purple and white flowers. The sun rarely breaks through the cloud cover but the atmosphere is never oppressive, always ethereal. Jagged mountain tops wreathed with low-lying ribbons of cloud and wisps of mist drifting out of glacial valleys down to the sea give the impression that our ship is floating on an imaginary body of water alongside the peaks of an almost submerged planet.

There are few places in the world that enchant and entrance as much as Kamchatka. Even for the most experienced travellers on board it was something special, somewhere that we thought didn't exist any more. And now back home it seems almost too far away to believe that it actually exists.

Aurora is venturing to the Russian Far East again in 2009, returning to the Kuril Islands and Kamchatka and a new adventure into the Arctic Ocean that takes in the Bering Strait and Wrangel Island. Call us on 1800 637 688 or email [auroraex@auroraexpeditions.com.au](mailto:auroraex@auroraexpeditions.com.au) to find out more about these unique expeditions.



IGOR SHPOENOK

## GIVING SOMETHING BACK

This year in Papua New Guinea, Aurora donated school supplies to a number of villages we encountered during our expeditions. We have been contemplating how best to continue applying our philosophy of supporting the communities we visit and have taken the first steps toward setting up a charitable trust. Working with David Keating, a passenger who joined us on our Rabaul to Alotau voyage this year, we are aiming to assist a number of schools on Karkar Island with donations of books and sporting equipment. David founded the Karkar Secondary school way back in 1969 and was welcomed as a guest of honour during our visit there.

Also each year, Aurora Expeditions supports the Australian Geographic Society by donating a percentage of profits from our Kimberley Coast voyages. The Society is committed to supporting scientific research, protecting and fostering a love for the environment and natural heritage and encouraging the spirit of discovery and adventure. Over the past 20 years, they have sponsored more than 1500 individuals and organisations, and this year we are pleased to announce that we have donated \$20,000 to the Society. We are proud to continue this association into the future.



DARREN JEW

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## ALL-STAR VOYAGE TO MAWSON'S ANTARCTICA

We have put together an impressive team of expedition staff and special guest lecturers for this year's *'Icebergs and Emperors'* voyage to Commonwealth Bay.

Science guru and media personality **Dr Karl Kruszelnicki** will be lecturing on board. Dr Karl is best known for his ability to make science accessible to everyone. His enthusiasm for his subject is infectious and his weekly radio program is one of the most popular in Australia.

**Emma McEwin**, great-granddaughter of Sir Douglas Mawson, will also be joining us. The voyage plans to visit Mawson's historic huts, the isolated base camp of the 1911 Australasian Antarctic Expedition and the site of one of the greatest survival stories of the 20th century. Emma, author of the recently published *An Antarctic Affair*, will give a unique insight into the life and loves of this Australian legend.

This voyage also sees the introduction of an 'Artist in Residence' program for the very first time, with acclaimed artist **Angus McDonald** running workshops for interested passengers. And if that's not enough, Aurora founders **Greg & Margaret Mortimer** will be leading the trip!

Visiting one of the wildest places on Earth, adventure awaits at every turn. From visiting massive Adélie penguin colonies to taking adrenaline-charged helicopter rides over the polar plateau, this voyage offers experiences afforded to only a few privileged travellers. In addition to exploring the remote East Antarctic coastline, the expedition will call in at two or three sub-Antarctic islands – oases of land teeming with royal, king and other penguins, several species of albatross, snorting elephant seals and frisky fur seals

Departing Hobart on 12 December 2008, we still have some spaces left on this voyage so call us to secure your berth on this special expedition. Call us on 1800 637 688 to find out more.



WILL BAILLIEU

## AURORA EXPEDITIONS 2009/2010 JOURNEY CALENDAR

Dates	Voyage	Ship	Options
12 Dec – 7 Jan <b>2009</b>	Icebergs and Emperors – Mawson's Hut	<i>Marina Svetaeva</i>	Helicopter sightseeing
8 Jan – 2 Feb	Ross Sea	<i>Marina Svetaeva</i>	Helicopter sightseeing
3–28 Feb	Ross Sea	<i>Marina Svetaeva</i>	Helicopter sightseeing
10–20 April	PNG – Alotau to Rabaul	<i>Marina Svetaeva</i>	Kayaking, Diving, Helicopter sightseeing
20–30 April	PNG – Rabaul to Alotau	<i>Marina Svetaeva</i>	Kayaking, Diving, Helicopter sightseeing
1–11 June	Kimberley Coast – Broome to Broome	<i>Coral Princess</i>	Kunmunya hike, Helicopter sightseeing
12–22 June	Kimberley Coast – Broome to Broome	<i>Coral Princess</i>	Kunmunya hike, Helicopter sightseeing
22 June – 2 July	Kimberley Coast – Broome to Darwin	<i>Coral Princess</i>	Kunmunya hike, Helicopter sightseeing
23 June – 3 July	Circumnavigation of Spitsbergen	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
11–24 July	Kuril Islands & Kamchatka	<i>Marina Svetaeva</i>	Kayaking
13–23 July	Circumnavigation of Spitsbergen	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
23 July – 5 Aug	Spitsbergen/Greenland/Iceland	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
24 July – 6 Aug	Kamchatka & Chukotka	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
5–24 August	Arctic Dreams: Iceland/Greenland/Spitsbergen/ Norway	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
6–18 August	Bering Strait & Wrangel Island	<i>Marina Svetaeva</i>	Kayaking
24 Aug – 12 Sept	Arctic Dreams: Norway/Spitsbergen/Greenland/ Iceland	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
9–27 November	Falklands, South Georgia, Antarctic Peninsula	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking
27 Nov – 7 Dec	Antarctic Peninsula Spring	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking, Camping, Climbing
7–18 Dec	Antarctic Peninsula Climbers and Kayakers	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking, Camping, Climbing
11 Dec – 6 Jan 2010	Icebergs & Emperors – Mawson's Hut	<i>Marina Svetaeva</i>	Helicopter sightseeing
18–28 Dec	Antarctic Peninsula Christmas	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking, Camping
28 Dec – 7 Jan <b>2010</b>	Antarctic Peninsula New Year's	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking, Camping
7–25 Jan	Falklands, South Georgia, Antarctic Peninsula	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	
7 Jan – 1 Feb	Ross Sea	<i>Marina Svetaeva</i>	Helicopter sightseeing
25 Jan – 5 Feb	Antarctic Peninsula & Weddell Sea	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	
2–27 Feb	Ross Sea	<i>Marina Svetaeva</i>	Helicopter sightseeing
5–16 Feb	Across the Circle	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	
16–27 Feb	Across the Circle	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Diving
27 Feb – 18 March	Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Alpine Crossing



Suite 201, Level 2, 88 George Street  
 The Rocks, Sydney, NSW 2000  
 Tel. 02 9252 1033 or 1 800 637 688  
 Facsimile 02 9252 1373  
 Email: [auroraex@auroraexpeditions.com.au](mailto:auroraex@auroraexpeditions.com.au)  
[www.auroraexpeditions.com.au](http://www.auroraexpeditions.com.au)  
 ABN 65 002 925 313

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