

# In Depth South Georgia and Antarctica









# About Us

Aurora Expeditions embodies the spirit of adventure, travelling to some of the most wild and remote places on our planet. With over 27 years' experience, our small group voyages allow for a truly intimate experience with nature.

Our expeditions push the boundaries with flexible and innovative itineraries, exciting wildlife experiences and fascinating lectures. You'll share your adventure with a group of like-minded souls in a relaxed, casual atmosphere while making the most of every opportunity for

adventure and discovery. Our highly experienced expedition team of naturalists, historians and destination specialists are passionate and knowledgeable – they are the secret to a fulfilling and successful voyage.

Whilst we are dedicated to providing a 'trip of a lifetime', we are also deeply committed to education and preservation of the environment. Our aim is to travel respectfully, creating lifelong ambassadors for the protection of our destinations.





DAY 1 | Saturday, 1 December 2018

# Port Stanley; South Atlantic Ocean

<b>Position:</b>	20:00 hours	<b>Location:</b>	Alongside in Stanley	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	15 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	1013 hPa & steady
<b>Latitude:</b>	51°41.5'S			<b>Wind Direction:</b>	S	<b>Air Temp:</b>	10° C
<b>Longitude:</b>	57°49.3'W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	11° C

After weeks of excited anticipation and long, long flights from around the globe, we finally landed at the Falklands, our departure port for our South Georgia and Antarctic adventure.

First the coach ride from Mt Pleasant Military Airport to Stanley, and then a tour of the surrounds.

We arrived at *Polar Pioneer*, met Expedition Leader Christian and our friendly team. We clambered up the gangway where the Aurora staff showed us to our cabins. Then it was time to explore the nooks and crannies of our cosy new home.

Onboard we total 51 adventurers with nationalities representing Australia (35), Canada (3), New Zealand (3), United Kingdom (4) and United States (7), along with 12 Aurora Expeditions staff 22 Russian and 1 Ukrainian crew.

We explored the decks, ventured down to the dining rooms for tea and coffee, then clambered up and down the various staircases. Christian then called us together to introduce the Aurora team, and give a lifeboat and safety briefing.

The sound of seven-short-one-long from the ship's horn was our signal to don bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster station, to sample the ambience of a Polar Class life vessel. Even without a full complement of Russian crew, the seating arrangements in the two lifeboats proved cosy.

At 2100 we steamed out of Stanley Harbour and through the Narrows where, dotted along the foreshore, we could see clusters of magellanic penguins. Bobbing in the water were pods of gentoo penguins, and flying about the ship we counted sooty shearwaters in their

dozens. We took a sharp right into the outer harbour, known as Port William, within sight of the distinctive Cape Pembroke lighthouse. Soon we had left the colourful town of Stanley in our wake .

After a delicious sit-down dinner prepared by our chefs Al and Bert, we made our way to our cabins for a much-needed sleep.

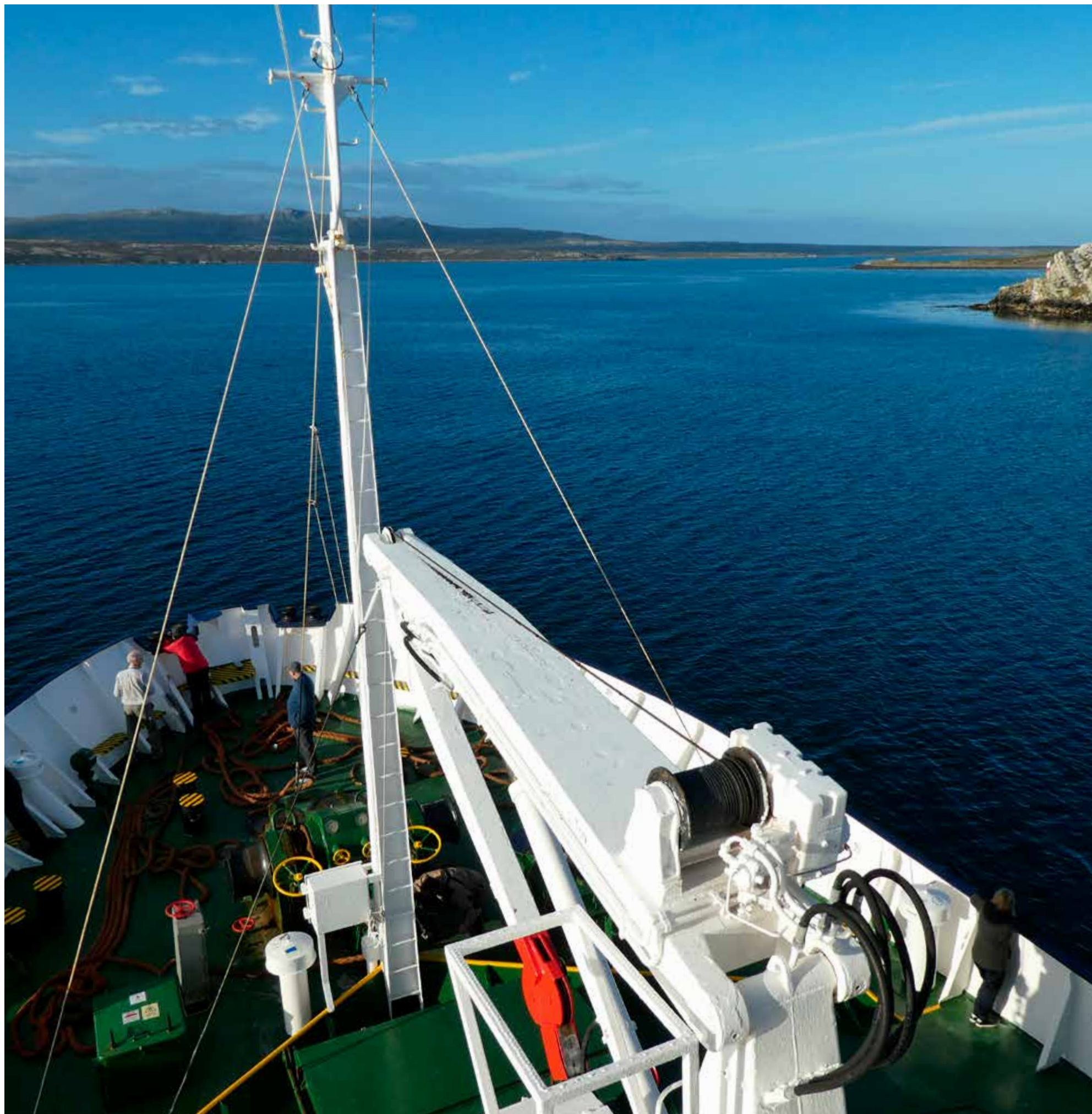
Today, 2 December, we are on our own at sea, motoring east across the South Atlantic. The bridge on Deck 6—accessible via the internal or external stairs—is now open 24 hours a day and is a premium place to sit and watch as we become acquainted with the various seabirds who may follow our south-easterly course. (Please, no hot or cold drinks on the bridge.)

Today we will learn more about our plans for the voyage, and who does what amongst the expedition team.

Our onboard naturalist Heidi will kick off our educational series with timely presentations on seabirds and marine mammals as we enter the oceanic world of the albatross.

So kick back, catch up on rest, let the day unfold, and take in the wonders of this vast stretch of ocean.







DAY 2 | Sunday, 2 December 2018

# Scotia sea, South Atlantic Ocean

<b>Position:</b>	20:45 hours	<b>Course:</b>	97°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	16 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	1012 hPa & steady
<b>Latitude:</b>	52°27'S	<b>Speed:</b>	11.2 knots	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	NW	<b>Air Temp:</b>	8° C
<b>Longitude:</b>	51°00'W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	6° C

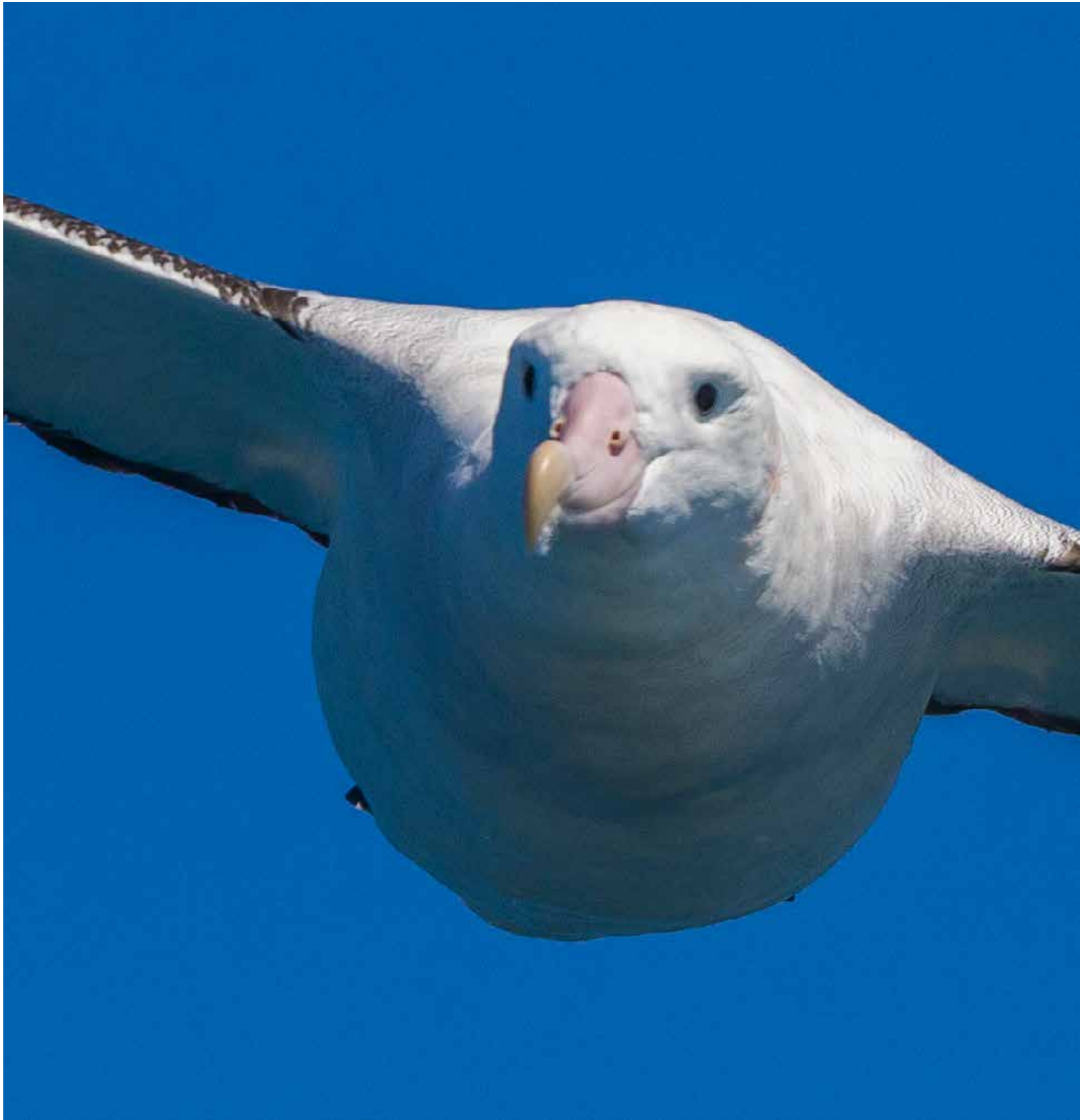
After a calm sleep at sea we woke to the dulcet tones of our french leader Christian ‘Good morning ladies and gentlemen good morning’. For many, jetlag seemed a thing of the past, as the albatross were not the only species wandering the open seas out on deck before breakfast. As we lined up patiently for our turn at the buffet the words at each table rang out, who’s in charge of toast? Who is in charge of coffee? Teamwork is key on an Aurora trip and it’s clear at this early stage you’ve all got what it takes. Following breakfast, we were called by deck for the infamous gumboot giveaway. With thick socks in hand it was off to the lecture room where the team were ready to fit us with our stylish and comfortable foot-wear. Heidi followed with an energetic talk on seabirds of the Southern Ocean. From the wandering albatross to the cape petrel (Heidi’s favourite), we received an overview of the many species we will see on our Antarctic adventure. Our keen birders and photographers revelled with delight at the stern of the ship, clicking away like paparazzi as the light-man-tled albatross stole the show.

Spaghetti and meatballs proved just the right dish for a relaxing two hours before our next event on the agenda. Peter’s reputation as a great photographer preceded him, as it was a full house for his ‘Tales by light’ presentation. A cinematic story of his own journey to Antarctica on *Polar Pioneer* where he shares his passion for the light and landscape of this region. We packed the lecture room once more as Nina took us back through time to 1675

when South Georgia was discovered. She introduced us to the wild island of snow-capped mountains, glaciers and wildlife before humans had ever set foot. Then we travelled through the sealing and whaling eras and back into the present, excited about what lies ahead. Our Captain Vladmir Zimin joined us in the bar for our Captain’s welcome drinks where we enjoyed canapés and Kathrine’s refreshing punch. A great opportunity to mingle with our new friends before another delicious dinner, thank you Al and Bert!

Today we continue our traverse south-east and we will be on the lookout for species of whale, such as fin and blue, known to forage in these frigid waters.







DAY 3 | Monday, 3 December 2018

# Scotia sea, South Atlantic Ocean

<b>Position:</b>	12:00 hours	<b>Course:</b>	102°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	16 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	1012 hPa & steady
<b>Latitude:</b>	53°05'S	<b>Speed:</b>	12 knots	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	NW	<b>Air Temp:</b>	5°C
<b>Longitude:</b>	45°42'W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	2.5°C

Early this morning the water temperature plummeted from 8 degrees Celsius to 2.5 over a few hour period. This marks the Polar Front, a line that fluctuates slightly and one of the defining boundaries of Antarctic waters. This is where the cold Antarctic surface water meets and dives beneath relatively warmer waters from the north. With such a change in temperature and salinity it forms an important biological boundary affecting the distribution of plankton, fish and birds.

The myriad of bird life we had yesterday subsided to the occasional sighting of wandering albatross and petrels. The Scotia Sea that we entered is bounded by Shag Rocks, South Sandwich Is; South Orkney Is and South Shetland Is was named after the ship used by the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition under the command of William S. Bruce. This morning Christian explained the operations of our proposed landings and warned us of the inherent dangers that surround us here and how we can safely manage them. Situational awareness was the key message to come away with and make sure someone has your back while you snap the perfect picture. Heidi also gave an animated presentation about IAATO (International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators) and the guidelines ratified by the ATCM (Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting) that we need to follow. Non-disturbance of wildlife was her key message. A delicious lunch followed by a siesta, for those not on deck. Wildlife spotting helped us digest not only food but all the information from the morning's briefings. Biosecurity and an informative video about South Georgia filled the better part of the afternoon. As South Georgia moves closer to eradicating all invasive species the importance of biosecurity is becoming even more important. They have had success with reindeer, rats and mice and are now focusing on plants. So, with vacuum cleaner and paperclip in hand we extracted seeds and dirt from Velcro on our clothes and mesh on our

backpacks to be sure we were not responsible for any further introduction. As far as the ship goes, our doctor Peter, has been busy checking 6 bait stations aboard to prove that we are not carrying any unwanted passengers. When not checking those stations, he has been checking in on all of us, making sure we are all safe and sound and healthy. Around sunset we pass Shag Rocks, 4 rock stacks up to 75m high and 115nm from South Georgia. Named for the shags and other seabirds that frequent them. The upwelling around this mid ocean rise brings nutrients and high productivity to the surrounding ocean – watch out for whales.







DAY 4 | Tuesday, 4 December 2018

# South Georgia Ahoy! Elsehul Bay

<b>Position:</b>	21:00 hours	<b>Course:</b>	220°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	20 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	992 hPa & falling
<b>Latitude:</b>	54°07.6'S	<b>Speed:</b>	2.6 knots	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	SW	<b>Air Temp:</b>	5° C
<b>Longitude:</b>	36°48.6'W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	1.5° C

What a day. What a place! By late morning South Georgia was almost within sight, its dramatic peaks hiding in the mist, waves breaking on the shore. Soon we were passing Bird Island on the NW corner, and turning into Elsehul where we dropped anchor ready for our first outing in Zodiacs and kayaks. Even before we left the ship we knew we were in for a treat, with an abundance of wildlife. With excited anticipation we donned our layers, turned our tags and washed our boots for our first experience of South Georgia.

Once Zodiacs cruised away from the ship we could see those lofty tussock slopes dotted with white birds. Black-browed; grey headed, and light-mantled albatross nest in their thousands in this wild oceanic cove. Our first acquaintance was with the Macaroni penguin colony. We gained a whole new appreciation for penguin athletics when we saw the steep cliff that these hardy little guys scale, in order to return to their nests high up in the tussock slopes. While the black-browed albatross on the adjacent headland have the clear advantage of wings to come and go, the Macaroni's think nothing of throwing themselves up onto the rocks in a big swell, then trudging a high-rise march to their nests in order to feed young chicks. South Georgia pipits, the world's southernmost songbirds were seen dancing above us, while a group of giant petrels; known to feed in groups were gathered on the water. We wound our way around the bay, spying cormorant colonies, and even South Georgia pintail ducks foraging at the intertidal zone. Fur seals were most abundant along the beach, some were camouflaged among the rocks while others sat up tall in a pose as if to say, ready when you



are, 'click'. The adorable seal pups; perhaps only a few days old starting to find their balance in a new environment and learn their mothers distinguishing call among the hubbub of other seals. Neighbouring elephant seals with their big round eyes stared right at us, we even managed to spot one master on the beach looking quite established.

Our kayakers adding a colourful addition to the somewhat muted landscape; what better conditions for the super eight to take their debut paddle!

At Elsehul we had our very first encounter of king and gentoo penguins but it was late afternoon at Salisbury plain where we witnessed from a distance one of the top three biggest king penguin colonies on South Georgia—a wide stretch of beach home to an estimated 250,000 birds during moulting season.

Shortly after we made our way north to admire Prion Island which lies in the Bay of Isles towards the west end of South Georgia's northeast coast. It is a site of high environmental sensitivity and exceptional conservation value. Wandering albatross nest predominantly on the upper slopes of the northern half of the island, whilst fur seals have their peak-breeding season between 20 November and 7 January. During this time the island is closed. We finished in the bar recapping our first day, discussing plans for tomorrow and trying one of Kathrine's delicious cocktails before dinner.









DAY 5 | Wednesday, 5 December 2018

# Fortuna and Hercules Bays

<b>Position:</b>	07:00 hours	<b>Course:</b>	120°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	12 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	1009.3 hPa & steady
<b>Latitude:</b>	54°09.5' S	<b>Speed:</b>	9 knots	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	NW	<b>Air Temp:</b>	9° C
<b>Longitude:</b>	36°42.2' W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	2°C

After a blustery introduction to South Georgia yesterday, we woke to an island transformed, with spectacular blue skies and soft morning light on the mountains nearby. The dining room at breakfast was filled with excited chatter as we gulped down tea, coffee and sustenance in preparation for our exploration of Fortuna Bay. When we arrived on the beach at Whistle Cove we experienced our first stern landing in a small swell, the staff ashore turning the Zodiac before we all disembarked and planted our feet on South Georgia land for the first time. We made our way up the beach through a gauntlet of hefty bull fur seals, to receive a briefing about the plan for the morning. Fortuna Bay is home to a king penguin colony and hundreds of fur seals and elephant seals that haul out to breed, mate and pup. Accompanied by our guides and armed with walking poles (which of course we hoped to use only for their intended purpose!), we made our way across the outwash gravel plain. It was a pleasure to walk across the lush grassy terrain and past fur seals with their shiny coats and just the occasional combative moment. And of course who could resist the elephant seal weaners with their bright, moony eyes! The king penguin colony at Fortuna Bay is set on the dramatic backdrop of Breakwind Ridge and the rapidly receding Konig Glacier. Home to 7,000 breeding pairs, it is overwhelming in sight, scent and sound. Downy brown chicks huddled among sleek adults and moulting penguins, patiently enduring the discomfort and hunger of this stage of life. We tuned into the symphony of penguin calls: the raucous horns of the adults



and the singsong chirp of the chicks as they sought each other out in the crowd. As the morning drew on the wind increased and a heavy mist descended over the glacier, eventually engulfing the colony. We returned to the ship just in time to watch the weather close in behind us as we sailed towards Hercules Bay. The afternoon program was a Zodiac cruise in Hercules Bay, a lovely sheltered cove encircled by dramatic peaks and silvery waterfalls. Amazingly, we found ourselves once again in spectacular South Georgia weather, calm and sunny. This was a wonderful opportunity to get up close and personal with some macaroni penguins, arguably the most dapper of the penguin species, with their flowing yellow crests and bright beaks. Of course there was much more to see - fur seals frolicking, elephant seals moulting, a variety of soaring sea birds, and kelp flowing like the hair of Medusa on the surface of the crystal clear water. Before dinner we were treated to a special ship cruise, where we were able to view the abandoned whaling stations of Leith Harbour and Stromness at close proximity. Thanks to our Captain and Chief Mate for their deft manoeuvring of the ship to bring us so close to these historic sites! And thanks of course to Al and Bert for yet another day of delicious dining!











DAY 6 | Thursday, 6 December 2018

# Neumayer Glacier and Grytviken

<b>Position:</b>	19:10 hours	<b>Course:</b>	145°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	14 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	1000 hPa & falling
<b>Latitude:</b>	54°17'S	<b>Speed:</b>	3 knots	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	SW	<b>Air Temp:</b>	6° C
<b>Longitude:</b>	36°30'W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	2° C

We came out on deck this morning before breakfast to see the sun touch the tops of the mountains surrounding West Cumberland Bay. *Polar Pioneer* was making her way slowly up the fjord towards the Neumayer Glacier. This is a relatively new access for ships as the glacier covered these waters not that many years ago. The mountain sides looked stark and naked without a coating of green vegetation that seems lush everywhere else in South Georgia, but these recently exposed slopes haven't had time to grow plants. The katabatic winds were gusting up to 60 knots at times, but our dedicated photographers gripped their cameras a little tighter; they would not be put off the beautiful morning light on ice and jagged peaks of the Allardyce Range. A couple of blue ice bergs were grounded in the shallows of the terminal moraine. Sitting on one ice berg was an entourage of over 20 elegant Snow Petrels in their perfect white plumage.

Breakfast was a chance to warm up our shutter fingers and drink cups of hot coffee. Then it was back out on deck as Captain Vladimir maneuvered the ship closer to the face of the glacier. The wind threatened to take away our hats and our breath but made the morning all the more dramatic as the sea was swept up into the sunlight with each gust. On the return navigation we passed the blue ice bergs once again and the official count was 27 Snow Petrels, standing like icing decorations on a cake.

On arrival in King Edward Cove the ship was visited by a Government Officer for various formalities. We also had two members of staff from the South Georgia Heritage Trust, Sarah and Dani give us a presentation of all the great work that this charity does for the island. It was inspirational to learn that this is the largest island in the world to have rodents eradicated.

It was only possible because glaciers split the island into manageable portions and many educated visitors have helped to fund the project. Many thanks to those who joined them.

After lunch we came ashore next to the Grytviken cemetery where we stood near the grave of Shackleton and his right-hand man, Frank Wild. Our historian, Nina shared a few, poignant words and proposed a whiskey toast. From the cemetery we made our way through the whaling station, where Finley lead a tour, describing much of the machinery and the process that was involved once the whale carcasses were landed from the catcher boats onto the slipway. We had a chance to wander the museum and take photographs of the bones and rusting metal from this bygone era. There was some time and money spent by us all in the Heritage Trust gift shop and post office this afternoon. Then Stephen lead a hike behind the church up into the hills above, where we took photos just like those of a young Australian, Frank Hurley. The evening finished with a unexpected display of humpbacks on the way to St Andrews.







DAY 7 | Friday, 7 December 2018

# St Andrews Bay and Ocean Harbour

<b>Position:</b>	17:30 hours	<b>Course:</b>	260°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	20 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	977.3 hPa & falling
<b>Latitude:</b>	54°20'S	<b>Speed:</b>	at anchor	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	N	<b>Air Temp:</b>	6° C
<b>Longitude:</b>	36°14'W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	3° C

After the excitement of last night's humpback whale spotting session and a rare leopard seal vs. penguin encounter, we woke full of anticipation of the day ahead. Those who were early to wake at about 5:30am managed to capture the beautiful luminescent quality of the mountains over St Andrew's, and also see the snowy sheathbills investigating the riggings on the rear deck. First stop after a hearty breakfast was visiting the stunning and most numerous king penguin colony of St. Andrew's. Following another excellent briefing from Heidi, and once again navigating the fur seals, elephant seals and king penguins, we made our way closer towards the colony of approximately 250,000 king penguins. The walk was superb with an abundance of wildlife as we made our way through running streams, assisted by Stephen, Nina and Peter (the river masters), and with the skuas and Antarctic terns circling overhead. Those who positioned themselves on grassy knolls above the colony were lucky to witness a skua chick being fed by its mother (which made us feel warmer towards skuas than normal!), and penguins flapping and courting. After several hours immersed in the wildlife we made our way back to shore, observing lines of penguins as we went, and enjoyed the company of elephant seal weaners trying to munch on our life jacket bags. The Zodiac cruise back to the ship was fairly easy for some, but our intrepid kayakers showed us how tough they were with a tricky dismount from the kayaks amid an increasing swell, and some excellent kayak manouvering work from the expedition team and crew. Special mention goes to Nina



for rescuing a passenger from what could have been a first unofficial polar plunge. After a comforting lunch of wraps and chips we cruised to one of the best sheltered bays in South Georgia, Ocean Harbour, with a beautiful old rusting ship in the centre of the harbour that had been blown away, along with half the jetty, during a particularly bad storm in 1911. We also listened to the interesting history of the steam train and a smaller whaling station that had long gone. With some passengers opting to Zodiac cruise whilst others hiked, we all enjoyed the impressive scenery and beautiful patchwork colours across the bay. Those who hiked to the top of the hill enjoyed some stunning vistas and various varieties of colourful moss whilst the rain fell down upon our (thankfully) waterproof gear. Following some rigorous exercise, and an impromptu glove rescue from some cheeky skuas from our fearless leader - all passengers in the bay returned to the ship, where we enjoyed some beautifully warm showers. Only to be topped by an excellent recap of what was a terrific day, an exciting teaser of what's in store for tomorrow, and a great cocktail from Kathrine.



















DAY 8 | Saturday, 8 December 2018

# Gold Harbour, Cooper Bay, Drygalski Fjord

**Position:** 19:15 hours  
**Latitude:** 54°46.7'S  
**Longitude:** 36 05.8'W

**Course:** 315°  
**Speed:** 9 knots

**Wind Speed:** 30 knots  
**Wind Direction:** NE

**Barometer:** 980 hPa & falling  
**Air Temp:** 2° C  
**Sea Temp:** 2° C

The ships company was roused early to make the most of morning light. The sounds and odor of another huge king penguin colony drifted out to us as the light of dawn reflected off the hanging glacier above Gold Harbour. The strong winds of yesterday afternoon had abated and the inky sea had barely a ripple upon a slow swell as we prepared for our morning landing. It is estimated that 25,000 pairs of king penguins call Gold Harbour home along with loads of elephant seals, a sprinkling of gentoos and the occasional fur seal. Flurries of snow put a thin veil of white over the landing that melted during our stay. It was one of those landings where we just did not know where to look. The jousting, amorous young elephant seals with their huge eyes were simply irresistible to photograph. The adolescent male elephant seals took their interactions a little more seriously with arched backs, snarls and bared teeth, certainly a force to be reckoned with. The rest of their species seemed content to rest silently undisturbed by the commotion around them. Some king penguins marched with a sense of purpose back and forth, others taking to the water porpoising to and from the open sea and the rest mingled in various group sizes through-out the beach. Many of last year's young were now close to fledging. Their downy feathers almost disappeared leaving some with funky mohawk hair styles. The adult feathers that have pushed out the downy ones are not yet as brightly coloured as the adults, but other than that it was hard to tell who's who.

Some were fat, others thin, some seemed awkward and as Heidi explained last night it's the "boy on top". Eventually we had to pull ourselves away from this menagerie of active wildlife and return to the ship, but that was tricky as the weaners had taken over the lifejacket bags. Heading south to Cooper Bay named after one of Captain Cooks Lieutenant's we took to the Zodiacs to cruise the shoreline in search of four penguin species. King, chinstrap, gentoo and

Macaroni all thrive here. The snowy conditions deterred a few of our intrepid photographer's keen to get a photo of a penguin clear the water. Several nesting blue-eyed shags on craggy rocky outcrops, skuas devouring a meal ashore and sheathbills also shared the shore. The nearby Cooper Island was one of the rat free refuges and has been a major population source for the natural recolonization of species like the South Georgia pipit, storm petrels and pintail duck. Moving to a protected anchorage in Drygalski Fjord, we anchored at the entrance to Larson Harbour. The calm waters allowed us to celebrate South Georgia in fine style with an auction in aid of the South Georgia Heritage Trust led by Toby and followed by a fine dinner. To cap off the evening we sailed up the dramatic fjord soaking in the surrounding towering peaks of rock and ice. An incredible finale to the South Georgia part of our journey.









DAY 9 | Sunday, 9 December 2018

# Scotia Sea

Position:	11:00 hours	Course:	239°	Wind Speed:	25 knots	Barometer:	982 hPa & steady
Latitude:	56°12'S	Speed:	10.6 knots	Wind Direction:	W	Air Temp:	3° C
Longitude:	39°34'W					Sea Temp:	1°C

Five metre waves, 25-knot winds, and green water over the bow greeted us on our first morning across the Scotia Sea. And while we were transiting in the opposite direction to that of Ernest Shackleton in 1916 aboard the 22-foot *James Caird*. Nina gave part one of a two-part presentation on Shackleton’s incredible Imperial Trans Antarctic Expedition. It ended with a cliffhanger, the ship *Endurance* crushed in the ice and Shackleton and his men abandoning ship. Part two we will learn how the story ends. This was one of those slightly uncomfortable sea days for all aboard—passengers, staff and Russian crew— waking in our bunks wearier than when we’d crawled into them the night before. Our ship rocked and rolled in a jarring dance with a relentless ocean that rose and fell throughout the day. Even large seabirds out and about had vigorous winds to contend with, keen bridge spotters were treated to another whale blow before lunch. Spare a thought for our long-suffering galley duo Al and Bert who spent their day wrangling runaway vegetables and sliding pots and pans; and stewardesses Uliana and Natalia, balancing dishes across two rollercoaster dining rooms. Somehow this awesome foursome manages to cook and serve three hearty meals each day, all done with smiles and attention to detail. Our wonderful hotel manager Kathrine looking after us all in the bar while we download our photos for the log, played cards and shared stories with fellow passengers. Heidi with her usual enthusiasm educated us on our much-loved penguin friends, talking of the magellanic, crested, king and the brush-tails, which we hope to



encounter if we’re lucky on the Antarctica peninsula. We learnt of their different breeding and nesting strategies and how many chicks they hope to raise. Back in its hay day; 40 million years ago, some 40-50 different species existed, compared to a cool 18-19 today. Conditions eased a whisker during the afternoon, which brought 13 movie lovers to the screening of our favourite animated movie *Happy Feet*. A patient audience stayed shortly after viewing the credits, which mention Aurora Expeditions and two of their Expedition leaders as well as one of your fellow shipmates Edwina who was part of a thousand-piece choir in production of the movie. Then it was time for Peter’s lecture ‘Create’ where he taught us the difference between taking the photo and creating the photo. His expression is a unique story of how he directs his creativity as an art, which enhances to his final picture. A quiet evening on board as we await the calm seas to arrive while we sleep. Ahead of us lies a new day at sea. Let’s see what the weather gods hold in store as our sturdy ice-strengthened vessel claws its way south to the ice.











DAY 10 | Monday, 10 December 2018

# Scotia Sea

<b>Position:</b>	17:30 hours	<b>Course:</b>	229°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	40 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	989 hPa & rising
<b>Latitude:</b>	58°56'S	<b>Speed:</b>	10.5 knots	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	W	<b>Air Temp:</b>	2° C
<b>Longitude:</b>	47°37'W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	1°C

Oh what a joy to be at sea when the conditions ease and we find ourselves gently rolling over oceanic undulations towards Antarctica! Yesterday's lumpy seas were replaced by a slightly more moderate three metre swell and 20 knot winds, making for a much smoother ride and easier time moving around the ship. A definite improvement, but not quite enough to get us all out of bed for breakfast! Huge thanks to Al, Bert, Natalia and Uliana for creating and serving yet another delicious buffet under challenging conditions. Enjoyed by all those who made it to the dining room. For the rest of us, another morning of rest and recuperation was in order, and what better place than the cosy *Polar Pioneer*? Today's jam-packed program began with another captivating talk from Heidi, this time about the cool cetations of the Southern Sea. Having seen some charismatic tail-slapping behaviour and some unidentified whale blows and backs around South Georgia, we were all excited to learn more about these leviathans of the deep. We have now been introduced to some of the beauties we are most likely to see between here, Antarctica and Ushuaia. Some happy whale-spotting lies ahead! Next, we returned to the lecture room with Nina to hear the second part of Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, an extraordinary feat of endurance that ended with Shackleton and five of his men crossing the very waters we are sailing today . . . but for 17 days in a 22 foot sail boat! After lunch we began the serious business of pre-Antarctic biosecurity, with simultaneous vacuum parties in the bar and lecture room - it wasn't long before our gear was spick and span and ready to visit the great white south. We also attended to other business, sifting through our photos to pick out a select few for inclusion in the voyage log, a memento of our journey. As we leave South Georgia behind we have some time to reflect on the phenomenal, sometimes overwhelming experiences we shared there. The sheer density of wildlife, the cacophony and aroma, the scale of the landscape, the severity of the weather: it's

quite unlike anywhere else, and it's wonderful to have this pause at sea to consider where we have been and where we are going. The afternoon's program consisted of some rest, bridge watch and another informative presentation from Peter, who showed us some tips and tricks to not only take a photograph, but to create a work of art that represents a more subjective experience of the world around us. Before dinner we met in the bar, where Christian shared the plan for the next few days. As we make our way towards Antarctica, our dreams will no doubt be filled with images of immense tabular icebergs, dormant calderas and penguins on ice. Tonight, we sleep once more on the high seas, and tomorrow we embark on the second part of our journey to Antarctica!







# Scotia Sea & Elephant Island (South Shetland Islands)

<b>Position:</b>	11:00 hours	<b>Course:</b>	238°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	5 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	1001 hPa & steady
<b>Latitude:</b>	60°40'S	<b>Speed:</b>	11.8 knots	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	W	<b>Air Temp:</b>	0°C
<b>Longitude:</b>	53°28'W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	0°C

The wind had finally eased to produce a glassy sea this morning. A little bit of residual swell had us still gripping the handrails as we negotiated the stairs and halls. Many more faces were seen at breakfast as we neared the end of our crossing of the Scotia Sea. A few fin whales were sighted as if they were helping us to celebrate the near end to this crossing. Our educational lecture series continued with Stephen delivering a presentation on ice. We learned the vocabulary to describe different types of sea and glacier ice: frazzle, pancake ice, bergy bits and growlers. Our historian Nina described the early exploration and discovery of Antarctica. Captain Cook made it below the Antarctic Circle more than once without actually sighting the continent itself. We came out on deck shortly after these presentations to see the snow-capped peaks of Elephant and Clarence Islands emerge through the layer of cloud on the horizon. Southern fulmars and cape petrels circled the ship, making beautiful reflections on the glassy sea and a few chinstrap penguins porpoised in the swell. After a warming lunch we were back out in sunshine. We could see just how formidable the shoreline was for Shackleton and his men to land. The captain maneuvered the ship close to Point Wild and the swell was calm enough for us to take to the Zodiacs. How fortunate! The sun dazzled on the glacier front, chinstrap penguins called out their squeaky-door sounds while they leapt off wave swept rocks. A leopard seal was seen lurking around the rocky islet colony and a couple Antarctic fur seals were also cavorting on the rocks. But spare a thought for Frank



Wild and those 22 men, they weren't here on a warm sunny, summer's day like us, they were stuck on these rocks for four and a half months of winter! It felt like we could linger and watch the glacier calving and the chinstraps going about their business for ages, but we had to get on our way as there was other exciting things to see in the vicinity! A large tabular iceberg, calved over 20 years ago from the Ross Ice Shelf had slowly circumnavigated three quarters of the Antarctic continent. The stars had aligned so that we could witness this spectacle on our journey towards Antarctica! Named for the quadrant of Antarctica that it originated from, this iceberg was labelled B09F and was over 35 km in length. It looked large from 30 nautical miles away when we had just cleared Cape Valentine on the tip of Elephant Island. We watched a few fin whales while we basked in the sunshine on the foredeck and made our way closer to this magnificent tabular berg. Before dinner we had a preview when we passed a berg only a mere 5 km in length. Then for desert we had the main show; this ice was so large that it was hard to comprehend! What an introduction to Antarctica!











DAY 12 | Wednesday, 12 December 2018

# Half Moon, Whalers Bay (South Shetland Islands)

**Position:** 14:00 hours  
**Latitude:** 62°36'S  
**Longitude:** 589°43'W

**Course:** 135°  
**Speed:** 11.3 knots

**Wind Speed:** 10 knots  
**Wind Direction:** NE

**Barometer:** 986.6 hPa & falling  
**Air Temp:** 5°C  
**Sea Temp:** 1°C

We awoke to beautifully silky-smooth seas after a nice lie in this morning. The early risers however were greeted by glorious vistas of Nelson Island on the starboard side, and a humpback whale merely 5m from the ship. For once there weren't too many birds around this morning, with only a few Antarctic terns and great petrels about and Heidi's early morning round of the ship confirmed once again we have avoided any bird strikes. After breakfast the fog closed in but the seas remained calm as we started our landing at Half Moon. Despite some light snow and rain, we made the most of the landing, exploring the bay to uncover fantastic chinstrap penguin rookeries, weddell seals and a few elephant seal weaners. The kayakers were even treated to a lone Adelie penguin with many of us envious, and eagerly awaiting our own spotting. We also discovered that we weren't alone at Half Moon as we spotted an Argentinian station and military ship about. Wet, and with a light smattering of guano (it was difficult to avoid!) we made our way back to the ship and the inviting wafting aroma of pizza as we reboarded. The perfect lunch for a wet, drizzly day after hosing down and hanging all our gear up to dry. With full bellies we enjoyed siestas or humpback whale spotting on the bridge before sauntering down to the lecture theatre for a briefing on the days to come (our first official landing on Antarctica!) and the historic past of Deception Island. After the briefing we cruised past Livingstone island, and made our way towards our afternoon landing at Deception Island. The captain carefully manoeuvred through the tricky opening at Neptune's Bellows, avoiding any submerged rock, and allowed us beautiful scenes of the colourful rock either side, perhaps like Nathaniel Palmer might have done many years ago. A volcanic crater made for a fascinating stop as we perused black volcanic beaches and remnants of old whaling stations, deteriorating old buildings and beautiful rust coloured tanks. A few gentoo and chinstrap penguins strolled along the black sandy shores and a few were fortunate to spot



a kelp gull with chicks. Those feeling active walked 1½km past a lone crabeater seal and old whale bones up to Neptune's window for a wonderful view of the vast ocean and cliff face. Following several hours ashore, and giving our waterproof gear a thorough test, we returned to the ship for hot showers and a nice hot meal to round out a wonderful day in the South Shetland islands.

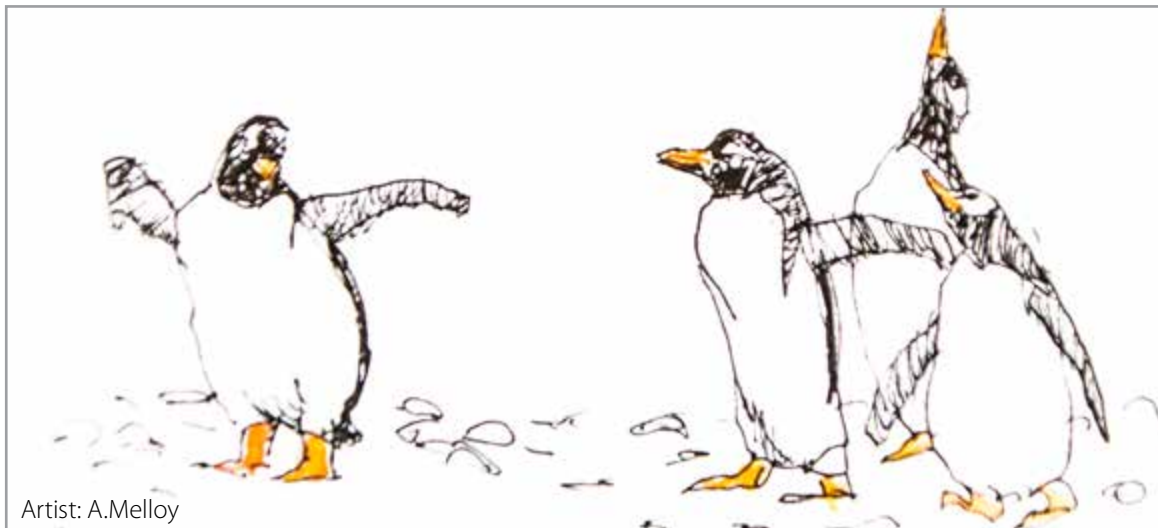
Today we will Zodiac cruise through Paradise Harbour, set foot on the continent of Antarctica and endeavour to camp on the ice.











Artist: A.Melloy



Artist: A.Melloy



Artist: P.Wallis



# Cape Petrels



Am



DAY 13 | Thursday, 13 December 2018

# Paradise Bay, Neko Harbour

**Position:** 18:45 hours  
**Latitude:** 64°50'S  
**Longitude:** 62°32'W  
**Course:** 281°  
**Location:** at anchor, Neko Harbour

The impressive glaciation of the Antarctic mainland rewarded the pre-breakfast risers. Mountains disappearing into clouds on either side of the ship was an awe-inspiring introduction to the southern region of the Gerlache Strait. Just prior to breakfast we navigated the narrow iceberg filled Errera Channel passing Cuverville and Danco Islands. The shallow waters and currents bring large bergs through the passage where they end up grounded, and a challenge for our officers on the bridge. Paradise Harbour was our mornings destination, a protected bay full of sculpted bergs, calm waters and magnificent mountain scenery oozing with glaciers. *Polar Pioneer* anchored just off the unmanned Argentine Station of Almirante Brown and we took to the Zodiacs to explore Skontorp Cove. The light flurry of snow eased and we spent a couple of glorious hours admiring sculpted icebergs in many hues of blue; Antarctic shags tending to the needs of their young; crabeater seals swimming alongside us and lazing on ice floes; calving glaciers sending thundering echoes in the amphitheater shaped bay and finally mirror like reflections as we sat still with the engine off contemplating the grandeur of it all. A truly memorable Zodiac cruise. Back aboard the mothership nearly 1/3 of the ships company braved the icy waters to partake in a polar plunge. Considering there was fresh ice congealing on the water during our Zodiac cruise it was a testament to their mental health (or not) as they leapt off the gangway. Part way through this spectacle all cameras diverted as a pod of orcas swam by the bow. As we left Paradise Harbour after a



**Wind:** calm  
**Air Temp:** 4°C  
**Barometer:** 983.9 hPa & steady  
**Sea Temp:** 0°C

sauna for many and hearty lunch for all, we found the pod again. We enjoyed quite a display as the six animals swam amongst ice, spy hopped and one of the younger animals even cleared the water in a breach. Not to be out done a humpback also surfaced nearby and showed his tail a few times. That, amongst more amazing bergs burnt through many more gigabytes of memory. A landing on the continent itself was our afternoons activity. Neko Harbour lies in the deep Andvord Bay and was full of beautiful icebergs. As we meandered our way through them the orcas and humpbacks did likewise putting on wonderful post lunch entertainment. A colony of gentoos call Neko Harbour home and ashore we admired their “highways” through the snow leading up to rookeries. First a couple of central pathways before they splayed out near the top in branches near the bare rocky nesting areas. We made our own highway off to the side and climbed the slopes to a spectacular lookout over the nearby glacier and brash filled bay. Humpback whales and crabeater seals swam in the waters below while penguins paraded the ice dotted shore line. A quick briefing in the bar about tomorrow and camping opportunities this evening encouraged a few to take to sleeping bags after a delicious evening meal aboard. Time will tell how they survived the night ashore.



















DAY 14 | Friday, 14 December 2018

# Neko Harbour; Port Lockroy, Lemaire Channel

<b>Position:</b>	06:25 hours	<b>Course:</b>	280°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	15 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	964 hPa & falling
<b>Latitude:</b>	64°49'S	<b>Speed:</b>	6 knots	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	NW	<b>Air Temp:</b>	2°C
<b>Longitude:</b>	63°33'W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	0°C

They survived! A night on the ice at Neko Harbour was no match for 12 intrepid campers aboard Aurora's ASG74 Expedition. Neko Harbour was named for the floating whale factory ship Neko, which operated in the area in 1911–12 and 1923–24 and also one of the few continental landings on the Antarctic peninsula. While the rest of us enjoyed *Polar Pioneer* creature comforts Toby, Nina and Justine handed out a sleeping bag, a sleeping mat and a very welcoming slab of ice in the hope of a good night's rest. Like the gentoos before them, they formed their 'sleeping nests' by levelling out the snow ready for a cosy night under cloudy skies. After breakfast our landing at Cuverville Island was cancelled when we were confronted with the early arrival of forecast inclement weather. Dressed then undressed we returned inside for another cuppa (and perhaps a few more zzz's for our campers)! As we approached the Neumayer Channel a blanket of snow covered the *Polar Pioneer* from bow to stern inviting us to play out on deck, throw snow balls and build a number of very cool snowmen. The view from the bridge was a delightful sight, it was like Christmas had come early. A hearty lunch followed as we waited in anticipation for our deck to be called for our landing at Port Lockroy where the friendly team of Brits were awaiting our arrival. Team leader Heidi joined us on board to give us an introduction to Port Lockroy, where her team of four are stationed for the summer. Heidi outlined the history of the base and how, in 1996 after the buildings had been left derelict for years, a team began the work of restoring the base. Over time a museum, gift store and post office evolved, making Port Lockroy the most visited site on the Antarctic Peninsula. Such is its popularity that the team frank between 60,000 and 80,000 pieces of mail during their 4-month summer, and along with revenue from the gift store, bolster funds to restore other historic British bases on the Antarctic Peninsula and Ross Sea. The team also monitors the gentoo penguins that nest on the tiny island. The penguin

monitoring, which began in 1997, suggests that human visitation has no negative impact on the breeding success of the gentoos; indeed, the chick mortality rate is low compared to most sites. During our time ashore our fantastic hotel team were busy preparing an evening of festivities. We met in the bar for a short recap and briefing before being asked to slowly make our way to the dining rooms for a good old fashion BBQ. Like musical chairs, we were each greeted with a silly hat on our seats, complimentary gluhwein, esky treats and a dinner of champions. Before long we made our way up to the bar to continue the party and dance like no one was watching. With the playlist on hold we ventured onto the bow and bridge as the captain navigated us through the gorgeous Lemaire Channel. In the days of film, this dramatic channel with its 1,000-metre peaks flanking either side, was coined Kodak Alley. The mountains plunge below the water to an equivalent depth. Thank you to Christian for planning another tremendous day in Antarctica.

Today we will start our adventure before breakfast as we head for Petermann Island to encounter our first and only Adelie penguin colony of our voyage.















DAY 15 | Saturday, 15 December 2018

# Petermann Island

Position:	12:00 hours	Course:	354°
Latitude:	64°43'S	Speed:	11 knots
Longitude:	64°53'W		

This morning, at an hour usually reserved for snoozing and sweet dreams, we were all rolling out of bed (with varying degrees of enthusiasm!) for a pre-breakfast landing south of the Lemaire Channel. By 5:30am the ship was abuzz with people snatching lifejackets off railings, pulling on overpants and grabbing a quick cuppa and snack to fuel up before braving the cold. Filing out onto the foredeck for our final landing on this voyage, we were treated to a truly Antarctic vista. Brash ice, berg-studded seas and a light dusting of snow on the deck gave the scene a decidedly polar feel as delicate snowflakes adorned our beanies and jackets. It wasn't long before we were loading onto Zodiacs and zooming towards Petermann Island. First discovered by a German expedition in 1873-4, Petermann Island was named for German geographer August Petermann, but is best known as the winter home of French explorer Jean Baptiste Charcot's 1909 expedition in the Pourquoi Pas?. Today it is home to colonies of gentoo and adelic penguins, an abandoned Argentine refugio and a memorial cross commemorating the lives of three British Antarctic Survey personnel who perished nearby in 1984.

When we arrived at the landing site we were greeted by deep snow banks almost a metre deep draped over black rocks, and curious gentoo penguins poking along the shoreline. A short walk through immaculate, squeaky-fresh snow brought us to a colony of gentoo and adelic penguins - for many of us, our first sighting of the charming adelic. It was wonderful



Wind Speed:	20 knots	Barometer:	964 hPa & falling
Wind Direction:	N	Air Temp:	1°C
		Sea Temp:	0°C

to see these two brush-tailed penguin species living side by side in apparent harmony, and to notice several eggs finding shelter under warm bellies, protected from the driving snow. A lucky few even witnessed one of the first chicks of the season, a tiny ball of fluff with a beak not much larger than a thumb! Tobogganing penguins and a small hike to a saddle with views over the ocean rounded off our visit, and before 7:30am we were all back on board, northward bound and ready for a hot cooked breakfast - thanks Al and Bert! Navigating from Petermann Island towards open sea the captain navigated the ship through French Passage, which was choked with pack ice. The endless white was a sight to behold, countless tessellated plates of frozen ocean, some of them home to a hauled out crabeater seal or five. Our little ship pushed bravely into the pack as we watched from the bridge and bow, grateful for this rare and moving experience. Once we reached open water we settled in for an afternoon of entertaining presentations. Christian regaled us with stories of Antarctic discovery and exploration, deepening our understanding of the history in the areas we have just visited. Dr Peter shared diverting tales from his time working as a doctor at the Australian Antarctic Division's Casey Station. A fascinating insight into a world few get to experience.

Today we continue our journey north towards the Antarctic convergence and Ushuaia crossing the infamous Drake Passage.









# Drake Passage

<b>Position:</b>	018:00 hours	<b>Course:</b>	005°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	21 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	983.9 hPa & rising
<b>Latitude:</b>	59°02’S	<b>Speed:</b>	13 knots	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	WSW	<b>Air Temp:</b>	3°C
<b>Longitude:</b>	65°36’W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	1°C

Through the night the good ship *Polar Pioneer* made her way north. Away from the frozen continent where we had had so many wonderful experiences. We rolled to port and then to starboard. Holding on to the handrails to make our way to the dining room. There were a few empty chairs at breakfast to remind us that not everyone has the stomach for a life at sea.

We rose from periodic and otherwise constant napping to meet in the lecture room for informative talks. Down low on deck two, this is a place of gentle motion that lends us a few more moments of eyes closed. Heidi gave us a talk on the biology of the Antarctic Krill. Most biologists describe it as a “keystone species” but now we know it is a miracle that makes this abundant and beautiful marine ecosystem in Antarctica possible. We also learned of the fisheries and human history surrounding the management of this fishery in the Southern Ocean.

There was time for a cup of tea before we joined again in the by-now familiar and comforting lecture room to hear Peter Eastway. We looked at stunning images taken during our voyage, some of us thinking to ourselves “gosh, mine don’t turn out as good as those!” We also learned about putting together a photo book to record these memories. The wind continued to blow and even picked up a notch. It took a bit of acrobatics to get ourselves into the dining room and into a seat; then to stay seated and keep our food on our plates as the ship rolled several degrees. After lunch Nina presented a very interesting subject: The Politics of

Antarctica. What started from a scientific endeavor during the Geophysical Year of 1957-58 eventually lead to the signing of the Antarctic Treaty. Hopefully preserving this continent for Science and Peace into the future. This afternoon we had a guest lecturer as Julian offered to give a presentation on the geology of the Scotia Sea. We learned that the Falkland Islands were once closer to South Africa and had the opposite orientation to how they sit currently. And that time has a much different meaning to geologists, millions of years being quite recent really! The sun eventually broke through the clouds making the wave tops shine and turn turquoise before their tops broke. After another delicious three courses we watched an interesting documentary on ice coring in Antarctica as our good ship *Polar Pioneer* continues to make her way north.

Today we will spend our last full day at sea and hope to be in protected waters by midday.











DAY 17 | Monday, 17 December 2018

# Drake Passage, Beagle Channel

<b>Position:</b>	15:20 hours	<b>Course:</b>	25°
<b>Latitude:</b>	55°20'3 S	<b>Speed:</b>	13.4 knots
<b>Longitude:</b>	66°16.6 W		

There was no need for yoga this morning as we had our workout just keeping still in bunks overnight. On the Beaufort Scale, the conditions for the Strong Gale conditions we were experiencing are described as “High waves; dense streaks of foam along the direction of the wind; crests of waves beginning to topple, tumble and roll over. Spray may affect visibility”. Probable wave height seven meters and wind strength of 41-47 knots. On a scale of one to twelve, a strong gale is nine. A few sturdy soles hauled themselves up to the bridge and others admired these tempestuous conditions from their portholes. An experience to remember and the staff agreed this was definitely a worse than average crossing. The majority still made it to a cooked breaky to fortify themselves for more movement around the ship. “Land ho” was called out just before lunch. Thanks to some forward planning we escaped the worst of the gale as the winds started topping 60 knots in the gusts. As we passed east of Isla Deceit, not far from Cape Horn itself, the seas torn and undulating surface began to ease behind the natural breakwater of the islands. A pertinent movie was shown late morning, it being too rough earlier. The story of a young sailor wanting to experience “a first-class Cape Horn storm”. “Around Cape Horn” was filmed in the 1920s and narrated by the cameraman 50 years later. It is a classic must see to put our “comfortable” lives aboard into perspective. The smell of food and flatter seas drew most out of their cabins for lunch. A short briefing on disembarkation plans and settlement of accounts after lunch, then it was time to start packing and finding all those belongings that had rolled out of sight. From the upper decks some watched the increasing numbers of birds and still spectacular churned up sea as we approached the Beagle Channel. The smell of trees started to permeate our nostrils for those game enough to step outside in the wind and the green surrounds an unfamiliar sight for some time tantalized our eyes. We came to anchor at the pilot station in the Beagle Channel , they will board the

<b>Wind Speed:</b>	48 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	996 hPa & steady
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	SW	<b>Air Temp:</b>	4°C
		<b>Sea Temp:</b>	5°C

ship tonight and bring the ship up to Ushuaia for tomorrow mornings arrival. We toasted the voyage at the captain’s farewell drinks and many received certificates for partaking in various activities. Well done to all adventurers. Another splendid meal by Al and Bert that we enjoyed on non-rocking tables. Then to wrap up a splendid voyage, we reminisced our last 18 days together with a slideshow put together by Peter Eastway using all our submitted photos. A great testament to the fun and photographic expertise of all aboard. And maybe even some photo shop skills.





DAY 18 | Tuesday, 18 December 2018

## Beagle Channel, Ushuaia

**Position:** 06:00 hours                      **Location:** Alongside in Ushuaia  
**Latitude:** 54° 48.5' S  
**Longitude:** 68° 18.1' W

**Wind Speed:** 15 knots                      **Barometer:** 1000Pa & steady  
**Wind Direction:** W                      **Air Temp:** 5°C  
**Sea Temp:** 5°C

*Believe me my young friend, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats...simply messing.*  
– Water Rat to Mole in Wind in the Willows:

Today, the final day of our Antarctic voyage as new adventures await us at and beyond Ushuaia. We awoke in port to an early 6am wake-up call ‘Good morning everybody good morning’ oh how we’ll miss that French accent of Christian’s. Before breakfast, we left our luggage outside each cabin and navigated once more through the corridors for our final hearty breakfast prepared by our fabulous chefs Al and Bert. To think only 18 days ago we were strangers not only to each other but to the extraordinary worlds of South Georgia and Antarctica. May the memories of malodorous but adorable penguins; wallows of belching elephant seals; curious weaners; territorial fur seals; stealthy orcas; Zodiac cruises; icebergs, glaciers, an ocean alive with seabirds; wild sea crossings; the B09F Iceberg, slothful crabeater seals; the majestic Lemaire Channel; summer snow storm; a BBQ; polar plunge, plus a whole swathe of kayaking experiences from the gentle to the raging oceanic live on and on.





# Kayaking Log

By Toby Story

**Kayaking Guide:** Toby Story and Michael Gray

**Kayakers:**

John Anderson	Yolanda Clarke	Cara McDonald	Suzanne Rumney
Ron Bjorge	Betsy Conti	Dave Prescott	Robyn Stonefield
Colin Clarke	Mark Henschke	Victoria Primrose	Prue Wallis

**DAYS 1-3: At sea**

**DAY 4: Elsehul** – Distance: 3.7 km

Despite the strong wind forecast it was all kayakers on deck for the first outing of the trip! After our final briefings and boot washing we loaded kayaks and paddlers over the side of the ship and into the gentle swells. Once we were all on the water, we paddled off to a macaroni colony high on the tussocks and watched fur seals play around the boats and on the rocks. Following the coastline down-wind we found another sheltered bay to sit and watch and be watched by some curious elephant seals. While the weather held we crossed the bay to view three try pots, the remnants of the early whaling days, on the beach surrounded by fur seals before a gust of wind gave us the signal to return to the ship.

**DAY 5: Fortuna Bay** – no paddle

**Hercules Bay** – Distance: 4.5 km

The sky was clear and blue and the winds were low as we launched kayaks from the gently rolling *Polar Pioneer*. We followed the rocky shore, searching for sea caves and dodging the surging fronds of kelp that lined the rocks while seals snorted and cavorted around the boats. Finding a narrow gap between the rocks, we paddled into a sheltered pool and sat as seals played around the boats in the still clear waters. Riding the surge into the bay we made our way towards the towering waterfall before moving on to watch macaroni penguins at their waterfront colony. Paddling lazily on, we were surprised by the zodiac paparazzi before returning to the ship.

**DAY 6: Grytviken** – Distance: 5 km

After a short paddle to shore and a quick toast to Shackleton led by our historian Nina, we did a waterfront tour of Grytviken, exploring the piers and rusting hulks of whale catchers before stopping in front of the museum. After wandering amongst the remains of the whaling station for a couple of hours we set out and paddled along the shore dodging gusts and searching for South Georgia pipits between the rocks. We paddled on until we were rewarded with a view to the peak of Mt Sugarloaf, towering 2500 meters above the tussock and slathered in recent snow. As the winds increased in the bay, trails of spindrift were whipped off the distant peaks and we turned towards the ship.

**DAY 7: Andrews Bay** – Distance: 6.3 km

With a close eye on the sky we launched into easy conditions in front of St Andrews Bay. We paddled close to shore watching (and smelling) the hundreds of thousands of king penguins ashore and in the water around the boats. The giant petrels floated lazily alongside waiting for an unlucky stray as a snack. Trading one sea for another, we landed and wandered to a high point to look out over a sea of penguins, while several curious chicks investigated our boots.

After a stroll we regrouped at the kayaks and paddled for the ship as the winds increased and the clouds loomed in the mountains. We scrambled back onto the ship as conditions deteriorated, managing to lash down the kayaks as the winds increased again, whipping the spray off the surface of the ocean.

**Ocean Harbour** – Distance: 3.5 km

Despite the plus 35 knot gusts in the open seas Ocean harbour afforded just enough protection for us to get off the ship and into the wind and sleet. We paddled directly to shore searching for sheltered patches of coast. Paddling along past resting and playing seals we made our way to shore. Once ashore we took a walk with John to the front to protect us from overly excited fur seals. When we arrived back at the boats we found a fur seal standing guard as well as a weaner who seemed to have taken a liking to one of the kayaks and had snuggled up close by. With some gentle coaxing they let us back into the kayaks and we paddled back to the ship.

**DAY 8: Gold Harbour** – Distance: 7.5 km

The winds were gentle as we launched at Gold Harbour. We paddled close to shore to watch the huge numbers of king penguins ashore before heading towards the lagoon. We searched for a safe spot to pass the surf zone at the bar that was once the terminal moraine of the glacier that now hangs on the high cliffs behind the lagoon. Paddling past Elephant seals, the occasional fur seal and yet more king penguins we found a small patch of gravel that was not already taken by wildlife for our landing. We sat at the beach and were visited by curious weaners before a short walk to a nearby lookout. By the time we got back to the boats one of the kayaks had been pushed into the lagoon by the weaners and had to be retrieved. As we paddled away a quiet crack from up high quickly became a roar as ice tumbled down a small gully and onto the rock and grass at the far end of the lagoon. As we left the lagoon, we opted for the more direct and exciting route out through some small waves. We almost managed to get the timing just right and exited the lagoon with a couple of wet faces. We paddled past the mass of the penguin colony one last time on our way back to the ship after a stunning and exciting paddle in Gold Harbour.

**Cooper Bay** – Distance: 4.5 km

There was a long lazy swell in the bay and the wind was up in Cooper Bay as we launched kayaks for one last time in South Georgia. With the winds making the open coast unpleasant we went in search of some open gulches to paddle in. We spotted our first chinstrap posing as a shag.

**DAY 9-11: At sea**

**DAY 12: Half-moon Bay** – Distance: 5.5 km

We were eagerly anticipating our first outing in Antarctica as we steamed into the bay at Half-moon Island in thick mist. There was almost no wind as we wound our way along the rocky coastline, making paddling through every gap in the rocks a delight and a goal for some. Dave spotted our first Adelie penguin sitting alone on the shore amongst the Gentoo's and shortly afterwards we made our first landing to wander beside sleepy Weddell seals. The mist cleared revealing distant glaciers that cracked and rumbled across the still waters as we turned for home after our first Antarctic paddle!







# Kayaking Log continued

**Whalers Bay, Deception Island** – Distance: 4 km

Despite the high winds in Whaler's Bay, we couldn't resist the opportunity to paddle in a flooded but still active caldera in Antarctica! We made our way out to the narrow gap to the open sea, paddling past high cliffs and sea stacks as we went towards Neptune's window, the old whaler's lookout. However, with the gusts increasing to over 20 knots we turned and headed back to the narrows where our zodiac taxi awaited to ferry us to the abandoned whaling station. After a short visit to the site we made the final downwind paddle back to the ship, eager for the warmth of a hot shower and a cup of tea.

**DAY 13: Paradise Bay** – Distance: 7 km

Paradise harbor more than lived up to its name and the glassy conditions were close to perfection for our first paddle amongst the "big ice". We made our way past high cliffs splashed orange and green by lichen and white by nesting blue-eyed shags. Paddling deep into the bay we could hear nothing but the sound of a lone Weddell seal singing and the low rumble of small avalanches tumbling from the towering peaks, occasionally revealed by the shifting cloud. Paddling slowly through the brash and bergy-bits, we made our way past numerous highly photogenic icebergs before paddling back to the ship for a polar plunge!

**Neko** – Distance: 6.5 km

We launched under the shadow of snow-capped peaks in Neko Harbour before picking our way through a small ice-field as we made our way into the bay. Hopping down the coast from bergy-bit to bergy-bit, Cara spotted humpback whales and we gave chase until they dove out of view. We paddled on hoping that the whales would find us again before returning to make a landing amongst the Gentoo's on the Antarctic continent. After some time to soak up the scenery we made our way back to the ship to prepare for a night out camping on the ice!

**DAY 14: Lemarie Channel** – No paddle

**DAY 15: Peterman Island** – Distance: 5.5 km

The gale-force winds from the previous day had abated but the snow was falling thick and fast, restricting our views to the nearby ice and low rocky coastline of Peterman Island. We launched tentatively dodging ice behind and along the edge of the ship. We paddled close to the adolie colony to peer at nesting penguins in the snow between the icy chunks in the water. Dodging the bobbing icebergs, we made our way along the snow-covered coast to an iceberg graveyard investigated by the occasional seal. We paused to refuel in front of a group of imposing bergs before paddling back to the ship, the snow blasting our faces and smarting our eyes. A fantastic way to finish our trip in Antarctica!!

**DISTANCE PADDLED: 64 KILOMETRES IN 12 PADDLES**







*Robyn, Cara, Dave, Suzanne,  
Mark and Betsy, John and Prue,  
Brave, skilled paddlers to a man  
Are Toby's fearless polar crew.*

*Growling seals and gleaming rocks  
Penguins leaping round the bow  
Freezing hands and soaking socks...  
Are nothing in the here and now.*

*Glaciers tumbling, weaners bold  
Morning tea and Toblerone  
We had it all at Harbour Gold  
and even powered through surf for home.*

*When Toby said, its time to go  
All were ready in a trice  
Six took the plunge, four slept on snow,  
Then best - and last - we stroked through ice.*

*Were we not lucky few  
To kayak in this magic sea?  
Thank you Toby, Michael too  
For showing us how it can be.*

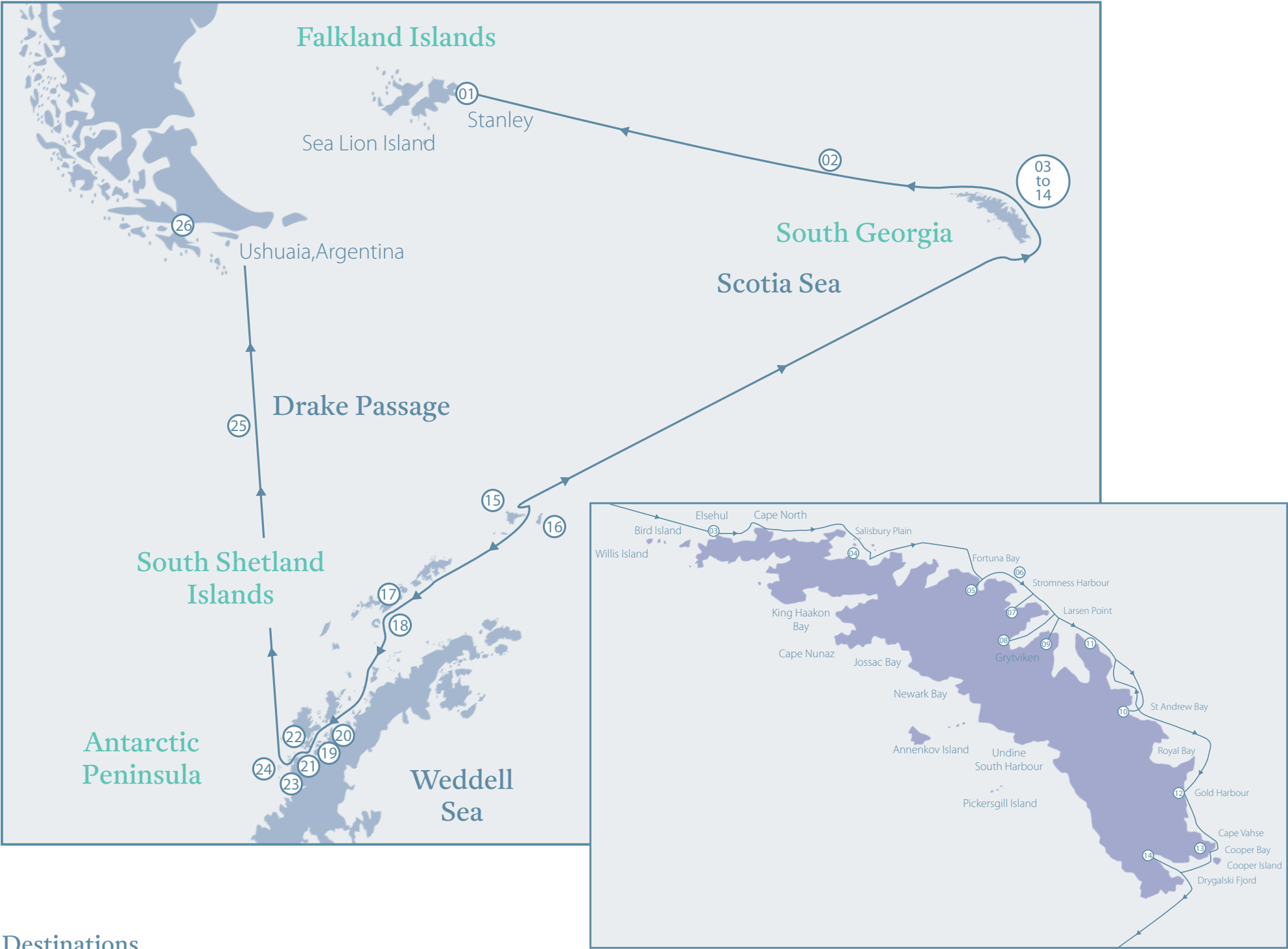
– Prue Wallis





# In Depth South Georgia & Antarctica Map

01 - 18 December 2018 | Distance Travelled: 2,641 nautical miles



## Destinations

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 01 Port Stanley   | 10 St Andrews Bay (largest king penguin colony in SG) |
| 02 Shag Rocks   | 11 Ocean Harbour (Zodiac cruise, Hike)                |
| 03 Elsehul (zodiac cruise)                                    | 12 Gold Harbour (kings, elephant seals, plateau walk) |
| 04 Salisbury Plain (ship cruise)                              | 13 Cooper Bay (ship cruise)                           |
| 05 Fortuna Bay (valley walk to kings)                         | 14 Drygalski Fjord (ship cruise, glacier)             |
| 06 Hercules Bay (zodiac cruise, macaroni penguins)            | 15 Elephant Island: Point Wild                        |
| 07 Stromness and Leith Whaling Station (ship cruise)          | 16 B09F Iceberg                                       |
| 08 Neumayer Glacier (ship cruise)                             | 17 Half Moon  |
| 09 Grytviken<br>(whaling station, Shackleton & Wild's graves) | 18 Deception Island                                   |
|   | 19 Paradise Harbour                                   |

- |                     |
|---------------------|
| 20 Neko             |
| 21 Neumayer         |
| 22 Goudier Island   |
| 23 Lemaire Channel  |
| 24 Petermann Island |
| 25 Drake Passage    |
| 26 Ushuaia          |







# Bird Species Log

Bird Species	December																
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
South Georgia Pintail				x	x	x	x	x									
Kelp Goose	x																
Magellanic Penguin	x																
King Penguin				x	x	x	x	x									
Adelié Penguin												x	x		x		
Gentoo Penguin				x		x		x			x	x	x	x	x		
Chinstrap Penguin								x			x	x					
Macaroni Penguin				x	x			x									
Wandering Albatross		x	x	x													
Southern Royal Albatross		x	x	x													
Black-browed Albatross	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x						x	x
Grey-headed Albatross				x							x						
Light-mantled Albatross		x		x	x			x									
Northern Giant Petrel		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x								
Southern Giant Petrel		x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x	x		x		x
Cape Petrel		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Snow Petrel			x	x		x		x					x	x			
Antarctic Fulmar (Southern)															x		
Antarctic Prion			x	x		x		x	x	x	x				x	x	x
Slender-billed Prion		x															
White-chinned Petrel		x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x					x	x
Sooty Shearwater																	x
Wilson's Storm-petrel		x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Black-bellied Storm-petrel			x					x									
Diving Petrel				x													
Antarctic Cormorant											x	x	x	x			
South Georgia Cormorant			x	x	x	x	x	x									
Imperial Cormorant																	x
Rock Cormorant	x																
Snowy Sheathbill				x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		
Chilean Skua																	x
Brown Skua				x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		





Giant Petrel



Macaroni penguins



King penguin



Kelp Gull

King penguins and elephant seals



Gentoo penguin highway



King penguin



King penguins



Brown skua and chick



# Bird Species Log

Bird Species	December																
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
South Polar Skua																	x
Kelp Gull				x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			
Dolphin Gull				x	x		x	x			x	x	x		x		x
Antarctic Tern	x			x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		
South American Tern																	x
Blackish Oystercatcher	x																
Turkey Vulture	x																
South Georgia Pipit				x	x	x	x	x									

# Mammal species log

Mammals Species	December																
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Antarctic Fur Seal			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x						
Southern Elephant Seal																	
Crabeater Seal				x	x	x	x	x			x	x					
Weddell Seal												x	x		x		
Leopard Seal											x						
Fin Whale											x						
Humpback Whale				x		x	x	x				x	x	x			
Sperm Whale																x	
Killer Whale (Orca)			x											x			





Black Brow Albatross



Fur seal and pup



Adelie and gentoo penguins



Killer whale



Elephant seal pup



Blonde fur seal



Fur seal and king penguins





# Expeditioners

Petina Alexander  
John Anderson  
Robyn Anker  
Larry Bardawil  
John Barker  
Marilyn Barker  
Ron Bjorge  
Jasmine Bowley

Ken Bretherton  
Lesley Bretherton  
Tash Bright  
Colin Clarke  
Yolanda Clarke  
Betsy Conti  
David Cuthbertson  
Paul Davies

Edwina Day  
Russell Dowling  
Jim Guille  
Celia Hacker  
Annette Hatten  
Mark Henschke  
Susie Holman  
Trevor Holman

Sue Hudson  
Anton Hudson  
Ryan Jackson  
Debbie Lewis  
John Lewis  
Cara McDonald  
Chris Melloy  
Anne Melloy

Suzanne Nelson  
Jan Parker  
Wendy Powe  
Dave Prescott  
Victoria Primrose  
Gary Richardson  
Suzanne Rumney  
Jenny Schure

Jerry Snyder  
Harvey St Amant  
Georgia Stergakis  
Robyn Stonefield  
Alison Turner  
Julian Vearncombe  
Susan Vearncombe  
Prue Wallis

Peter Wilcock  
Carole Wilcock  
Kath Wilson





## Expedition Team

Expedition Leader:	Christian Genillard
Assistant Expedition Leader:	Stephen Anstee
Assistant Expedition Leader Trainee:	Justine Bornholdt
Naturalist:	Heidi Krajewsky
Historian:	Nina Gallo
Doctor:	Peter Lovell
Chef:	Allan Estoque
Second Chef:	Herbert Cruz
Hotel Manager:	Kathrine Ersando
Kayaking Master:	Toby Story
Kayaking Guide:	Michael Gray
Photography Guide:	Peter Eastway

Ship's log compiled by Stephen Anstee, Justine Bornholdt, and ships log written by Stephen Anstee, Justine Bornholdt, Nina Gallo, Heidi Krajewsky and Victoria Primrose

## Polar Pioneer Crew

Captain:	Vladimir Zimin
Chief Mate:	Maxim Makarovskiy
Second Mate:	Evgenii Aleksandrov
Second Mate:	Anton Bogdanov
Radio Operator:	Ilia Liamzin
Chief Engineer:	Evgeny Pavlov
Second Engineer:	Pavel Voronov
Third Engineer:	Evgeny Petukhov
Fourth Engineer:	Yurii Horobets
Electrical Engineer:	Valentin Lomachenko
Boatswain:	Alexandr Agafonov
Able Seaman:	Vasilii Berlizev
Able Seaman:	Igor Popp
Able Seaman:	Aleksandr Litvinov
Able Seaman:	Aleksei Okunkov

Head Stewardess:	Natalia Pustovalova
Stewardess:	Evgeniya Chemiris
Stewardess:	Alena Antonova
Stewardess:	Anastasiia Peregontseva
Stewardess:	Ilia Koval
Stewardess:	Roman Trushin
Russian Crew Chef:	Petr Pustovalov

## Photo Credits

Petina Alexander	Susie Holman
John Anderson	Trevor Holman
Stephen Anstee	Sue Hudson
Larry Bardawil	Heidi Krajewsky
Ron Bjorge	Anne Melloy
Justine Bornholdt	Chris Melloy
Lesley Bretherton	Suzanne Nelson
Tash Bright	Victoria Primrose
Colin Clarke	Gary Richardson
Yolanda Clarke	Jerry Snyder
Betsy Conti	Robyn Stonefield
Edwina Day	Toby Story
Peter Eastway	Prue Wallis
Nina Gallo	Peter Wilcock
Michael Gray	Kath Wilson



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