



Spirit of Antarctica



31 October – 10 November 2019 | *Greg Mortimer*



About Us

Aurora Expeditions embodies the spirit of adventure, travelling to some of the most wild and remote places on our planet. With over 28 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.



Ushuaia

Position: 18:00 hours
Latitude: 54°49' S
Longitude: 68°18' W

Course: 83°

Wind Speed: Calm

Barometer: 976.3 hPa & steady
Air Temp: 9° C
Sea Temp: 8° C

Explore. Dream. Discover. —Mark Twain

After months of heart pumping anticipation and long, long flights from around the world, we finally arrived in Ushuaia, ‘el fin del mundo’ (the end of the world). After a good night rest, we were eager to begin our Antarctic adventure, but first we were collected from our hotels after lunch for a tour of the old airport and prison museum on the outskirts of town.

Before long it was time to make our way to the ship. At 1600, we pulled up alongside the *Greg Mortimer*, our floating home away from home for the next 11 days. With the X-Bow design, she is a vessel that clearly stood out from the other the ships nearby, helped, no doubt, by a perfect backdrop of brilliant blue sky and high snowy peaks.

Our leadership trio Greg, Howard and Justine welcomed us at the wharf and photographers snapped a photoboard shot of each of us before we headed up the gangway.

On board, we met some of our crew and hotel team, who kindly escorted us to our cabins and began our induction into shipboard life. Once unpacked, we settled in and began exploring the ship’s many levels. In the Elephant Island Bar on deck five we enjoyed an impressive embarkation buffet accompanied by champagne and good company. The room was buzzing! Greg Mortimer, our fearless friend and Expedition Leader called us into the lecture theatre to introduce our Expedition team and give us an update on the afternoon’s events. We soon learnt that a few last-minute checks were taking place and we’d be pulling away some time after dinner.

We were also told that..., wait for it..., we’d lose internet connection once we crossed the convergence!! A few were given the chance to do some last minute downloading in port while the rest of us enjoyed the thought of officially being disconnected for the next eight days.

The sound of seven-short-one-long rings from the ship’s signal system was our cue to don warm clothes and bring our bulky orange lifejackets to the muster station. Raj and Vishal made sure we all were present before further instruction came from the bridge. With lifejackets fitted it, we set off for the lifeboats - portside first, followed by starboard, we were led up to deck 7 to complete the drill.

With free time before dinner and a healthy curiosity as to what’s what on this stunning new ship, we continued our exploration of the many stairwells and began discovering of our new favourite spots.

After a delicious dinner prepared by our talented galley team, Captain Ulf-Peter ordered the lines cast off, fired up the thrusters and fingered the joystick to steer us east along the beautiful Beagle Channel. As the bustling town of Ushuaia gradually receded, we were encouraged on our way by Chilean skuas, giant petrels and a host of other avian pilots to celebrate our departure for Antarctica. On our port side, the snow-capped peaks of Argentina glowed in the twilight.

On board, we total 119 adventurers with nationalities representing Australia, United Kingdom, Brazil, United States, Canada, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, Spain, Slovakia, France, Brunei Darussalam and Switzerland, along with 22 far-flung Aurora Expeditions staff and 96 crew from around the globe. Today we continue our preparation for landing as we near the icy continent.



DAY 2 | Friday, 1 November 2019

Drake Passage; approaching South Shetland Island

Position:	20:00 hours	Course:	156°	Wind Speed:	35 knots	Barometer:	988 mb & steady
Latitude:	55°54'S	Speed:	14.5 knots	Wind Direction:	W	Air Temp:	3°C
Longitude:	065°46'W					Sea Temp:	12°C

We dropped our lines in the wee hours of yesterday morning and made our way down a calm Beagle Channel. Early risers glimpsed our pilot departing as the sun rose and we altered course south toward Antarctica. The calm conditions prevailed until we emerged from the lee of Cape Horn when a brisk west wind started a gentle rocking of our world. Southern black-browed albatross and a menagerie of petrels joined us on our passage. The Deck 8 observation lounge and rear decks enticed many of us to gaze out upon, photograph and simply enjoy this new environment.

Ben gave a lively explanation as to how the Drake Passage earned its name, why short Portuguese explorers called Tierra Del Fuego locals ‘giants’, and read excerpts from Drake’s log in which the buccaneer first-described open water to the east, south and west of South America’s southernmost islands. Using historical maps, Ben illustrated how the shape of Antarctica slowly emerged as explorers pushed further and further south.

A bit later, Heidi presented *Sea Birds of the Southern Ocean*. Explaining the ‘polar front’, the biological boundary to the Southern Ocean, Heidi went on to describe many of the species we hope to see, including 12 already identified by keen birders this morning. Using a length of string to explain wingspan, Heidi left us in awe of the wandering albatross. Finally, we learnt about how these seabirds have adapted to survive in the polar environment and the importance of krill.

After a sumptuous lunch, Heidi explained how we need to behave ashore in Antarctica including the five-metre rule, is our minimum approach distance to wildlife.

Howard then enlightened us on Zodiac and shore operations. Following the briefing, the expedition team guided us to the mudroom where we found our lockers and made sure our warm boots were the right fit.

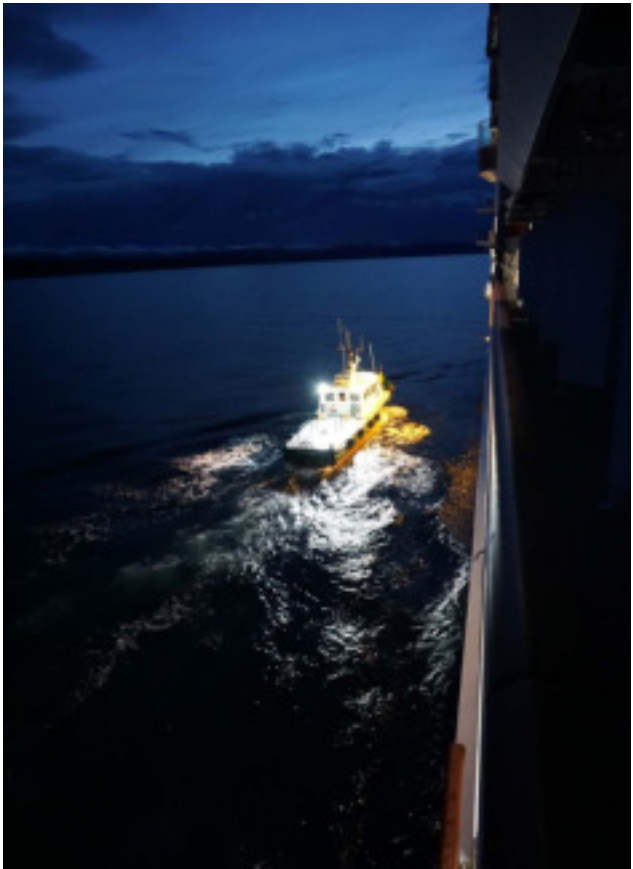
The winds continued to build through the afternoon, yet we only felt a gentle rocking as we devoured a delightful afternoon tea that the galley team had prepared.

Our last activity for the afternoon was biosecurity to ensure we don’t carry any invasive organisms to Antarctica. It meant time spent checking and vacuuming our outer clothing and bags.

Bright sunshine broke through clouds lighting up a glistening, wind-swept sea as birds circled the ship, and every moment spent out on deck made us feel electrically alive!

Pre-dinner we joined the Captain in the Lecture Theatre as he presented his officers and toasted the first full day of our expedition.

Krill spawn during the southern summer —December to March — with each female laying several thousand eggs in the upper layers of the ocean. The eggs sink for 10 days, then hatch as ‘nauplii,’ up to one kilometre down. The nauplii develop through various larval stages to adulthood.





DAY 3 | Saturday, 2 November 2019

Drake Passage; Aitcho (Barrientos Island)

Position: 18.30 hours
Latitude: 63°54'S
Longitude: 061°06'W

Course: 159.4°
Speed: 13.6 knots

Wind Speed: 15 knots
Wind Direction: S

Barometer: 973 hPa & steady
Air Temp: -3°C
Sea Temp: 1°C

Eades left a party of ten with a year's supplies on Marion Island. Although he had told the men that he would return to collect them in nine months. Eades left them intentionally for over two years. Class and Colonialism in Antarctic Exploration, 1750-1920. — Ben Maddison, Historian on MV-Greg Mortimer Maiden Voyage

Quite a gentle start to the day this morning after a comfortable night of gently rocking in our beds. It was an easier motion than yesterday although there are still a few folk suffering from 'Mal de Mer'. Several Antarctic Petrels were among a mixed squadron of birds wheeling around the ship as she/he continued south towards Antarctica. The sun shone on a blue sea as we listened to Ben's lively account of the sealing days in the Antarctic Peninsula. The gruesome slaughter of millions of fur seals for their pelts and elephant seals for their oil was hard to comprehend. The vision of a lone woman sprucing up for her rescuers by washing her hair in the blood of a freshly slaughtered King penguin brought into focus the struggle those early sealers endured while the master and their ship departed for several months.

Soon after Alexander gave us a rousing talk about "Penguinos" – from whence they came and how they evolved. He cleverly put together little humorous snippets of criminal penguins raiding neighbours stones and super clever Adelies who played ping pong at incredible speeds to keep in shape for flying underwater. We learnt about the species of penguins we might encounter in the Antarctic Peninsula this week - chinstraps, gentoos, Adelie or maybe a vagrant King or Emperor!

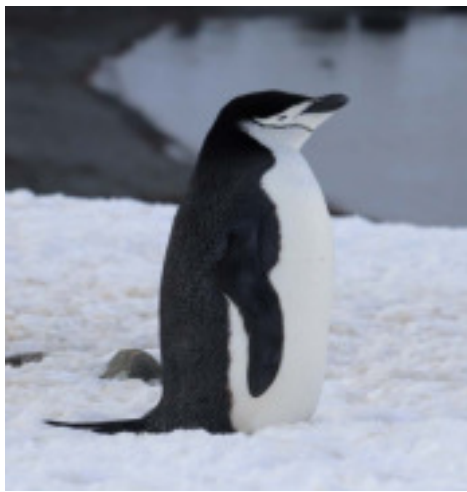
Al called the kayakers to the mudroom to get kitted up ready for a possible late afternoon kayak before we consumed another delicious lunch. Towards the end of our meal, the first iceberg was sighted on the port side. Captain Ulf sailed *Greg Mortimer* over to it so we could get a closer look. It was a beautiful little berg with a smooth foot sticking out one side and a little huddle of penguins were hitching a ride. It was fascinating watching the iceberg alter shape dramatically as we passed it.

Skiers also gathered for a meeting to prepare for their primary ski tomorrow either in Mikkleson Harbour or Curtis Bay.

So much was going on today that it was hard to keep up! Scott shared his bounteous knowledge about photography before a briefing about our landing, which turned out to be on Aitcho Island. Everyone was excited as we geared up in the mudroom and embarked easily on the Zodes

It was an unforgettable moment as we made our first landing in Antarctica. Every hilltop was decorated with either Chinstraps or Gentoo penguins waiting for the snow to melt and reveal the essential stones for making a nest. We were captivated by the penguins antics as we made our way to a little bay where a lone female leopard seal was hauled out.

A superb meal warmed our cockles on our return to the ship.



Chinstrap Penguins

Chinstrap penguins – named for the narrow black band under their heads – weigh 3.5–5.5 kilograms. They are distinguished by the narrow band of black feathers which extends from ear to ear, just below the chin and the cheeks. Males and females look similar but males are larger and heavier than females.





DAY 4 | Sunday, 3 November 2019

Mikkelsen Harbour, Portal Point

Position: 22:00 hours
Latitude: 64°36'S
Longitude: 62°89'W

Speed: 13 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots
Wind Direction: SSW

Barometer: 973 hPa & steady
Air Temp: -3°C
Sea Temp: 0°C

*I have often had the impression that, to penguins, man is just another penguin – different, less predictable, occasionally violent, but tolerable company when he sits still and minds his own business.— Bernard Stonehouse, *Penguins**

A winter wonderland beneath a leaden sky welcomed us into Mikkelsen Harbour, named for the Swedish Expedition. A tiny Argentinian rescue hut bloomed exotic against the snow slopes and a pink ooze from the summit placed the gentoo rookery. Ten Zodiacs fanned out across the bay, with lookouts posted for rogue rocks. Corniced and crevassed snow banks sloped down to a little cuddle of Weddell seals while a leopard seal popped up for a look. Cormorants cruised past as the snowshoers waddled along the path to the top before the land folks followed their trail. A gentoo penguin point caused endless amusement as the plucky guys surfed up, crashed into the bobbing ice, and often somersaulted off the rock in the push to reach their mates and nests. A huge bathing exercise around us was reminiscent of a kid's swimming pool. Snow petrels and skuas circled as spring fever elevated the pressure to breed.

Mistaken for giant penguins, the ski team plodded up the slope for their prize – a rapid descent with sharp pull -up! The story of ice showed in the indigo splashes, collected moraine and rocks. Remnant bergs discharged a slew of happy penguins on a watery chute and a few lucky folks sniffed out some chinstraps on a small neighbouring island. Kayakers paddled hard to towards the glacier then gently blew back to spot the Weddell seals.

With cold hands and happy hearts we returned to the ship, but our post-prandial rest was dramatically interrupted! Ten type B killer whales surfaced and blew. With yellow grey colouring and a large eye patch, the males demonstrated their unique dorsal fins and we

thought a baby was spotted too in this matriarchal group. Snowflakes fluttered around as the whole ship populated outdoor decks to enjoy this amazing spectacle.

Portal Point was our afternoon delight for snow bunnies. This was the easiest entrance to the Peninsula Plateau for dog teams in the 1950s and the site hosted the historic Reclus Hut, now located in the Falkland Islands museum. Threading initially though an iceberg alley, the snow shoe team plonked off onto crusted soft snow and the skiers traversed over the skyline into a powder snow mecca. Thigh deep snow challenged many of us, but the climb up to view the surrounding soft, snowy, berg-filled scene was worth the effort. On the horizon, Two Hummock Island caught the dying sun's last rays as the rest of the landscape seemed to be cosseted in a grey blanket. Grounded bergs revealed their tide lines, and the sea was full of beautiful glassy grey ice ideal for cooling a whisky! Some Zodiacers spotted flocks of snow and Antarctic petrels and terns. The ice bird or snow petrel is the only bird that overwinters and calls the mountainous nunataks home. Clear shallows revealed red kelp and limpets – food for the young kelp gull which graced the largest ice berg. Always ice swirling around and, at times, making our approach to the shore difficult, and clear stalactites of icicles graced the landing. The last trip back to the ship allowed us a view of the *Greg Mortimer* bookended by icebergs. Through two other huge bergs decorated with seracs and hues of blue, the last light on the horizon was stunning. The pastel kayakers enhanced the scene – they seemed to cover a huge amount of sea today and punched a little colour into the shades of grey. A fur seal hosted a hot drink stop. Our ship welcomed us back to its bosom, hot drinks, bar drinks and then a marvellous supper to crown a wonderful day in Antarctica.



DAY 5 | Monday, 4 November 2019

Port Lockroy, Jougla Point, Lemaire Channel

Position: 18.30 hours
Latitude: 58° 13'N
Longitude: 06° 54'W

Course: 44.1°
Speed: At anchor

Wind Speed: 12 knots
Wind Direction: NW

Barometer: 1031.9 hPa & steady
Air Temp: 14°C
Sea Temp: 13°C

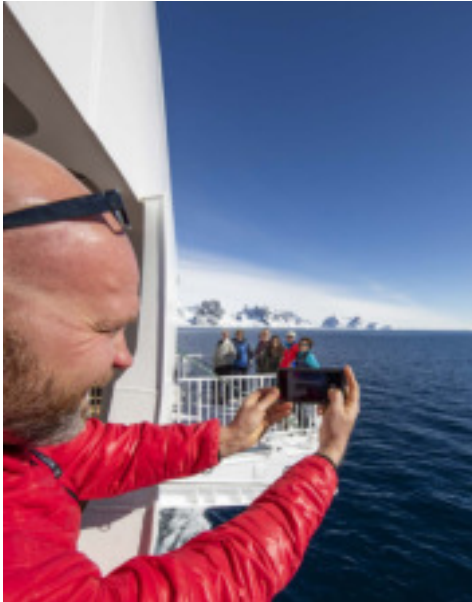
Patches of textured ice on the outer decks greeted early risers this morning. Clear blue skies contrasted the ice-cloaked mountains, perfectly reflected in the still water. We entered Neumayer Channel on the south side of Anvers Island, with the broad summit of Mount Français rising over 2800 meters above. After following this beautiful channel (with its hidden escape at the southern end), the ship dropped anchor in Port Lockroy, another French site named by Jean Baptiste Charcot who explored the area in 1904.

Expeditioners ate a hearty breakfast as before setting off in many directions in perfect conditions. The kayaking team was keen to explore the Peltier Channel. Snowshoers planned a circuit across fast ice and over hills for stunning views on Wiencke Island. The ski team headed across to Doumer Island on a mission to summit its highest peak. The landing parties split their attention between Jougla Point on Weincke Island and British Base “A” on Goudier Island. Jougla Point had a scatter of some 1000 gentoo penguins courting in the first flush of the breeding season. A small blue-eyed shag (or Antarctic cormorant, the new common name) colony brought life to the very end of the point. These elegant seabirds dove for seaweed in the waters nearby before flying to their mates to present the nesting material in a courtship ritual.

On Goudier Island, we explored an historic station from the 1940-50's. Operation Tabarin, named after a Parisian nightclub, was run during a British World War II expedition in 1944, to

observe enemy activities in the Antarctic Peninsula region. There was none observed and after the war, the base became a scientific research station that operated until 1962. Now an historical site, we entered to discover tins of food still on the shelf and radio equipment from an earlier era. Outside, gentoo penguins were busy courting and stealing stones around the hut, too busy to even notice our presence. Because the snow still hadn't melted enough to release precious nesting stones, a couple of penguins resorted to diving for them in the shallows nearby.

After a successful morning of exploration, we enjoyed a delicious lunch. The ship then weighed anchor and we made our way south through Butler Passage towards the famous and stunning Lemaire Channel. This channel is only about 200 meters at its narrowest and is often choked by ice. With no other ships in the area to report on current conditions, we continued south with fingers crossed and no confirmation that we would make it through. The scenery was worth many photos in all directions. Brash ice in the channel made musical sounds on our unique hull but was no impediment to our journey. We enjoyed views from the top deck and side wings over the water. With mountains and glaciers reflected in the still waters on all sides, the anchor was dropped near the southwest corner of Booth Island. We had experienced an exquisite day in Antarctica!





DAY 6 | Tuesday, 5 November 2019

Iceberg Alley, Pleneau, Lemaire Channel

Position: 16:25 hours
Latitude: 64° 52'S
Longitude: 063° 59'W

Course: 090°
Speed: 6.4 knots

Wind Speed: 15 knots
Wind Direction: NE

Barometer: 961 mb & steady
Air Temp: -1°C
Sea Temp: 2°C

The Lemaire Channel is seven miles long. For those who have seen it, it is considered to be the most beautiful natural wonder in the world. Discovered by a German expedition in 1873–74, Gerlache later named it for Charles Lemaire, a Belgian explorer of the Congo. Contemporary explorers refer to it as Kodak Alley. The channel is 0.7 miles at its narrowest point and 1 mile at its widest. On either side cliffs rise directly out of the water to a height of 900 metres.

The incredible hues of last night’s sunset had faded and soft morning light revealed even more ice filling the bay we have come to know as ‘iceberg alley’. Our Zodiacs scattered in all directions beneath the towering peaks of Booth Island as we set off to explore. Kayakers and Zodiacs meandered amidst ice monoliths, finding secluded landing sites to stretch their legs and soak in the remote beauty and silence of the embayment. The icebergs that have ended up here are grounded in shallow water, held in their watery grave by the current, slowly melting and breaking up to create myriad shapes – fun and games for those with imagination. Some Zodiacs travelled north into Salpêtrière Bay, named by Jean-Baptiste Charcot who overwintered on the north side of Booth Island during the French Antarctic Expedition 1903-1905. To the south most of us landed on Pleneau Island and hiked to a high point amid scattered penguin rookeries. Spring was in the air and many large rafts of penguins landed nearby to parade up slopes in search of snow-free, high ground on which to start their nesting cycle. It may be a few weeks until that is possible, given the extensive cover still around. The snowshoers, however, relished the snow and made an extensive circuit of the island that featured spectacular views of iceberg-filled channels and glacier-clad peaks.

After a full morning of adventure, lunch was a welcome and tasty repast. Whilst we ate, the crew hauled anchor and our afternoon began with another passage of the spectacular Lemaire Channel. After passing abeam of the striking twin-peaked mountains named after Una (a bartender in Stanley/Montevideo, or secretary with the British Antarctic Survey in Stanley, etc.), we made a left out toward open sea. Although open in one sense, the area was covered in broken pack ice, the perfect opportunity to test the capabilities of our sturdy home as she sliced through the pack like a hot knife through butter. The bow wings proved perfect platforms for viewing the spectacle of pack ice stretching to the horizon, beyond which a ‘water sky’ alluded to open water. The ice offered perfect haul out spots for crabeater seals, many of whom displayed tell-tale teeth marks of close encounters with leopard seals, possibly from when the seals were pups that narrowly escaped ending up as a meal. Another curiosity in the afternoon pack ice was a blue and yellow buoy we assumed to be a research device. We passed not far from Palmer Station, one of the American Antarctic bases, before crossing our earlier southbound track from Port Lockroy and continuing toward Paradise Harbour. In typical Antarctic fashion, we had to change to plan B as our passage was blocked by ice. Instead we navigated into Andvoord Bay where our adventurous campers planned to spend the night ashore at Neko Harbour.



Adélie Penguins

Adélie penguins, along with Adélie Land located in the region of Antarctic south of Australia, were named by French explorer Dumont d’Urville in honour of his wife. Adélie penguins weigh in at 5kgs and live to around 10–12 years of age. Adélies are the most widely distributed of all penguins, ranging all the way around the Antarctic continent.



Neko Harbour, Errera Channel, Gerlache Strait

Position: 18:30 hours
Latitude: 59° 59' N
Longitude: 1° 11' W

Course: 170°
Speed: At anchor Mousa

Wind Speed: 12 knots
Wind Direction: SSE

Barometer: 1021.3 hPa & falling
Air Temp: 14°C
Sea Temp: 13°C

Antarctica is the windiest place on earth. Wind dominates all activity, sets schedules, imperils lives, makes one a hostage indoors. —David G. Campbell, The Crystal Desert, 1992

Neko Harbour, named after a famous whaling ship, was a temporary home for its crew and other early pioneers. Their exploits, though now considered gruesome because of the number of whales killed, were seen as heroic a hundred years ago as they provided lighting, oils, energy and food for the Western world. Today it's a place of penguins and peace, providing a beautiful anchorage for the *Greg Mortimer* and for 36 lucky campers, a place to sleep ashore. They settled into their ice beds as the soft glow of a setting sun washed surrounding peaks serenated by a nearby colony of hardened gentoo penguins. That night, our campers' peace was lost in the few hours of darkness as literally thousands of our feathered friends descended from the hills like orcs, striding through the camp in formation, unperturbed by their visitors and full of chatter. They ended their march by launching into the ocean from the shoreline presumably for a feed. Based on the chatter, however, it was as likely a social sojourn as anything: there is nothing like the noise made by 10,000 happy penguins!

Encouraged from their snuggle pits around 0515, our campers were soon back aboard our uber-comfortable abode. After a coffee and quick wash to remove sleep from our eyes, a spectacular day rolled on. Blue skies, little wind and small lumps of ice slowly tumbling around our vessel as if in a washing machine revealed our extraordinary luck with the weather. Breakfast was quick amidst excited chatter, as we ate our fill and headed ashore. The snowshoe and ski teams charged up the slopes like old hands and were followed off the ship by our first snorkeling excursion off the *Greg Mortimer*. Twenty water-proof clad expeditioners ventured into the cold blue, first from the shore and then out to a small 'bergy

bit' lying offshore. They were greeted by gentoo penguins who flew past them underwater like missiles, followed by a very relaxed Weddell seal curious about her mammalian cousins. A game of peek-a-boo was had as she came and went. Eventually, she decided she was the master of her domain, as our cold, but over-joyed, snorkelers ended their adventure.

For the rest of us 'less adventurous' folk, our day was fun filled through old fashioned means. A hike up to a vantage point over Neko Harbour produced magnificent views, which, naturally, was followed by a bobsled on our bots back down the hill. The penguins looked on at first with alarm, and then mirth. What were these silly humans doing sliding down the hill? Antarctic hills are clearly a penguins' domain, as they then showed us how to sled down the slopes on tummies, not bottoms, before jumping into the sea to excite our snorkeling friends.

Lunch was another magnificent buffet as we sailed from Neko Harbour to Wilhemina Bay. After allowing for much-needed digestion time, we searched the passing ice for life. Hundreds of Antarctic fur seals decorated the floes, indicating significant krill in the area. The odd crabeater and leopard were also lying among their fury friends adding to seal diversity and making us all aware that, despite the ice, frozen ocean and katabatic winds, life abounds down here. Our historian Ben then gave us a lecture reminding us of how this life was an important economic commodity a century ago: whaling and sealing in Antarctica was big business!

Our day ended with hardy skiers and kayakers setting off for sunset adventures while those remaining enjoyed the *Greg Mortimer's* first a on the top deck. Naturally, given this is our inaugural voyage, it was a first, and one we predict will become renowned for its food, drink and dance!



Whalers Bay, Deception Island, Elephant Point

Position: 15:00 hours
Latitude: 62° 94' S
Longitude: 60° 55' W

Course: 304°
Speed: 10.4 knots

Wind Speed: 8 knots
Wind Direction: NW

Barometer: 950 hPa & steady
Air Temp: 4°C
Sea Temp: 1°C

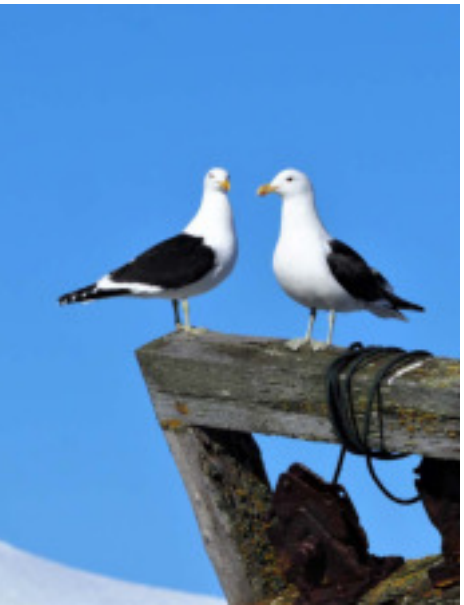
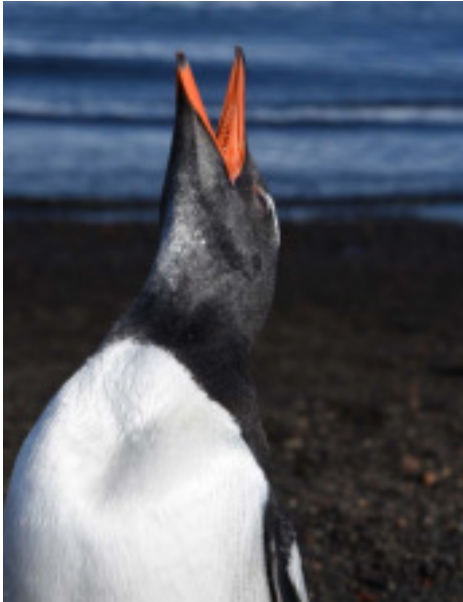
Deception Island -

A Falkland Islands Dependencies magistrate was resident here every season from 1912 to 1931 to administer the whaling industry operating from a Norwegian shore whaling station (floating factories had worked there since 1906) . Research activity at scientific stations established in 1944 was interrupted by volcanic eruptions in 1967,1969 and 1970 (there had previously been much volcanic activity on the island).

Coming through the narrows of Neptune’s Bellows, our entry into Whalers’ Bay at Deception Island revealed a glassy smooth, magic morning - a perfect beginning to our last day in Antarctica. Whalers’ Bay was the hub of Antarctic Peninsula whaling in the early twentieth century, and its industrial remnants added a darker tone to the sunny peace and tranquillity of the day. The large, corrugated iron hanger marks the start of Antarctic aviation, when in 1928, Australian Hubert Wilkins took off from the beach at Whalers’ Bay and flew down the Peninsula and into the Weddell Sea region. Later the site was a part of the British secret Antarctic base system established in 1944, and in the 1950s and ‘60s was a British Antarctic Survey station. The eruption of the caldera in the late 1960s led to the evacuation of the British, Chilean and Argentinian research bases, and the tracks of the cinder flows can be seen today in the collapse of ‘Biscoe House’ and the partial burial of a Massey Ferguson tractor. Climbing the snowy path to Neptune’s Window gave a brilliant view out across

the Bransfield Strait to the Antarctic Peninsula. Conditions for snorkelling were perfect, and calm enough for a kayaking excursion along the coastline outside the Bellows. Skiers and snowshoers, ascending to the caldera rim, were rewarded with views across the interior of the island to the Chilean research station. Soon our morning slipped away and we re-emerged through the Bellows and headed north to the South Shetlands proper.

Our afternoon excursion to Elephant Point on Livingston Island, contrasted in almost every way with our morning. Here the exit from ship to Zodiac was very lively, as the *Greg Mortimer* rode on its anchor, rolling with the swell. In the Zodiacs we cast our way along beaches receiving that swell, packed with elephant seals, with the sharp breeze reminding us that we were still in Antarctica. Finally, as the swell reduced, we were able to land, and then to wander amongst the wonders of this most marvellous of all final Antarctic landings. Beaches of elephant seals resolved into distinct groups – ‘harems’ of females with their pups, lorded over by the ‘beachmaster’; disconsolate vanquished males lying on the shingle healing their battle wounds and groups of Gentoo penguins casting a quizzical eye over it all. Terns swooped and fussed over us, skuas patrolled the beach and mounds that were home to Gentoos already sitting on their pebble nests. Our final Zodiac ride back to the ship was through open ocean, preparing us for the journey between continents - from Antarctica, across the Drake to Cabo de Hornos and South America.





DAY 9 | Friday, 8 November 2019

Drake Passage

Position:	22:30 hours	Course:	91.5°
Latitude:	61° 01'S	Speed:	13.6 knots
Longitude:	63° 21'W		

Wind Speed:	16.3 knots	Barometer:	979.9 hPa & rising
Wind Direction:	SW	Air Temp:	2°C
		Sea Temp:	2°C

Around 2130 last night, we left the Bransfield Strait between Smith and Snow islands and headed out into a benign Drake Passage through Boyd Strait. There were a few sleepy heads around the ship this morning after our gentle overnight slumber. In fact, even Greg ran late with our "Good Morning Good people" summoning us to breakfast!

Outside, a lovely blue sea offered us a comfortable passage. You would never have guessed that we were belting along at a good 15 knots.

A relaxed atmosphere seeped throughout the ship, with a few souls wandering the deck to drink in the fresh sea air and enjoy small squadrons of cape petrels and a mix of smaller petrels circling our vessel. Others tidied up their diaries or edited their photos. Soaring birds, like the majestic albatross, were in short supply due to the lack of steep waves and troughs that they love so much. Good for us, but not for them.

Heidi treated us to an in-depth explanation about the differences between true seals and the 'not so true' seals? We learned about seals that walked on shore some 24 million years ago before slowly evolving to be creatures of the deep. We all enjoyed hearing more about the Elephant Point elephant seal harems we witnessed yesterday and the powerful drive of the massive male 'beach masters' to mate.

Afterwards, we enjoyed the dulcet sounds of our baby grand piano, played by Kyria, wafting across the Elephant Island Bar lounge and creating a delightful sense of relaxation.

As we made our way north, the sea turned from blue to grey and back to blue. Fluffy white cumulus clouds gathered overhead, accentuating the horizontal line of the horizon.

Some people may think that being in the middle of an ocean is loneliness, I tend to think of it as freedom, a chance to be close to nature. Just like on our recent fantastic visit to the heart of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Ben took us on an incredible journey with Captain Larsen on board the *Antarctic* in his talk about Nordenskjold's Swedish Antarctic Expedition of 1901 - 1903. A domino of errors occurred due to the fickle character and volatility of Antarctic ice. The expeditioners were separated and when Larsen came to collect them as arranged, his ship was beset and crushed in the ice that forced the three parties to endure a winter, not knowing what had become of their fellow companions. Finally, they were rescued by Charcot, in the Argentine vessel, *Uruguay*.

Recapping our voyage with Heidi and Ben reminded us of the extra special times we had shared and the friendships we have made. Hot chocolate consumed by the kayakers seemed to have made a lasting impression!

The film *Rounding the Horn*, with Captain Irvine Johnson, featuring the square rigger *Peking* in 1929, was a moving finale to the second last day of our extraordinary voyage. Fortunately, as I write, the seas are predicting a comfortable night for those of us on board the *Greg Mortimer*.



Drake Passage, Cape Horn, Beagle Channel

Position:	05:30 hours	Course:	83°	Wind Speed:	20 knots	Barometer:	973 hPa & rising
Latitude:	56° 35 S	Speed:	11.1 knots	Wind Direction:	SW	Air Temp:	1°C
Longitude:	66° 50'W					Sea Temp:	5°C

After a surprisingly calm crossing of the Drake Passage and a similarly restful night's sleep on a placid Southern Ocean, many passengers were gently roused from their slumber by a 'Good morning - good people' call from our expedition leader at 0745, announcing first sight of land the southernmost tip of the South-American continent coming into view some 12 nm to the north.

Over breakfast, the stunning panorama of wild, imposing cliffs unfolded before us as we passed below Cape Horn. A fresh dusting of snow cloaked the high points of Tierra Del Fuego's unforgiving coastline, but on this occasion Cape Horn did not live up to its violent and unpredictable reputation. As the ship navigated to within three nautical miles of the Horn, we crossed back from the Pacific Ocean into the Atlantic, and listened to a hauntingly beautiful recital of the poem by Sara Vial inscribed on the Cape's albatross monument. The poem was first read in Spanish by our Catalanian guest Merce Galofre, followed by a translation from our expedition doctor, Lesley Cadzow.

Our naturalist Alexander Watson gave a brilliant lecture on the Behemoths of the Southern Ocean – explaining much about the cetaceans that cruise Drake Passage and Antarctica. Alex told us about the evolution of cetaceans, their ecology, and what we need to look for to identify different species.

At midday, as a result of multiple requests, there was another viewing of the spectacular short film: Rounding the Horn – including incredible footage of a humbling passage around the Cabo de Hornos, narrated by a crew member aboard a stunning tall ship in the early 1900's. I'm sure the passengers were grateful that safety standards have improved since the film's making! There was also a mid-afternoon viewing of Ice & Sky, a documentary about the life's work of French glaciologist, Claude Lorius, deciphering the message of Antarctic ice cores and the story they tell about global warming.

At 1900, we had a short Disembarkation Briefing for the following day. Greg gave a heartfelt thanks to all the passengers for joining us on this inaugural voyage to Antarctica onboard the new ship, and he then expressly thanked his expedition team for their dedicated and passionate work and support of what was a wonderfully successful maiden voyage. Howard, the deputy expedition leader, seized the opportunity to pay an emotional tribute to Greg's immense leadership and profound legacy in Aurora Expeditions.

Canapes followed, accompanied by drinks to toast the Captain's Farewell speech in which the Captain talked of how lucky we had been with the weather, how proud he was in the vessel's performance through the Drake, the ice, and how - as far as he was aware - this was the earliest time of year he'd ever heard of a vessel passing through the Lemaire Channel. All in all a highly successful 2950km journey through the South Shetland Islands and Antarctic Peninsula.

Shortly after, the sight of greenery and trees marked the abrupt transition to more familiar terrain, and a beautiful evening welcomed us back to South America. We had a fantastic dinner with Patagonian evening light streaming through windows and illuminating snow-capped peaks as we made our way up the glassy smooth Beagle Channel. Just as dinner plates were being cleared, the ship steamed into Ushuaia. It was time to retire to the bar lounge to watch a stunning slideshow compiled by Scott and Massimo. Their photos, along with many from the guests and expedition staff, did a wonderful job of rekindling the extraordinary moments and encounters we experienced over the last 10 days.

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

I am the albatross that waits for you
at the end of the earth.
I am the forgotten soul of the dead sailors
who crossed Cape Horn
from all the seas of the world.
But they did not die
in the furious waves.
Today they fly in my wings
to eternity
in the last trough of the Antarctic winds





DAY 11 | Sunday, 10 November 2019

Ushuaia

Position: At anchor Ushuaia **Wind Speed:** Calm **Barometer:** 979.9 hPa & steady **Air Temp:** 7°C
Latitude: 54° 49'S **Sea Temp:** 9°C
Longitude: 68° 18'W

The final day of our Antarctic voyage together, as new adventures await us in and beyond Ushuaia. Before breakfast, we left our luggage outside our cabins and navigated once more through the corridors for our final hearty breakfast prepared by our fabulous chefs. To think that only 10 days ago we were strangers not only to each other but also to the extraordinary world of Antarctica.

May the memories of stout and adorable penguins: Gentoo, Chinstrap and Adelie; piles of belching and breeding elephant seals; Weddell, crabeater and leopard seals on ice; killer whales in the Gerlache Strait; brash ice and bergs in the Lemaire Channel, Zodiac cruising, skiing, snow-shoeing, kayaking and snorkelling; pushing through sea ice; a sunset BBQ; majestic seabirds flying through Drake Passage. Our voyage has certainly been one to remember.

To quote Steinbeck: *"Once a journey is designed, equipped, and put in progress, a new factor enters and takes over. A trip, a safari, an exploration, is an entity, different from all other journeys. It has personality, temperament, individuality, uniqueness. A journey is a person in itself; no two are alike. And all plans, safeguards, policing and coercion are fruitless. We find after years of struggle that we do not take a trip, a trip takes us."*

Aurora Expeditions thanks you for joining us aboard MV *Greg Mortimer* for it's Maiden Voyage to Antarctica. We hope to see you on the high seas again someday!



Kayaking Log

By Al Bakker

Kayaking Masters: Al Bakker, Frank Whitter, Peter Wainwright

Kayakers:

Brandye Alexander	Edith Beaudoin	Gustavo Braga Marini
Matthew Cechner	Chris Coombs	Romain Dupuy
Dag Goering	Sharon Hatcher	Xan Latta
Kyria Laird	Pedro Ferraz Matheson Drummond	
Carlos Leal	Leonardo Matheson Drummond	
Rob MacFarland	Teresa Machan	Rachel Mendizabal
David Moncur	Jacob Murray	Mike O'Hara
Andre Queree	Angela Reiner	Thomas Reiner
Arthur Repsold	Rebecca Rogers	Denise Sargent
Helen Torok	Nigel Williamson	

The kayak is without comparison the best one-man vessel to be found. — Fridtjof Nansen

DAY 1: Ushuaia

DAY 2: Drake Passage

DAY 3: AM: At sea

PM: Aitcho Island – Distance: 3.5 km

Grey skies and 15 knots of wind mid channel at Aitcho. It was great to have an introductory outing and get the feel of our kayaks but a strong current of 4-5 knots at the stern required a zodiac taxi to shore for paddlers and kayaks. We cruised along the shore between the shallow rocks at the end of the island before a short landing. Chinstraps, a few gentoos. Weddell seals and a lone fur seal were on hand to greet us.

DAY 4: AM: Mikkelson Harbours – Distance: 6 km

A slow but noticeable ocean swell was rolling into the bay, but with light winds we enjoyed working our way into the bay, paddling through some bands of brash ice. Ice breaking through brash is a very noisy affair but quite exhilarating. We enjoyed a small bay surrounded by blue tinged ice walls with seals on floes, before making our way back the small island landing site. Alas, the 1 metre ice on shore made landing too difficult so we slowly meandered back to the ship.

PM: Portal Point – Distance: 4 km

With no wind and a surreal backdrop of large icebergs and “the continent” we made our way to a sheltered bay guarded by a lone fur seal. A pebbly beach beckoned and we stopped for a hot chocolate to celebrate our continental landing - topped off by some intrepid paddlers making snow angels in the snow. Then it was time to ice hop past a chain of majestic bergs as we made our way back to the ship. A great day in Antarctica!

DAY 5: AM: Port Lockroy, Peltier Channel – Distance: 8.5 km

What a glorious morning! Sunshine and no wind set the tone for an early start. We crossed the short distance over to Base A at Port Lockroy. The buildings were closed in early season but we were able to land on the fast ice still attached to the shoreline and get a close

up encounter with the penguin inhabitants. Then it was time to investigate the Peltier Channel. We cruised around patches of sea ice wondering if a route was possible. Just when it seemed high ice cliffs blocked our way, the hidden entrance slowly opened up to unveil a paddling delight of clear water, mirror reflections, and a mix of frazel and sea ice. We continued down to a half-way point before taking a break on the fast ice in a delightful amphitheatre of icy walls - in balmy, tropical conditions!

PM: Lemaire Channel – No paddle

It was time for an adventure so with some trepidation we set off in the ship seek a way through the Lemaire Channel. Not possible at this early point in the season for many years. With skillful navigation the captain eased us through to a superb anchorage behind Booth island equidistance from Plenau and Point Charcot. Revelling in the quiet and surrounded by sea ice and massive bergs it was a delightful afternoon on the ship

DAY 6: AM: Plenaul – Distance: 13 km

Splitting into three groups the kayakers headed off, soon to be lost in the maze of ice with a myriad of choices. One group climbed a low hill to be surrounded by gentoos, others summited a snow-covered island for views out to the Drake passage and the 3rd had a wonderful encounter with Frank nearly backing into a large rock which turned into an elephant seal! Our two hill group spotted an orca amongst the ice and everyone was entertained with hundreds of gentoos preening and cavorting in the water. Sadly it was time to return to the ship after a wonderful morning.

PM: Sea Ice – No paddle

We travelled back through the Lemaire and headed west for a sporty exploration breaking one year old sea ice. Paradise Harbour totally iced in so we headed to Neko.

DAY 7: AM: Neko Harbour – No paddle

An early start to the day to pick up our intrepid campers. Kayakers all opted to try snorkelling so Frank headed up into Andvoord Bay to get acquainted. Headwinds and a solid band of pack ice ensured an early end to the paddle but not before sighting a Minke whale nearby.

PM: Bancroft Bay – 3.5km

The wind picked up as we left Neko and the plan to cruise into Wilhelmina Bay looked in jeopardy. Thanks to the persistence of Greg and the captain we found a beautiful sheltered anchorage at the head of the Bancroft Glacier. The kayakers hopped off smartly for a short paddle in the bay – navigating through tiny leads in the freshly frozen sea ice. The late afternoon light made for a gorgeous romp in the ice. Frank's group tried their hand at breaking through a solid band of ice but as progress slowed to zero, had to back out. We returned to the ship fashionably late just in time for the BBQ!!

DAY 8: AM: Deception Island – 5.5km

Another balmy day made for delightful cruise as we paddled past the red cliffs guarding the narrow channel out of the caldera. Outside in the open ocean the underlying ground swell rebounded off the cliffs making for a bouncy paddle. Ice chunks and a large swell prevented any landing on the small beach. Peter headed across the channel to a Chinstrap colony and the others made their way into the landing site. A few keen adventures then

took the Stand Up Paddleboards for a spin. A group of energetic penguins kept Dag mesmerised as they circled around. Our last paddle so we sadly began the big cleanup as we returned to the ship.

PM: Elephant Point, Livingstone Island – No Paddle

A rough exit off the ship ensured we transfer by zodiac to shore spend some time with the astounding and prolific wildlife. And a grand finale it was!! And then it was pack up time as began our long journey across the Drake to Ushuaia.

DAY 9-10: At Sea.

DAY 11: Arrive Ushuaia, disembark.



Snow Shoe Log

By Hillary Cave

Snow Shoe Masters: Hilary Cave & Kevin Nicholas

Snow Shoers:

Katy Afshar	Ken Ansell	Charles Barnfield
Margaret Barnfield	Ali Basti	Rai Belenes Juarez
Doug Blackney	Anita Coombs	Sean Crealey
Merce Casas Galofre	Geoff Green	Cynthia Hansen
Carolyn Foss	Lorraine Jacob	Peter Jacob
Marise Marques Torres De Castro Marini		Steve Milazzo
Kerry Petersen	Neil Petersen	Rene Pols
Vee Pols	Anne Schenk	Peter Schenk
Steve Shelton	Afsaneh Taghavi	Zilda Vieira Teixeira
Marina Watts		

NOVEMBER 2ND

PM: Aitcho Island

This small island was our first outing after crossing the Drake passage and for most of us the first visit to both Gentoo and Chinstrap penguin colonies. We used this opportunity to familiarise ourselves with and to test out the new equipment. Wearing tennis racquets on our feet we explored this tiny island watching the penguins busily create nests out of stones. Also met Weddell seals resting on the shore.

NOVEMBER 3RD: AM: D’Hainaut island - Mikkelson Harbour

We landed on a small Island which had an Argentinian emergency hut on it. Whilst circumnavigating the island we experienced the closeness of the sea as we watched penguins hopping ashore and seals swimming below. Sheath bills, Antarctic Terns and a lone Skua were also seen on our walk.

PM: Portal Point – Continental landing

This is a historic site of Cape Reclus hut used in 1956/7 by the British Antarctic Survey researchers and explorers and from where they accessed the high plateaus of the Antarctic Peninsula to traverse to Hope Bay using dog sled teams. Here we roped up for glacier travel and followed the skiers skinning track climbing high above the bay. Our big loop on the snow slopes gave us ample opportunity to take in the spectacular views of glaciers, ice bergs and mountains forming the spine of the Peninsula.

NOVEMBER 4TH : AM: Jugla Point/Port Lockroy

We shared our landing with gentoo penguins leaping out of the sea as they arrived to nest. We made a wandering loop of the Jugla Point with great views of the Seven sister peaks on Weinke Island. We then stepped out over water filled tide cracks and onto the sea ice. This enabled us to trace a route in front of the glowing blue glacier face. We kept our distance from the towering ice cliffs that threatened to tumble without warning. The sea ice was solid so we continued on foot to the little Island of Port Lockroy and explore the historic British Antarctic Survey research hut and post office.

PM: Lemaire Channel

Cruised on the GM through the Lamaire Channel to anchor ear Port Charcot ice bergs and under Booth Island.

NOVEMBER 5TH : AM: Pleneau Island

We made an interesting loop of Pleneau Island, the snow was firm so we used the snow shoes as crampons as we travelled over the hard surface. We descended right over the back of the island into a small frozen bay. The sea ice had some glowing blue melt pools but we were confident that it was strong enough to walk over. On the way back over the top looking north to the sea ice and grounded ice bergs we could see long lines of penguins swarming out of the ocean and marching towards the island as they returned for their summer breeding.

PM: We cruised back up the spectacular Lamaire Channel – then west into the open sea where we experienced the *Greg Mortimer* munching through the sea ice. Final anchor was in Neko Harbour where some hardy souls opted to camp overnight. The highlight for many campers was witnessing hundreds of penguins arriving onshore on mass in the very early hours of the morning and wandering amongst the sleeping campers.

NOVEMBER 6TH : AM: Neko Harbour

A long ascent on firm snow with fantastic ice fall and sea views. The ship soon became a tiny spec far below. We were roped up due to the crevassed terrain. The moderate wind often lifted and swung the rope between us, the loose snow swirled around our feet creating atmospheric real Antarctic travel as we trudged back down to the shore. We witnessed a glacier calving, a roar and ice cloud the ice debris tipping into the ocean. We were joined by the skiers who had been thwarted on their initial landing.

The afternoon was spent cruising in the *Greg Mortimer* north to Wilhemina bay and anchor at Xxxx bay.

NOVEMBER 7TH: AM: Whalers Bay, Deception Island

We chose to leave the snow shoes on shore and to walk on Deception Island to small peak above the ruined whaling town. Views further up the harbour showed the true extent of the volcanic formed landscape. From the peak we traversed to a saddle and looped down easy snow slopes, allowing time to explore the ruins and to warm our feet in the steaming sand.



Ski Touring Log

By Tarn Pilkington

Ski Touring Masters: Tarn Pilkington & Michael Roberts

Skiers:

BraSergio Carneiro (Brazil)	Julia Carneiro (Brazil)	Joao Drummond (Brazil)
Mengzi Yin (USA)	Rebecca Newman–Rogers (UK)	

GUIDES: The principal guiding staff with the skiers were Tarn Pilkington and Mike Roberts, but this varied from day to day and included Kevin Nicholas and Hillary Cave

2 NOVEMBER

Our first landing was on the afternoon 2 November at Barrientos Island, part of the Aitcho Island Group in the South Shetlands. This location is rich in wildlife with Gentoo and Chinstrap Penguins, Waddell and Fur seals and even a Sea Leopard resting on the beach. What a great way to start our trip!

3 NOVEMBER

Landing 1: Borge Peak, Mickelson Harbour

It was a misty morning in Mickelson Harbour with recent snow to shoreline. The team were psyched to load skis and packs into the zodiac and head for Skatsberg Point on Trinity Island. This was our first ski trip of the voyage and for Julia, Joao and Sergio, their first-time ski touring, a steep learning curve in a remarkably beautiful and remote location. The slope angle at Skatsberg Point was deemed too steep for a first outing. With Peter driving the zodiac we relocated to Borge Peak and much to the bemusement of a Waddell Seal, this secluded icy point was soon occupied by seven skiers.

Being our first outing, we did an avalanche rescue brief and familiarized ourselves with the specialized ski touring kit. Glue-on synthetic skins are placed on the ski bases to give traction and the bindings allow the heel to raise for uphill travel. Gliding the ski’s over the crusty snow surface in a series of low angled sweeps across the slope, we slowly gained height. The view down to the ocean and ice bounded Mickelson Harbour was magical. Our first ski turns in Antarctica were in variable conditions ranging from rime ice, to packed powder and close to shore, wet snow. The outing was declared a great success.

Landing 2: Portal Point

Historically, Portal Point, our first continental landing, provided access to the main spine of Antarctic Peninsula and the interior. Thanks to an afternoon clearance, the high terrain of Antarctic Peninsular was now visible, although shrouded in curved lenticular clouds. Dappled sun intermittently lit the high peaks, as we headed to shore for our second landing of the day. The ocean refracted light as a magical bright blue around ice bergs.

We unloaded onto a picturesque rocky point; granite rich in pink feldspar. We dragged our shore bags well above the high tide line, and the potential impact of surge waves created by ice carving into the ocean. Nearby, Gentoo Penguins squawked, and mating rituals became frenzied. Following a broad low angle snow lead we slowly gained 100m of height over two kilometers. Our eyes feasted on the undulating ice coast, bergs and steeply rising peaks.

An aspect of back country skiing is taking the off-piste snow conditions as you find them, sometimes dream powder, other times less desirable snow to ski. In response to Greg’s radio call, Tarn described the skiing as two out of ten. Yep, we were in for a testing descent on a vicious breakable crust. After a series of spectacular crashes, Joao realized the wisdom of Tarns ski descent strategy; traverse – kick-turn – repeat - this was survival skiing. This wasn’t a day for hero photos – turn that go-pro off! With today came the realization that Antarctic skiing, like a lot of life, is about the journey. True adventure does not follow a script. What a fantastic day.

4 NOVEMBER

Doumer Island

A day of extraordinary scenic viewing and reflections began at 6.00am when the ship entered the majestic Neumayer Channel. After having breakfast at Port Lockroy, revelling in the blue-sky day, we soaked in the sun’s rays as we took a short Zodiac trip to a snow landing. The team had become efficient in gearing up and soon we were underway, traversing the steepest slope of the day. Our route ascended the north east ridge and was carefully planned to avoid crevasses. We roped-up for the final 100m, donning ice axe and crampons, a true ski mountaineering trip. Despite blisters and pressure points everyone made the top.

Congratulations all! The views from the summit were superb, including the legendary Lemaire Channel to our south, which was ice-free. Being able to transit this majestic body of water by ship in early November is highly unusual and this is what we did. The Lemaire Channel is colloquially known as kodak alley, the team suggested a more appropriate name was Instagram alley, which Rebecca, a journalist, took great exception. Unlike Portal Point, we were rewarded with some fun ski turns. Ascent height gain was 500m height, distance up 3.55km and total outing time was 4 ¾ hours. Ski Touring to the summit of Doumer Island was a trip highlight.

5 NOVEMBER

Hoovgard Island

Our drop-off to shore was notable for needing to use the zodiac as a mini icebreaker, pushing and weaving our way through the brash ice, and burgy bits, which had blown in over-night. In contrast to the previous day, the sky was heavy overcast and the light flat. Under time pressure, we pushed ourselves along the broad open north ridge for 2.66km to the plateau like summit, a height gain of 328m. To the south cloud lifted and sun shone on distant summits, enticing us onwards but this was to be our furthest south point of the trip, as open water ended at the Argentine Islands.

Without the softening effect of the sun, snow conditions were hard on descent and flat light was a challenge, even wearing goggles. It was a fun outing into an ever-changing landscape of ocean, ice and summits. During lunch the *Greg Mortimer* lifted anchor, travelling back through the Lemaire Channel until Cape Renard, then turned west into the Nimrod Passage. Our expedition leader, Greg Mortimer (the man not the ship) made a spur of the moment decision to change the route northward into pack-ice, as he wanted to test the ship. The XBOW did great, slicing through moist fast-ice up to 1m deep. We then traversed the Wauwerman Islands and back to Gerlache Strait via Bismark Strait.

Continuing, we discovered Paradise Harbour ice-choked and unnavigable. Fortunately, Nikko Harbour was open, and we arrived in time for a sunset dinner. Twenty-six folks opted to campout and were treated to a midnight rendition of march of the penguins. What a memorable and full day.

6 NOVEMBER

Landing 1: Nikko Harbour

As the skiing team headed across Andvord Bay to a route called Roscoe’s, the wind got up; sheets of sea spray added an atmospheric and somewhat dampening dimension! Above the landing firm conditions were going to require a lengthy bootpack and so the decision was taken to return to Nikko Harbour and ski tour 300m above the Gentoo Penguin rookery. There were fantastic views and firm but fun and skiable conditions on descent. In the afternoon we entered picturesque Errera Channel that traces Ronge, Cuverville, and Danco and Islands. Dense pack-ice prevented entry to Wilhelmina Bay, so continued northwards to Bancroft Bay

Landing 2: Igloo Hill

The skiers made a second landing under Igloo Hill and skied to the shoulder in magnificent evening light. There was a lot of photos taken as a sapphire glow lit the sky. Meanwhile the barbeque taking place on the ship had turned into a party with a spectacular Antarctic sunset back-drop. Another indescribably awesome experience. Fortunately for us, the cooks had saved dinner, which we ate as the ship relocated northwards to Deception Island.



7 NOVEMBER

Deception Island

At 7.00am on a blue-sky day we sailed through Neptune’s Bellows into the massive ocean filled caldera of Deception Island. What a magnificent location, rich in history with the remains of Whalers Bay Station. Our ski journey for the day started immediately behind the large tanks. Linking patches of soft snow, we snaked our way up a large basin to what is effectively the crater rim, some 300m up. The final section had large wind sculptured sastrugi that intrigued Sergio, our one remaining skier, the others having elected to go snorkelling. The view across to the ice clad summits of Smith Island were magnificent and often not seen at all due to low cloud. This our best skiing conditions of the trip. Aside from negotiating some sastrugi and ice patches, we enjoyed the soft powdery surface. We descended in time to look at some of the fascinating remains of Whalers Bay and to walk along the beach. Later that day amid chaotic swell, chop and surf, we made an adventurous landing at Elephant Head, our last landfall of the trip, more akin to the sun Antarctic Islands.

8-10 NOVEMBER

Ocean transit back to Ushuaia where we were once again fortunate to get relatively benign conditions in the Drake Passage. Boring seas are good in my book but disappointed some.

Thanks everyone for a fantastic and memorable experiences skiing and sightseeing on Antarctic Peninsula



Spirit of Antarctica (Maiden Voyage)

31 October – 10 November 2019 | Distance Travelled: 1,220 nautical miles (2,257 kilometres)

Southernmost point of voyage: Pleneau Island 65°07.1S, 64°01.2'W



Destinations

- 01 Aitcho – Barrientos Island
- 02 Mikkelsen Harbour
- 03 Portal Point
- 04 Neumayer

- 05 Port Lockroy and Jougla Point
- 06 Lemaire Channel
- 07 Pleneau Island, iceberg alley
- 08 Bismarck Strait, pack ice

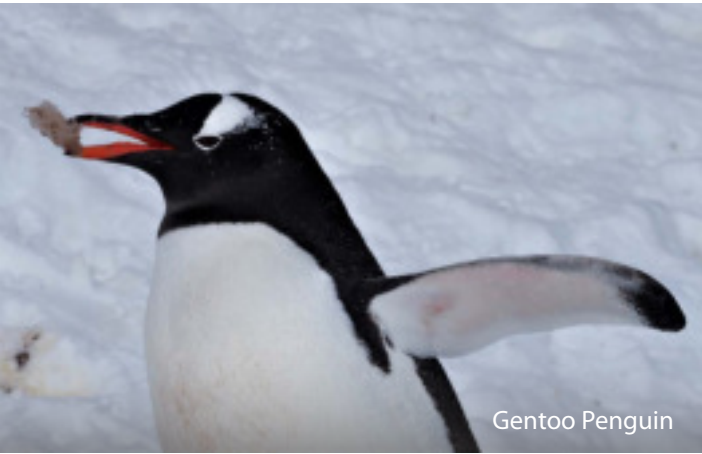
- 09 Neko Harbour
- 10 Errera Channel
- 11 Gerlache Strait
- 12 Whalers Bay, Deception Island

- 13 Elephant Point
- 14 Drake Passage
- 15 Ushuaia



Bird Species Log

Bird Species	October - November									
	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gentoo Penguin			X	X	X	X	X	X		
Chinstrap Penguin			X		X					
Adelie Penguin					X	X				
Magellanic Penguin										X
Wandering Albatross		X							X	
Royal Albatross		X								
Black-browed Albatross		X	X	X					X	X
Grey-headed Albatross		X								
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross		X							X	
Southern Giant Petrel	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Northern Giant Petrel		X								X
Antarctic Petrel			X							
Cape Petrel		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Snow Petrel				X	X	X	X			
Antarctic Fulmar		X	X	X			X		X	
Blue Petrel		X	X							
Soft-plumaged Petrel										X
White-chinned Petrel		X							X	X
Sooty Shearwater		X								X
Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic)		X	X						X	
Wilson's Storm-petrel		X		X						
Imperial Cormorant (blue-eyed)		X								X
Antarctic Cormorant			X	X	X	X	X	X		
Snowy Sheathbill			X	X	X	X	X			
Chilean Skua	X	X								X
Brown Skua			X	X	X	X	X	X		
South Polar Skua						X				
Kelp Gull	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Dolphin Gull	X	X								X
South American Tern	X									X
Antarctic Tern			X	X	X	X	X	X		



Mammals Log

Mammals	October - November									
	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Antarctic Fur Seal			X				X	X		
Southern Elephant Seal								X		
Crabeater Seal						X	X			
Weddell Seal			X	X	X		X	X		
Leopard Seal			X	X			X			
Antarctic Minke Whale				X	X					
Humpback Whale							X		X	
Orca				X		X				
Dusky Dolphin										X





Expeditioners

Greg Adams	Anita Coombs	Mark Frevert	Fred Jones	Leonardo Matheson	Vee Pols	Seng Huat Teh
Katy Afshar	Chris Coombs	Vance Gledhill	Harry Kentrotis	Drummond	Chris Quah	Andrew Teo
Brandye Alexander	Peter Crealey	Dag Goering	Sandra Kentrotis	Phillipa McDonald	Andre Queree	Helen Torok
Ken Ansell	Sean Crealey	Geoff Green	Malcolm Kirk	Rob McFarland	Angela Reiner	Calvin Treacy
Rosemary Barber	Bruce Currie	Julie Green	Connie Kok	Rachael Mendizabal	Thomas Reiner	Caroline Treacy
Charles Barnfield	Jacqui Currie	Sergio Guedes Carneiro	Glenda Korporaal	Steve Milazzo	Arthur Repsold Neto	Zilda Vieira Teixeira
Margaret Barnfield	Andy Dickman	Annette Haifer	Jozef Krajca	Bob Moncur	Rebecca Rogers	Yonghong Wang
Ali Basti	Romain Dupuy	Michael Haifer	Kyria Laird	David Moncur	Barbara Rozowsky	Marina Watts
Edith Beaudoin	Joao Ferraz Matheson	Charlotte Hall	Xan Latta	Caroline Morgan	Brian Rozowsky	Nigel Williamson
Rai Belenes Juarez	Drummond	Tom Hall	Sheri Laverack	Jacob Murray	Julia Sampaio Carneiro	Leanne Wilson
Doug Blackney	Maria Ferraz Matheson	Cynthia Hansen	Carlos Leal Teixeira Junior	Pauline Neo	Denise Sargent	Peter Wilson
Gustavo Braga Marini	Drummond	Deb Harrison	Jeffrey Lee	Mike O'Hara	Anne Schenk	Michael Wong
Robyn Brown	Pedro Ferraz Matheson	Keith Harrison	JY Lee	Lubos Ondrus	Peter Schenk	Lui Ching Woon
Claudia Capanema Repsold	Drummond	Sharon Hatcher	Narelle Lee	Dennis Ow	Steve Shelton	Bee Lan Yap
Merce Casas Galofre	David Fong	Regina Hew	Fung Kit Lim	Kerry Petersen	Andrej Skultety	Mengzi Yin
Matthew Cechner	Carolyn Foss	Sharon Ho	Teresa Machan	Neil Petersen	Afsaneh Taghavi	Shiu-Wei Yin
Choon Far Chen	Lily Frere	Lorraine Jacob	Marise Marques Torres	Vin Plant	Doreen Tan	
Michael Colefax	Steven Frere	Peter Jacob	De Castro Marini	Rene Pols	Kelley Tausch	



Expedition Team

Expedition Leader	Greg Mortimer	Photography Guide	Massimo Bassano
Voyage Escort	Margaret Mortimer	Expedition Doctor	Lesley Cadzow
Deputy Expedition Leader	Howard Whelan	Zodiac Master	Sergei Andronov
Assistant Expedition Leader	Justine Bornholdt	Zodiac Master	Sergei Khyнку
Historian & Lecturer	Ben Maddison	Mudroom/Shopkeeper	Reza Rusooly
Naturalist & Lecturer	Heidi Krajewsky		
Naturalist & Lecturer	Alex Watson		
Expedition Guide	Stephen Anstee		
Expedition Guide	Emma Hansen		
Dive/Snorkel Guide	Piotr Szyszka		
Kayaking Master	Al Bakker		
Kayaking Guide	Frank Witter		
Kayaking Guide	Peter Wainwright		
Snowshoe Guide	Kevin Nicholas		
Snowshoe Guide	Hilary Cave		
Head Ski Tour Guide	Tarn Pilkington		
Ski Tour Guide	Michael Roberts		
Photography Guide	Scott Portelli		

Greg Mortimer Crew

Master	Ulf-Peter Lindström	Head Stateroom	Irene Abania
Chief Officer	Oleg Kapko	Spa Manager	Grace Tembo
Second Officer	Vishal Sharma	Able Seaman	Samuel Ricafort
Deck Cadet	Lovelyn Yray	Able Seaman	Junar Gorecho
Safety Officer	Andrey Zakalashnyuk	Able Seaman	Leo Marzan
Bosun	Duglas Garay	Able Seaman	Bobby Payumo
Ship Nurse	Sydney Grove	Able Seaman	Khenette Verzosa
Chief Engineer	Marinko Hrabar	Able Seaman	Mickey Ledonio
First Engineer	Ruslan Rotar	Ordinary Seaman	Alfredo Murillo
Hotel Director	Franz Wusits		
Chief Purser	Jane Saladaga		
Executive Chef	Przemyslaw Wisniewski		
Sous Chef	Allan Estoque		
Hotel Controller	Allen Thomas		
Receptionist	Mary Sarah Baldovino		
Receptionist	Mary Jane Lacerna		

Ship's log written by members of the Expedition Team & compiled by Justine Bornholdt

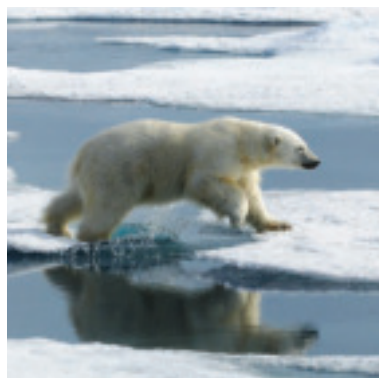


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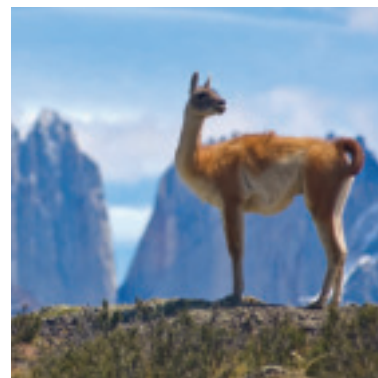
The Arctic

Polar bears roam pack ice for seals, walrus and whales. Deep fjords and towering icebergs meet colourful tundra and fossil-rich plains.



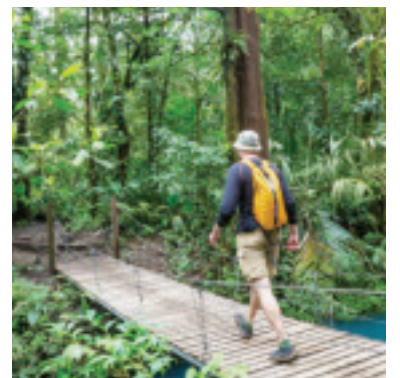
Scotland

Abandoned castles, exquisite abbeys, stone age villages and haunting Neolithic relics. Breeding seals and Europe's largest seabird colonies.



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