

Voyage to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula

aboard *Polar Pioneer*
7–25 January 2010





Cover: Reflections of Stromness (by Charles Allen)

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SHIP'S LOG

Voyage to The Falkland Islands South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula

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SHIRLEY GREGOR

Day 1

Thursday, 7 January 2010

Ushuaia; Beagle Channel

Position 2200: Lat. 54° 57'S, Long. 66° 56'W

Course: 101°

Speed: 11.2 knots

Barometer: 985.3 hPa steady

Wind: 10 knots N

Air temperature: 12°C

Sea temperature: 8°C

The land was gone, all but a little streak, away off on the edge of the water, and down under us was just ocean, ocean, ocean – millions of miles of it, heaving and pitching and squirming, and white sprays blowing from the wave-tops ... and we had the sky and the ocean to ourselves, and the roomiest place I ever did see ...

—Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer Abroad*



AMANDA TILL

Leaving the dock

By Marina Sommer

I remember well, five years ago, when I was standing at the port in Ushuaia, watching the ships and wishing to be one of the lucky passengers taking part on an Antarctic trip. Four years later I knew that I could make my dream come true and booked my trip of a lifetime. I started to look up everything about the Antarctic and got excited like hardly ever before. I remember well going to all those outdoor shops in Switzerland, looking for warm clothes, thermals, gloves and more gloves, socks and hats and all the question kept keeping my mind regarding the trip (would those socks be warm enough in gum boots, will the gum boots fit, are the clothes to be hired in Ushuaia OK, is that fleece/jacket warm enough, will the Drake Passage be as horrible as described in many travel logs on internet etc?). I am probably well known in Ushuaia, too, by now since I did question many of the outdoor shop salespeople asking if the water-resistant and not waterproof jacket I rented is enough.

Here I am sitting now in the office of the *Polar Pioneer*, writing the first day of the log book. I still can't believe my luck to be here and can't describe my feelings (not because of writing the log book but being actually on the ship).

I had been in Ushuaia for four days visiting friends and came down to the port everyday, looking out for 'my' ship, getting anxious to spot it. I had to wait until to the departing day to discover the pretty ship and would have liked to tell everyone passing by that this will be my home for the next 18 days. I had been counting the days to this point and loved to watch the other passengers figuring out if they would be on the same ship. We then were standing in front of the *Polar Pioneer*, some talking, some quietly standing, some taking pictures. All seemed anxious and ready for a new adventure in one of the most interesting parts of the world.

We finally were warmly welcomed by the crew and could enter the ship where we were guided to our cabins. I was amazed how much room we got to put our belongings away, and I finally met my roommate, Shirley.



AMANDA TILL

Roger and Pip



AMANDA TILL

Safety briefing at the bar

We managed well to get all our things away neatly ... well Shirley did so; I needed some more time to get a bit organised. There were too many things on the ship to be discovered.

We were invited to tea and cookies in the neat dining room and started to get to know each other a bit, and once again I was happy to have booked a smaller ship with a familiar taste. I do hope, though, to keep some names by the end of the trip. We then had our first meeting on the bridge where all the staff were introduced to us and where we got the first idea of our upcoming trip. Of course, we did then all go out on the deck to enjoy our departure out of Ushuaia with beautiful weather and calm waters. After a really nice dinner with excellent hospitality most went to bed early whilst others took out their cameras for some other shots of birds, water, water and birds. I am sure we all had a good night with lots of nice dreams of a great time ahead of us.



AMANDA TILL

Our departing pilot leaves us on our own

Day 2

Friday, 8 January 2010

South Atlantic Ocean

Position 2100: Lat. 53° 19'S, Long. 60° 30'W

Course: 080°

Speed: 9.1 knots

Barometer: 983.9 hPa falling

Wind: Calm

Air temperature: 9°C

Sea temperature: 8°C

When I first set eyes on the Falkland Islands, on Christmas Eve, 1959, I instinctively knew that I had found a very special part of this earth and that I was going to make it my home. I had a passion for nature and wilderness and the islands were to develop that even more, for nature here is quite unique.

—Ian Strange, in his *Field Guide to the Wildlife of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia*

By Kim Ketelbey

Awake to the sight of flocks of sea birds feeding after being lollled to sleep by gentle seas. The sea gods have been kind to us. A hearty breakfast was had by the majority of the ship, though not all were to keep it! Seasickness has struck quite a few of us, giving Dr Lesley some subjects for her acupuncture trial.

We begin to acclimatise to shipboard life – a stroll around the decks, sitting in a watery sun and visiting the bridge. Black-browed albatrosses, Cape petrels and sooty albatrosses circle the boat. Some of us amuse ourselves trying to capture that ultimate photo as an albatross swoops teasingly close ... just not close enough! Thank goodness for the 'delete' button.

Suddenly a call for the Great Gumboot Giveaway. What could have potentially been a mad frenzy of boots and people is admirably orchestrated by Amanda. Very shortly, passengers are proudly strutting around showing of their boots, ready for land action.

Mid-morning we are called to our first lecture, an inspiring talk given by Jenny on the wildlife and environment of the Falkland Islands. With our appetites whetted by the slide show of beautiful flightless steamer ducks, Cobb's wrens, tussock grass and gentoo and Magellanic penguins, to name a few, some of us return to the bridge. It's not long before there is a brief sighting of a whale.



AMANDA TILL

Our friendly fin whale



AMANDA TILL

Jean and Dr Lesley watch for whales



AMANDA TILL

It's over there, I promise



AMANDA TILL

Windswept Chris



AMANDA TILL

Enjoying a cocktail

After lunch Dave gives us a rundown on what to expect and do at Port Stanley, or 'Stanley' as the main settlement of the Falklands is known to the locals. Shipboard life proves to be tiring for many of us, with all this activity, good food and the gently rolling ship. As some of us have dozed off in the lecture theatre; an afternoon snooze is essential.

Yet another call to muster! This time Howard, Jenny and Amanda give us the lowdown on Zodiac operation (that is, how to get in and out of the thing without falling in) and the importance of protecting the unique environments we are about to visit. Cross-contamination between the islands could be disastrous, so careful boot washing tomorrow is imperative.

With all the serious business behind us we at last can refresh at Sarah's bar. Captain Nesterov has kindly invited us all for drinks. The food and punch are delicious after a hard day at sea. (We haven't even had time to read our novels!). Captain Nesterov gives us a very interesting speech on his time in these waters and I, like many others, I am sure, feel we are in very safe hands for this wonderful and privileged voyage.



AMANDA TILL

Captain's drinks

Day 3

Saturday, 9 January 2010

Sea Lion Island; Bleaker Island

Position 2130: Lat. 52° 10'S. Long. 58° 50'W

Speed: at anchor

Course: at anchor

Barometer: 989.3 hPa steady

Wind: Calm

Air temperature: 11°C

Sea temperature: 8°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*



AMANDA TILL

Sunrise over Beauchene Island

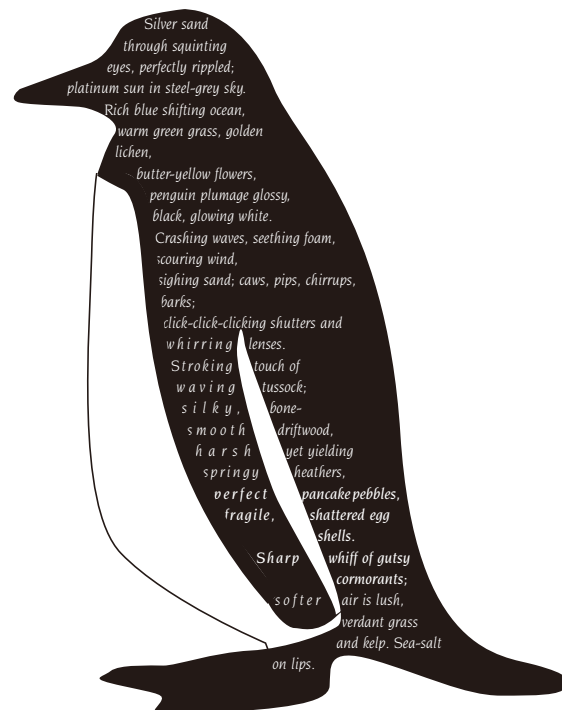
By Corran McArthur

The Falklands waited for us under clear skies and blazing sun, and all of the islands' wildlife turned out in force to welcome us on Sea Lion and Bleaker islands. In the words of Subba, we were all David Attenborough today, although perhaps without the splendid sunglasses he was wearing in the Life in the Freezer TV series! Whichever of the three available routes we each chose to tread today, there was no disappointment, as creatures from the tiny, flitting Cobb's wren to the vast, rippling blubber of the elephant seals presented themselves for us. Teeming life contrasted for some with a stark reminder of human mortality and the bloody conflict that was fought on these peaceful shores not thirty years ago.

It would be easy to commit pages and pages of digital space to our experiences of the day, but Amanda threw down the gauntlet – a challenge to produce a poem! I am not one for poetry (as is evident in the offering below), but neither am I one to ignore a challenge when it is given. And so ...

Sea Lion Island

or A Pretentious Verse Composed Under Duress





Bleaker Island

to be female, seemingly at their ease and enjoying a splash in the shallow water off the beach. The proximity of the Zodiac did not seem to cause disturbance to the creatures, and indeed some considered them to be putting on a display for the voyagers.

The Antarctic Scots are considered to be land mammals but are observed to immerse themselves in freezing water during 'March Hare'-like moments of insanity. Characterised by thick blue-white skin, blonde or brown hair, wanton consumption of intoxicating beverages and distinctive (some may say unintelligible) vocalisations, these surely are prime specimens of this wholly new species.

The breeding cycle of these individuals is not known; however a foreign male observed to encroach upon their territory with a display of prancing, swimming and waving of arms was quickly sent packing by the blonde Antarctic Scot with a well-aimed splash. A lucky bystander was superbly located to capture this shot of the event.

Attempts are underway to decipher the language used between the three females, and it is hoped that translations will become available, given time. It is also hoped that these animals will be included in Jenny's lectures on subsequent Falklands/South Georgia voyages and perhaps a grant may be received from the Falkland Islands government for future study.



Crazy swimmers

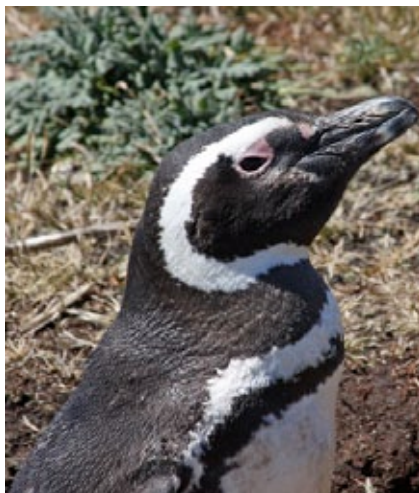


Surprise in the tussock

ALL THIS ROW BY AMANDA TILL



Falklands thrush



Magellanic penguin



Rufous-breasted dotterel

CORRAN McARTHUR



Cormorant taking off, Bleaker Island

CLIVE & PAT MINTON



I'm the long-billed Falklands snipe



Skua family



Rock cormorants

CENTRE AND RIGHT BY AMANDA TILL



JENNY SCOTT

Bleaker detail



CLIVE & PAT MINTON

Upland geese strolling downhill



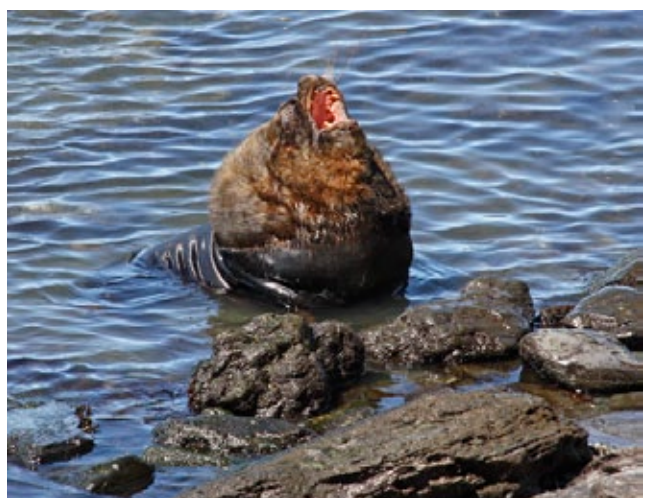
CLIVE & PAT MINTON

Six double-banded dotterels



AMANDA TILL

The namesakes of Sea Lion Island



AMANDA TILL

Roaring male sea lion

Day 4

Sunday, 10 January 2010

Port Stanley

Position 2100: Lat. 51° 59'S, Long. 55° 20'W

Speed: 12.1 knots

Course: 96°

Barometer: 994.6 hPa and rising

Wind: 4 knots N

Air temperature: 11°C

Sea temperature: 8°C

I cannot call to mind any other settlement (except perhaps Tristan da Cunha) more dismal, miserable, and devoid of all interest than this at the Falkland Islands—the geese were so tame that we had to give up shooting them.

—W.J.J. Spry, RN, HMS *Challenger*, 1876

By Jim Russell

After a strenuous day on Sea Lion Island and Bleaker Island yesterday we remained at anchor in the calm waters on the north side of Bleaker Island for the evening. We weighed anchor at midnight for the short voyage to Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands.

The weather has been remarkable – light winds and calm seas continue –and we are treated to an armchair ride. At 0700 this morning we are off Point Pembroke and the entrance to Port William. As we turn to port and head west we have our first view of Stanley gleaming in the morning sunlight. It is another beautiful day, but we are warned the weather can change in an instant. By 0730 we have entered Stanley Harbour through a narrow channel and dropping anchor a few hundred metres from the public pier.

Breakfast is the usual high standard; this morning it is poached eggs and bacon.

At 0845 the Zodiacs are ready to take us ashore. Today we land on a floating dock, so there is no need for gumboots. Everyone is prepared for rain although it is still a beautiful morning.

Occupied by Britain since 1833, except for a few weeks in 1982, the Falklands is one of the few remaining colonies of the once mighty British Empire. Buildings along Ross Street are reminders of the Victorian era and are similar to early settlement buildings in Australia. There is, however, a difference; viewed from the ship the town is a patchwork of brightly painted cottages, similar in many ways to those to be seen in Iceland, northern Scandinavia and other places in high latitudes. Here the homes are all set on the north-facing slopes of the ridge overlooking the harbour. On two occasions the town was almost demolished when unstable peat in cuttings along the ridge collapsed and slipped in thick, lumpy slurry through the town demolishing some buildings and houses.

Being Sunday morning, shops are normally closed. Today, however, the gift shops and the visitor centre open for us.

The elegant Jubilee Villas built in 1887 at the beginning of Ross Street seem a little incongruous in this harsh, windswept setting.

Built over 100 years ago from bricks brought as ballast on sailing ships and stones from the Corn Exchange destroyed in one of the peat slips, the Anglican Cathedral is the most southerly Anglican



Colourful Stanley



Prevailing wind, perhaps?



AMANDA TILL

Four seasons in one day

Cathedral. It is a fairly traditional building, but the large windows on the east end of the choir fill the building with light. Memorial plaques on the wall provide an insight into the families that have lived on the Islands for many years. Among them are ones that remind you that this tiny outpost of empire also contributed and lost sons in the world wars. By way of contrast the timber Roman Catholic church is in need of a coat of paint.

The British Antarctic Survey offices occupy a terrace of small whitewashed stone buildings, typical of those to be found in Scotland or the settlements in Sydney and Hobart.

The *Great Britain*, designed by one of Britain's greatest engineers, Izambard Kingdom Brunel, was the largest ship in the world when she was built in 1843. She arrived, storm damaged, in Stanley 1886 where she remained until 1970 when she was returned to Bristol and restored. Her mizzenmast remains on display in Stanley.

For those interested in stamps the Philately Centre provides a chance to add to their collections.

The memorial to those who died in the liberation of the Falklands in 1982 is a striking and simple reminder of the units that served and those who died. About 300 names are inscribed on the memorial plaques. Coincidentally, today is Maggie Thatcher Day, recognising the part the then Prime Minister of Britain played in sending British troops to the end of the earth to liberate the Falklands from an invader.

Having walked this far along Ross Street and spent some time in the gift shop, it is about 1030, and the promised change in the weather is fast approaching, and so having taken a photo of Government House and its manicured gardens, we turn to retrace our steps. Rain and hail fall before we are halfway back, and I am 'forced' to shelter in another gift shop; the boys have gone on ahead.

The rain has set in, so we return to the ship as soon as possible, fortunately in a break in the rain and so are not drenched. We missed out on the 'gnomes cottage'. When everyone is on board we set sail for South Georgia. Baguette and salad makes another delicious lunch.

The main activities for the afternoon are Jenny's illustrated lecture on the birds of the Southern Ocean, and sleep, and, for Ben and Connor, more time with their iPods. Some passengers are able to successfully combine both activities.

After a meal of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes and veg., bed seems attractive, and Ben and Connor, who are feeling off-colour, head for an early night. Many of us headed for the lecture room to watch episodes of *Life in the Freezer*, narrated by David Attenborough, before turning in.



AMANDA TILL

The Anglican cathedral at Stanley

Day 5

Monday 11 January 2010

Southern Ocean

Position 2100: Lat. 52° 52'S, Long. 47° 47'W

Speed: 11.4 knots

Course: 102°

Barometer: 1002.6 hPa and rising

Wind: 15 knots from NE

Air temperature: 5°C

Sea temperature: 4°C

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

—Robert Cushman Murphy

By Phil and Gill Leach

We saw a show on the TV about a naturalist who went into the Northern Territory of Australia to study some endangered native birds. He took a gun with him and shot one or two of these endangered species. The idea was for science to analysis the contents of the stomachs of these birds to see if there was a food shortage that was causing their near extinction. It seemed a bit ironical that it was deemed necessary to kill one of two animals to understand if something could be done about the survival of the remaining birds.

The group we are travelling with has a global perspective and diverse reasons for being here. We are travelling over 1,400 nautical miles of Southern Ocean on our way to South Georgia. We are going to create some greenhouse gases from the fuel we used to explore this region. The Copenhagen talks finished just before Christmas in 2009 with minimal conclusions announced on the human-activity-induced global warming.

The information sessions today covered the bird species and some of the history of South Georgia. The albatross population has been diminished by the activities of longline fishing, before we even start on the history of whaling with no less than four different whaling companies operating from South Georgia in the early 20th century. Sometimes they took over 40,000 whales in one season.

One of the conditions of visiting South Georgia is to ensure the minimal transmission of alien matter. To this end no less than four vacuum cleaners were charged with the job cleaning pants pockets, jacket pockets and backpacks to prove cleanliness. We even had to declare the job completed. (Never had to declare cleanliness of vacuuming at home before!)

And here we are on Day 5 of an expedition steaming in open water, creating some greenhouse gases so that we may take the views, or 'understand the stomach contents', of South Georgia to give us, albeit a small but enthusiastic group, some message of how human lives will need to change in the future to preserve the species.



The lecture buffs



Luda and Larissa, our stewardesses

Day 6

Tuesday, 12 January 2010

Scotia Sea

Position 2015: Lat. 53° 44'S, Long. 40° 38'W

Speed: 10.5 knots

Course: 98°

Barometer: 993.3 and falling

Wind: 35 knots NE

Air temperature: 1°C

Sea temperature: 2°C

By Rosemary Burke, Terry Maunsell,
Yvonne Stenning, Johneen Tierney and
Glenda Horner

The day commenced with 15 people on the bridge before breakfast, watching albatrosses, petrels and seals. It was -1°C (the temperature had dropped overnight). After breakfast, whilst some went to the bridge to watch waves breaking over the bow, Shirley, Marina and Pauline decided to test their wet-weather gear before access to the bow was closed.

After Jenny's interesting lecture on fur seals and a bonus lecture on vegetation and reindeer, with discussion on rat elimination (the pharmacists on board were especially interested in the new anticoagulant), everyone filed to the dining room for lunch. Connor and Ben's eyes lit up when hamburgers were on the lunch menu. Then the boys tried out the sauna.

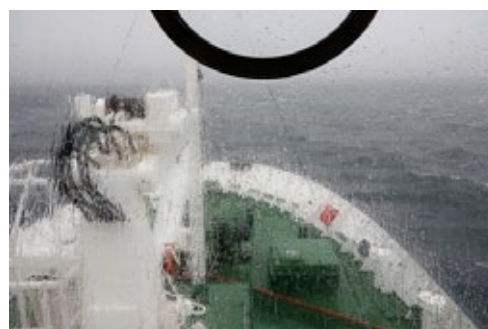
The question of the day was 'Who was the phantom white board artist?' as more drawings of penguins appeared. The bridge was crowded with most passengers up to see Shag Rocks. (The captain's nightmare of too many people on the bridge affecting the balance of the boat seemed to be coming true as the swell increased.) Whilst Anita tried to explain colloquialisms to the Russian crew, the others were trying to photograph cormorants, albatrosses, prions and petrels. We knew it was cold when Tim was spotted in long sleeves and shoes. A few brave souls ventured outside.

Then we were entertained by Dave with his narrative of his 1970s expedition to Elephant Island. Who could forget the FLOG glacier! We are looking forward to visiting some Shackleton sites in the next few days. By dinnertime the wind had whipped up and seas were rough. Interesting dances were seen in the corridors, as people tried to stagger to dinner. Appropriately, the Russian phrase for the day was 'Kak Dyela?' (How are you?) as more and more people required Lesley's attention. It should be noted that, before dinner, Sarah's Bloody Marys were very popular, but no drinks were sold after dinner. As the night progressed the wind and rain turned into a mini-cyclone, and most people were happy to be safely in their beds (with no visions of sugar plums dancing there). People experienced involuntary bed surfing, skiing manoeuvres in bed and items on the desk leaping into bed with them. We all longed for seat belts in our beds. And who thought a whole day at sea would be boring?



Shag Rocks circumnavigation

AMANDA TILL



Into the storm

AMANDA TILL

Dear Sir Ernest,

We three sporty girls have decided to write and beg of you, to take us with you on your expedition to the South Pole. We are three strong, healthy girls, and also gay and bright, and willing to undergo any hardships, that you yourselves undergo. If our feminine garb is inconvenient, we should just love to don masculine attire.

We have been reading all books and articles that have been written on dangerous expeditions by brave men to the polar regions, and we do not see why men should have all the glory, and women none, especially when there are women just as brave and capable as there are men.

Shackleton regretted that there were 'no vacancies for the opposite sex on the expedition'.

Day 7

Wednesday 13 January 2010

South Georgia: Undine Harbour

Position 2045: Lat. 54° 03'S, Long. 38° 01'W

Speed: at anchor

Course: at anchor

Barometer: 966.6 hPa steady

Wind: 30 knots E

Air temperature: 2°C

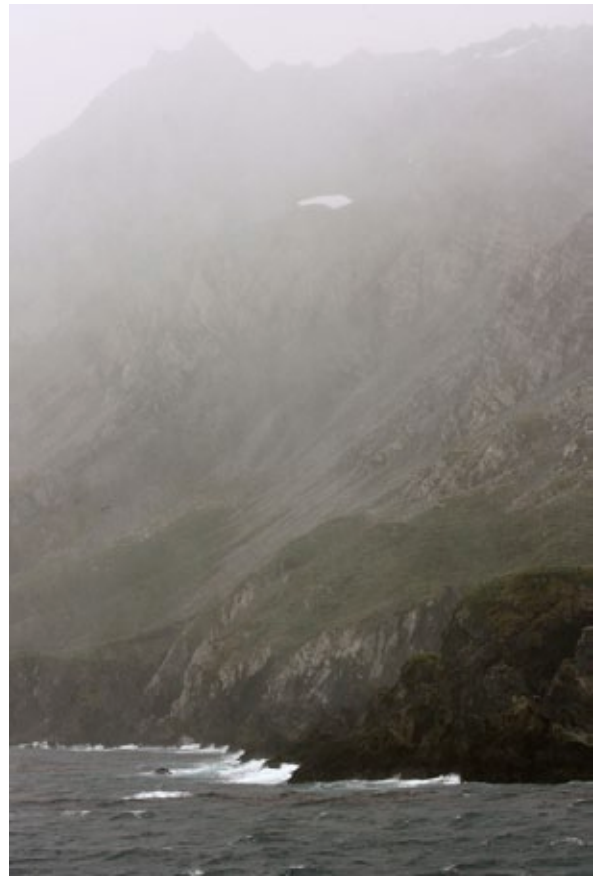
Sea temperature: 2°C

Visually and emotionally, the island of South Georgia overwhelms. At first glance, it resembles the far South Atlantic branch of Dr Doolittle's fantastic zoo: a profusion of captivating animals that quickly transforms even the most discriminating observer into a raving anthropomorphic.

—Ron Naveen, *Wild Ice*

By Subba and Bho Singh

We were awoken around 1.00 a.m. by what seemed an earthquake – things in the room were rattling and flying off. We realised we were in the midst of a storm and the ship was being violently thrashed around. The rest of the early morning after 1.00 a.m. saw us having very little sleep. We later learnt that wind speeds had exceeded 50 knots. We were informed that the captain had tried to enter King Haakon Bay but was unsuccessful due to strong winds. He later dropped anchor near Undine Harbour which was relatively much calmer. However, by about 2.00 p.m. strong winds were now affecting the boat. Many of us



AMANDA TILL

Wild South Georgia on our arrival

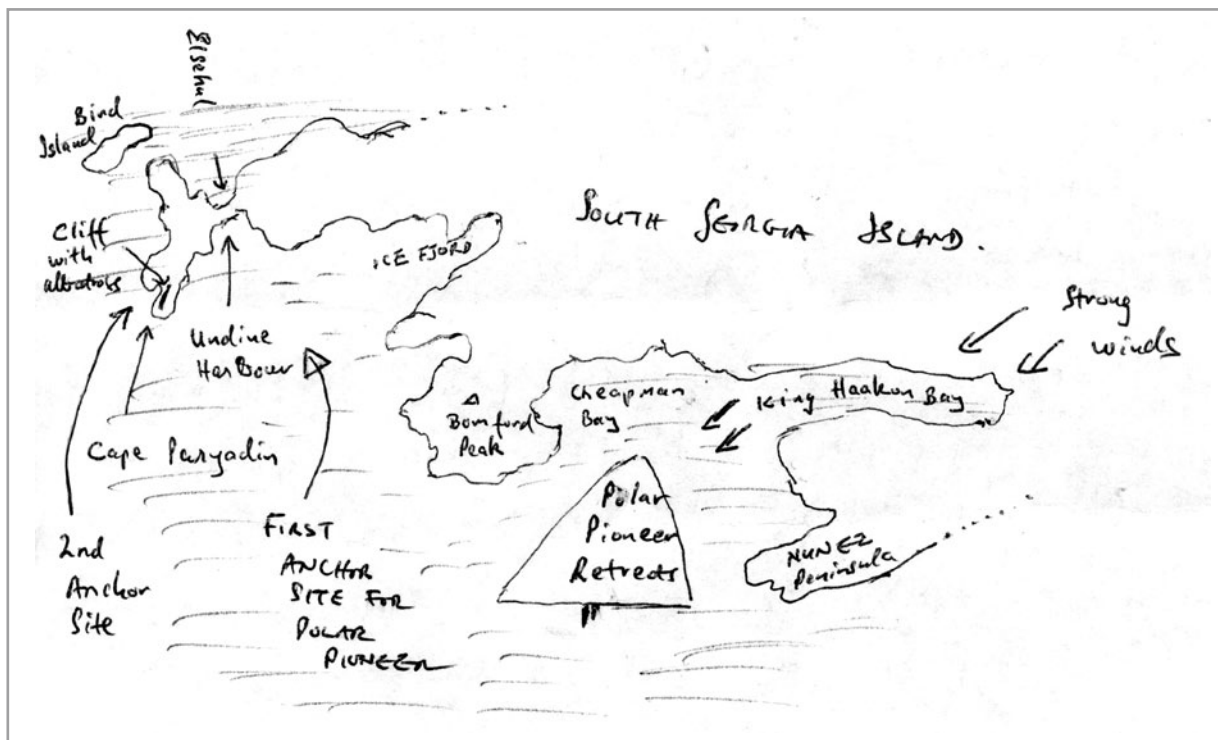


Diagram of anchoring movements to find a calm spot



Looking out onto windy Amanda Harbour

watched the massive waves as they broke over the ship and sent massive spray and water over the sides. We realised that this was itself a 'Shackleton Experience' and one that had to be experienced by Antarctic hopefuls. Shortly after 2.00 p.m. Captain Nesterov was at the helm, the crew moved about swiftly, the ship moved, and within half an hour the captain had steered it close to Cape Paryadin into Amanda Harbour (named by Captain Nesterov) which proved to be a true patch of much calmer waters. Once again Captain Nesterov had drawn upon his long experience and immense skills. The scene in the waters had changed. The large number of seals that we saw earlier had vanished. We suddenly realised we were close to some large mountains on South Georgia. A closer look with binoculars revealed that there were nesting albatrosses. These were confirmed by Jenny to be black-browed and grey-headed albatrosses. There was suddenly much excitement on the bridge as expeditioners became busy with cameras and binoculars. Later that evening there was a lovely talk by Dave about his adventures on the Antarctic Peninsula in the 1970's. This took place after a lovely dinner. All in all it was a very eventful day, even though we were unable to land on shore.



Thank the captain for safe anchorage

Day 8

Thursday, 14 January 2010

Grytviken; Fortuna Bay; Stromness

Position 2200: Lat. 54° 09'S, Long. 36° 42'W

Speed: at anchor

Course: at anchor

Barometer: 985.3 hPa rising

Wind: Calm

Air temperature: 6°C

Sea temperature: 2°C

Everybody knew Shackleton well, and we very sorry he is lost in ice with all hands. We not know three terrible looking bearded men who walk into office off the mountainside. Manager say: 'Who the hell are you?' and terrible bearded man in the centre of the three say very quietly: 'My name is Shackleton.' Me, I turn aside and weep. I think Manager weep too.

—Norwegian whaler at Husvik,
South Georgia 1916



ELVA FITZELL

Grytviken scene – my next life is a jigsaw puzzle

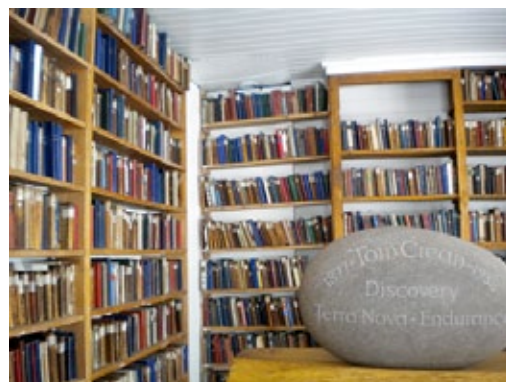
By Pat and Clive Minton

Today at last we were able to land after three complete days on the ship – two travelling and one storm-bound. But it was a very different scene to what we had expected. Instead of the green hillsides and grey scree and rock slopes, everything was white with several centimetres of fresh snow right down to sea level.

The storm had been really wild, with the central pressure falling to 966 hectopascals when the eye, with its attendant patch of blue sky, passed over us at 7.00 p.m. the previous evening. The Captain, who had so successfully 'parked' us in such a sheltered location, had to make the difficult call of when to move round to the north side of the island as the wind turned nearly 180 degrees to the south. Apart from a few minutes of wild rolling, which interrupted the Shackleton film, he deftly achieved this, and we sailed through the night to enter the sheltered harbour at Grytviken just in time to anchor for a 7.00 a.m. breakfast.

The mirror calm of the inner harbour was an incredible contrast and much welcomed by all. And to add to the picture, a huge, flat iceberg was grounded in the fjord as a backdrop to the King Edward Station.

We all landed beside the graveyard where Shackleton had been buried in 1922. The whole of the shore was littered with baby fur seals and a sprinkling of the much larger elephant seals. Standing guard were half a dozen king penguins. The wildlife looked a little fazed by the unexpected snowfall but was as entertaining as expected. Male elephant seals had short battles, trialling for the day when they will be grown bulls trying to carve out a harem. The baby fur seals seemed to be undecided about their next move – when they should go down to the sea? – and spent much of the time scratching themselves with a flipper. One of the king penguins regularly helped himself to beakfuls of fresh, clean snow. Elsewhere on the shore there was other wildlife. Several South Georgia pintails were present, and on two separate



AMANDA TILL

The Crean memorial library at the back of the church, Grytviken



TIM MCCULLOUGH

The walk from Fortuna Bay to Stromness



AMANDA TILL

Tracing Shackleton's steps ... amazing overview of Stromness

dilapidated jetties two pairs of Antarctic terns were each feeding a half-grown chick.

Everyone visited the remains of the whale-processing factory, the museum and the post office, and the beautiful little church. Some also made the 20-minute walk round to the British Antarctic Survey base on King Edward Point.

As we returned to the ship for a 12.30 p.m. lunch, the light drizzle, which had persisted most of the morning, cleared and the sun briefly came out. A truly memorable morning for history, wildlife and scenery.

In the early afternoon the ship moved round into Fortuna Bay, and at three o'clock we were ready to go ashore again. The more energetic and fit half of the group were landed on the east side of the bay and made the challenging 5.5-km, three-hour trek following Shackleton's footsteps over the mountains to Stromness. The views were unbelievable, especially from the crest, which was over 300 metres above sea level. The highlight for some was the 'bum-slide', enhanced by all the fresh snow.

The other half of the group landed on the large terminal moraine at the head of the bay. The shore was littered with fur seals and their pups, some of which seemed only hours old. Moulting king penguins were everywhere standing around in small groups on the flat, stony area, being especially concentrated round the small, freshwater streams. Some two kilometres up the moraine was a still-active colony of many thousands of king penguins. Most had well grown young, still covered in their fluffy brown down.

The landing had been somewhat tortuous, with a significant swell from the previous day's storm still penetrating right up to the end of the inlet. Several people were knocked over and wetted by a large wave as we arrived. Departure was no less traumatic, with occupants of one Zodiac being inundated by a breaking wave. But a great time was had by all in this wonderful scenic habitat, which so teems with wildlife.

The grand finale was a BBQ on the afterdeck, complete with hot punch, fancy hats and wigs and music/dancing (in which Dr Lesley excelled!). We then set sail for tomorrow's target location, with everyone going to bed expecting another rather rocky night.



CHARLES ALLEN

Behind Stromness

The Barbecue



ALL BY MARINA SOMMER

The Barbecue



ALL BY MARINA SOMMIERS

CORRAN MCCARTHUR

MARINA SOMMIERS

SHIRLEY GREGOR

Do I feel lucky?

Sarah, the Aurora bar penguin

Day 9

Friday, 15 January 2010

Gold Harbour; Cooper Bay; Drygalski Fjord

Position 2100: Lat. 54° 34'S, Long. 35° 46'W

Speed: 7.2 knots

Course: 346°

Barometer: 979.9 hPa and steady

Wind: 2 knots from N

Air temperature: 3°C

Sea temperature: 2°C

The great hurrah about wild animals is that they exist at all. And the greater hurrah is the actual moment of seeing them, because they have a nice dignity, and prefer to have nothing to do with me, not even as the simple objects of my vision. They show me by their very wariness what a prize it is simply to open my eyes and behold.

—Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*



MARINA SOMMER

Back home

By Ann and David Bryan

We were both awake at 6.00 a.m. and, shortly after, we heard the ship's anchor being dropped. A quick look out of our porthole revealed mountaintops covered in mist – as promised, it looked likely that we were anchored in Gold Harbour. Howard's 'Good morning' message confirmed this and it wasn't long before we joined everyone else for breakfast before making preparations to go ashore. Whilst we donned our waterproof gear and boots, the crew and staff were already out in one of the Zodiacs checking for the best landing site. The weather was bright but the sea a bit rough.

Despite the strong swell, a suitable site to land was found and we all took to the Zodiacs for our trip to shore. Gold Harbour proved to be the most beautiful place. We were greeted by thousands of king penguins, including lots of large chicks wearing what looked like brown fur coats! Elephant seals were snoozing in large groups everywhere and didn't seem at all disturbed by us all wandering about on the beach. We were able to spend several hours walking up and down the beach taking heaps of photos. Amongst the large healthy chicks, we spotted one much smaller chick that had obviously had a tumble in the surf. He was very unsteady on his feet, and we were saddened to realise that he had obviously lost his mother and it was likely that he wouldn't last long with all the skuas on the lookout for the weaker chicks.

All too quickly it was time to return to the ship for lunch – thanks to the chefs for the hearty Cornish pasties with potato wedges and beans – which fortified us for the challenges of the afternoon. For those of us who were still finding the trips on the Zodiacs a little bit stressful, the afternoon was certainly adventurous. Half of us were put ashore in one of the coves of Cooper Bay whilst the other half spent time 'cruising' in the bay checking out the shore as we went. Whilst hanging on tight, it was



JENNY SCOTT

Gold Harbour itch



AMANDA TILL

Gold Harbour delight

great fun to be accompanied alongside by seals and a variety of penguins. On shore in the cove, we felt so privileged to be surrounded by so much wildlife – fur seals and four different types of penguins in such a small area – just magic! As well as that, South Georgia pipits were spotted along with several other types of seabirds.

Once safely back on board *Polar Pioneer* (thanks to the expertise of staff and crew in quite a big swell), we had time for a cuppa before going up to the bridge for a cruise into Drygalski Fjord. The fjord is dominated by huge cliffs of rock and ice – awesome! The captain took us right up to the Risting Glacier whilst Dave kept us entertained with stories of his adventures in this area. After our magical cruise up the fjord, we turned around and all adjourned to the bar for a pre-dinner drink. What a fantastic day in South Georgia! We all have memories to last a lifetime.



JENNY SCOTT

Anomalous at Gold Harbour



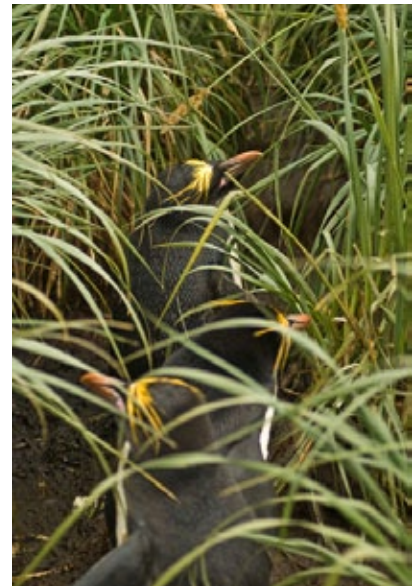
DAVID BRYAN

Waiting for Dad



ELVA FITZELL

Where have I seen those yellow jackets before?!



ANDY WEST

Which way now?



ANN BRYAN

Oh no! Not more tourists!



AMANDA TILL

Drygalski deck goers



AMANDA TILL

The brave

Day 10

Saturday, 16 January 2010

Prion Island; Salisbury Plain

Position 2100: Lat. 54° 27'S, Long. 38° 28'W

Speed: 10.7 knots

Course: 207°

Barometer: 1006.6 hPa rising

Wind: 10 knots SW

Air temperature: 1°C

Sea temperature: 2°C

*The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew, the
furrow followed free; we were the first that
ever burst into that silent sea.*

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Rime of the
Ancient Mariner*



LISA WYLIE

By Lisa Wylie

Sunshine sparkles down onto an ocean dappled with turquoise and cobalt. Jagged, snow-capped, black mountains claw at passing clouds, and lush, green tussock grass ripples like a fur pelt in the fresh morning breeze. Amid this enchanting scenery, buried deep in the heart of the Southern Ocean, an astonishing episode in the workings of the natural world is about to unfold in front of us. And, as usual, it's all happening in one truly extraordinary place: South Georgia.

Prion Island, South Georgia, home to a cornucopia of wildlife and seabirds. As dawn breaks, our omnipresent friends, the fur seals, command the beaches and the lower tussock slopes but share their living space with burrowing Antarctic prions, delicate South Georgia pipits, and the occasional carnivorous pintail duck. For these denizens of the harsh sub-Antarctic climes, a normal day seems to be in the offing, but as the sun rises, a babble of migratory sea-dwelling humans finds its way ashore. Their bird-of-paradise-like colouring makes a brilliant display; these humans are resplendent in their full sea plumage (identifiable by the marked lack of green around the gills).

These humans, able to stay at sea for hours at a time, have come ashore to hunt, and we see straightaway an unusual development in social hierarchy. Normally, these creatures will break off from the main babble into pairs or small groups of three or four to hunt, each picking a different path across

the landscape, but here, motivated by what is clearly a desire for communal benefit, the humans self-organise into larger packs of around ten, following a single trail.

Tension rises as suddenly as a Southern Ocean mini-cyclone as one of the packs, led by an alpha-female with brilliant orange plumage, is confronted with a challenge. In seeking to use the well-worn seal track up into the hills (the seals have carefully constructed this track using driftwood, chicken wire and nails – a truly incredible feat, using flippers with no opposable digits), the group comes face to face with a fearsome sight – a haughty, territorial and truly ferocious fur seal beach-master.



LISA WYLIE

Resplendant humans

Having the last laugh on the tourists



Fur seal standoff

The stand-off is resolved by the beach-master's mother calling him home to have his ears washed, and a sense of relaxation settles over the group – there will be no bloodshed today, no chance for the skuas and giant petrels to feast on the carcasses of the losers.

Migrating on, the humans ascend through the verdant tussock to the crest of the hill, and here, in the wind-whipped grass and heath, find the prize they seek, something unique to this island paradise, something they can find almost nowhere else on earth – a nesting wandering albatross. She is a magnificent sight, tucked into her nest, pristine white and ink-black feathers stirring in the air, beak and face buried against the whistling sub-Antarctic wind, save one ebony eye that pops open now and again to watch those watching her.

All around the hilltop, nested albatrosses wait patiently for the circle of life to begin anew, incubating a precious new life; non-breeders lurch across the ground, hunch-backed and ungainly on land as they are graceful and elegant in the air. The humans gather into larger groups, staring in awe and wonder at these ever-rarer aristocrats of the seabird world. Skuas swoop and dive overhead, fighting to control their flight in the bluster. The conditions soon begin to take their toll, however. Rising winds and biting chill eventually drive most of the babble back to the sea. Only a few specimens, indulging a monkey-like curiosity mixed with donkey-like stubbornness, remain perched on the hilltop, watching and waiting for the first nesting albatross to do something, anything. Their patience eventually pays dividends, though not from a quarter they expect, and these creatures are privileged to witness something very special indeed. Swooping in from overhead, a male albatross lands near a waiting female. After some courteous nodding and bowing to one another, the male begins his dancing. His potential beloved watches with interest at first, but soon wearies of his posturing and walks away. This handsome fellow must press his suit elsewhere today.

Contented, the babble returns to its floating colony, and drifts across the splendid Bay of Isles to wash up on Salisbury Plain. Something has attracted their attention, something of sufficient import to make them forego their customary midday ravening. As we follow the pack across the outwash plain of the mighty Grace Glacier, we see their more regular foraging patterns emerge, the babble fracturing into pairs and small groups to cover as much of the land as possible. Their prey on this wind-scoured glacial prairie is the king penguin. The second largest colony on South Georgia, Salisbury Plain is home to a quarter of a million penguins of all ages and all sizes, and the roving humans have the opportunity to see the full gamut of king penguin existence (one of the human males, named Subba, even has the opportunity to watch a changing of the guard as one parent surrenders custody of their egg to the other). Fur seals and elephant seals are, as always, present, playing in the silver surf, moulting on the beaches, and chasing off humans who stray too close. Here too are the skuas and giant petrels, and they are not short of food; strewn across the plain is ample evidence of the harshness of life in this brutal climate.

As afternoon wears on, hunger drives the babble back out to sea, and the human colony moves on, escorted by a pair of young wandering albatrosses, leaving the splendours of South Georgia behind for the adventures that await them further south ...



Posturing albatrosses

The Penguins of Salisbury Plain



SUBBA & BHO SINGH

What an Attenborough feeling



WINSTON & JACQUE SCOTNEY

How do you like my new coat?



MARINA SOMMER



DAVID BRYAN

Standing room only



ROGER THORNTON

New species – King Charles I penguin

Day 11

Sunday, 17 January 2010

South Scotia Sea

Position 2030: Lat. 58° 54'S, Long. 42° 29'W
Speed: 12.5 knots
Course: 206°
Barometer: 998.6 hPa falling
Wind: 6 knots from the SW
Air temperature: 0°C
Sea temperature: 1°C

*The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around;
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!*

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

By Gabrielle and John Goudy

0755. Awake call with the news that there were two fin whales off to starboard. It was either a quiet night's passage or we were getting much better at stowing things in the cabin so they do not rattle and roll all night. We have noticed that a reasonable forecast of the amount of bounce anticipated may be calculated by the number of bags decorating the passage way handrails.

This morning Howard gave us a talk on the background work involved in the making of the film *Happy Feet* illustrated with footage he had shot from the vessel *Braveheart* and on location.

1100. Weather changing, some snow with diminished visibility. Chance to get caught up on writing and laundry.

Noon: Sarah spread her stock of sale goods over the tables in the bar for a spot of 'retail therapy'. We picked up a delightful souvenir of the trip – a watercolour of a rockhopper, done by a member of the crew.

After lunch, Jenny gave a talk on whales and seals of Antarctica, which also included information of the bite that cute little penguin chicks are capable of inflicting. When we get home we must look up the film Ingrid Visser posted on YouTube of two orcas teaching the young how to catch a seal. Dave followed with an overview of the exploration of the Scotia Seas by Scottish doctor William Spiers Bruce, who spent two seasons based on Laurie Island (which we will visit tomorrow), one of the South Orkney Islands.

Before dinner, we all assembled in the bar for a review, led by Ben, of the first half of our journey. He took us day by day of the journey so far, eliciting reactions and comments or impressions from us. We found this a very good exercise as it helped to order our experiences which lay in our minds like a jumble of snapshots in a box.

Down to dinner. As it was Marinas' birthday, the chefs had made her a birthday cake, complete with candles to blow out. Bho sang "Happy Birthday" in two languages.

After dinner we went back down to the lecture room to see the film *Happy Feet*. It was fun to recognise Stromness old whaling station. We waited to see Howard's name on the credits, which took a while, not surprising as we learned that 1000 people had been involved with the production of that film.

The few bags decorating the handrails assures us of a peaceful passage to the South Orkney Islands and the ruins of Spiers Bruce's stone hut.



Retail rush for the magnetic penguins



LUISOV ANDRONOVA

Day 12

Monday, 18 January 2010

Orcadas Station, Laurie I.; South Orkney Is.

Position 2130: Lat. 60° 56'S, Long. 48° 26'W

Speed: 12.2 knots

Course: 263°

Barometer: 995.9 hPa rising

Wind: 22 knots NE

Air temperature: -2°C

Sea temperature: 0

Such a wild and inhospitable coast I have never beheld. Yet there is a profound grandeur about these savage cliffs with the drifting snow and veiling clouds...I thought of those lines of Robert Service, 'A land of savage grandeur that measures each man at his worth'.

—Frank Hurley's 1916 journal entry describing Point Wild at Elephant Island



JIM CLINKERBEARD

A friend from the other side

By John and Lorraine Kaminski

6.30 a.m. We were awakened by Howard to see our first 'real' iceberg (with chinstrap penguins atop) in Scotia Bay. The glacial fields filled in the gaps between the rugged peaks.

Next was the research station (Argentinian) on Laurie Island. The tour of the station included Omond stone cottage (built in 1902 by the Scottish Bruce Expedition), the cemetery, and the museum.

After the tour we donned our lifejackets and toured Scotia Bay for about one hour, sighting Adélie and chinstrap penguins, leopard, elephant, crabeater, Weddell, and fur seals. Two of the Zodiacs were constantly circled by a leopard seal. An unusual and amazing sight. The animals were on, and amongst, various shapes and sizes of icebergs. The blue color was intense, the water very clear.

At 12.30 p.m. *Polar Pioneer* lifted anchor and set sail for Elephant Island. Numerous large icebergs were viewed as we travelled through the South Orkney Island group.

At 2.30 p.m., we had blue skies, brilliant sunshine, and temp 4°. By 4.30 p.m. we were viewing an iceberg 7 kilometres long, which we needed to deviate around. Unfortunately, it attracted its own microclimate of cold air, low cloud and heavy mist, which decreased the visibility. It was a magnificent sight. Small birds were seen, and a tiny storm petrel was skipping and diving over the waves (a great exhibition).

This fabulous day finished with the viewing of Shackleton's incredible journey, with his men, back to South Georgia.



LISA WYLIE

Costa del Antarctica



TIM MCCULLOUGH

The essential mix

Day 13

Tuesday, 19 January 2010

Point Wild, Elephant Island

Position 2115: Lat. 61° 36'S, Long. 56° 06'W

Speed: 12.7 knots

Course: 232°

Barometer: 987.9 hPa & steady

Wind: 4 knots

Air temperature: 3°C

Sea temperature: 0°C

Penguins are beautiful, interesting and funny. They are a pleasure to watch even though they do smell and their voices are not melodious.

—George Gaylord Simpson, *Penguins Past and Present, Here and There*

By Chris Lincoln

Today began at the late hour of 8.00 a.m., with fog and rolling swells. Icebergs were spotted on radar but couldn't be seen through the fog. We were steaming toward Elephant Island, with an ETA of around 11.00 a.m. Our morning lecture by Dave covered the historic sites on the Antarctic Peninsula. As always, he turned off all the lights, which was great for sleeping but bad for taking any notes. Elephant Island was named for the profusion of elephant seals, known at the time as sea elephants. The charts of the era labelled it Sea Elephant Island, but the 'Sea' was dropped later.

A plowman's lunch was followed by our arrival, around 1.00 p.m., at Elephant Island, South Shetlands. Icebergs dot the sea, with colors ranging from jade through aquamarine, turquoise, and a deep



STEPAN PATASHVILI

Passengers and elephant seals



JIM CLINKENBEARD

Afternoon light

sapphire blue. Ahead was Furness Glacier that Dave and his team rappelled down during their 1970–1971 expedition to Elephant Island. It is a major coup to land here; the wind and swells normally make a landing impossible.

After struggling into a wildly pitching Zodiac, we came ashore on the spit of land that housed Shackleton's men – and in the midst of a chinstrap penguin colony. The Zodiacs had to take turns landing, so our time on the shore was limited to about 10 minutes per boat. The chinstrap colony was noisy, smelly and full of activity.

Back aboard the Zodiacs, we toured the local icebergs. Loud booming noises that I took for thunderclaps were the sound of the Furness Glacier shedding small chunks and crumbly bits of ice. A ring of brash ice several hundred feet wide surrounded the foot of the glacier. Sheer rock walls stretched up to the sky next to the glacier. The sea was turquoise and white surf broke on the black rocks.

While we watched wildlife, our captain went for a swim. Anyone who wants proof, should see Marina; she took pictures!

Back on the *Polar Pioneer* we had muffins for tea and a lecture by Jenny on icebergs; at least she started her talk after two power failures left the room in the dark and the projector off. The final straw was an announcement that the sun was out and the fog had cleared. We all tramped up to the bridge to see Elephant Island in all its glory. Glistening snow on black rock, seabirds and penguins, and even a single minke whale was seen.

Dinner and a show and off to sleep until Livingston Island tomorrow.



LESLEY CADZOW

Pharmacist's blue dream



BEN MADDISON

Looka moy, Kimmy Kimmy, looka moy



ROGER THORNTON

Check my tonsils



TIM MCCULLOUGH

Ben and the ice



GEOFF THOMAS

The Cooper family puzzle, completed for the first time at 4.15 p.m. on January 19th

Day 14

Wednesday, 20 January 2010

Robert Island; Deception Island

Position 2100: Lat. 63° 26'S, Long. 60° 51'W

Speed: 9 knots

Course: 200°

Barometer: 987.9 hPa & steady

Wind: 7 knots SE

Air temperature: 2°C

Sea temperature: 0°C

Snow began to fall while volcanic material rained down, knocking one of the men to the ground and damaging the radio he carried. Sheltering precariously under the rucksacks, they moved to the protection of some rocks as soon as possible, and then down to an old corrugated iron shed in Whalers Bay. In the poor visibility the splash of falling debris made it seem as if the bay was boiling, and birds could be seen flying desperately about seeking shelter.

—Vivien Fuchs, from *Of Ice and Men*, describing the Deception Island volcanic eruption, Whalers Bay 1968–69

By Tim McCullough

Calm seas gently lapped against the bow of the *Polar Pioneer* as the horizon was broken by a slither of morning sun peeking in beneath the fog and cloud. Chief mate Valery, on morning watch, kept an expert eye on the seemingly endless grey from the bridge as the ship quietly steamed down to the South Shetland Islands. Bright-blue icebergs came and went, and the passengers slept soundly in their bunks with the gentle rocking of the sea bringing dreams of adventures already undertaken

and those still ahead on the voyage. The silence was broken ever so delicately by Howard's morning wake-up call, or as some passengers referred to it, 'Howard's advanced-warning system of 10 minutes'. "Good Morning everyone, it's Wednesday the 20th of January and it's a beautiful day outside" was the message that hummed through the loudspeakers. "It's 10 to seven and breakfast will be served in 10 minutes". One passenger grunted and buried a weary head back into the pillow under the warm and cosy doona.

In the dining room there was a hum of activity; Russian stewardesses set tables and brought out the morning offerings as the passengers chose their seats in the port and starboard halls, referred to as the 'light' and 'dark' sides with reference to the coloured cladding on the walls. Some chose light and healthy fruit and yoghurt, while others indulged in the sausages and baked beans, ample fuel for the day ahead. There was a definite air of excitement and general buzz at the tables and dominated the morning conversations. 'The Inaugural Antarctic Highland Games' were devised by the 'Glaswegians' on board to spice up the landing on Deception Island and get a bit of competition and rivalry happening. Lisa and Corran had conjured up a Wellie-boot-throwing competition and posted the event details and rules on the white board the previous night. At the breakfast tables passengers quickly developed teams of four, including multi-national competitors and the compulsory under-17 member. Before the tables had cleared there were seven teams eager to take the challenge and be crowned Grand Wellington Throwing Champion.

By mid-morning the ship steamed up through the South Shetland Islands, approaching Livingstone



TIM MCCULLOUGH

Playful giant



T CADZOW

Alfred Hitchcock's 'Jim and the giant petrel'



Mean male

Island off the starboard bow. Southern giant petrels cruised along with the ship, taking advantage of the updrafts and effortlessly ducking and diving in the breeze, able to hang almost motionless in the air. Like stealth pilots, they scanned the waters below for krill to fill a morning hunger. Humpback whales were spotted, and the bridge deck and 'bow gazers' were treated with a diving tail as the majestic mammal dove deep into the southern waters.

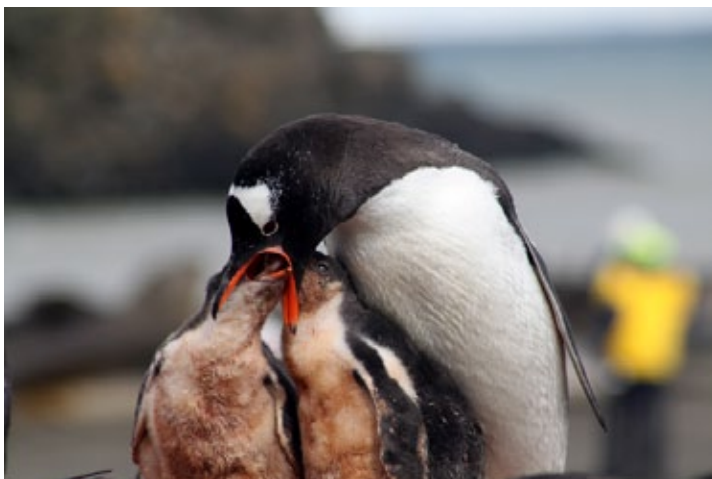
Some people continued to watch nature's gladiators at battle while others chose to observe patiently as gentoo

penguins built stone nets upon perfectly convex mounds, built up over time that littered the back of the beach. Near fledged chicks squawked loudly and expectantly as the adult birds returned to the nests to deliver a bounty of freshly caught krill for a seemingly endless hunger of these fat little fluff-balls, a necessary weight gain if they are to survive the imminent winter chill and beckoning sea ice. Dave hurried excitedly up the rocky escarpment to explore the ruins of an old sealers hut, preserved in time from the sealing days of the past. Eager to uncover new historic sites of significance, he disappeared over the crest and pottered around like a child on Christmas morning hovering around the tree to open the presents. The 'birdos' of the group were delighted to find nesting giant petrels on the rocky outcrops, and the shutters of the cameras burst like machine guns as the birds took flight and returned to the the nests. Several ladies rested their weary bones on a conveniently parked baleen whale jawbone that made an excellent make-shift lounge chair. Perfect opportunity to take a breather and just stop for a moment and take in the full extent of the Antarctic splendour of these fabulous islands. Wildlife hot-spots would seem somewhat of an understatement when presented with such sensory overload. Before long the last few passengers were donning life jackets and clambering aboard the Zodiacs to head back for a hearty lunch and an impressive steam towards Deception Island.

In the early afternoon the ominous peak of Bailey's Head could be seen, abruptly rising up out of the ocean, dwarfing the knitting-needle spire and surrounding cliffs of the volcanic caldera that is Deception Island. An ever active volcano, Deception Island holds as much intrigue and mystery as it does colourful history of the whaling days, and passengers lined the bridge and flydeck to get a bird's-eye view of 'Neptune's Bellows', the aptly named narrow entrance to the middle of the island on the outer rim of the crater. Captain Nesterov busily watched the radar and depth sounder, calling out bearings whilst Sergey

expertly steered the ship into the narrowing passage. The ship was soon dwarfed by the towering walls of the caldera on either side, rising almost vertical from the sea.

Upon landing, passengers could see the steam rising from the shoreline and nostrils were pricked with the pungent odour of sulphurous gas that filled the air. The water was warm to the touch at the shoreline, an obvious reminder of the volcanic activity for this sleeping giant. The scene was somewhat barren, like a desolate moonscape. Deep reds, blacks and browns formed a stark



Let me guess ... krill again?

contrast against the leftover white of the winter snow and the rusted remains of blubber oil tanks. Some chose to hike up to Neptune's Window, while most explored the ruins of the whaling station and residence destroyed by the last volcanic eruption in 1969 that eventually saw the closure of the station. Howard, Lesley and several others found amusement in the fantastic acoustics of an abandoned whale oil tank and 'kookaburra sits in the old gum tree' echoed in circular waves through the rusty chamber.



GARY MILLER

Deception Island tanks

Before long it was time to commence the much-anticipated Antarctic Highland Games, and the bleak, steamy shores of Deception formed the perfect backdrop of what was poised to be a great battle of epic polar proportions. The teams formed behind the starting line, and Dave paced out the official units of measurement (Burkitts). The Gentle Gentoos, Haggis Hurlers, Nicole's Nippers, Up-to-no-good, The Stinky Seals, Helly Hansen and the Hippy Ganstger Pirates all looked the part, although Tim's controversial, streamlined uniform caused an early protest from Jim. Before long the first competitors took to the line and flung the white Wellingtons as far as they could. "Eleven Burkitts" was shouted out, as results were recorded. Laughter filled the beach as competitors one after the other flung, threw or crash landed their Wellie's in fine form, one narrowly missing an inquisitive skua that flew by to investigate the commotion. At the end of the games there was a 'throw-off' between Ross and Tim to determine the Grand Champion, with Ross the final victor by an ever so slightest of margins. An honourable mention to Tim for the longest throw of the day of 21.5 Burkitts and an extra point for him and Lesley for their dubious, yet smile-provoking, outfits. A great time was had by all and a light-hearted end to yet another amazing day in the great southern ocean.

As the last Zodiac left the steamy shores of Deception and the sun lowered itself into the sky, peace once again returned to the island and the ghosts of whalers past scratched their heads at the spectacle they had just encountered. What would behold these historic shores on the next Aurora Expedition? Only time and imagination will tell!

Round-up scores for the day: Orcas 25; Leopard Seals 3; Flying Haggis 0



ALL THIS ROW BY HOWARD WHELAN



The Inaugural Antarctic Highland Games

ALL PHOTOS BY HOWARD WHELAN (OR HIS CAMERA)





Wellie-Boot-Throwing Competition



Day 15

Thursday, 21 January 2010

Port Lockroy; Jouglia Pt.; Paradise Hr.; Lemaire Ch.

Position 2100: Lat. 65° 02'S, Long. 63° 53'W

Speed: 8.7 knots

COURSE° 197

Barometer: 981.3 hPa falling

WIND 6.2 knots SE

Air temperature: 3°C

Sea temperature: 0°C

*The traveller sees what he sees, the tourist sees
what he has come to see.*

—Gilbert K. Chesterton

**By The Group of Young Ladies (From Johnneen, Yvonne,
Terry, Rosemary and Glenda)**

Privyet, or hello from the writers of Day 15.

The day started early with our fearless leader waking us at 5.30 a.m. with people eager to view the whales. A few saw these elusive creatures as we passed along the Gerlache Strait and Neumayer Channel. After breakfast most people were on the bow or lining the bridge before we hopped into the Zodiacs to visit Port Lockroy and Doumer Island. Even though we were laden with shopping dollars and wallets were begging to be opened, the anticipated shopping frenzy had to wait for us to view whale bones and blue-eyed shags and visiting yachts. The Cooper children obliged us by lying in the jaws of the whale for the avid photo shoot. At Port Lockroy we appreciated the fantastic restoration work Dave had done and took the challenge to spot a young Dave in the photograph display. Bho and Subba won the shopping challenge with two bags stuffed full of goodies now that their food supply is slowly lowering and allowing them space to fill in their suitcases. There was no space in the Zodiacs thanks to hundreds of Port Lockroy bags grasped firmly in our warm little hands.

Pizza lunch suited the palate of all both young, and not so young and Amanda gave a tray of this delicious meal to the four girls at the station.

Everyone had just settled down for their usual afternoon naps when over the speakers came “orca, orca”. These words saw us move from our cabins quicker than any evacuate-ship call.

Next was our visit to Paradise Harbour, where the bold flag of St Andrew was raised proudly aloft the higher hill nearby. A slide down the snow slope was enjoyed by many, whilst others built an amazing snowman clad in clothing from numerous and sundry. It was a stunning creation and many a magazine would have sort to snap this architectural gem. Cartwheels by Corran, Lauren and Nicole completed our warm ups for the upcoming winter Olympics.

On return we were treated to a Victoria sponge for afternoon tea. Even so Jim managed three Baked Alaskas for desert. After dinner it was unusual to see so many people on the deck to view our passage along the Lemaire Channel. The captain's skills were again demonstrated and his abilities were definitely appreciated. We then headed off for an early night as the anticipated 5.00 a.m. start and stepping on to the continent of Antarctica was beckoning.



Port Lockroy gentoo and chicks

GEOFF THOMAS



ROSEMARY BURKE

New passenger

GEOFF THOMAS



Port Lockroy kitchen

LISA WYLIE



Bigfoot spotted in the Antarctic

GEOFF THOMAS



Jougla Point whale bones

MARINA SOMMER



Hello!

STEFAN PATASHVILI



Stranded passengers!



TIM MCCULLOUGH

Leopard seal-watching, Paradise Harbour



TIM MCCULLOUGH

Howard in Paradise



TIM MCCULLOUGH

Paradise Trek



ANIN BRYON

When they were up they were up ...



SUBBA & BHO SINGH

The sweet slide down



SUBBA & BHO SINGH

Success after the hard drag uphill

Day 16

Friday, 22 January 2010

Pléneau I.; Vernadsky Station; Petermann I.

Position 2040: Lat. 64° 13'S, Long. 64° 52'W

Speed: 11.5 knots

Course: 352°

Barometer: 977.3 hPa falling

Wind: 12 knots from N

Air temperature: 2°C

Sea temperature: 0°C

*Antarctica left a restless longing in my heart
beckoning towards an incomprehensible perfection
forever beyond the reach of mortal man. Its
overwhelming beauty touches one so deeply that it
is like a wound.*

—Edwin Mickleburgh, *Beyond the Frozen Sea*

By Charles and Jocelyn Allen

Howard may have warned us, but his dulcet tones at 0430 were no more welcome for that. Forewarned of the cold we clad ourselves in extra layers, waddled across the deck and down the companionway stepping lightly onto the Zodiacs like the seasoned expeditioners we now were. No longer peering with trepidation at the unfathomable rise and fall of the Zodiacs like a penguin trying to judge whether there was a leopard seal awaiting us, we took the plunge with every confidence. All aboard and off we went into the misty morning, wending our way through the architectural mysteries of the iceberg world, Frank Lloyd Wright had nothing on this nature.

Cruising through the silent waters of the bay of the Pléneau Island with the black peaks of the Lemaire behind, we suddenly started to see leopard seals lazing on the ice flows with all the indolence of an expeditioner after lunch. Not for long: their snooze was terminated by the enthusiastic turbulence of the outboard until they yawned, rolled, scratched and finally dropped into the bay to give us a magnificent



MARINA SOMMER

Blue



EVA MELLBRING

Icebergs



A woman must do what a woman must do



The hustler



Conor driving the Zodiac

display of their sleek outline through the clear water with the occasional leap and curious peek to be sure that we were appreciating their performance. Lest they were less than appreciative, one seal decided that a bite out of one of the other Zodiacs would ensure he was not forgotten. Whilst others watched crabeater seals rounding up krill, we returned gratefully to the *Polar Pioneer* to warm frozen limbs and enjoy the usual hearty breakfast.

No time for a rest before Howard was after us again to clad up and face the Zodiacs to the Ukrainian Antarctic research station, Vernadsky, originally the British base Faraday built in the early 1960s. Our Zodiac went first to Wordie House, which was just around the corner, where we visited a base originally established by an expedition in 1932 and later re-established in 1947, the original building having most probably been destroyed by a tsunami between times. This small hut is being carefully restored and gave a true feel of the living conditions of the explorers of those times: simple, cosy, cramped yet with a warm impression of the challenge of their overwintering experience.

We cruised round the corner past one of the safest anchorages for yachts in the Peninsula to visit the research station. We were warmly welcomed there by the chief mechanic, who spoke good, if slightly broken, English. This was such a contrast to the previous building, a research station built for scientists rather than explorers, with comfortable accommodation and good facilities. The outstanding facility was the upstairs kitchen, mess and bar where some of us partook of a glass of their excellent vodka whilst others donated some of their more intimate clothing (in the form of the traditional bra) to the decorations and demonstrated a remarkable ineptitude on the billiard table. History has it that the carpenters who built the bar instead of a new boat shed were given the sack on their return, but perhaps they left a greater legacy for future generations of scientists and visitors.

Back to the *Polar Pioneer*, another quick change and lunch before we were off again to Petermann Island, where finally we were able to have a wonderful view of our favourite penguin, the Adélie. There were a few thousand other penguins, and some wretched shags nesting on the cliffs, but the day belongs to the Adélies, who behaved as only Adélies can giving us a wonderful display of just being there and living. Their chicks were fairly large though a few were somewhat behind schedule and were unlikely to survive. Just offshore a solitary leopard seal basked on his ice floe, reminding us of the risks for the feeding adults and ourselves of the challenge of getting on and off the Zodiacs in a southern swell when swaddled in a dozen layers of pullovers, Goretex and lifejackets.

We hardly had time to remove some of these layers before the intrepid polar swimmers took their plunge into the freezing depths (they assumed that Dave had driven off the awaiting leopard seal) culminating in an impressive swallow dive from the deck by Howard, our irrepressible leader. We can only assume that having got us all up so early he felt he had to atone for his sin. Hot chocolate and Crème-de-Menthe followed



SARAH WEST

Charcot's view over Petermann Island

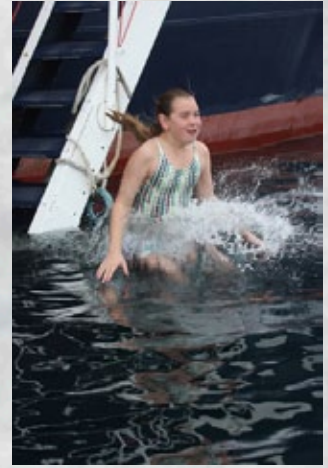
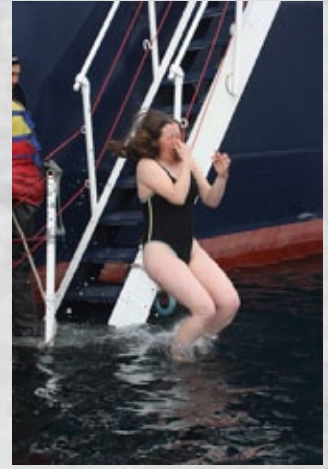
by another magnificent meal as we headed out into the ocean (and some people's meals headed elsewhere) brought our landings and visit to the Antarctic Peninsula to an end and we turned north for the Drake Passage and home.



SHIRLEY GREGOR

Ice by two

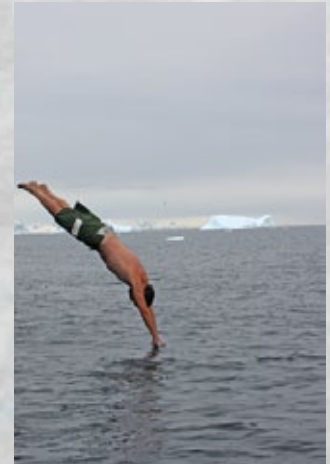
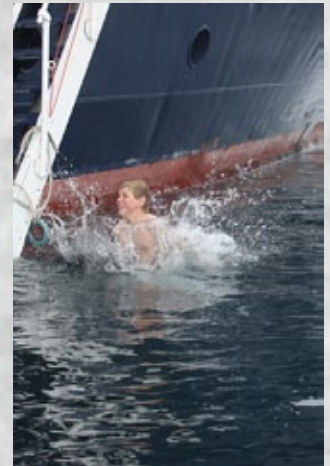
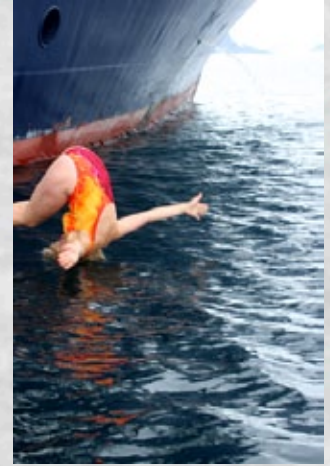
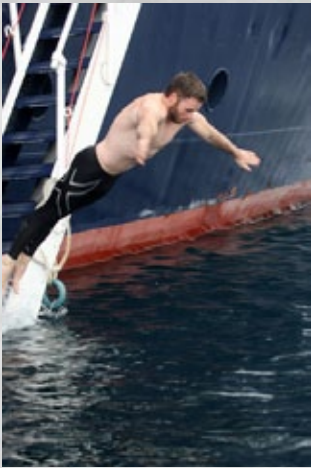
The Intrepid Polar Plungers



JACQUIE SCOTNEY

ALL BY GREG THOMAS

The Intrepid Polar Plungers



ALL BY GREG THOMAS

LISA WYLIE

Day 17

Saturday, 23 January 2010

Drake Passage

Position 2030: Lat. 59° 26'S, Long. 66° 25'W

Speed: 12.4 knots

Course: 354°

Barometer: 987.9 hPa rising

Wind: 5 knots N

Air temperature: 4°C

Sea temperature: 4°C

Often I feel I go to some distant region of the world to be reminded of who I really am. There is no mystery about why this should be so. Stripped of your daily routines ... you are forced into direct experience. Such direct experience inevitably makes you aware of who it is that is having the experience. —Michael Crichton, 1988

By Jean Golding

Saturday 23rd January and I didn't need to open my eyes for the words of an old song to float across my still sleepy brain. "My boat is rocking, my boat is rolling ...". We are in the much-feared Drake Passage! Water, water everywhere with not a speck of land in sight. A few quiet moments alone on deck gives back a splendid sense of isolation. Despite the surging swell that laid many of us low last night, this is a remarkably calm crossing, and thanks to a variety of pills, injections and patches, most intrepid expeditioners are again up and about, albeit a trifle cautiously for some.

Early risers were greeted by fog that soon cleared, and the grey day was enriched by wandering albatrosses and Wilson's storm petrels. While many people drowsed the morning away, the bar was a scene of activity as people checked their photos and selected only three to contribute to tomorrow's slide show. Amanda's assistants, Shirley and Jenny, with occasional help from Kim, Jim and others, were kept very busy. Calm seas is a relative term as we rock and roll ponderously with the swell on our port bow. Every so often a larger surge seems to jolt, rock and rotate us all at once – a very disconcerting sensation to an already lurching stomach!

In the afternoon the sun emerged and there were more wandering albatrosses to thrill us with their soaring and dipping flight, and Jenny was at last able to complete her lecture on icebergs.

A long day at sea gives us a chance to tune out the now familiar hum and throb of the engines and listen to the gentle creaks of the ship or the susurrations of the sea as we cleave our way north. It is also a chance to reflect on where we have been and all we have seen and done in the past few weeks in a world where reality has far exceeded all prior imagination. We have seen islands teeming with wildlife in the harshest of environments. We have seen places little changed since they were first discovered and have imagined the ferocious cold and hardships experienced by those early explorers and whalers without the benefit of modern foods, fabrics, transport and communications. We have seen spectacular cliffs where stark vertical pitches of rock rise sheer from the sea to vanish high in the clouds above or are capped by snow of amazing whiteness and we have seen glaciers sweeping and tumbling to the sea full of colour and patterns of algae or moraines. We have enjoyed the privilege of sharing for just a few moments in the lives of so many penguins and other birds and seals and even those elusive whales. And we have been captivated by the icebergs – amazed by the fantastically sculptured shapes and sizes and the varied colours in the ice and sea around them. It is as well we have had time to reflect and remember, as just before dinner Ben conducts a recap of the last week and we share so many wonderful memories and experiences.

After yet another gastronomic wonder from Andy and Gray for dinner, the day concludes with the beautiful film *Whale Rider* in our so-familiar Theatre 2.



Arctic tern

CLIVE & PAT MINTON

Day 18

Sunday, 24 January 2010

Drake Passage; Beagle Channel

Position 2100: Lat. 55° 00'S, Long. 66° 54'W

Course: at anchor

Speed: at anchor

Barometer: 1007.9 hPa rising

Wind: 2 knots N

Air temperature: 8°C

Sea temperature: 8°C

*He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe,
Is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.*

—Albert Einstein

By Roger and Pip Thornton

Almost our final day of sailing. The day begins as usual with Howard's dulcet tones, telling us what day it is, the date and time, all very important. Also, what a beautiful morning it is (what morning has not been beautiful according to Howard?) and that the Drake Passage is wonderfully calm. Added to this are the morning's plans. A quick read of the *Penguin Post* and off to breakfast.

(One of us is writing this account – the other is not at her best due to the disastrous, dreaded Drake.)

As we round Cape Horn, we're treated to a wonderful display of aerobatics by hundreds of black-browed albatrosses. Now, almost back to Ushuaia, it is appropriate to reflect on where we've been and what we've done over the 19 days. Despite being at sea for nine of those, we've made 17 landings and had five Zodiac excursions, plus two good, long walks. The Aurora team has delivered us to some of the truly great sites (such as Salisbury Plain, Gold Harbour and Prion Island), where others would not have dared to tread.

Many of the experiences were both wonderful and expected – massed penguins, sleek seals, countless glaciers and majestic icebergs, to name but a few. We've also eaten superbly (when well enough to do so) – three meals a day.

However, three aspects of our trip fit into the unexpected category. Firstly, the malodorous nature of Antarctica. Penguins pong, the stench of elephant seals is stupefying, but whales are the worst. On one Zodiac outing, we had the pleasure of being very close to a minke whale when it blew and, brother, did we know all about it!!

The second surprise was the truly stunning and narrow channels through which we travelled between Antarctic islands. With majestic mountain peaks to both port and starboard, at times it seemed as though we could almost reach out and touch both sides.

Thirdly, the fact that we were all welcome on the bridge added to the experience hugely. Not only was the view as good as it gets (unless willing to freeze on the flying bridge) but it was great to experience the quiet competence with which Captain Nesterov and his crew operate the ship.



Our wonderful chefs hard at work

AMANDA TILL



AMANDA TILL

Head stewardess Larissa

Now, moored at the eastern end of the Beagle Channel awaiting the arrival of the pilot, the trip has come to a terrific conclusion. Everyone's favourite photos have been shared, and the captain's drinks was a most lively affair, with renditions of some old-time favourites (albeit with an Antarctic flavour). After dinner, Dave Burkitt's Antarctic quiz tested our memories and all teams did well. However, the evening climaxed with the piping in of the haggis (for an early Burns Night), a beautifully be-sporanned Dave's 'Ode to the Haggis' and much exuberant Scottish dancing.

Thank you Aurora for an unforgettable holiday.

Poem inscribed on the Cape Horn Albatross Monument

by Sara Vial (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*



ROBYN MUNDY

Juvenile wandering albatross



AMANDA TILL

Flowering sea cabbage, Falkland Islands

Day 19

Monday, 25 January 2010

Ushuaia

Position: Lat. 54° 52'S, Long. 67° 56'W

Course: at wharf

Speed: at wharf

Air temperature: 10°C

Sea temperature: 10°C

Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.

—Anonymous

By Göran and Eva Mellbring

Some thoughts January 7–25, 2010

August 2008. We decided. It would be the longer voyage. The messages from friends in Argentina and a Swedish 'Antarctic veteran' were clear: you must visit South Georgia.



Beauchene Island

SHIRLEY GREGOR

We invented our equipment in November 2009. We made some complements before the Christmas-shopping. We were ready to go.

January 7, 2010. In the morning we could see the *Polar Pioneer* from the room at our hotel in Ushuaia. She is really a beauty. This was confirmed in the afternoon while waiting on the quay.

On the ship we found our cabin very suitable as were the common areas. We were altogether 55 passengers. The Australians dominated. The other nations represented were the United States, the UK, Canada, Israel, Switzerland and Sweden. Already during the introductory lessons we found our fellow passengers very appropriate for this adventure voyage. Questions were adequate. The scheduled times were respected. We grew into a large family very fast. This was deepened during our journey and added significantly to the overall experience.

The Falklands surprised us by its botanic productivity. The wildlife was easy reachable and gave a magnificent impression. Especially we remember the rockhopper penguin and the striated caracara. The latter exists only at the western Falkland Islands in about 500 pairs. A few pair nest in some islands outside Tierra del Fuego. Very interesting is the history of the Falklands as showed at the museum.

The Shag Rocks made a strange impression in the middle of the huge Atlantic Ocean. Hitherto to the weather had been calm. During the night before South Georgia we were hit by the storm. The top wind speed as measured on *Polar Pioneer* was 23 m/s (severe gale). Our excellent captain, however, found a place behind South Georgia for less wind. It was for sure wind over 25 m/s in the area (i.e. storm). We were lucky to approach South Georgia the same night the storm begun. One day earlier or after we had left the area would have spoiled a lot.

South Georgia is absolutely fantastic! The topography of the island is stunning. So are also the king penguin colonies. To mingle with the birds there is to be in another world. The ghost towns from the whaling era remind us of mankind's inability to adjust. Hunt and kill as much as possible – sooner or later the business will die.

On Elephant Island we landed at Point Wild. Well, we think the whole island is wild. It is remarkable people could stay alive there during more than four months in 1916. We saw a beautiful panorama when sailing along the south border.

Before the start we had expected to see more of the Antarctic Peninsula. We should visit only a small part. Furthermore, we thought most of the snow had gone in the middle of January. How wrong we were! Mountains, glaciers and icebergs were overwhelming. Sea elephants, leopard seals and penguins gave memories for a lifetime.

We had high demands before the voyage. Aurora Expeditions was chosen because of the image they give regarding adventure travel. In other words, we wanted a relatively tough program. The name of *Polar Pioneer* was met with expressive respect in Ushuaia. It is a pleasure to conclude the staff stood up to our expectations! Their enthusiastic leadership and service were beyond duty. We really hope the voyages will continue under the same concept in the future. Captain and crew, staff and our fellow travellers – thank you for a tremendous three weeks!

PS. Several hundreds of black-browed albatrosses outside Cape Horn was a grand finale.

www.photonature.se

Poems recited by Gabrielle Goudy

(author unknown)

The Cormorant

*The common cormorant or shag
Lays eggs inside a paper bag
The reason, you will see no doubt,
Is to keep the lightning out.
But what these unobservant birds
forget, is wandering herds
of bear, come along with buns
and steal the bags
to hold their crumbs.*

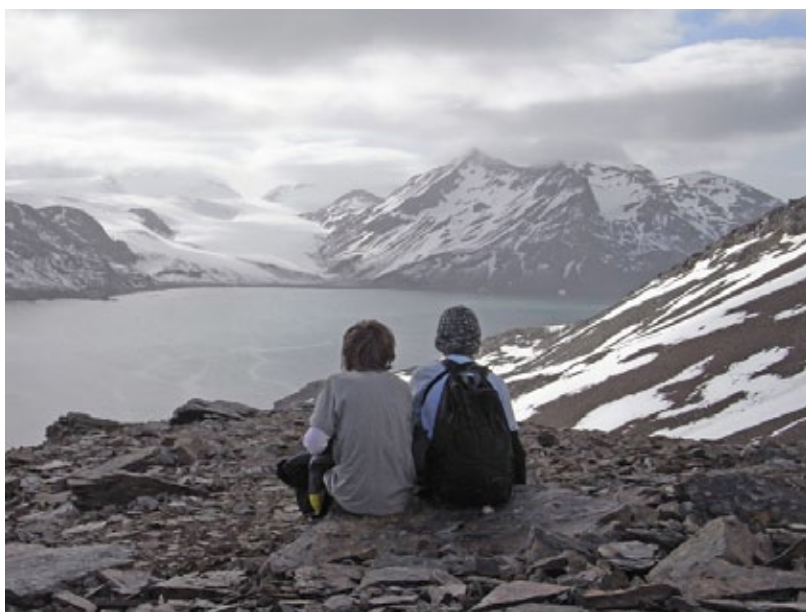
The Jellyfish

*The jellyfish swam in the tropical sea
He said "This world is made for me.
there is nothing above and
nothing below
A jellyfish doesn't know"*



AMANDA TILL

John and Gabrielle visit Stanley again



BEN MADDISON

The boys survey the scene

Distance travelled: 3587 nautical miles

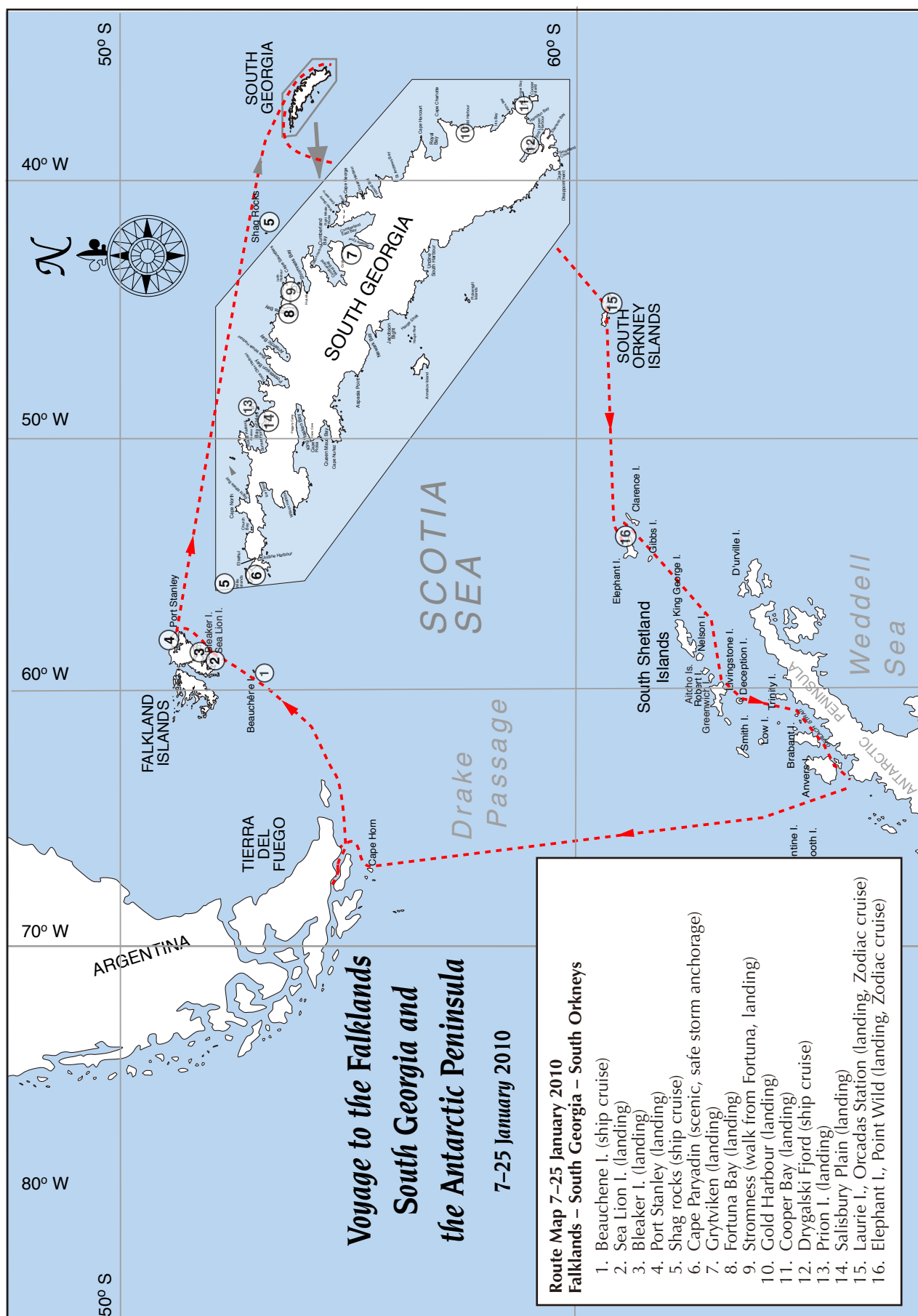


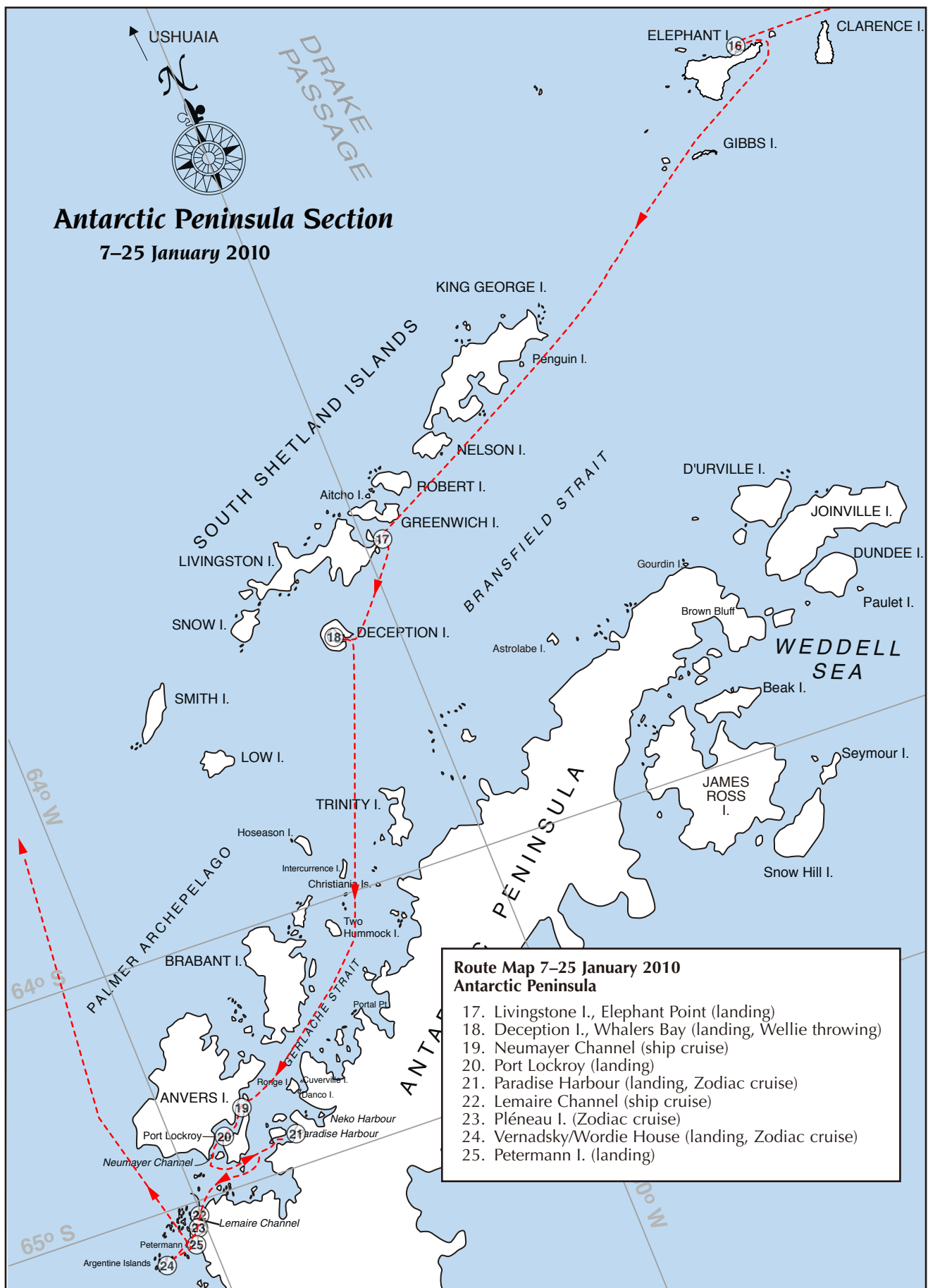
The group

Russian Phrases

English.	Russian
Hello.....	Zdrastvuyte
Good Morning	Dobraye Utra
Good Afternoon	Dobry Dyen
Good Evening	Dobry Vyechir
Good Night.....	Spakoonay Noche
Good Bye	Da Svidanya
See You Later.....	Paka
See You Tomorrow.....	Da Zaftra
How Are You?	Kak Dyela?
Fine.....	Charasho (Ch As In 'Loch')
Me Too	Ya Tozhe (Zh As In Pleasure)
Yes.....	Da
No.....	Nyet
Thank You	Spasiba

English.	Russian
Thank You Very Much . . .	Balshoye Spasiba
Please	Pzhalusta
You Are Welcome	Pazhalusta, Nichivo
One, Two, Three	Adeen, Dva, Tree
Four, Five, Six	Chiteeree, Pyat, Shest
Seven, Eight.....	Syem, Vosyem
Nine, Ten.....	Dyevet, Dyeset
Cheers!	Na Zdarovya!
One For The Road!	Na Pasachode!
What Is Your Name? . . .	Kak Vas Zavut?
My Name Is	Menya Zavut
What Is That In Russian? .	Kak Eta Pa Rooski?
I Don't Understand . . .	Ya Nye Panimayo
Do You Understand? . . .	Panimayesh?





BIRD SPECIES SIGHTED, *Polar Pioneer*, 7–25 Jan. 2010

BIRD SPECIES	Jan																								
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25						
King Penguin			X					X	X	X			X												5
Gentoo Penguin			X				X	X	X	X				X	X	X									8
Chinstrap Penguin							X		X				X	X	X										5
Adelie Penguin												X				X									2
Macaroni Penguin									X	X															2
Rockhopper Penguin			X																						1
Magellanic Penguin	X	X	X	X															X						5
Wandering Albatross		X			X		X			X	X							X	X						7
Royal Albatross		X		X	X	X												X	X						6
Black-browed Albatross	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X							16
Grey-headed Albatross						X	X	X	X	X															5
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross									X	X															2
Northern Giant Petrel	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X			X						X						10
Southern Giant Petrel	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						17
Giant petrel sp.	X	X		X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X									11
Cape Petrel		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X							13
Snow Petrel									X		X	X				X									4
Antarctic Fulmar (Southern)													X		X										2
Antarctic Petrel					X																				1
Blue Petrel		X			X					X		X						X							5
Grey Petrel					X																				1
White-chinned Petrel		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X					X							11
Sooty Shearwater			X		X	X													X						4
Prion sp. (probably mainly Antarctic)		X			X	X			X	X	X	X	X					X							9
Slender-billed prion		X																							1
Wilson's Storm-petrel		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						15
Black-bellied Storm-petrel		X			X						X	X	X												5
Diving Petrel(Common/Georgian)		X			X					X															3
King (blue-eyed) Cormorant (Shag)	X		X			X			X	X		X	X	X	X										9
Rock Cormorant (Shag)	X		X																						2
Olivaceous Cormorant	X																								1
Striated Caracara (Johnny Rook)			X																						1
Crested Caracara			X																						1
Peregrine			X																						1
Turkey Vulture	X		X																						2
Snowy Sheathbill (American)			X				X	X	X	X		X			X										7
Magellanic Oystercatcher			X																						1
Rufous-chested Dotterel			X																						1
Two-banded Plover			X																						1
Chilean Skua	X																								1
Falklands Skua			X																						1
Brown Skua			X				X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X									10
Kelp Gull	X	X	X	X				X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X									12
Dolphin Gull	X		X	X																					3
Arctic Tern	X																								1
Antarctic Tern							X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X									9
South American Tern	X		X																						2
Kelp Goose			X																						1
Upland Goose			X	X																					2
Ruddy-headed Goose			X																						1
Flightless Steamer Duck			X																						1
Patagonian Crested Duck			X	X																					2
Silvery Grebe			X																						1
White Tufted Grebe			X																						1
Chiloe Wigeon			X																						1
South Georgia Pintail								X	X	X															3
Speckled Teal			X																						1
Falklands Pipit			X																						1
South Georgia Pipit									X	X															2
Dark-faced Ground Tyrant			X																						1
Tussac Bird (Blackish Cinclodes)			X																						1
Falklands Thrush			X																						1
Black-throated Finch			X																						1
Long-tailed Meadowlark			X																						1
Grass Wren			X																						1
Cobbs Wren			X																						1
Magellanic (Falklands) Snipe			X																						1
House Sparrow				X																					1
Number of Bird Species per day:	13	16	42	14	17	13	14	14	22	23	9	18	16	10	11	8	9	8							
Jan	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25						

MAMMAL SPECIES SIGHTED, *Polar Pioneer*, 7–25 Jan. 2010

	Jan	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
MARINE MAMMALS																					
Southern Sea Lion		X		X																	2
Antarctic Fur Seal							X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X						8
Southern Elephant Seal				X					X	X	X		X			X	X				7
Crabeater Seal													X			X	X				3
Weddell Seal													X			X	X				3
Leopard Seal													X			X	X				3
Peale's Dolphin					X														X		2
Hourglass Dolphin						X															1
Unidentified Dolphin			X	X																	2
Humpback Whale										X			X		X	X	X				5
Fin Whale			X									X									2
Minke Whale												X	X	X		X	X				5
Orca			X													X					2
Right Whale						X															1
Unidentified Whale													X					X			2
Number of Mammal Species per day:		1	3	3	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	2	8	2	2	7	5	1	1		
		Beagle Channel - at sea	At sea	Falklands - Beauchene-Sealion-Bleaker	Stanley - at sea	At sea	At sea - Shag Rocks	Sth G - Undine Harbour-C. Payadin	Grylken-Fortuna-Stromess	Gold Hbr-Cooper B.-Drygalski Fjord	Prion Island-Salisbury Plain	At sea - Scotia Sea	Sth Orkneys - Orcadas - At sea	At sea - Elephant Island-Pt. Wild	Livingstone Is-Deception Is	Pt Lockroy-Paradise B.-Lemaire Ch.	Pleneau Is-Vernadsky-Petermann Is.	At sea - Drake Passage	At sea - Drake Passage-C. Horn	Beagle Channel-Ushuaia - No obs.	Total days species sighted



KIM KETELBEY

Where's my mummy!?



KIM KETELBEY

Who can I bite next?

CETACEAN SIGHTINGS, Polar Pioneer, 7-25 Jan. 2010

DATE	TIME	SHIP LOCATION S. LAT.	W. LONG.	SPECIES OF WHALE	EST. #	CONDITIONS SEA	ICE (tenths)	COMMENTS
8-Jan	9.45am	54° 06' S	63° 09' W	Orca		4 moderate	0	On passage to Falklands. Travelling fast, under bow, fins seen.
8-Jan	9.15pm	53° 19' S	60° 53' W	Fin whale	3-4	moderate	0	Several large and small whales, blowing and feeding, possibly fin mothers and calves or mixed fin and sei whale group.
10-Jan	3.30pm	52° 14' S	53° 17' W	Peales dolphin	12-13	moderate	0	Several separate pods, near ship.
11-Jan	9.45am	52° 27' S	51° 53' W	Hourglass dolphin	3	moderate	0	Bow of ship - very fast.
11-Jan	6.10pm	52° 47' S	48° 32' W	Hourglass dolphin	3	moderate	0	Travelling briefly with ship- mainly dorsal fins seen.
11-Jan	7.30pm	52° 49' S	48° 11' W	Right whale, humpback whale	2 + 2	moderate	0	Right whales: callosities and black tail fins seen. Humpbacks: humping, blowing and flipper-waving.
17-Jan	7.55am	56° 30' S	40° 10' W	Fin whale	1	moderate	0	Scotia Sea - beside ship, travelling.
17-Jan	9.45am	56° 46' S	40° 29' W	Fin whale	2	moderate	0	
17-Jan	1.55pm	57° 32' S	41° 12' W	Fin whale	2	calm	0	Scotia Sea
18-Jan	6.45am	60° 30' S	44° 20' W	Minke whale	1	calm	1	Near Laurie Island, South Orkneys
18-Jan	7.30am	60° 47' S	44° 38' W	Humpback whale, Minke whale	1	calm	1	Near Orcadas station, around ship.
18-Jan	9.00pm	60° 55' S	48° 22' W	Unidentified whale, Minke whale	3	moderate	1	Three thick straight short blows.
19-Jan	12.50pm	61° 05' S	54° 52' W	Minke whale	1	moderate	1	
19-Jan	5.30pm	61° 12' S	54° 50' W	Minke whale	1	calm	1	Off south coast of Elephant Island
20-Jan	8.10am	62° 46' S	60° 09' W	Humpback whale	2	calm	0	Right next to ship
20-Jan	9.45am	62° 43' S	60° 43' W	Humpback whale	3	calm	0	Whales all around ship all morning, along coast of Livingstone Island.
21-Jan	8.40am	64° 46' S	63° 22' W	Humpback whale	35+	calm	0	Along Gerlache Strait all morning
21-Jan	9.00am	-	-	Minke whale	3	calm	0	Alongside ship, portside
21-Jan	12.00pm	64° 54' S	63° 37' W	Minke whale	4	calm	1	Dived right under ship
21-Jan	1.30pm	64° 56' S	63° 19' W	Orca	10+	calm	0	All around ship, 2 males, many females and young
21-Jan	9.10pm	65° 03' S	63° 55' W	Minke whale	1	calm	3	In Lemaire Channel
22-Jan	6.00pm	64° 43' S	64° 40' W	Humpback whale	2+	moderate	0	"Whales everywhere" (Valeriy Chief mate) coming out of French Passage into Drake.
23-Jan	5.30pm	60° 20' S	66° 14' W	Unidentified whale	1	-	-	Large whale
24-Jan	9.00pm	55° 00' S	66° 54' W	Peales dolphin	10+	calm	0	Cavorting around ship, at anchor in Beagel Channel waiting for pilot.



HOWARD WHELAN

Eat your heart out, Jamie!



HOWARD WHELAN

Luda skipping rope



TIM MCCULLOUGH

Kelp elephant



LESLEY CADZOW

Happy feet star moves



AMANDA TILL

Relics of Grytviken

Expeditioners

Charles & Jocelyn Allen
David & Ann Bryan
Rosemary Burke
Jim Clinkenbeard
Ian & Debra Cooper
Brendan & Matthew Cooper
Lauren & Nicole Cooper
Sally Corke
Ross & Elva Fitzell
Tom Follosco
Jean Golding
John & Gabrielle Goudy
Shirley Gregor
Glenda Horner
John & Lorraine Kaminski
Roger & Judy Kaye
Kim Ketelbey
Brian Larner
Phil & Gill Leach
Chris Lincoln
Anita Listkow
Terry Maunsell
Corran McArthur
Tim McCullough
Neil McLachlan
Göran & Eva Mellbring
Clive & Pat Minton
Pauline Roberts
Jim, Ben & Connor Russell
Winston & Jacquie Scotney
Subba & Bho Singh
Marina Sommer
Yvonne Stenning
Johnneen Tierney
Geoff Thomas
Roger & Pip Thornton
Lisa Wylie

Expedition Staff

<i>Expedition Leader</i>	Howard Whelan
<i>Assistant Expedition Leader</i>	Amanda Till
<i>Naturalist & Lecturer</i>	Jenny Scott
<i>Historian</i>	Dave Burkitt
<i>Assistant Historian</i>	Ben Maddison
<i>Doctor</i>	Lesley Cadzow
<i>Chef</i>	Gray Kirkpatrick
<i>Second Chef</i>	Andy West
<i>Hotel Manager</i>	Sarah West

Polar Pioneer Crew

<i>Captain</i>	Sergey Nesterov
<i>Chief Mate</i>	Valery Mamedov
<i>2nd Mate</i>	Gennady Berg
<i>3rd Mate</i>	Vadim Fedin
<i>Radio Officer</i>	Valery Artemenkov
<i>Boatswain</i>	Sergey Solomkin
<i>AB Sailors</i>	Sergey Andronov, Oleg Kaberegin, Valeriy Ryabtsev
<i>Chief Engineer</i>	Viktor Burakov
<i>2nd Engineer</i>	Andrey Stepantsov
<i>3rd Engineer</i>	Alexander Merkulov
<i>4th Engineer</i>	Andrey Dadychenko
<i>Electrical Engineer</i>	Radik Kharrasov
<i>Motormen</i>	Nikolay Emolenko, Sergey Ivanov
<i>Head Stewardess</i>	Larisa Solomkina
<i>Stewardess/Waitress</i>	Liudmila (Luda) Lomakina, Larisa Krylova, Svetlana Egorova, Liubov (Luba) Andronova, Tamara Kirsanova, Natalia Pustovalova
<i>Russian Crew Cook</i>	Petr Pustovalov

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Log production and design: Carrots & David Colfelt
Windward Publications Pty Ltd
Berry, New South Wales, 2535 Australia



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