



OCEANWIDE

EXPEDITIONS

Falkland Islands, South Georgia and Antarctic Peninsula

29th November – 18th December 2017

M/V Plancius



Antarctic Sound December 12th 2017

MV *Plancius* was named after the Dutch astronomer, cartographer, geologist and vicar Petrus Plancius (1552-1622). *Plancius* was built in 1976 as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy and was named *Hr. Ms. Tydeman*. The ship sailed for the Royal Dutch Navy until June 2004 when she was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions and completely refit in 2007, being converted into a 114-passenger expedition vessel. *Plancius* is 89 m (267 feet) long, 14.5 m (43 feet) wide and has a maximum draft of 5 m, with an Ice Strength rating of 1D, top speed of 12+ knots and three diesel engines generating 1230 hp each.



Captain Alexey Nazarov

and his international crew

Including:

Chief Officer:	Jaanus Hannes	[Estonia]
2nd Officer:	Matei Mocanu	[Romania]
3rd Officer:	Clarence Pamine	[Phillipines]
Chief Engineer:	Teunis van't Verlaat	[Netherlands]
Hotel Manager:	Zsuzsanna Varga	[Hungary]
Assist. Hotel Manager:	Bobby Manevski	[Macedonia]
Head Chef:	Ralf Barthel	[Germany]
Sous Chef:	Lars Prater	[Germany]
Ship's Physician:	Moniek Mestrom	[Netherlands]

AND

Expedition Leader:	Andrew Bishop	[Australia]
Assist. Expedition Leader:	Katja Riedel	[Germany]
Expedition Guide:	Ali Liddle	[England]
Expedition Guide:	Daniel Höhne	[Germany]
Expedition Guide:	Marijke de Boer	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	Walt Sturgeon	[USA]
Expedition Guide:	Joselyn Fenstermacher	[USA]
Expedition Guide:	Lydie Lescarmontier	[France]

Day 1 – Wednesday 29th November 2017

Embarkation – Ushuaia, Argentina

GPS 08.00 Position: 042°45'S / 065°01'W

Wind: WSW 5. Sea State: In Port. Weather: Clear. Temperature: +18°C.



So here we are at last in Tierra del Fuego, at the bottom of the world. Well, from Ushuaia we'll be going *south* of south...a long way south. But for today, we ambled about this lovely Patagonian city, savouring the local flavours and enjoying the sights.

Ushuaia marks the end of the road in Argentine Tierra del Fuego, but also the beginning – the beginning of a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. During the summer this rapidly growing frontier town of 55,000 bustles with adventurous travellers. The duty-free port flourishes with tourism but also thrives on a sizeable

crab fishery and a burgeoning electronics industry. Ushuaia (lit. "*bay that penetrates to the west*" in the indigenous Yaghan tongue) clearly benefits from its magnificent, yet remote setting. The rugged spine of the South American Andes ends here, where two oceans meet. As could be expected from such an exposed setting, the weather has the habit of changing on a whim. However, temperatures during the long days of the austral summer are relatively mild, providing a final blanket of warmth before heading off on our adventures.

For many of us this is the start of a lifelong dream. The excitement comes in different forms for each unique person, but even the most experienced of us feels genuine excitement to depart on a journey to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and Antarctica. Most passengers were promptly at the gangway at 16:00, ready to board our ship MV *Plancius*, home for the next 19 days.

We were greeted at the gangway by members of our Expedition staff who were enjoying the warm sunshine having just returned from Antarctica that morning. Our luggage was already on board so after a short wait on the wharf we made our way up the gangway and onto the good ship *Plancius*. We were met at Reception by Zsuzsanna and Bobbi, our Hotel and Restaurant Managers. We were then checked into our cabins with the assistance of our fabulous Filipino crew.

A little while after boarding we convened in the lounge on deck five to meet First Officer Jaanus, who led us through the details of the required SOLAS (Safety Of Life At Sea) Safety and Lifeboat Drill, assisted by the crew and staff. On hearing the alarm we reconvened at the 'muster station', the lounge, for the mandatory safety briefing and abandon ship drill donning our huge orange life jackets that will keep us safe should the need arise. After this lifeboat drill we returned to the outer decks to watch our departure from the jetty of Ushuaia and the last of city life for a while. We entered the Beagle Channel with an escort of Black browed albatross. Once we were on our way into the channel we were invited once again to the lounge to meet our Expedition Leader, Andrew Bishop and Hotel Manager Zsuzsanna



who gave us an overview of the ship, a floating hotel which will be our home for the next few weeks. We then met the rest of the Expedition Team, an international bunch who will guide during our voyage, driving us ashore, giving lectures and ensuring we get the best possible experience during our trip.

This was also a chance to meet our Captain, Alexey Nazarov and toast our voyage with a glass of Prosecco. At 19:30 we sampled the first of many delicious meals on board, prepared by Chef Ralf and Lars and their galley staff. This first evening on board was occupied with more exploration of the ship, adjusting to her movements, and settling into our cabins. In the early hours of the morning we would be out into



the open waters of the Drake Passage and heading north eastwards towards the Falkland Islands.

Day 2 – Thursday 30th November 2017

At Sea Sailing to the Falkland Islands

08:00 GPS Position: 054°20' S / 064°20' W

Wind: NNW 6/7. Sea State: Rough. Weather: Clear. Air Temp: +10°C. Sea Temp: +8°C



This morning was our first wake-up call of the voyage and Andrew woke us up with news of wind and weather. There was around 30 knots of wind blowing and for some of it was a little more than we had hoped for as we got up and tried to make our way to breakfast. For some of us the smell of food was a perfect start to the day but for others it was all a bit too much for the seasick body and escaping back to the cabin was the best option.

After breakfast some of us headed out on deck for some fresh air, enjoy the sunshine and enjoy the birds that were flying around the

ship and gathering in large numbers behind the ship as we sailed towards the Falkland Islands. The most common species was the Giant petrel, both Southern and Northern but there were also Black browed albatross, Cape petrels and even some Royal albatross. Birds habitually follow ships at sea looking for food brought up to the surface by the wake but also to enjoy the uplift created by our passing.

Traditionally they would follow fishing vessels for discarded food but that is not on offer from *Plancius* of course!

At 9.45 we were invited to the lounge for the mandatory Zodiac briefing from Andrew, which gave an overview of our Zodiac operations and how we should embark and disembark the small rubber boats both at the ship and shore. After this there was just time to grab some morning coffee and head down to the Restaurant where Ali was ready to give the first part of her two part presentation about the Falklands Islands where she lived for 15 years. This first part looked at the history and economy of the islands and gave an insight into island life on this isolated

archipelago. It was a great introduction for many of us who knew only a little about the islands and we all looked forward to hearing the second part in the afternoon.

Lunch was served at 12.30 and there were a few more takers in the Restaurant than there had been for breakfast and by mid-afternoon, with the sun beginning to break through the clouds and the wind decreasing we all enjoyed some more time out on deck trying to photograph the Giant petrels that were flying just a head height on the top

deck. A few whale blows were seen off in the distance but they were too far away to be properly identified.

At 3pm we were invited to the boot room deck by deck to collect our Rubber Boots ready for the wet landings on shore. The staff were on hand to ensure that the system ran with the utmost efficiency with boots of all sizes being passed along the line to ensure everyone got the correct size ready to go ashore in the morning.

By the time boots were issued and afternoon tea had been consumed in the lounge it was time to go back downstairs to the Restaurant for the second instalment of Ali's presentation about the Falklands. This time she talked about the tourism in the islands and showed some photographs of some of the wildlife we hope to see during our visit. She also told us about what took her to the islands in the first place and some of her 'character building' experiences as a travelling teacher on the remote farms of the Falkland Islands.

By this time it was early evening and some of us took a pre-dinner drink at the bar while others enjoyed the warm sunshine on deck. Those of us out on deck got a great view of some Fin whales and Hourglass dolphins that came quite close to the bow of the ship. These whales are the second largest of all the whales and the dolphins often like to bow ride these huge animals as well as the ship so it was great to see the interaction between them both.

At 6.30 we were invited to the lounge for the daily briefing where Andrew explained our Plan A plans for tomorrow, at Carcass Island and Saunders Island, Lydie outlined the plans for a photo competition on board and Marijke told us a little more about the Fin whales and Hourglass dolphins we had seen earlier.



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Day 3 – Friday 1st December 2017

Carcass and Saunders Islands

Falkland Islands

08:00 GPS Position: 051°18' S / 060°33' W

Wind: W 4. Sea State: Slight. Weather: Clear. Air Temp: +10°C. Sea Temp: +7°C

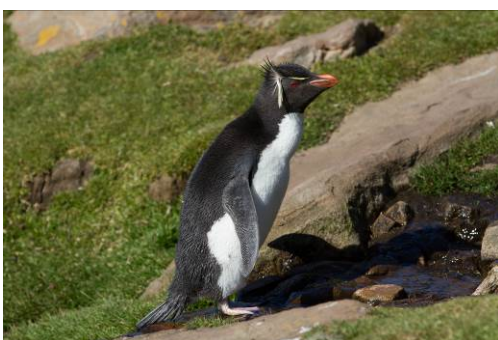


Many were up bright and early to witness the captain's navigation of Woolly Gut, a narrow passage through the small islands en-route to our morning's destination. It was a gorgeous sunny day full of sea-sparkle and happy faces. The first Gentoo penguins were sighted in a small rookery as we cruised by a low peninsula and then a few Commerson's dolphins made a brief appearance as well—what a nice welcome to the Falklands! But more was waiting for us onshore at Carcass Island.

Plancius anchored in the bay and as soon as the anchor was dropped the staff went ashore and before too long the long-walkers departed the ship first and were dropped off at Dyke Bay, a shallow sandy bay where two

young elephant seal pups, or weaners, were on hand to greet them—a taste of things to come in South Georgia. The keen birders were pleased to get some great views of the endemic Cobb's Wren amongst the kelp seaweed at the high water mark and Tussac birds fed amongst the rotting kelp feeding on marine invertebrates. Ali led the start of the walk through the Marram grass and into the tussac grass at the back of the beach. As soon as we started walking we began to see many of the birds that Carcass Island is famous for. With no rats or cats there is an abundance of small, ground nesting birds. We saw Magellanic snipe, Long tailed meadowlark, and tussac birds to name just a few. Over the low lying hills we came across a small Gentoo penguin colony and all enjoyed our first views of these fabulous little birds. Most of the penguins were still incubating eggs but some of them already had very small chicks that can't have been more than a few days old. Brown skuas could be seen patrolling around the edge of the colony looking for an opportunity to take a chick or egg from under the beak of the penguins.

From here we walked over to Leopard Beach, a beautiful white sandy beach with turquoise water making it feel more like the Caribbean than the Falklands. The presence of penguins was a bit of a giveaway that we were indeed in the South Atlantic! We watched Magellanic penguins surfing in the shallow water and coming out onto the beach in a rush and beach combed looking at shells and sponges.



From here we walked westwards along the coastline towards the settlement where there were ample opportunities for other photographic subjects—the landscape, the plants, and other people enjoying themselves on a lovely summer's day tramp through the countryside.

Not all preferred to go for a long walk so a few zodiac loads were taken to the settlement jetty where a small group accompanied Marijke on a nature walk. No one had to go very far however to see the group of Night heron that had taken up residence in the bushes just next to the landing site. Eventually everyone converged on the settlement proper,

where the sheltered garden provided a very welcoming setting where to sit with a cup of tea and some cakes listening to the birdsong and perhaps shedding most layers of clothing... a turn around the lawn in bare feet made it really feel like a summer's holiday.

Before anyone could drop too deeply into a snooze in the sun, it was time to put boots and layers back on for the return trip to the ship. Once on board there was just a short amount of time before rugging up again for the afternoon landing at Saunders Island. Again the landing was at a shallow sandy bay but with a bit more wind and more rugged scenery the atmosphere felt a bit less English Garden and more Windswept Beach and Hills. Once on shore we were met by the land owner, David Pole Evans and many of the island's resident penguins and Striated caracara before her headed off in a line of brightly coloured people following Katja and Walt along the "red stick



path". This went along the area known as The Neck, past the Gentoo colony and a few nesting Skua. Careful and patient watching of the penguins on their nests rewarded those watching with glimpses of wee tiny wobbly heads poking out to complain that mom or dad hadn't provided enough food! The first chicks of the season, likely only a day or two old as the second eggs hadn't hatched yet. What great timing for our visit! Many males are still actively offering nest material to their mates, sometimes just a small chunk of peat or nub of twig. This will prove to be quite the counterpoint to the robust pebble nests we will see in the Antarctic.

Next up was our first encounter with King penguins and two almost impossibly fat chicks who seemed to barely be able to stand up. Perhaps the energy going into moulting off their brown baby down into their adult plumage was taking its toll, but regardless they provided some good entertainment.

Then it was up, up, up the hill—watching for Magellanic penguins in their burrows or making their climb home from a stint out at sea. Up and over the fence and then along the way to visit the fourth penguin species of the day (where else can you do that?!), at the Rockhopper colony. What fun it was to watch the jolly little trompers come up the hill to grab a drink of fresh water, or throw their head and flippers back in ecstasy calling out to the world to see how beautifully their fancy eyebrows flash and flutter in the wind. But this wasn't the only sight to see on the cliff side—just a bit further was the source behind all of the large white specs soaring around, the Black-browed albatross colony. Seeing their pillar-like nests up close, not to mention their sleek forms and beak-rubbing courtship behaviour, was something very special.



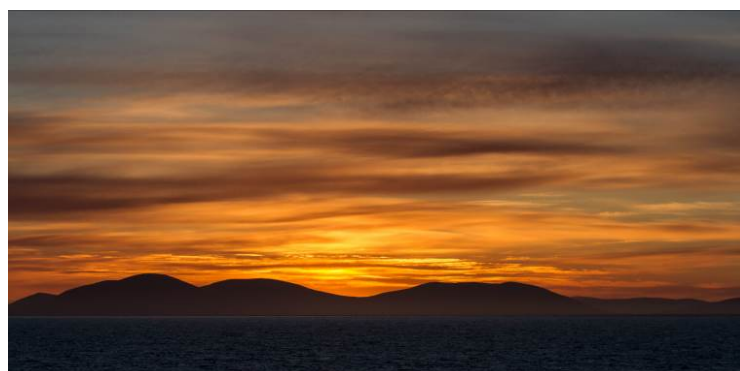
From the position high up on the slope we could see human forms wandering about down on the beach below enticed many folks to join them—the vantage point from the ground gave good perspective on how far the Rockhoppers have to climb and just how hard it is to get in and out of the water as the waves crash and break on the rocks and cliffs. It was also lovely to see the Magellanic penguins paddling around like ducks in the wave wash, and even a few Gentoo penguins surfing the backs of the breaking waves. A healthy contingent of Snowy sheathbills were also there to greet us—in a much nicer environment foraging for tidbits in the tidepools as opposed to the poo-based diet we will see them observe further south. A family of Kelp geese, with goslings well looked after by

mom—showing off her iridescent green wing bars—was also taking advantage of the dynamic shoreline.

Before we became thoroughly sunburnt however, it was time for us to head back to the landing and the comfort of our ocean home. returning to the zodiacs, and passing the abundant sea cabbage plants with their hairy leaves to protect them against the drying winds, one could only imagine how it must have felt to be shipwrecked on shores such as this and use the plants as sustenance and a source of vitamin C to stave off scurvy.

Back on board Plancius navigated along the north shore of the Falkland Islands making our way to the capital, Stanley where we hoped to go ashore in the morning.

At re-cap Andrew outlined plans for tomorrow in town



Day 4 – Saturday 2nd December 2017

Stanley, Falkland Islands



0800 GPS Position: 051°41' S / 057°51' W

Wind: NW 6. **Sea State:** Slight. **Weather:** Overcast. **Air Temp:** +12°C. **Sea Temp:** +8°C



As Andrew made the wake-up call this morning we found ourselves entering the outer harbour of Port William on our way towards Stanley. We could see the black and white lighthouse on the end of Cape Pembroke to our port side and the long white sandy beaches of Yorke Bay, beaches that were sadly turned into mine fields by the Argentinean military during the Falklands war in 1982. Before too long we found ourselves approaching The Narrows, the narrow entrance to the inner harbour and we could see the brightly coloured roofs of Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands ahead of us.

Shortly after breakfast, the Zodiacs were lowered and we were soon heading ashore to land on the floating pontoons at the Jetty Centre and to explore the town. The ride was a

little windy and wet but a good way to get used to as we will undoubtedly experience more of these later in the trip!

Many of us headed to the museum to take a look back in time at life in the Falkland Islands while the attraction of tea, cake and Wi-Fi was irresistible for some. Whatever the choice it was lovely to be on shore and to have the time to take a walk around the main part of town as well as some of the back roads amongst the older part of the town. Gift shops were visited and penguin souvenirs purchased, postcards and greetings cards were sent around the world. Before too long it was time to make our way back to the jetty for the ride back to Plancius and get ready to set sail on the next part of our voyage towards South Georgia.



At 1430, a few days earlier than scheduled because of the rough weather ahead, we had the mandatory IAATO briefing containing the important information as to how we protect wildlife and behave around the wildlife on South Georgia and Antarctica – remember Penguins do have the right of way! The IAATO briefing was followed by a session of vacuum cleaning in order to get rid of all the grass seeds potentially hiding in our velcro, pockets, hats, gloves and backpacks. Finished with the vacuum cleaning the first great albatrosses made their appearance – both Southern



Royal and Wandering albatrosses were circling the Plancius together with the Black browed and Greyheaded albatrosses! As we left the shelter of the islands the wind and waves started to increase and by late afternoon the outside decks were declared closed for safety reasons and ropes appeared in the lounge as additional holding on locations.

As is now the usual routine, the expedition staff invited us for a briefing in the lounge to look back on our Falkland days and look ahead to plans for tomorrow. Katja explained about the Antarctic treaty that was celebrating an anniversary this very day and Ali outlined some of the current work of Falkland Conservation and some

of the projects she had been involved with when she worked for them, including a ban plastic bag campaign..... So two days around the Falkland Islands had been fantastic with lots of sun and only a bit windy at times, but the wildlife was there in huge numbers and we all have some wonderful memories of penguins, albatross, Carcass Island hospitality, dry and wet zodiac rides! Next stop, South Georgia!

Day 5 – Sunday 3rd December 2017

At Sea Sailing to South Georgia

0800 GPS Position: 051°57'S / 051°49'W

Wind: SW 8. **Sea State:** V Rough. **Weather:** Overcast. **Air Temp:** +6°C. **Sea Temp:** +6°C



During the night the rolling of the ship increased and while some were lulled to sleep by the movements of the ship others struggled to find comfort in their beds and as a result were already wide awake when Katja made the wake-up call in the morning. As we emerged from our cabins the sun was shining over the Southern Ocean, but the wind was strong, creating increasing swell as the morning went on. Breakfast was a difficult affair, trying to steady yourself and hang on to the things on your plate, like drunken sailors we staggered through the restaurant. As a result of the increasing motion of the ocean the outside decks

remained closed apart from the Bridge wings.

At 10:30 Ali gave a presentation about the Black browed albatrosses that we saw in the Falkland Islands. The islands are home to around 70% of the world's population with 535,000 breeding pairs counted at the last census in 2015. They are opportunistic feeders, having learned to follow fishing boats to feed on bait and fish scraps. Unfortunately that led to their decline in recent years since they got caught in hooks and nets. However, simple measures like using streamers, sinking bait faster and during night time, reduced this so called 'bycatch' of albatrosses greatly. The good news is that these mitigation methods appear to be working and the populations of this species of albatross at least is on the increase.

From the Bridge wings and the comfort and safety of the lounge we could watch Wandering and Light mantled sooty albatrosses soar over the waves. Little Cape petrels flitted around and earnest Storm petrels glided past. Marijke even spotted some Bottle nosed whales in the rough water but any cetacean spotting was incredibly difficult with so much wind and spray.

After lunch and the post lunch siesta time for many, Walt talked more about the different seabirds. He gave clues as to how to identify the birds at sea and gave some insights into their breeding behaviour as well. It certainly gave us some more tools for seabird ID from the decks of Plancius and most of us were able to tell our prions from our petrels as a result!

That was followed by a presentation from Marijke on penguins. She eluded on penguin highways – they always have the right of way – and talked about penguin panic on ice floes. Moreover she gave handy hints how to identify the different penguin species.



In the afternoon the wind increased and the lean of the ship was sometimes severe. Coffee cups and tea glasses had to be held with an iron grip while enjoying the afternoon treat of chocolate brownies. We were invited to the lounge once again for the daily briefing where Andrew outlined our plans for tomorrow and explained why we appeared to be on a route to Capetown. Lydie demonstrated with the help of a piece of string (and Walt) the wingspan of different sea-birds. The Wandering albatross was the champion with 3.5 m wingspan, quite impressive if you see it in the confinements of the

lounge. Joselyn explained about lichens, which gave us all a lot more respect for these little algae/fungi that grow on rocks. After that it was dinner time with gravelax salmon roses for starters. Bedtime came early for some since the permanent movements of the ship were tiring. Hopefully tomorrow will bring calmer conditions and less motion in the ocean!

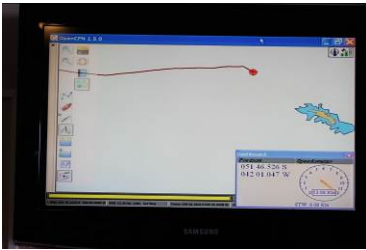


Day 6 – Monday 4th December 2017

At Sea Sailing to South Georgia

0800 GPS Position: 051°29' S / 044°33' W

Wind: SW 6. **Sea State:** Rough. **Weather:** Overcast. **Air Temp:** +5°C. **Sea Temp:** +5°C



After a rock and roll night, it seems like we are all getting our sea legs but many of us had still had a bit of a disturbed night of sleep as the ship rolled on the ocean swells!

Katja got her best morning voice on ready to wake us up this morning, and after a sportive shower, where holding on a single handed soaping were essential components, we are all ready for the breakfast. Just as breakfast was finished the Captain attempted to change course to take us on a more direct route towards

South Georgia, after being on an easterly heading since leaving the Falklands in order to make the journey safer and more comfortable. The course change proved to be unsuccessful as the ship rolled to almost 30 degrees and the contents of the galley and dining room crashed to the floor. Try again later!

Between the offered lectures of the day, each of us choose its favourite activity that ranged from the observation of the sea birds from the safety of the Bridge wings, to the card playing in the lounge or the quiet book reading.

At 10:30, Ali invited us to the restaurant for a presentation about South Georgia. As well as spending 15 years living in the Falkland Islands she also overwintered on South Georgia cap and she shared with us her wintering experience in the island. She took us on a historic journey from the evolution of Grytviken as a whaling station, to the current fisheries industry. She also prepared us for the wildlife spectacle that we would experience during our time on the island. We are now ready to enjoy and understand the beauty of the island.

By 12:30 we were all ready for the next meal of the day; travelling a sea is an exhausting experience you know. Due to the continued rolling of the ship the soup of the day was cancelled and coffee was taken in the lounge!

Again, just after the meal service the Captain tried again to change course and head towards South Georgia, as our direction was still heading to South Africa since yesterday. We were given plenty of warning this time and, after one bigger roll it seemed that the turn had been successful and we finally rectified our course! As a result the outside decks were opened and we emerged from our captivity and enjoyed some time in the fresh air and sunshine.

By mid afternoon we were invited back to the Restaurant where Marijke gave us some practice on the identification of the different type of seals we will see over the trip and some safety tips, especially with the Fur seals on South Georgia. As we had learned from Ali this morning, the Fur seals were thought to be extinct from the island at the beginning of the 20th century as a result of the fur trade but since then their numbers have increased to over 5 million and the beaches at this time of year are packed with seals. We're going to have to be alert as we make our way ashore. At 16:30, Joselyn shared the secret of survival of the plants that might be useful during our landing in South Georgia: stay low, and hide from the wind! She explained about how the plants in all the locations that we are visiting are so well adapted to their environment but can also be valuable indicators as to the environment and ecology in which they thrive and survive. The plants know the way!



Shortly after her presentation Zsuzsanna opened the Ship Shop in the Reception offering a chance for some retail therapy and some Christmas shopping time! From jackets and tee-shirts to patches and postcards! Some of us even adopted a penguin!

Finally, the usual daily briefing started at 18:15 to present the first of our activities in South Georgia. Even with the slightly deviated course we were still on time to make a landing in the morning. Tomorrow we should enjoy the large colony of King penguins of Salisbury Plain, which is one of the

highlights of a visit to South Georgia. Crossed fingers the weather will be with us... After the briefing we watched a Government documentary about our responsibility as visitors to the island and then we took part in the photo competition that Lydie had organised on board. Sea days are a good opportunity to start sorting pictures, and tonight we saw the first round of the photo competition with photos from the Falkland Islands. We could choose one photo from each category of wildlife and landscape and we'll find out tomorrow who the winner is. May the best win!

Day 7 – Tuesday 5th December 2017

Salisbury Plain and Right Whale Bay, South Georgia

0800 GPS Position: 053°51' S / 037°36' W

Wind: NE 4. **Sea State:** Slight. **Weather:** Rain Fog. **Air Temp:** +3°C. **Sea Temp:** +3°C



After a relatively smooth night of sailing, compared to the last couple of nights at full speed toward South Georgia, the early visitors to the lounge and bridge wing were treated to lots of fur seals and a few birds. The visibility wasn't great with fog and low cloud and we didn't see South Georgia until we began to enter the Bay of Isles but we knew it was there as the wildlife around the ship had increased greatly. Occasional king penguins were porpoising by the ship and there were hundreds of Fur seals; a taste of things to come on shore! Some of the early rising passengers reported seeing a humpback whale but whale watching in fog is always a challenge! The serious birders among us

were on the after deck and they were lucky enough to see a few species of albatross, plenty of Giant petrels, and some delicate Storm petrels.

When Andrew did his usual upbeat wake-up call at 7:30 most people were already up and about in anticipation of the arrival on South Georgia and the dining room filled up quickly with everyone was ready for the day of adventure among the seals and penguins on the Salisbury Plain.

Captain Alexey brought the ship into the Bay Of Isles with Albatross Island to port and Tern Island to starboard for our first stop in South Georgia about 0930, only an hour delayed according to Plan A even after our northern route to get here. As we neared our anchorage for the morning the wildlife and mountains appeared in the distance and the overcast sky offered up some light snow.



Zodiacs were readied and everyone went ashore for their first experience of life on South Georgia. At the landing site, members of the expedition team had secured a safe route up the beach avoiding the Fur seal harems with the aggressive males, feisty females and very cute, black pups. There were parades of King penguins all along the beach who carefully picked their way amongst the Fur seals and young Elephant seals. Staff had flagged a route to the back of the beach where the density of seals was less and only the occasional one bluff charged as Ali led the way through them to the main King penguin colony.



This breeding colony is the second largest on South Georgia and with estimated population of around 80,000 the beach and hillside was full of penguins. There were lots of burly looking brown young spread throughout the colony and lots of others that were moulting their brown down feathers and exhibiting some very interesting fur coats. There were also many birds incubating eggs towards the centre of the colony. These could be identified by the hunkering position and bulge at their feet. As we made our way through the mud along the edge of the tussac the brown fluffy chicks came across to welcome us with innocent curiosity. They were hoping that these large brightly coloured visitors to their home were bringing some food! They kept

everyone entertained and posed perfectly for the cameras, despite the rain and snow.

Up near the colony we saw a white morph Southern Giant petrel as well as regular Northern and Southern Petrels. Along with the skuas these birds clean up the colony feeding on anything dead, dying and decomposing. As we walked through the tussac grass the endemic South Georgia pipit was much in evidence, flying high and vocalising as the world's most southerly song bird. These birds are only here as a result of the recent rat eradication programme and it was also fantastic to see the South Georgia pintails, the endemic duck which is now thriving due to the removal of their main predator, the rat. All too soon, despite the cold, wet weather it was time to make our way



back to the landing site. The spectacle of nature overwhelmed most of us and it was hard to leave it behind and return to the ship. While waiting to board the Zodiac for our return to the Plancius some of the travellers witnessed a fur seal birth right near where they were standing.

During lunch, Plancius repositioned into Right Whale Bay where we hoped to make our afternoon landing. The staff first went ashore to scout a suitable landing place amongst the thousands of Fur seals and, after driving the entire coastline it soon became clear that landing on the beach was not going to be possible. The decision was made to do a Zodiac cruise instead of a landing and despite the wet

weather it was a fabulous afternoon. The density of Fur seals along the rocky beaches and main beach was much greater than we had seen in the morning with several blond ones in the group. There was constant movement as males tried to keep the females in their harems and other males, the satellite bulls tried to sneak in and steal a female. There was constant noise, the high pitched cried of the seal pups and the distinctive hurrumphing of the bulls. There were also some big Elephant seal bulls wallowing like hippos in the shallow pools by the shore and, with the young ones swimming around them we really got an idea of their size. The seal activity in the water was constant and all around us as the seal swam and played in the shallow water. The photo opportunities were endless. Some of the new species we saw this afternoon were South Georgia Shag, including some courting activity, and nice group of Snowy Sheathbills. There were also many Gentoo penguins along the shore with another large King penguin colony on the mountainside. This colony isn't as big as the one we had seen at Salisbury Plain but to see it from a different perspective was also impressive. As a very welcome treat Zsuzsanna met everyone as they got off the Zodiacs with a cup of hot chocolate spiked with rum.

At 1900 Andrew did his daily update and laid out the plans for tomorrow with. This was followed by dinner where we all chatted about our first day here on South Georgia. Most people were tired and retired early after getting twice wet and inhaling a lot of cold fresh air during our adventures of the day.



Daniel Höhne - LebeDeineReise

Day 8 – Wednesday 6th December 2017

Grytviken and Godthul, South Georgia

0800 GPS Position: 054°17' S / 036°30' W

Wind: W 3. Sea State: Smooth. Weather: Clear. Air Temp: +6°C. Sea Temp: +3°C



After the rain, sleet and snow of yesterday we were all delighted to emerge from our cabins this morning and find South Georgia bathed in blue sky and sunshine. The mountains of the Allardyce Range were standing out clearly against the blue sky and as we sailed into Cumberland Bay the clouds began to lift from the summit of the highest peak, Mt Paget and the views were spectacular. As we entered into the inner harbour we could see the rusty buildings of the whaling station of Grytviken ahead of us and to our starboard side, the modern buildings of the Government offices and the British Antarctic Survey on King Edward

Point were a stark contrast to the historic buildings.

Just after breakfast we were invited to the lounge for a presentation by Dani from the South Georgia Heritage Fund who gave an overview of the Habitat Restoration project to eradicate the rats from the island over the last 6 years. So far the project looks to be successful and the charity is now at the monitoring and protection phase of the project. She explained what we could do to help by sponsoring a hectare of the island or purchasing items at the gift shop in the museum.



After the presentation the staff were ready to take us ashore in glorious sunshine. Mount Hodges, at the back of the whaling station and Mount Duse, near King Edward Point create a natural sheltered bay and the warm sunshine and lack of wind meant that



conditions ashore were beautiful. We made our way up to the cemetery where Ali was ready to make a short toast, with whisky to 'The Boss', Sir Ernest Shackleton who died here on board The Quest in 1922. His wife Emily requested that he was buried with the whalers and sailors here on South Georgia.

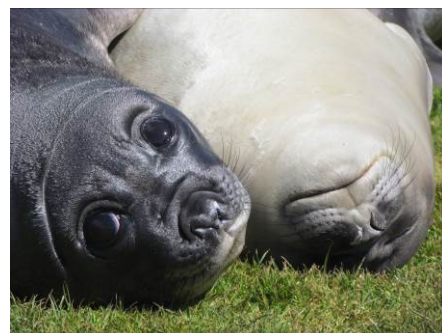
From here, some of us took a station tour with Charlotte, some explored the ruins themselves including the beautiful church, while other enjoyed some relaxing time photographing the Fur seals and Elephant seals between the cemetery and the museum. The weather created a very mellow mood on shore with people sitting in the sunshine just watching and listening to the seals in

the bay. Everyone paid a visit to the museum, shop and Post Office and by lunchtime, with souvenirs bought and postcards mailed it was time to go back to the ship. What a fabulous morning here at Grytviken!

During lunch the ship repositioned to Godthul, where we escaped the increasingly strong winds and entered the shelter of the bay. It was a perfect place to spend the afternoon as the weather system began to bring the forecast strong winds.

On shore there were a couple of options, a long hike and a medium hike. Although, the wind was still picking up a bit we managed to land and found the beach was littered with old whale bones from the whaling station here. Along the beach from the landing site we could see the relics of the whaling that took place here in the form of two 'Jollies' little wooden boats that were used as platforms for flensing the whales at the side of the ship.

Soon the hikers made their way through the tussock grass, outmaneuvering various 4 to 5m long elephant seals and Fur seals along the way to reach the Gentoo colony. It was incredible to see the grass nests that the penguins had built ready for the breeding season, impressive constructions using beaks and feet! Most of the penguins had chicks, two grey fluffy ones that were constantly pestering the parent bird for food. We all enjoyed watching penguins stealing vegetation from other nests and taking it back to their own nests looking very pleased with themselves!

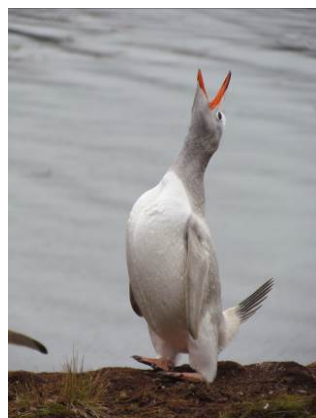




The first group of walkers headed up to the lake and then up the hill to the saddle of the mountains. The plan was to try for the 300m summit and, with reasonable conditions, albeit a little windy they made it up the steep scree slopes to the top. Sadly as they reached the top the clouds that had been coming and going on the summit all afternoon decided to descend properly and the views were a little limited! Ah well, it had been a good leg stretch anyway!

The medium hikers made their way from the lake to the higher colonies of Gentoo penguins that had made the long trek from the sea to almost 200m above sea level. Why they do it is anybody's guess but we all marveled at their efforts! On the way back down at the penguin colony an unusual coloured Gentoo penguin was detected – it was almost all white – not a true albino but a so-called leucistic animal. Very unusual to see such an odd-coloured animal!

Meanwhile out in the bay some of us did a zodiac cruise along the shore where Antarctic terns were seen flying just over our heads. The zodiac glided through the sea kelp where Kelp gulls were foraging and penguins were seen porpoising close by. It had been a fabulous day here on South Georgia and, after a short briefing about our plans for tomorrow we were all invited to the back deck for a special celebration dinner: a BBQ! There were sausages, steaks, ribs and salads all washed down by mulled wine, beer and wine. Afterwards the music was turned up and many people enjoyed dancing for a few hours before bed time. A great end to the day!



“For scientific discovery give me Scott; for speed and efficiency of travel give me Amundsen; but when disaster strikes and all hope is gone, get down on your knees and pray for Shackleton.” Sir Raymond Priestly, Antarctic Explorer and Geologist

Day 9 – Thursday 7th December 2017

Stromness and Fortuna Bay, South Georgia

0800 GPS Position: 054°09' S / 036°42' W

Wind: NW 5. **Sea State:** Slight. **Weather:** Overcast. **Air Temp:** +5°C. **Sea Temp:** +3°C



Well, today was a day of weather. We sure did get a taste of what South Georgia has to offer on her non-sunny days! Approaching into Stromness conditions were misty and bordering between rain and snow. Scouting the beach by zodiac, the staff were able to find an acceptable spot to get ashore and squeeze some space between the Fur seals to enable a landing. It was a quick process, getting out of the zodiac and “running the gauntlet” from the waterline to the lifejacket bags through a minefield of Fur seals, all the while keeping those eyes in the back of our heads fully open and watching for any sneak attacks from behind. Once lifejackets were shed, the group headed off upstream, towards the mythical Shackleton Waterfall... the last major barrier that confronted the

weary party of three men after making the 36 hour crossing of the island in the hope of finding help at the Stromness whaling station. We certainly had an easier time traversing their footsteps, even if we were walking into a blustery wind and stinging sleet at times. The valley was wide and flat, cut in numerous places by the braided stream, and as we found further along there were terns nesting who

kept reminding us to stay far to the outside of the gravel outwash plain—far away from their nests, which really is indistinguishable from its surroundings as the eggs are simply laid on the gravel in a space in between larger rocks. The waterfall made for a nice destination, flanked by lush carpets of moss, lichens, and the South Georgia club moss. The contrast between the barren



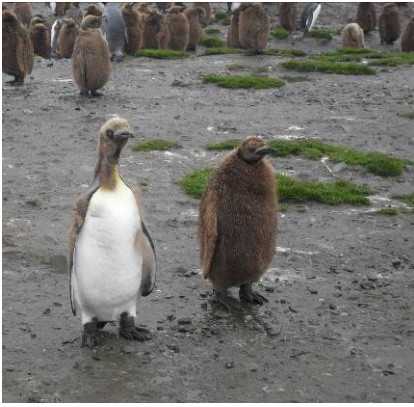
scree slopes and the various shades of green surrounding the stream was enhanced that much more by the flat lighting of the day's overcast skies. Returning to the ship the winds had begun to pick up, as forecasted, and were at about 30 knots by the time everyone was back onboard which made for challenging driving conditions for the staff and crew for a while, and this was in the relative protection of the sheltered bay. Once Captain Alexey brought the

ship back into open waters, the show really began. Heading north up the coast towards our afternoon's objective—Fortuna Bay—was an adventure. The wind was whipping the waves into a frenzy and a few thin spots in the clouds let some sun shine through to turn the slate blue frothy sea into a shimmering pool of mercury tortured by wind and swell. As we approached the entrance to the bay, the winds as they screamed down the coast were holding at about 50 knots with gusts to over 70. Quite a few passengers were on the bridge wings, filling their lungs deeply with the forceful breath of this powerful island. Once inside the bay, the winds abated somewhat but it was still unclear if conditions would be calm enough at the landing site, or even if the fur seals would allow us passage. Again after a thorough scout by the staff, an



acceptable spot was found to get everyone safely on shore and through the seals.

The winds were more than slight, but within range for operations and so we took our chance while we could. It was a narrow walkway that had been staked out—the thin margin between the seal territories and the thick tussock, with an occasional sleeping fur seal pup tucked in amongst the grassy clumps. We continued on the route, passing



weaners and an increasing number of King penguins until we arrived at the colony, a mass of thousands of birds on the verdant grassy plain and snaking up the distant hillside. The cacophony of sounds was still audible over the strong wind gusts, and all of the typical behavior was on display with interlopers being fought off by proud posture and flipper fights; awkward half-molted chicks flailing their flippers and racing around as if they could escape their dangling, matted, brown baby fluff if only they ran fast enough; stoic standing strong, hunched against the wind, feet tucked up to belly, seemingly unmovable for all time. A movement in the accumulated human forms began, and we slowly strung out towards a knoll on the side of the valley and a short climb brought us up in elevation to gain a new perspective on the colony, and a fresh perspective on the winds being tossed around in the valley. One moment they were

buffeting us from one direction, only to swing around and push us back from the other. There were times when walking sideways leaning into the gust was the only option to stay on your feet. As we slowly made our way back to the landing site, some of the group veered off to the left to explore a waterfall. Gazing into the depths of the eroded canyon, the fall's water being lifted into the wind like a gauzy bridal-veil created quite a delicate counterpoint to the jagged dark rocks of the underlying mountain. And what riches there were underfoot! An incredible variety of water-logged biota clung to every surface, filling just about every nook and cranny with interesting shapes, sizes, and



colors. The view from the ridge was impressive, craggy slopes freshly dusted with snow contrasting with the golden-greenness underfoot, all highlighted with the fog and mist and blowing snow from the slopes... and wait, what is that? Apparently we were not the only ones appreciating that vantage point as gazing across the canyon to a rocky outcrop with a fine view of the harbor and beach below were two Fur seals as if playing king of the castle. We left them to their majestic view with such fullness of vast space and loud silence, and returned to the beach to see how we ourselves would find our way back to our sweet home, our castle upon the water.

Walking our narrow path of safety back along the beach, perhaps there were a few moments to enjoy watching a Fur seal pup play with a blade of tussock grass, or even its own flippers in a game of hide and seek or keep-away. It's easy to be reminded of a puppy dog from home, in their curious play, but take one step too close and this South Georgia pup gives you a growl and a comic attempt at a fierce grimace (complete with a very cute underbite!) All rather innocent at this stage but still a potent reminder of the intimidating creatures they will grow into. Once back to the ship we heard that the trip was done in 30 knot winds, not everyday conditions certainly but well in hand by the staff and crew to get us ashore for as many experiences as possible in our short time here. Back on board there was time for re-cap where Andrew outlined the plans for tomorrow and gave us some background geological information about Drygalski Fjord, where we hope to visit and Katja gave a Shackleton Special, explaining about the advert that he supposedly placed in a London newspaper, the Third Man phenomenon and the Shackleton whisky, which was found



underneath his hut at Cape Royds. Hunkering down for the night to stay in the relative shelter of the bay we could only wonder at what tomorrow would bring us.

Day 10 – Friday 8th December 2017

Drygalski Fjord and Cooper Bay, South Georgia

0800 GPS Position: 054°49' S / 035°54' W

Wind: W 7?8. Sea State: Rough. Weather: Snow. Air Temp: -1°C. Sea Temp: +2°C



We had spent the early part of the night in Fortuna Bay for shelter but eventually, during the night we had to head out into the open water to sail south towards Cooper Bay. There had been some motion but with wind behind us it was relatively comfortable. As we approached Cooper Bay itself the wind was a steady 30 knots and with the bay looking like a washing machine! Despite the windy conditions the number of seabirds were impressive – the first Macaroni penguins were seen in the water and the keen birders were very happy to see the tiny South Georgia Diving Petrels. Grey headed and Black browed albatross were also seen around the ship. A whale was also spotted fluking right ahead of the Plancius and it was identified as an impressively large humpback whale!

With conditions not suitable for either anchoring Plancius in the bay or for our planned Zodiac cruise continued down the coast towards Drygalski Fjord where we hoped to find some shelter. Although it was still very windy the conditions gradually improved and by the time we turned into Drygalski Fjord the seas were calm.

The Captain took Plancius right up the fjord towards the Risting Glacier at the head of the bay. On the way we passed jagged black peaks, remnants of the super continent Gondwanaland, hanging glaciers and small icebergs that had calved from the glacier. There were Cape petrels, Snow petrels and simply lots of snow flakes. At the end of the fjord the Captain held the ship in position for a while so we could take photos and watch the small ice calvings from the front of the glacier. It was an impressive sight, despite the poor visibility. As we were admiring the view, Andrew made an announcement that we were going to make the most of the calm conditions and the time we had a go out on a Zodiac cruise in the local area. Some people decided to stay warm and dry in the comfort of the lounge but those of us that ventured out had a magical time on the water.



The boats first made their way towards the front of the glacier where we could see the deep blue of the ice from

recent calvings and the dark lateral moraines at the side. There was a meltwater waterfall at the edge of the glacier front pouring ice cold sedimentary water into the fjord. As we made our way back along the shore with high cliffs and hanging glaciers above us, Ali spotted our first Weddell seals hauled out on the snow by the water's edge. This small Weddell seal population here in Drygalski Fjord is the only one found outside of Antarctica as they are really seals of the ice and with a population of around 30 we saw 6, a good percentage of the population.



From the steep cliffs of the main fjord we turned a corner into a sheltered bay and found a small beach filled with Elephant seals, both weaners and young adults and, once the staff had navigated the Zodiacs through the thick kelp we were able to get a good view of the seals on the beach. On the way back to Plancius we came across some small ice floes where Snow petrels were having a 'snow bath' and a few Gentoo penguins were posing for photos on the higher points of the ice. All around there were Wilson's storm-petrels showing off their yellow-webbed tiny feet!

After the cruise, there was time to warm up and dry off before lunch and as we enjoyed an early lunch the ship navigated towards Cooper Bay where we planned to transit the narrow channel between Cooper Island and the mainland and see if we could do the zodiac cruise that had been cancelled this morning. The wind conditions had



improved significantly but unfortunately there was still too much swell for zodiac operations and the Captain decided it was too risky to attempt anchoring or drifting so we decided to set sail for Antarctica. It was disappointing but for those of us wanting to see Macaroni penguins the wait in the bay gave us another opportunity to see Macaroni penguins in the water and indeed most of us were lucky enough to get a good glimpse of them whilst they were porpoising on their way back to the colony.

On leaving South Georgia behind we were invited for hot chocolate in the restaurant before the next part of the Shackleton movie was shown. Everyone had just got themselves settled when a call came over the PA system

that a pod of Killer whales had been seen near the ship. They were being escorted by hundreds of Black browed albatrosses and Antarctic prions and Giant petrels! The Orca were probably feeding on tight balls of krill which they brought closer to the surface where the albatrosses and other seabirds were patiently waiting to get their share of this feast. With strong winds, foaming seas and the dramatic mountain scenery of South Georgia behind it really was a stunning scene and one that many of us will remember for a very long time.

As we set sail on our route towards Antarctica many of us began to feel the motion of the ocean swells once again and it was very quiet around the ship for the rest of the afternoon. Re-cap was a quiet affair but Ali showed us some images and shared some of her experiences of living on South Georgia, Andrew gave us information about the geology of South Georgia and Katja spoke about the glaciers of the island and how they are in retreat. At the end of re-cap we had a visitor from the past, an old whaling flenser named Hans who told the story of his early demise at the hands of a big blue whale! The dining room had a few spare seats for dinner but as we made our way to bed later that evening the sea was beginning to calm a little and things were more comfortable for everyone.

Next stop – Antarctica!



Day 11 – Saturday 9th December 2017

At Sea to Elephant Island

0800 GPS Position: 056°28' S / 040°28' W

Wind: NNW 4. **Sea State:** Moderate. **Weather:** Fog. **Air Temp:** +1°C. **Sea Temp:** +1°C



Overnight the sea had calmed and by morning, as we made our way to breakfast it was smooth sailing. There was however a layer of dense fog engulfing the Plancius when the wake up call curtailed our dreams. In these cold waters fog is often associated with ice and as we continued on our way to Antarctica we saw the first significant iceberg of our voyage. The iceberg materialised shortly after breakfast and we all grabbed our coats and cameras and made our way out on deck. It was the first one of our journey and Captain Alexey took great pleasure in circumnavigating it in order for us to see it clearly from all sides. One side was smoothed by the sea while the other was untouched and sharp edged. These

icebergs often roll over as a result of melting beneath and becoming top heavy and each berg is individually carved by wind and waves. Myriads of Prions and Cape petrels hovered at the flanks of the iceberg, feeding on organisms brought to the surface by upwelling meltwater. Waves broke spectacularly at the iceberg sending spume and spray into the air. It was an impressive first iceberg but we hope to see many more on our voyage.

In preparation for Antarctica we filed into the lounge during the course of the morning to vacuum our outer clothes. Backpacks and camera bags, too, had to be ridded of seeds and dirt from South Georgia. The staff were on hand to help and advice although this time we had to complete the process ourselves but with six vacuum cleaners at once it was noisy but fast.

After lunch Suzanna and Bobby opened the ship shop again and maps, books, t-shirts and other items were for sale. While some indulged in retail therapy, others took a beauty nap, read in the lounge or enjoyed the sun on the top deck. All this came to an end when Marijke spotted some whale blows in the far distance and they were big blows so we were all hopeful it might be Blue whales. Captain Alexey turned the ship and we crept closer, keeping an eye on where the blows had last been seen. After some puzzlement about which whale species it was, the white right hand jaw confirmed that we were watching Fin whales, actually two Fin whales, a mother and a juvenile. We spent a bit more time with them, but then left them to their feeding.



With a slight delay due to the whales it was then time for Lydie's presentation about glaciology. She explained the differences between ice caps, ice shelves and glaciers and with the help of some satellite pictures gave us a view from space on the ice in Antarctica. We saw some small glaciers on South Georgia but we're heading to a place where ice is king so it was very useful to learn more about what we are going to see and the processes that are involved.

Later in the afternoon the hotel team announced a happy hour in the bar and together with drinks at half price we munched happily on corn chips with salsa and cheese. All this got us in the right mood for the auction for the South Georgia Habitat Restoration project. Several items were auctioned off, humorously chaired by Ali. There was the bronze cast of a little Elephant weaner, a cyanotype print of the Endurance in the ice and an illustrated ship chart by Bruce Pearson, an



internationally renowned artist who has spent many months on South Georgia. All together 1115 Euro were raised for the South Georgia Heritage Trust, a great achievement on the little blue ship Plancius. After this it was dinner time and the day ended as it started with thick fog surrounding Plancius like candy floss.

Day 12 – Sunday 10th December 2017

At Sea to Elephant Island

0800 GPS Position: 059°02' S / 048°15' W

Wind: NW 5. **Sea State:** Moderate. **Weather:** Overcast. **Air Temp:** +2°C. **Sea Temp:** +1°C



The early visitors to the lounge and the bridge had a clear morning and were treated to four Fin whales in two groups at around 0600. They were the first of maybe as many as two dozen fin whales we could identify throughout the day and some came quite close as we headed southwest toward Elephant Island and our next landfall.

Katja was standing in to the wake-up call this morning and it went out a little later than usual giving us a 15 minute lie in! After a leisurely breakfast people drifted up to the upper decks and lounge to watch several ice bergs as we passed by them. At one point all we could see on the horizon was a line of grey and it was a huge iceberg almost 8

miles away from our course. Whenever you get a large berg like this there are always going to be smaller ones in the area and it certainly proved to be the case. One particularly large tabular iceberg known as B-41 was 6km long and perhaps as much as 50m high and the Captain slowed down the ship as we passed so everyone could get a good look. This iceberg had broken off the Ross Ice Shelf some 15 years ago and had drifted around the Antarctic Continent in an anti-clockwise direction until heading north to its present location. At one point we got a good look at some chinstrap penguins floating by on a small iceberg known as a growler.

The icebergs set the stage for Katja's lecture on the Antarctic Continent including how it was formed, size with and without the icecap, weather, icebergs, currents surrounding it and how the magnetic south pole moves around. It was a lot to comprehend but very well presented and well received. It stimulated a lot of discussion at lunch and made people want to get into many of the topics in greater detail.

After lunch we finished the last part of the movie "Shackleton" covering the period of time when they left the sinking ship until Shackleton returned to Elephant Island to rescue the men. At the time we were on the same course that Shackleton would have used to get back to Elephant Island and it was even more poignant to watch the film and then look out of the window to try to imagine what it must have been like to sail these very same seas in the tiny James Caird.

Later in the afternoon Chef Ralf gave us a fascinating presentation on the logistics of running the galley on board our ship. The amount of food that he had to provide in this remote place to feed 150 or so people (passengers and crew) 3 meals a day for an extended period was staggering. Fresh produce was especially challenging for these long voyages. He also described how they made water on the ship and how they handled the garbage on the ship as well as the recyclables. Everyone in attendance was very interested in what he had to say and he received many interesting questions. It certainly made our weekly shop at the supermarket seem very easy in comparison.



Marijke gave a presentation on whales that included an introduction to marine mammals in general that includes



everything from whales to manatees and polar bears. Her in-depth discussion on the whales we might see on this trip including everything from identification to the sounds they make was fabulous, the life below the water that we will never see or hear.

As usual the Expedition staff invited us to the lounge for the daily briefing about tomorrow's and things that were relevant to our day and the coming days. Fingers were crossed for fine, calm weather around Elephant Island. Katja then followed with a short presentation on icebergs and how they are named by and the evening was finished by Lydie who showed the entrants in the two categories of photographs

for the photo competition, landscape and wildlife and ask everyone to vote on their favourite in each category. Interest in the contest is picking up and there were twice as many photos entered this round.

We were all off to dinner at 1900 and as it was winding down there was a call from the bridge that multiple whales had been spotted off the bow of the ship.

The tall dorsal fins sliding through the waves soon gave their identification away – a pod of around 12 Killer whales! They were soon splitting into two sub groups. It was clear that they were up to something as one group spread out into a half circle with the males throwing their huge dorsal fins to one side so they could make a sharp turn and dive deep. A young calf was seen in the middle of it watching the spectacle below. The other group then turned up slightly further away when suddenly the tall blows of Fin whales were seen right next to one of the huge orca males. There was at least one young fin whale there too. Based on the displayed hunting behaviour of the orcas and the agitated surfacing behaviour of the whales we can only assume that the orcas had been trying to exhaust these whales and probably hunting them targeting the youngest and slowest member of the Fin whale group. A fog bank rolled in and soon we could no longer see what the outcome of this assumed hunt was to be, but whatever the outcome, the orcas were keeping true to their name –and are often also referred to as ‘wolves of the sea’ for good reasons!

We were back on course at 2115 for an early arrival at Elephant Island in the morning. It had been a very full and exciting sea day with everyone heading back to their cabins to reflect on what they had seen and heard. It was certainly a **WHALE** of a day.....



Daniel Höhne - LebeDeineReise

Day 13 – Monday 11th December 2017

Elephant Island

0800 GPS Position: 061°03' S / 054°35' W

Wind: N 5 **Sea State:** Moderate. **Weather:** Fog. **Air Temp:** +0°C. **Sea Temp:** +0°C



Long before the wake-up call many of us were already up when we were approaching Elephant Island although the views were largely interrupted by foggy conditions. As we made our final approach the grey shadows and rock of the island very slowly came into view. The wind was blowing at around 30 knots at this stage and it certainly seemed like a very forbidding place. With such high winds and surging swells it was going to be impossible to launch zodiacs but instead the Captain took Plancius into the bay off Point Wild in order for us to get a misty view of where Shackleton landed his men 101 years ago after escaping the sea ice at the top end of the Weddell Sea. We all had thoughts of

22 his men who spent over 4 months living here during the winter while Shackleton sailed to South Georgia on the James Caird to raise the alarm and arrange rescue. From the ship we could hear thousands of Chinstrap penguins on the rocky high points and we could also just about see the small statue bust of Captain Pardo, the captain of the tug boat the Yelcho that came to rescue Shackleton's men on 31st August 1916.

We then continued to sail through the fog towards Cape Look Out, which was a few hours away. Occasionally we caught a fleeting glimpse of a whale in the fog and as we rounded the end of Elephant Island and started sailing along the southern shore the fog finally began to lift and we found ourselves sailing through groups of Fin whales, which sneaked upon us from a fog bank. How enormous these whales were and how impressive the sound of their blows sounded. Whilst they were gliding alongside our bow we started to appreciate their size even more!



As we made our way along the coast of Elephant Island, with glimpses of the Endurance Glacier to our starboard side conditions were slowly improving and so lunch was pulled forward just a little bit to give us the opportunity to launch the zodiacs straight after lunch! Although the wind speed was slight the swell was still high and so it took us a little time before we boarded the zodiacs as conditions at the gangway were quite challenging. Before too long though we made our way to the shore of the island to see what we could see. We visited the Chinstrap penguins on the far shore near Cape Lookout and even a few Macaroni penguins were spotted high up on the rocks. It was difficult to get close up views due to

the swell and surf but all the staff and crew did their best to keep the boats safe and stable for a reasonable view. We then made our way into a small bay where a curious Leopard seal was spy hopping alongside the zodiacs. It soon became obvious the seal had been feasting on penguin as it remains were seen floating nearby where Skuas and Kelp gulls were fighting over the left overs. It checked out all the zodiacs and even nibbled on the propeller of Ali's boat, giving passengers a fabulous view of its mouth and teeth!

From here, some of us circled the island just off shore from the mainland encountering more Leopard seals along the way as well as large flocks of Cape petrels that were floating on the water just off the headland. Staff and crew took the zodiacs into another small bay where the Macaroni penguin colony could be seen high up on the slope above and from a safe distance for swell and surf a small group of Macaroni penguins stood proudly on a rocky cave shelf with their orange, yellow head feathers being blown around in the wind! We



had waited a few days to see these iconic little birds and although photographing them from a bouncing zodiac was a challenge it was still great to see them and we all respected their tenacity in difficult conditions. On our way back to the ship we navigated through another narrow channel into the bay where we had been previously and made it back to the Plancius in good time. Here yet another Leopard seal was spotted quite close to the gangway where it was curiously observing the procedures taking place! Maybe it was hoping for a feed of an unsuspecting passenger falling from the gangway!

The rest of the afternoon was spent admiring the coast of Elephant Island and Clarence Island whilst we sailed south. A curious humpback whale quickly appeared from the fog but soon disappeared in yet another fog bank.

Re-cap this evening brought us the plans for Antarctica tomorrow, the encounter about the hunting behavior of killer whales (wolves of the sea) and the story of some of the earliest Photoshop techniques by Frank Hurley. A wide range of topics for the evening! And last but not least the winners of the photo competitions were announced! Well done to everyone who took the time to enter.

After dinner most of us retired soon to our cabins whilst a huge but long swell was building up from a storm in the Drake Passage far to the north. Thankfully, soon after mid night it had calmed down.



Day 14 – Tuesday 12th December 2017

Brown Bluff and Antarctic Sound, Antarctica

0800 GPS Position: 063°30' S / 056°51' W

Wind: W 5. **Sea State:** Slight. **Weather:** Overcast. **Air Temp:** -2°C. **Sea Temp:** +0°C



Many of us had been up in the very early hours of the morning to watch our navigation into Antarctic Sound. With sunrise at around 2am it was difficult to be up at that time to see that but seeing the early morning light on the icebergs a few hours later was well worth the effort.

As we approached our destination for the morning, Brown Bluff the winds from the continent of Antarctica were making their presence felt and we had 30 – 35 knots of wind as we travelled the last few miles. Thankfully, as we neared the anchorage position the continent of Antarctica created enough protection from the wind and it seemed that we were going to be able to go ashore.

Conditions were a bit bumpy at the gangway and it was a splashy ride ashore but as we made our way past the grounded icebergs we could see the staff waiting for us along with a welcome committee of Adélie and Gentoo penguins.

The impressive brown bluff, remnants of an underwater volcano, towered over the landing site and there were a number of huge, wind sculptured rocks near the shore which. Stepping ashore we arrived on the seventh, and icy continent and the penguins on the beach set the scene perfectly! We gathered by the large volcanic rocks and from that point on the Adélies simply charmed us, walking in waves down the beach, constantly assessing where it might be safe to jump in the water. We were able to take a walk along the beach towards the colony but it was a slow walk with lots of stops to stand and sit and watch the penguins busily making their way along the shore. They clearly had their preferred swimming beach and were very adamant about where they were going to attempt to brave the water! They gathered in large groups at the water's edge and after lots of calling there was a rush to the water and they launched themselves off into the surf.



At the breeding colony we could stand and watch the penguins incubating their eggs and displaying to each other and also watch their antics from the edge of the colony to see who was stealing rocks from whom, at one point resulting in a particularly fierce flipper fight—was quite the entertainment. A few Brown skuas were circling the

colony and one was seen to take an egg from an Adélie penguin who had been distracted by a pebble stealing neighbour.

Those who had a bit more wanderlust in their feet returned to the landing site and continued around the corner, braving the slippery snow slope in order to see the head of the glacier and other interesting geologic features. It was a little windy up on the glacier compared to the peaceful, sunny beach but it only added to that sense of being properly in Antarctica and the views of the bay were stunning. Back at the beach there was still plenty of time to walk along the cobbles, find a decent rock and just sit and enjoy the penguin parade along the shore line. We could have stayed there all day enjoying the warm summer sunshine and watching the penguins and it was so peaceful it was hard



to believe we had anywhere else to go that could be any better... but who knew what we had in store for us?!

Once back on the ship the plan was to cruise the Antarctic Sound, enjoying the sea ice and possibly getting all the way through into the Weddell Sea. The weather was beautiful with blue sky, sunshine and streaks of clouds across the sky and memory cards were filled during the afternoon. The Captain skilfully navigated through the icy waters around icebergs and sea ice, giving us great views of hauled out Weddell Seal and a Leopard seal that only woke as Plancius was right alongside it! Adélies were gathered on icebergs and did their usual panic and run around as we slowly sailed past before settling back down to rest.



We sailed between Johannsson and Anderson Islands and out into the top end of the Weddell Sea and with blue sky and sunshine it was the perfect Antarctic day we had been hoping for. In the distance we could see a huge iceberg which was thought to be around 7 miles long and 3 miles across, a piece of the Weddell ice shelf that had broken off and drifted to its current position.

From here we then felt Plancius change course and then come to a stop in the middle of the open water. Andrew announced that we were going to go out for a zodiac cruise and it was the icing on the cake of a fabulous day so far. We all went out together but the staff and crew found their own little routes through the ice looking

for penguins and seals. There were a number of Adélie penguins on low lying ice floes but also one lonely individual high up on the top of a tall iceberg. We all marvelled at how it had got there!

From here the boats were taken deeper into the ice and, in pairs the drivers found a suitable piece of ice on which to park their boats. With a bit of a run up and some revs by the edge of the ice we found ourselves parked at a steep angle but still suitable for getting out and taking a little walk on the ice. There were some stunning ice formations, pressure ridges caused by the ice being pushed upwards during winter storms and these created a fabulous backdrop for the many photos that were taken.

All too soon it was time to make our way back to the boats and then back to the ship ready for the next part of our Antarctic adventure which would take place on the western side of the peninsula.

At re-cap Andrew explained that we had a long way to go in the coming hours but we would be in the Gerlache Strait in the morning for a scenic ship cruise. Walt then explained the story of the Nordenskjold Expedition in 1902 that took place in the region of Antarctic Sound with camps at Snow Hill, Hope Bay and Paulet Island. To finish re-cap Lydie talked about the beautiful Snow petrels we had been seeing over the last few days since South Georgia.

During dinner we sailed back out of Antarctic Sound and with the last of the sunshine creating light shafts through the clouds onto the icebergs it was a stunning end to what had been a fabulous Antarctic day.



Day 15 – Wednesday 13th December 2017

Portal Point and Wilhelmina Bay, Antarctica

0525 GPS Position: 063°52' S / 060°27' W

Wind: Var 1. Sea State: Calm. Weather: Clear. Air Temp: +0°C. Sea Temp: +1°C



It was an early morning for most of us as the weather and the landscape are far too good to stay in bed and sleep as we make our way down the Bransfield Strait. The sky was clear blue and the sea was a calm as it was possible to be and with the white snowy mountains of the Antarctica to our port side and Brabant Island to our starboard side the views were stunning as we continued on our way south. Added to the landscape scenery was the marine life with whale blows and tail flukes of Humpback whales almost all around the ship. It was the perfect Antarctic day that we had all dreamed about but didn't dare hope for after the fine sunny weather in Antarctic Sound the day before. After breakfast most of us ended up on the deck with some essential sun screen on to enjoy the

warm sun of Antarctica. Who would have thought we would be so warm down here?! The humpback whales accompanied the ship as we keep going down along the West side of the Peninsula as everyone went from one side of the ship to the other to get the best views of the whales.

During the morning, as Katja was due to give a talk about Climate Change but due to the fabulous weather and scenery it was decided to cancel to make sure that everyone enjoyed the moments here in Antarctica. It isn't always like this!

Towards lunch time the Captain pulled out from his secret pocket an amazing navigation path which took us through Graham Passage as we leave Hughe's Bay, we were hardly able to tell exactly where our route would be on our way out to Charlotte's Bay as it looked like we were about to sail into the islands themselves. We got closer and closer to the glaciers with the Humpback whales still feeding around us and even breaching not too far from the ship and as everyone bet on our next direction (left or right?) the way finally opened up in front of us! What a wonderful view!



As we started to exit the narrow channel Zuzanna made the call for lunch but had trouble to get everyone inside and into the dining room... Lucky for us it was a buffet so we could all eat quickly and head back out onto the decks to see where we were going to next.



After lunch, we found ourselves sailing into Charlotte Bay ready to set out for our afternoon's activities. The plan was to do a split landing and cruise so we could go ashore for our second continental landing at Portal Point and also explore the local area on the water. On shore the snow was quite deep and it had been a hard job for Katja and Dan to break a trail in the soft deep snow to allow us all to walk easily up to the summit of the dome. Their efforts were much appreciated and the walk to the top was well worth it as the views of the bay below were beautiful and although it wasn't a long walk it gave everyone time to just sit end soak up the beauty of Antarctica.

From the dome of Portal Point could see the zodiacs out in the bay as they cruised past icebergs and ice floes and then found a couple of Humpback whales to see at close quarters. Jos even had a whale come right underneath the zodiac, much to the amazement and excitement of her passengers who couldn't believe their luck! Everyone else had good views of the whales as well as some Weddell seals that had found some ice to rest on. The animals were certainly showing off this afternoon, and everyone enjoyed Humpback whales, Gentoo penguins, Leopard seals, and Weddell seals... what a day in Antarctica.

At the end of the afternoon there was madness spreading through the passengers.....what's else would you do with cold clear water, penguins, nice views and icebergs but to enjoy a Polar Plunge!!? Let's jump in the water! There was much anticipation as 15 guests were brave enough to enjoy the 2°C water, although it left the Gentoo penguins wondering what all the fuss was about and indeed were these new Antarctic species that hadn't yet evolved to



survive freezing water or climb up onto ice floes?

Back on board and the polar swimmers used all the hot water supply on the ship and we were then invited to the lounge for the daily re-cap with plans for the coming day from Andrew, some information from Ali about Leopard seals and an explanation about Humpback whale bubble feeding from Marijke, which is something we had all been able to see from the zodiacs during the afternoon.

After dinner we were all looking back on what had been a stunning day in Antarctica when the Captain decided to offer us a second "secret pocket surprise" and Andrew suggested we wrap up warm for a bit of a look....

And as we got closer to Wilhelmina Bay, the sound of the ice breaking along the hull of the ship got stronger and we found ourselves sailing through newly formed brash filled sea ice and past increasingly large icebergs. More and more faces got out on deck to find out what was going on and discovered a great icy landscape where the Plancius was completely surrounded by ice! Sea ice, icebergs, glaciers... the ice lovers don't know where to look anymore! There were a few concerns that maybe we were getting stuck but Captain Alexey did an amazing job of navigating through the ice and icebergs and taking us on a memorable journey. Many megabytes of photos were taken during the course of the evening but finally, at 10pm, the Plancius has to surrender..... We won't manage to make our way through the bay with a long line of fast ice right across the entrance. The Captain, standing up on his chair decides to go back out and carefully (but with some disco music anyway) gets back to more watery water :)

Good night the Plancius, and remember the 13th of December as one of the most Antarctic days of the trip!



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Day 16 – Thursday 14th December 2017

Damoy Point and Foyn Harbour, Antarctica

0800 GPS Position: 064°48' S / 063°30' W

Wind: NE 5. **Sea State:** Slight. **Weather:** Overcast. **Air Temp:** + 4°C. **Sea Temp:** + 1°C



We all awoke to another beautiful clear day in the Antarctic with clear skies and light winds. During the early morning hours we made our way through the Neumayer Channel and a narrow passage between Anders Island and Weineke Island to Damoy Point and our landing site on the shores of Dorian Bay. Humpback whales were seen along the way but the scenery and the light conditions for photographs were fantastic and a definite highlight. Andrew gave a wakeup call at 0630 so most people got a chance to see at least the final part of the passage.

At 0800 people started to go ashore near two historical huts, one used for research by Argentina built in 1953, and another built by the British Antarctic Survey for staging people flying in and out on a snow airstrip on a reasonably level hill behind them. The landing was on a rocky beach with overhanging snow so Ali, Daniel and Walt carved out some steps to get up onto the flatter snow.

Once on shore we were given a pair of snow shoes which were going to make it much easier to get around on the icy snow. As Ali said, if you can walk you can snowshoe and within a few minutes we were all stepping along like true polar explorers, as long as we didn't try to step backwards to take a photo! Lydie opened the British hut that has been preserved by the British Antarctic heritage Trust with supplies, furniture, tools, etc. just left in place when the last people using it walked away. Everyone got a chance to go inside, look around and take a step back in time. We also had two seals close to the huts and several other Gentoo penguin colonies that were accessible for those who chose not to use snow shoes and go on the long walk. The birders had a chance to get a good look at a pair of South Polar Skua that was setting on a nest in the rocks near our landing spot.



Ali led a walk on snow shoes along the coast and past the Gentoo penguin colonies on all the rocky outcrops along the ridge. The penguins nest here as the wind blows the snow off these little peaks first allowing the penguins to access the pebbles they need for their nests. She then led a route up to the long ridge behind the huts, which was where the twin-otter ski planes used to land to take personnel and provisions further south to Antarctic bases such as Rothera. From here there was a fabulous view of the mountain range known as the Seven Brothers and of Port Lockroy which was formerly a British Antarctic Survey Base known as Base A and is now a museums with a gift shop and Post Office. It is staffed for the summer season for visiting cruise ships and we saw the ship the Hanseatic moored in the bay, along with two small yachts. All too soon it was time to head back towards the landing site and back to the ship ready to sail to our next destination.

A good lunch of "bangers and mash" replaced most of the calories we burned this morning during the landing and many people enjoyed time on deck after lunch enjoying the return navigation of the Neumayer Channel and out into the Gerlache Strait once again. At 2pm Katja gave a presentation on Climate Change. She presented a lot of facts that can't be refuted and we all came away with an idea of the questions to ask the people who doubt that it is happening.

At about 3:30pm the Plancius was back in Wilhelmina Bay, near the Enterprise and Nansen Islands where the plan was to head out on a zodiac cruise of the local area. It was a bit grey and windy but it didn't stop almost everyone on board going out in the boats. Most of the zodiacs circumnavigated Enterprise Island, named for the enterprising whalers who worked these shore from 1916 until 1930. There were a few Gentoo penguins, Antarctic terns, Kelp gulls, Antarctic shags, and Skuas for the





birders but the real star of the cruise was the ice. We were cruising through a turquoise sculpture garden. The ice bergs took marvellous shapes and only one's imagination was a limiting factor in what you saw in them. The tour ended at the wreck of "Gouvernoren I" in a bay of the same name. The whaling ship with its crew of 85 was run aground after it caught on fire in an attempt to put out the fire and save the cargo of whale oil.

Once we were back on board Zsuzsanna met everyone at the top of the runway with a cup of hot chocolate spiked with Tia Maria. It was much appreciated by all after a couple of hours on the water. Andrew got everyone together for the evening briefing and

explained that we would be traveling to the South Shetlands over night for a visit to Half Moon Island and a chinstrap penguin colony. Ali finished off the briefing with a talk on krill and its importance to the marine animal food chain. She explained that without the small copepods everything from penguins to seals to whales would suffer from lack of an acceptable food source.

Dinner was a combination of a modern version of Shackleton's hoosh and Falkland Island tooth fish. Most people retired after that to the lounge for a view of the passing scenery and to watch for Humpback whales. What an **ICE** day!



Day 17 – Friday 15th December 2017

Halfmoon Island, Antarctica

0800 GPS Position: 062°35' S / 059°54' W

Wind: NE 3. **Sea State:** Slight. **Weather:** Snow. **Air Temp:** - 2°C. **Sea Temp:** +1°C



During the night we sailed north through the Gerlache Strait, crossed Bransfield Strait and arrived in the morning at the South Shetland Islands. Our last landing in Antarctica was to be Halfmoon Island, a crescent shaped piece of land between Greenwich and Livingston Islands and home to several thousand Chinstrap penguins. It was snowing in big soft flakes when we took the Zodiacs to shore. The whole island was carpeted with a layer of new snow making it seem like a festive winter wonderland. Chinstrap penguins waddled through the white stuff that went up to their bellies. At the penguin highway some penguins tobogganed down the slope on their bellies, reaching impressive speeds. The ones coming up the slope, heading back to the

colony, had a much harder job and we admired them for their persistence.

Through a narrow pass we could walk to the other side of the island where we saw Chinstraps coming out of the water where they spent time on the beach preening their feathers and summoning the energy to make the walk up the hill through the deep snow. Further along a Weddell seal was hauled out on the beach. A side trip took us to another colony where the birds either sat stoically on their nests, squabbled with neighbours or defended their nest against the predatory attacks of a Skua.

Returning on the same way to the landing site everybody who was keen for a leg stretch had the chance to join Joselyn for a walk to Camara Station and beyond. The bright orange buildings with the Argentinian flag were unoccupied at this time of the year. Only in January and February roughly 20 people work here, making weather observations and doing some basic research. The main objective, however, is to show a political presence in the area claimed by Argentina.



Daniel Höhne - LebeDeineReise



By this time the weather had begun to improve with less snow and increasing visibility and we could see the islands around Halfmoon Island appearing out of the mist and snow. With better weather Jos was able to lead a walk from the buildings, along the cobble beach continuing all the way up to a highpoint with wonderful views over the bay and the glacier covered peaks of Livingston Island. Along the way Skuas were sitting on the snow. Though the sun was out a chilly wind whipped up the snow and blew it over the ground for a real Antarctic feeling. On the way back to the landing site we stopped at the Weddell seals hauled out along the beach. They looked very comfortable and content on their beds of snow and mostly ignored us. Blue ice pieces were lined up at the water's edge.

It had been a magical morning here on Halfmoon Island with plenty of time for people to take a walk or just sit with penguins absorbing the sights sounds and smells! It was also good to be able to take time to reflect on the last few days here in Antarctica.

As soon as we were back on board the anchor was lifted and we headed north for the English Passage. We enjoyed one more hour of protection and nice views before the Plancius headed out into the Drake Passage. Some whales bade a farewell to us along the way.

Luckily sea-conditions were very good and the movement of the ship wasn't bad at all. After a short nap we watched a film called "Around Cape Horn" which was filmed in the 1920's by Irving Johnson. He was a young man on the ship who then went on became a well-known and experienced captain sailing multiple times around the world. It was an



entertaining narration of some incredible footage of the days of sailing in these southern waters. It also made us realise that we travelled so much more comfortable, having a reliable engine, warm and dry cabins and three nice meals each day.

At the daily briefing Marijke talked about noise in the ocean for example from ships and drilling platforms, Katja showed us a time-lapse movie from a penguin colony and explained how we can take part in some citizen science with Penguinwatch.org and Andrew enlightened us about penguin pooping pressure (PPP). In the evening we settled back into sea-day routines: Dinner, bar, bed. The prospect of no wake-up call next morning was enticing after the busy days and short nights we had in Antarctica.



Day 18 – Saturday 16th December 2017

Drake Passage! (Drake Lake!)

0800 GPS Position: 059°21'S / 062°38'W

Wind: NW 2/3. **Sea State:** Smooth. **Weather:** Overcast. **Air Temp:** + 3°C. **Sea Temp:** +1°C



Wow, what a lovely way to wake up with calm seas and sunshine, and at our own leisure with no wake up call—a luxury indeed. The top deck was a peaceful retreat to sit in the sun and work up a bit of a tan; Andrew was sporting shorts and Joselyn was laid out on the deck snoozing like a lizard on a hot rock.

At 10:30 Ali gave her presentation *Ice Maidens*, about the women behind the heroic explorers and how despite their very different personalities they each provided the foundation for the success of their partners. She also shed some light on the transition of Antarctica from being a men's only domain to one where researchers and explorers of both sexes pursue their dreams and passions.

After a fine lunch and, maybe for some an afternoon lie-down, Joselyn invited us into the dining room to hear about her experiences as a modern "Ice Maiden", living and working in Antarctica at McMurdo and South Pole station, two U.S. science bases. She led us through "a day in the life" of a station worker, which certainly covers some ground—showing that the hard work of making science happen doesn't limit the ability to have fun or be creative while living for months so far away from the life most are used to back home.

Shortly after, the much anticipated happy hour commenced, and Raquel had a rollicking trade at the bar in preparation for the Plancius Pub Quiz hour.

Complete with cheese dip and tortilla chips, the keen publicans gathered around to test their Southern Ocean IQs. Ali began by leading us through three categories of traditional trivia-type questions, focusing on the Falklands and South Georgia, Antarctica, and "ship facts": who knew that gin and tonics were the most popular drink at the bar? Then for a creative finish there were two special rounds testing our senses—the first went through some of the sounds we've heard, and the other was a visual challenge—guessing what animal the super-cropped image on the screen belonged to. During the sounds round, it seemed like someone played a prank and snuck in a clip of Andrew sneezing instead of an elephant seal burping, but all came right in the end and everyone made their guesses. The winners were the Eco Quest team, taking first place by only a couple of points with the joint runners up the Macaroni's and The Commonwealth. The winners shared a bottle of Prosecco for their efforts.



Enjoying a last drink before dinner, the pub quiz rolled right into our daily briefing—Zsuzanna explained the details of settling accounts and other end-of-trip matters, Andrew gave us an update about the weather and our progress running for the shelter of South America before another storm hits, and the potential for the ship to change course if the weather held to try for a closer look of Cape Horn itself. Then Katja explained to us what sort of time zones are used in Antarctica and why—not a straightforward matter!—and then Lydie took the stage to introduce our final photo competition. There were 17 submissions for each category and the competition was stiff

and choosing a clear standout winner was not an easy choice. We'll wait in anticipation for the final results tomorrow, but the variety of entries was certainly a popular topic of conversation at dinner.

As night began to fall (we are back in the land of early sunsets!) the clouds increased, setting the stage for a dramatic sunset. There were even distant rain squalls on the horizon to add even more texture to the sky. As the last orange glow subsided, that rain moved in and blessed the ship with a cleansing douse of fresh water, the first we have experienced since leaving South Georgia. A reminder that we have returned to more temperate conditions and the new, greener vistas that will greet us in the morning.



Day 19 – Sunday 17th December 2017

Drake Passage! (Back to a bit of shake!)

0800 GPS Position: 055°13'S / 066°17'W

Wind: NW 5. **Sea State:** Slight. **Weather:** Overcast. **Air Temp:** +7°C. **Sea Temp:** +6°C



During the night the forecast winds arrived and by midnight it was blowing a steady 40 knots with gusts of over 60 knots so deviating to Cape Horn was not an option for the ship. By the early hours of the morning we were beginning to get into the shelter of the continent of South America and conditions were much more comfortable on board. With no early wake-up call from Andrew we were all able to sleep until the breakfast call from Zsuzanna if we chose to and, after a bit of a disturbed night it is exactly what many of us did.

As we emerged from our cabins we could already see land ahead as we made our way to the entrance of the Beagle Channel. The winds were still quite

strong out on deck but with the protection of the land there was very little swell and conditions were very comfortable. It seems that the Captain made a very wise choice to maximise the fabulous Drake Lake conditions yesterday and seek shelter from the coming storm as soon as he could. !! It was lovely to step out on deck and look at the mountains rising ahead of us and even begin to smell the Southern beech forests that cover the lower hills of Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia.

After breakfast as we were all enjoying a second or third coffee there was a call from the Bridge that some Sei whales had been spotted. This is a new species for us on this voyage. They are baleen whales but smaller than the Fin whales we had been seeing in recent weeks and with a much more erect dorsal fin. We grabbed our cameras and headed out on deck but they were a little elusive and we only got glimpses of their blows and fins. A few Peale's dolphins were seen near the bow of the ship but we weren't travelling at any speed at the time so they weren't interested in bow riding.



At 10:30 we were invited to the dining room for a presentation from Jos entitled 'What Lies Beneath'. Having spent time at McMurdo Station she had been able to obtain some incredible footage of the marine life of Antarctica. The diversity of life in such a seemingly hostile environment is astounding but the creatures there enjoy a relatively stable temperature under the surface of the water and the ice and as a result are slow growing and long lived. It was a fascinating glimpse into a watery world that few of us will ever experience.

After lunch, as we continued up the Beagle Channel the winds increased a little making it a bit blowy out on deck with 35 knots coming from the starboard side. We were getting closer to the pilot station where we would collect a navigating pilot to take us up to Ushuaia. Just before the pilot boat came alongside we had some more Peale's dolphins at the bow of Plancius hoping to bow ride once again but our speed wasn't exciting enough for them!



At 3pm Katja invited us to the dining room for a presentation about the time she spent with the German Antarctic Programme at the Neumayer Base and also with the Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Division. She was studying the ice during her time there and gave us a fabulous insight into her work but also into life down on the Antarctic Continent.

The last household chore of the afternoon, other than packing was to return our rubber boots to the boot room. These sturdy 'Muck Boots' had kept our feet warm and dry during the voyage and we were grateful to have had them, especially in the cold of Antarctica.

At 6pm we were invited to the lounge for Captain's Cocktails where we met with Captain Alexey once again to toast the wonderful voyage. He did some amazing navigation with Plancius, taking us close to whales and icebergs, particularly in Wilhelmina Bay. The staff had contributed photos for a slide show which Ali had put together with some appropriate music. It was lovely to look back over the last 19 days on board Plancius and remember the places we had visited and the wonderful things we had seen.

The night was spent alongside the wharf in the port of Ushuaia where we had come early to avoid the storms in the area. It meant we all had a very comfortable night on board

Day 20 – Monday 18th December 2017

Disembarkation Ushuaia

We were woken by the last wake-up call from our Expedition Leader Andrew and got ready to disembark for the final time. We didn't have to turn our tags, there was no zodiac ride ashore and it was a dry landing. The last three weeks have taken us on a remarkable journey from the Falkland Islands, to South Georgia and to Antarctica and allowed us a glimpse of life in these remote and sometimes inhospitable places. We will all have different memories of our trip but whatever the memories, whether it was the King penguins in the rain at Salisbury Plain or the sight of the icebergs in Antarctic Sound for the first time they are memories that will stay with us for the rest of our lives.

Total distance sailed on our voyage:

Nautical miles: 3670 nm

Kilometres: 6797 km

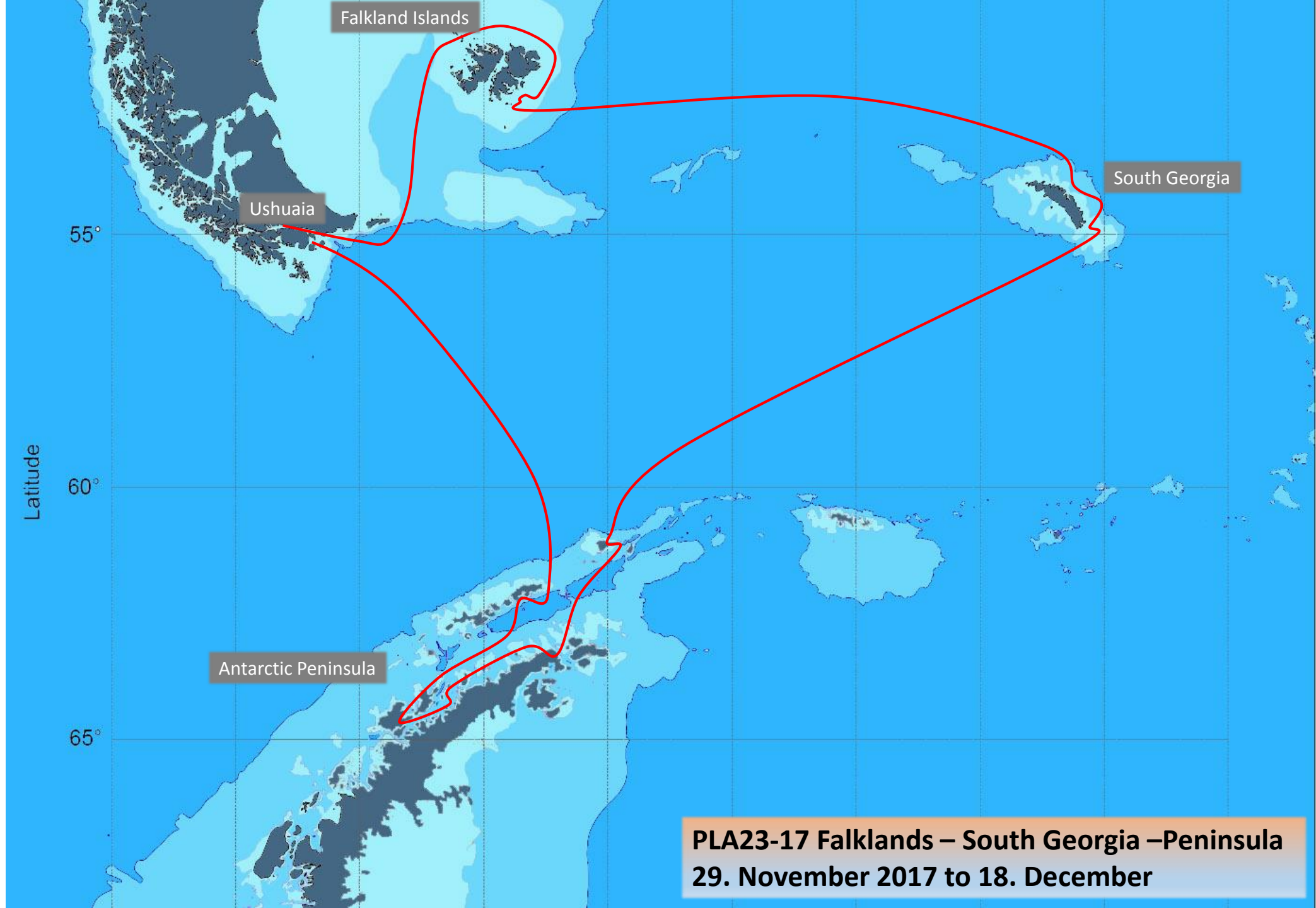


Your Expedition Team!

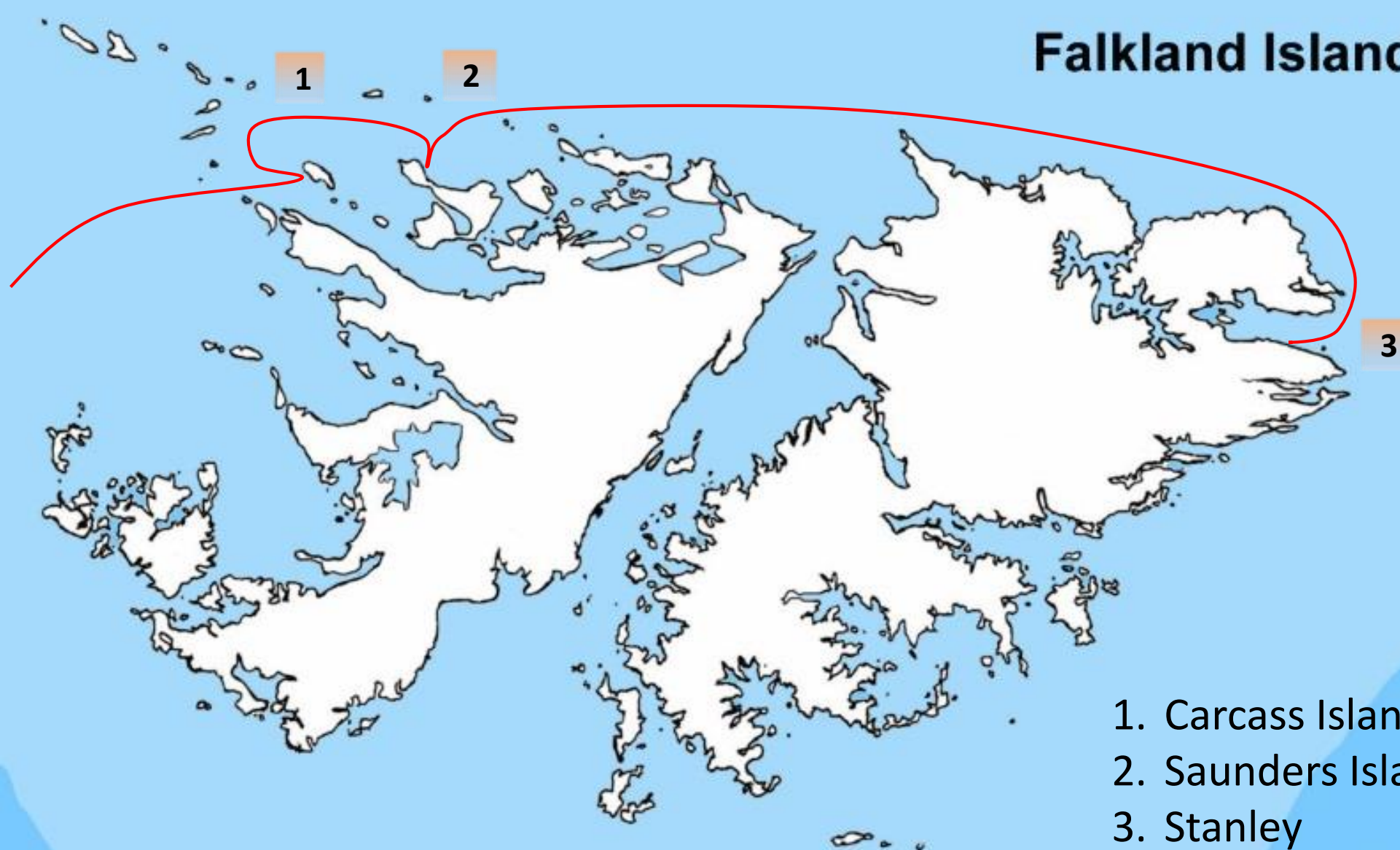
On behalf of everyone on board we thank you for travelling with us and wish you a safe journey home.



OCEANWIDE
EXPEDITIONS



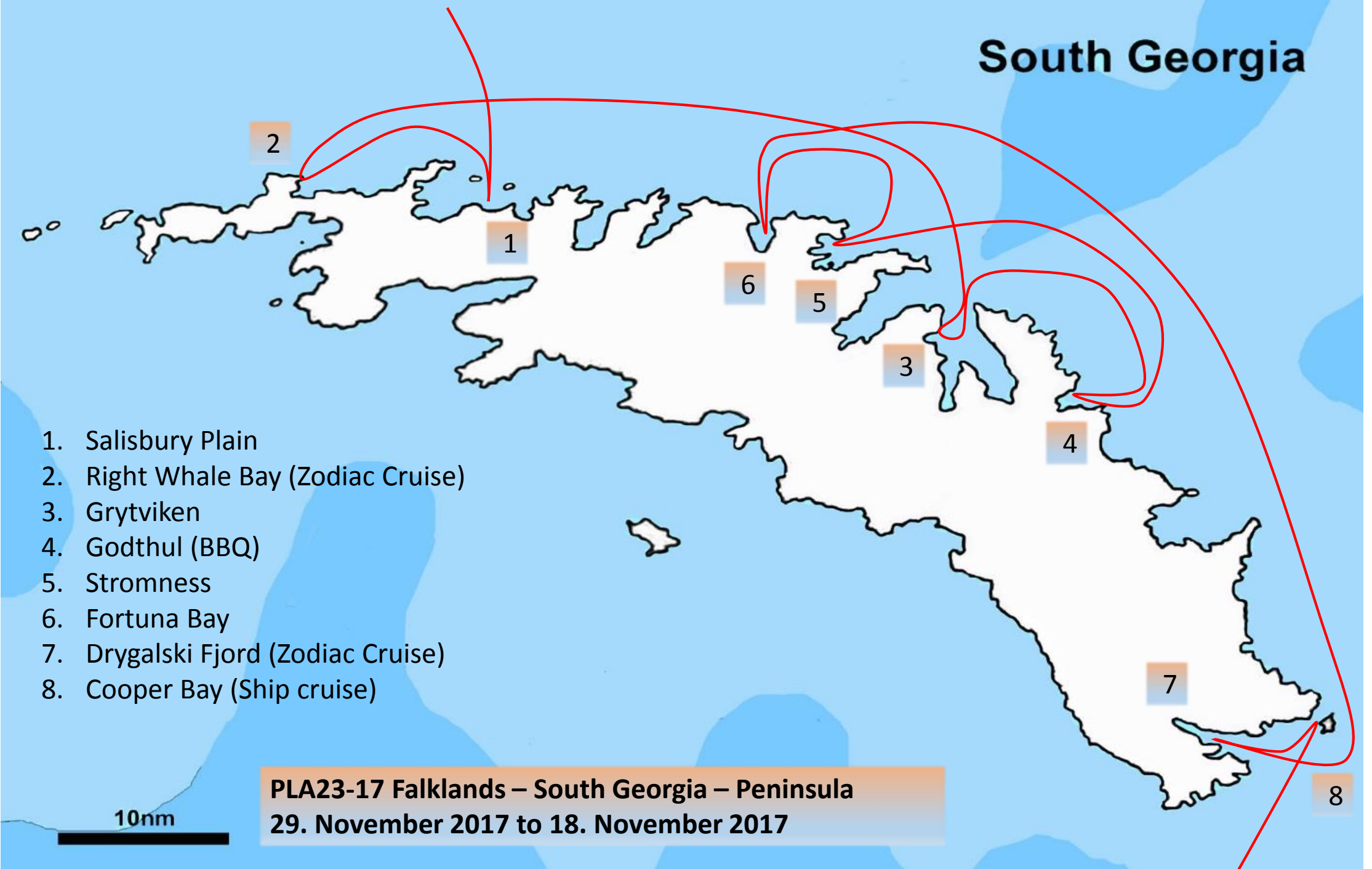
Falkland Islands



1. Carcass Island
2. Saunders Island
3. Stanley

**PLA 23-17 Falklands – South Georgia – Peninsula
29. November 2017 to 18. December 2017**

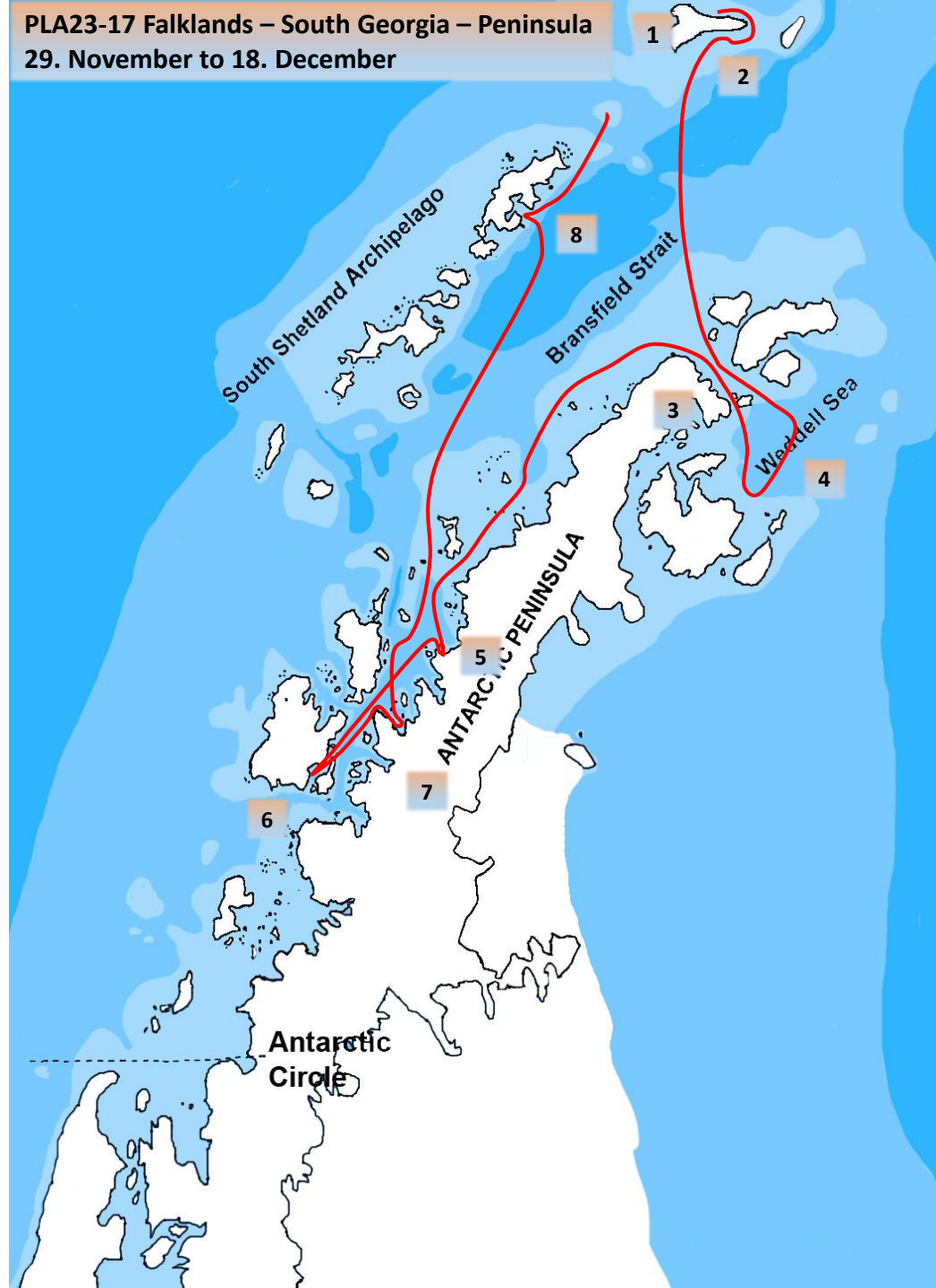
South Georgia



1. Salisbury Plain
2. Right Whale Bay (Zodiac Cruise)
3. Grytviken
4. Godthul (BBQ)
5. Stromness
6. Fortuna Bay
7. Drygalski Fjord (Zodiac Cruise)
8. Cooper Bay (Ship cruise)

PLA23-17 Falklands – South Georgia – Peninsula
29. November 2017 to 18. November 2017

PLA23-17 Falklands – South Georgia – Peninsula
29. November to 18. December



1. Elephant Island: Point Wild (Ship Cruise)
2. Elephant Island: Cape Lookout
3. Brown Bluff
4. Weddell Sea (Zodic Cruise)
5. Charlotte Bay / Portal Point
Landing and Zodiac Cruise)
6. Neumayer Channel and Dorian Bay
(Landing and Huts)
7. Foyen Harbour in Wilhelmina Bay
8. Halfmoon Island
(Chinstrap Penguins and Argentine Base)

Species list: Common birds and marine mammals of the Antarctic region

English	Latin	29-nov	30-nov	1-dec	2-dec
Emperor Penguin	<i>Aptenodytes forsteri</i>				
Adelie Penguin	<i>Pygoscelis adeliae</i>				
Gentoo Penguin	<i>Pygoscelis papua papua</i>			X	
Chinstrap Penguin	<i>Pygoscelis antarctica</i>				
Macaroni Penguin	<i>Eudyptes chrysolophus</i>				
Magellanic Penguin	<i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>	X	X	X	X
Wandering Albatross	<i>Diomedea exulans</i>				X
Northern Royal Albatross	<i>Diomedea sanfordi</i>				
Southern Royal Albatross	<i>Diomedea epomophora</i>		X		X
Black-browed Albatross	<i>Diomedea melanophris</i>	X	X	X	X
Grey-Headed Albatross	<i>Diomedea chrysostoma</i>				X
Light Mantled Albatross	<i>Phoebetria palpebrata</i>				
Northern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes halli</i>				
Southern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	X	X	X	X
Antarctic Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialisoides</i>		X		X
Cape Petrel (Pintado)	<i>Daption capensis</i>		X		X
Antarctic Petrel	<i>Thalassoica antarctica</i>				
Snow Petrel	<i>Pagodroma nivea</i>				
Soft Plumaged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>				
Blue Petrel	<i>Halobaena caerulea</i>				
White-chinned Petrel	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>				
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>		X	X	X

Great Shearwater	<i>Puffinus gravis</i>		X		
Antarctic Prion	<i>Pachyptila desolata</i>				
Fairy Prion	<i>Pachyptila turtur</i>				
Slender-billed Prion	<i>Pachyptila belcheri</i>		X		X
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>		X		X
Black-bellied Storm-Petrel	<i>Fregetta tropica</i>				X
Grey-backed Storm-Petrel	<i>Oceanites nereis</i>				
Common Diving-Petrel	<i>Pelecanoides (urinatrix) berard</i>		X	X	
Imperial (Blue Eyed) Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax atriceps</i>	X		X	X
Antarctic Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax bransfieldensis</i>				
Pale-faced Shearbill	<i>Chionis alba</i>			X	
Chilean Skua	<i>Catharacta chilensis</i>	X	X		
South Polar Skua	<i>Catharacta maccormicki</i>				
Sub-Antarctic (Brown) Skua	<i>Catharacta antarctica</i>			X	
Dolphin Gull	<i>Larus scoresbii</i>	X		X	X
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	X		X	X
South American Tern	<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>	X		X	X
Antarctic Tern	<i>Sterna vittata</i>				
Arctic tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>				
Specific to Falkland Islands					
Rockhopper Penguin	<i>Eudyptes chrysocome</i>			X	
Rock Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax magellanicus</i>			X	
Upland Goose	<i>Chloephaga picta</i>			X	X
Kelp Goose	<i>Chloephaga hybrida</i>			X	
Ruddy-headed Goose	<i>Chloephaga rubidiceps</i>			X	X

Flying Steamer Duck	<i>Tachyeres patachonicus</i>				
Falkland Flightless Steamer Duck	<i>Tachyeres brachypterus</i>			X	X
Crested Duck	<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>			X	X
Chiloe Wigeon	<i>Anas sibilatrix</i>				
Speckled Teal	<i>Anas flavirostris</i>			X	
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>			X	X
Red-backed Hawk	<i>Buteo polyosoma</i>				
Striated Caracara	<i>Phalco boenus australis</i>			X	
Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara plancus</i>				X
Magellanic Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus leucopodus</i>			X	X
Blackish Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ater</i>			X	X
Two-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>				
Rufous-chested Dotterel	<i>Charadrius modestus</i>				X
Magellanic Snipe	<i>Gallinago paraguaiiae magellanica</i>			X	X
South American Tern	<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>			X	X
Blackish Cinclodes (Tussack Bird)	<i>Cinclodes antarcticus antarcticus</i>			X	
Dark-faced ground-tyrant	<i>Muscisaxicola m. macloviana</i>			X	X
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>				X
Cobb's Wren	<i>Troglodytes cobbi</i>			X	
Chilean Swallow	<i>Tachycineta leucopyga</i>				
Falkland Thrush	<i>Turdus falcklandii falcklandii</i>			X	X
Long-tailed Meadow Lark	<i>Sturnella loyca falklandica</i>			X	X
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax falklandicus</i>			X	
Grass Wren					X
Barn Swallow					X
White-rumped Sandpiper					X

White-tufted Grebe					X
Specific to South Georgia					
King Penguin	<i>Aptenodytes patagonicus</i>				
South Georgia Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax georgianus</i>				
South Georgia Diving Petrel	<i>Pelecanoides georgicus</i>				
South Georgia Pipit	<i>Anthus antarcticus</i>				
South Georgia Pintail	<i>Anas georgica georgica</i>				
Marine mammals					
Southern Right Whale	<i>Eubalaena australis</i>				
Antarctic Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera bonaerensis</i>				
Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>				
Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>				
Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>		X		
Sei whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>				
Southern Bottlenose Whale	<i>Hyperoodon planifrons</i>				
Long Finned Pilot whale	<i>Globicephala melas</i>				
Killer Whale	<i>Orcinus orca</i>				
Hourglass Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus cruciger</i>		X		
Peale's Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus australis</i>			X	X
Commerson's Dolphin	<i>Cephalorhynchus commersonii</i>			X	X
Leopard Seal	<i>Hydrurga leptonyx</i>				
Crabeater Seal	<i>Lobodon carcinophagus</i>				
Weddell Seal	<i>Leptonychotes weddelli</i>				
Southern Elephant Seal	<i>Mirounga leonin</i>			X	
Antarctic Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus gazella</i>				

Southern Sea Lion	<i>Otaria flavescens</i>	X	X	X	X
South American Fur Seal			X	X	
Beaked whale sp.	Mesoplodon sp.				

3-dec	4-dec	5-dec	6-dec	7-dec	8-dec	9-dec	10-dec	11-dec	12-dec	13-dec
									X	
		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
					X			X	X	X
			X		X			X		
X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
					X					
X	X	X			X	X				
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
X	X	X	X	X	X					
X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
		X								
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X					X	X	X	X		
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	X	X	X		X				X	X
	X	X		X	X	X	X			
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
X						X				

	X	X	X			X				
		X	X							
		X	X							
		X	X							
		X	X							
								X		X
		X			X			X		X
						X				
					X	X	X	X		
X							X			
					X					
	X					X				
								X	X	X
									X	
					X					X
		X	X	X	X			X		X
		X	X	X	X	X				

Andrew Bishop – Expedition Leader



Andrew hails from King Island, a small island just north of Tasmania, Australia. He completed his university studies in Hobart at the University of Tasmania in 2001, earning a double major in Geology and Environmental Geography.

Since then he has travelled the world, visiting all seven continents, climbing a few high mountains and enjoying the experiences and challenges different nations and cultures can offer.

In 2010, after spending several years mainly focussed on working as an exploration geologist in the remoter areas of Australia, he began working as an expedition guide and lecturer to the Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. Since then he has completed over 50 trips to this region working as a guide in various positions, and for the past few seasons as Expedition Leader.

Katja Riedel – Assistant Expedition Leader



Katja Riedel grew up in Germany where she studied and completed a Phd in Atmospheric Chemistry. For her research she overwintered 1997 at the German Antarctic Base Neumayer where she was responsible for the Atmospheric Observatory.

Since then she has been on several scientific expeditions to Antarctica, for example measuring ozone at Scott Base, drilling ice cores at Law Dome and taking samples of 120,000 years old ice on Taylor Glacier in the Dry Valleys.

She completed a course in Antarctic studies and worked for more than 12 years as a research scientist in Wellington, New Zealand. Her research interests are greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and ice cores. Since 2011 she works as a guide and lecturer on expedition cruises in the Arctic and Antarctic.

The Polar Regions have always fascinated Katja. On private adventures she skied over 220 km through Svalbard, sailed in a small yacht to Antarctica, kayaked icy waters and worked as a science assistant in Western Greenland. Her fondest memories of Antarctica are building a 24 h sundial and sledging from Hut Point to the Erebus Ice Tongue.

Life is an adventure for Katja and whenever she can she travels, hikes, cycles, sea-kayaks and skis to the remote and beautiful places on earth.

When not traveling Katja lives in New Zealand and works as a freelance science communicator and photographer. She speaks fluently English and German.

Ali Liddle — Expedition Guide



Ali has lived on both the Falklands and South Georgia, has published 3 books and when she is not running marathons is either on ships in the south or teaching children in the north.

Originally from the UK, Ali spent 15 years living in the Falkland Islands where she worked as a Primary school teacher both teaching out in 'camp' and at the school in Stanley.

Latterly, she was employed as Education Officer for Falklands Conservation and shared her time between classroom teaching and conservation. In 1997 she spent 9 months living on South Georgia where she ran the Post Office and took every opportunity to hike, ski and explore the surrounding peaks and coastline.

She has published 3 books to date – Plants of the Falkland Islands and 2 art and craft books for children using penguins and albatross as the inspiration. Ali is a keen runner, having completed 3 marathons in the Falkland Islands and 2 in the UK and enjoys hiking and camping, particularly in remote corners of the Falkland Islands.

Ali has been working on Antarctic and Arctic cruise ships with Oceanwide for a number of years and, for now, she shares her time between working on board *Plancius* and teaching in Northumberland in the UK, where she is currently based. She hopes to return to the Falkland Islands at some point in the future to continue living the island life she loves so much.

Daniel Höhne – Expedition Guide



I studied Geography and Geology in Tübingen in the south of Germany. Since then I have been fascinated by the vigour and sensitivity of our ecosystems.

Previously it was my hobby to go outside and take nature photos, but today it is my profession. I strongly believe that a well composed picture does more than just make you look at it again and again. It compels an emotional response. Most of us want to experience regions all over the world in the most natural and original way. Therefore it is necessary to protect the specific ecosystems. Goethe already said: “You can only see what you do understand”.

Taking people into the outdoors and teaching them to see and feel is one of the greatest things for me to do. To help them understand why things happen in nature and what our role is in different environments. It enables me to broaden my horizon every day. If we go out with an open mind we will appreciate nature as its best.

Presently I am self employed as a nature photographer and guide. My focus is in Iceland, where I spend 18 weeks a year guiding and taking my own pictures. I also guide in Svalbard/Spitsbergen, Finnish Lapland and northeastern parts of Germany as they are some of my favorite areas as well. This will be my first season in Antarctica. For me this life style means passion, personal development and freedom.

Marijke de Boer – Expedition Guide



Marijke grew up in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany. She is fascinated by cetaceans and has participated in various ocean-crossing surveys, namely the Arctic Davis Strait, Indian Ocean, South China Sea, Southern Ocean and Antarctica. These surveys formed the core foundation of her detailed in-depth experience with marine mammals and sea-birds.

She completed a MSc in Marine Ecology (Utrecht University) and a PhD in Marine Mammal Ecology (Wageningen University) focusing on the abundance and distribution of cetaceans using (low-cost) seagoing vessels ('Platforms of Opportunity').

Nowadays her research focuses on marine fauna within the Caribbean, West Africa and Cornwall (UK). Marijke has produced a wide selection of scientific publications and presented papers to international conferences and committees.

Whilst she very much enjoys the academic side of her career, her first love is sharing her knowledge in the field. She has worked as a wildlife guide during multiple oceanic expeditions and speaks Dutch, English and German. The ocean is very special to her – *'after more than 20 years of sailing the seven seas, it never fails to educate, surprise and enthrall me'*.

Walter Sturgeon – Expedition Guide



Naturalist, Aviculturist, Conservationist, Student of Arctic History, Eco-Tour Leader, Champion of Crane Conservation, Photographer, Museum Director, veteran of 21 trips to the Canadian, Alaskan, and Norwegian Arctic to research and collect waterfowl and other Arctic nesting birds, graduate of Yale University.

Since childhood I have had a love for birds and once I discovered that I could keep and breed many bird species in captivity I have used that interest to contribute to conservation of waterfowl, cranes, and other species. Over the last 60 years I have used those birds for public education purposes as well as supplying birds to zoos and other public institutions using them for education. Some of my earlier waterfowl species were collected out of the wild in Alaska and Canada. Agencies in both countries started taking advantage of my interest and love for the Arctic and my expertise with waterfowl and cranes and invited me to work with them as a field assistant.

These trips led to assignments in some very remote places not often visited like Melville, Prince Patrick, and Cornwallis Islands in the Canadian Arctic. Travel in these places leads you to wonder who was there before and why. So my interest in Polar history led to my own Arctic and Antarctic library. While this was all happening I held down a full time job as a nuclear engineer which gave me the resources to pursue my interests. I have retired three times and always come back to work on an interesting project, lead a trip to some remote place, or help conserve some rare species through captive propagation and reintroduction to the wild. This is my first trip to Antarctica.

Joselyn Fenstermacher – Expedition Guide



As an undergraduate, Joselyn studied behavioral ecology and conservation biology, going abroad to Ecuador and Tanzania completing hands-on, research-based semester courses studying the local flora, fauna, and conservation attitudes.

She has worked all over the United States including Alaska and Hawaii, and with all manner of critters including fish, brown bears, desert tortoises, and endangered birds. Over the past many years she has also been working in Antarctica, beginning with several seasons supporting the scientific research at two U.S. science bases (McMurdo and South Pole). More recently she has served as guide and education coordinator on expedition voyages to the Falklands, South Georgia, and the Antarctic Peninsula as well as in the Indian Ocean and around the UK and Scandinavia.

When back in the U.S. Joselyn spends most of her time in the Big Bend region of far western Texas where she has fallen in love with the Chihuahuan Desert. She works seasonally for the National Park Service as a bio-technician and interpretive Park Ranger, and completed her Master of Science botanical research there on Big Bend flora in 2007. Since then, she has continued investigating a small group of relatively unknown cacti, becoming a recognized regional expert.

Joselyn is passionate about learning more about the world around her, and sharing that passion with others- hoping to inspire a broader appreciation for, and understanding of, the fascinating world we live in.

Lydie Lescarmontier – Expedition Guide



I'm passionate about the environment and the polar regions !

I started my studies focusing on the environment, and the impact of humans on its quality. And I actually figured out that the most impacted part of the earth are the polar regions. That's why I decided to work on the evolution of glaciers in Antarctica. I

followed a master degree in oceanography and climatology and started a Doctorate degree in glaciology. I worked with the french national research center on the interaction between the Antarctic ice-sheet and the ocean, using the example of the Mertz Glacier in Adelie Land (East Antarctica) I participated to four seasons in Antarctica with the french polar institute onboard the Astrolabe, a french ice breaker, to put in place a network of GPS stations on the glacier and follow its evolution.

After my doctorate, I spent 3 years in Australia to work at the Australian National University of the mass balance of East Antarctica. A part of my job in collaboration with the Australian Antarctic Division was to set up a network of autonomous GPS beacons in different part of the continent to get accurate estimates of the quantity of ice in that region.

My work in the Arctic is more recent as I started in 2014 working as a guide in Svalbard and Greenland. And because I think that the best way to protect polar regions is to talk about them, I'm also involved in an association promoting polar sciences and networking young french polar researchers.



Captain Alexey Nazarov

and his international crew

Including:

Chief Officer:	Jaanus Hannes	[Estonia]
2nd Officer:	Matei Mocanu	[Romania]
3rd Officer:	Clarence Pamine	[Phillipines]
Chief Engineer:	Teunis van't Verlaat	[Netherlands]
Hotel Manager:	Zsuzsanna Varga	[Hungary]
Assist. Hotel Manager:	Bobby Manevski	[Macedonia]
Head Chef:	Ralf Barthel	[Germany]
Sous Chef:	Lars Prater	[Germany]
Ship's Physician:	Moniek Mestrom	[Netherlands]

AND

Expedition Leader:	Andrew Bishop	[Australia]
Assist. Expedition Leader:	Katja Riedel	[Germany/New Zealand]
Expedition Guide:	Ali Liddle	[England]
Expedition Guide:	Daniel Höhne	[Germany]
Expedition Guide	Marijke de Boer	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	Walt Sturgeon	[USA]
Expedition Guide:	Joselyn Fenstermacher	[USA]
Expedition Guide:	Lydie Lescarmontier	[France]

Welcome you on board!



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Embarkation in Ushuaia
Wednesday 29th November 2017

Welcome on board! Your luggage will be delivered to your cabin as soon as possible. *After we are all on board*, please check your luggage and notify Reception if you are missing anything or have the wrong luggage.

~1700 **Mandatory Safety and Lifeboat Drill in the Lounge.**

*ALL passengers are **required** to attend this very important safety briefing.*

~1800 Approximate sailing time. As we leave Ushuaia we recommend that you enjoy the views from the outside decks.

Please note: **The Bridge and Bridge wings will be closed for departure while we navigate the Beagle Channel this evening.**

We will conduct the mandatory Lifeboat Drill once we have departed Ushuaia. Please listen for the Alarm.

~1845 Soon after sailing we would like to invite you to the **Lounge** (Deck 5) for a welcome from Expedition Leader **Andrew Bishop** and an introduction to the ship by Hotel Manager **Zsuzsanna Varga**.

Afterwards there will be Captain's Cocktails! Captain **Alexey Nazarov** invites you to join him for a welcome drink in the Lounge, where you will also meet the Expedition Team.

1930 **Dinner** is served in the **Dining Room**, located on **Deck 3** behind Reception. Bon appétit!

This evening we will be sailing into the Drake Passage. Please secure all breakable items (cameras, computers, etc.), doors and drawers in your cabin, take sea-sickness medication if necessary and always keep at least one hand free to hold on to the ship.



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

At Sea towards the Falkland Islands

Thursday 30th November 2017

0730 Wake Up call.

0800 Breakfast is served in the **Restaurant** (Deck 3) for one hour.

0945 Please come to the **Lounge** (Deck 5) for a **mandatory Zodiac boat briefing** by Andrew

1030 **Ali** would like to share her passion and inside knowledge of the **Falkland Islands** in the first of two talks. This will be in the **Restaurant**.

1230 Lunch is served in the Restaurant.

As we sail towards the Falklands please keep a lookout for birds and mammals.

~1500 Please come to the boot room (Deck 3 forward) to collect your **rubber boots**. We will **call you by deck**, please bring your thick socks if you have them and listen for announcements.

1630 **Ali** would like to present the second of her talks on the **Falkland Islands**. This will be in the **Restaurant**.

1830 Join **Andrew** and the Expedition team in the **Lounge** for the Daily Briefing where we look back upon our day and towards future plans.

1900 Dinner is served in the **Restaurant**. Bon appétit.

Please ensure your valuables (cameras, computers, etc.) are secure in your cabin to prevent any accidents. Always keep at least one hand free to hold on to the ship!



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Carcass Island and Saunders Island

Friday 1st December 2017

At approximately 0700 we will be navigating through the **'Wooly Gut'**, a very scenic and narrow stretch of water. Here we can see various penguin species as well as cormorants and local birds and maybe even dolphins.

0444 Sunrise

0630 Wake-up call

~0700 'Wooly Gut' navigation

0730 Breakfast is served in the Restaurant for one hour.

0830 This morning we would like to go ashore at **Carcass Island**. If the weather allows we would like to offer a long hike (4 km) before visiting the settlement for a delicious (complementary) morning tea. Long hikers will disembark first. Please listen for announcements.

1230 Lunch is served in the Restaurant.

~1400 Please come to the lounge for a briefing regarding our afternoon landing.

~1430 This afternoon we hope to land at **Saunders Island**. Here we can find Gentoo, Rockhopper, Magellanic and King penguins and Imperial shags. The track to the Black browed albatross colony is steep and could be slippery.

1830 Join Andrew and the Expedition team in the Lounge for the **Daily Briefing**.

1900 Dinner is served in the Restaurant. Bon appétit.

2055 Sunset



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Port Stanley

Saturday 2nd December 2017

At approximately 0700 this morning we will be sailing through 'The Narrows' and into the harbour of Port Stanley. If the weather is good this is a nice introduction to the township of Stanley.

0430 Sunrise

0645 Wake Up call.

0700 Transit of 'The Narrows'.

0730 Breakfast is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

~0830 In the morning we plan to visit **Port Stanley**. This should be a dry landing onto a floating pontoon.

- There are special notices posted on the whiteboards with information about some of the shops and attractions that will be open.
- Please note that not all shops can accept credit/debit cards, so it is advisable to carry some cash.
- Pounds Sterling and Falkland currency is fine, **undamaged** US Dollar and Euro notes may be accepted and your change will be given back in Falkland pounds.

1300 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

1600 Please join in Ali in the Dining Room for her talk on **Blackbrowed albatrosses and albatross conservation**.

1800 Join Andrew and the Expedition team in the Lounge for the Daily Briefing.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

2030 Sunset

As we will be sailing in open waters after lunch, please ensure that you cabin and breakables are secure and you have taken medical precautions against seasickness if required.



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

At Sea en-route to South Georgia

Sunday 3rd December 2017

0350 Sunrise.

0745 Wake Up call.

0800 Breakfast is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

1030 Please join in Ali in the Dining Room for her talk on **Blackbrowed albatrosses and albatross conservation.**

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

If conditions allow, this afternoon the Officers will be dropping an ARGO buoy. Please listen out for announcements.

1500 **Walt** would like give a talk on how to identify some of the different kinds of seabirds we hope to see on this voyage. This will be in the **Dining Room.**

1630 This afternoon **Marijke** would like to offer a talk on **Penguins** in the **Dining Room.**

1830 Daily Briefing - please join the Expedition team in the Lounge.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

2025 Sunset.

Please ensure breakables are secured in your cabin and keep at least one hand free to hold on to the ship.



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

At Sea en-route to South Georgia

Monday 4th December 2017

As we continue sailing towards the biologically rich waters of South Georgia keep a lookout out for birds and large mammals!

0415 Sunrise.

0745 Wake Up call.

0800 Breakfast is served in the Restaurant for one hour.

1030 **Ali** spent several months on **South Georgia** and would like to introduce you to this magical island in the **Restaurant**.

1230 Lunch is served in the Restaurant.

1500 We will be seeing many **seals** over the next few days. **Marijke** will be in the **Lounge** and delighted to talk about these fascinating creatures.

1630 **Joselyn** enjoys the Polar Regions, and as such would like to talk about **plants and their secrets to survival**. This will be in the **Restaurant**.

1815 You are invited to the **Lounge** for the **Daily Briefing**. (SG movie)

1900 Dinner is served in the Restaurant. Bon appétit.

2045 Sunset.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CLOSE YOUR CURTAINS AND MINIMISE LIGHT USAGE TONIGHT TO HELP AVOID SEABIRD STRIKES.



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Salisbury Plain and Expedition Afternoon

Tuesday 5th December 2017

We will be cruising towards the north-eastern coast of South Georgia from the early hours of the morning.

0453 Sunrise

0730 Wake-up call

0800 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the dining room.

~1000 This morning we hope to take you ashore at **Salisbury Plain** which is home to a large King penguin colony. There will also be Fur seals and maybe Elephant seals on the beach.

1300 Lunch is served in the Dining Room

This afternoon will be an expedition afternoon, our plans will depend on the weather. Please listen for announcements.

1900 Please come to the Lounge for our daily briefing.

1930 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

2047 Sunset

DON'T FORGET TO CLOSE YOUR CURTAINS TO PREVENT BIRD STRIKES.



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Grytviken and Godthul

Wednesday 6th December 2017

0353 Sunrise

0645 Wake-up call

0700 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the dining room.

~0830 Please come to the lounge for an introduction to Grytviken and information about the rat eradication program, conducted by staff from the SGHT museum while we are clearing customs.

~0900 First zodiac to shore to the Cemetery. Here you can visit Shackleton's grave. There will be a guided tour through the whaling station on offer, starting from the Pump House, alternatively you can roam freely and visit the Church, museum, post office, and gallery. All other buildings are closed! Zodiacs back to the ship will leave from the two ship wrecks in front of the museum.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

~1500 If conditions (and wildlife) allow, we would like to go ashore at Godthul, (meaning 'good cove' in Norwegian). For those who enjoy a leg stretch, we will offer an energetic and steep 5km round trip hike to a view point above the bay. Shorter walks will also be on offer as well as a zodiac cruise if the weather is favourable. Please listen for announcements.

1845 Come and join your Expedition team in the Lounge for the Daily Briefing.

1900 A special surprise dinner will be served on the back deck (Deck 3 behind the restaurant)!! Please dress warmly!! Bon appétit.

2048 Sunset

Please close the curtains in your cabin to avoid bird strike.



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Stromness and Fortuna Bay

Thursday 7th December 2017

0355 Sunrise

0700 Wake up-call

0730 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the dining room.

~0845 Wildlife and weather allowing, we would like to take you ashore at Stromness, an abandoned whaling station. For those who are interested, we will offer a walk to 'Shackleton's Waterfall', but you will be also able to stroll along the beach and nearby areas.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

~1430 We would like to take you ashore at Fortuna Bay if conditions permit. Here we can offer a nice walk (approx. 1km each way) to a small King penguin rookery and further into valley if time allows. There will also be fur seals.

1830 Please come up to the lounge for the Daily Briefing.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

2049 Sunset

DON'T FORGET TO CLOSE YOUR CURTAINS TO PREVENT BIRD STRIKES.

Plan A

Our activities today will be highly dependent on weather and swell.

0344 Sunrise

0700 Wake-up call

0730 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the dining room.

~0830 We hope to make a Zodiac Cruise at **Cooper Bay**. Cooper Bay is a breeding site for Macaroni penguins, Light-mantled Sooty albatrosses, Blue-eyed cormorants, King, Gentoo, and Chinstrap penguins.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

~1330 After lunch the Captain will sail the ship into **Drygalski Fjord** to view. This is one of the most striking landscapes of the island and a fitting farewell to our South Georgia adventure.

1500 We would like to continue the first part of the **Kenneth Branagh's** TV drama "**Shackleton**" in the Lounge.

~1800 Please come to the Lounge for an extended **South Georgia Briefing**.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

2048 Sunset

We will be heading into open waters during the afternoon, as always please secure your belongings, make sure all cupboards and doors are secure and always have one hand for the ship when moving around.



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

At Sea towards Antarctica

Saturday 9th December 2017

- 0745 Wake-up call
- 0800 Breakfast is served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 1100 **Vacuuming for Antarctica** in the Lounge! We will call you by deck. Please bring your outer clothes, backpacks and camera bags.
- 1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- After lunch join Zsuzsanna & Bobby for some retail therapy at Reception. The ship shop is open!**
- 1430 Vacuuming for Antarctica will continue! We will call you by deck.
- ~1530 **Lydie** will be in the **Dining Room** to give an **Introduction into Glaciology**.
- 1700 It's **Happy Hour!!** Please feel free to come up to the **Lounge** and enjoy good company and a drink or two prior to our Auction!
- 1730 To assist the SGHT in their efforts to keep South Georgia rat free we would like to run an **Auction**. Items will be displayed from 1630 in the **Lounge**.
- 1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

As we expect continuous motion of the ship, please secure your belongings and take your medication. Always remember to have one hand for the ship!



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

At Sea towards Antarctica

Sunday 10th December 2017

0745 Wake-up call

0800 Breakfast is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

1030 **Katja** will give an **Introduction to Antarctica** in the **Lounge**.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

1400 We would like to show the remainder of the **Shackleton** movie in the **Lounge**.

1530 Have you ever wondered what it takes to make all these delicious meals on a three week journey? Join Chef **Ralf** as he tells us some of his secrets in the **Dining Room**.

1700 **Marijke** would like to meet with you in the **Lounge** to talk about **Whales**.

1830 Please join the expedition team in the Lounge for the **daily briefing**.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

As the ship continues to move please remember to secure your belongings and always have one hand for the ship! Thank you.

This morning we will be approaching Elephant Island, where Shackleton's men survived for several months before being rescued.

0258 Sunrise

0700 Wake-up call

0730 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the dining room.

0830 If conditions are agreeable we would like to offer a zodiac cruise at **Point Wild**, the site of Shackleton's camp.

We have split the group into two;

Group 1: decks 2, 3, 5, 6

Group 2: deck 4

Please listen out for announcements.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

This afternoon will be an Expedition afternoon and dependent on conditions. Please listen for announcements.

1830 Come and join the Expedition team in the Lounge for the Daily Briefing.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

2210 Sunset.



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Brown Bluff and Expedition afternoon

12th December 2017

This morning we will sail into the scenic **Antarctic Sound**, where we can usually see many large icebergs.

0235 Sunrise

0700 Wake-up call

0730 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the dining room.

0830 This morning, if conditions allow, we plan to go ashore on the Continent of Antarctica at **Brown Bluff**. There is an Adélie and small Gentoo penguin colony. The beach is backed by a steep escarpment which are the remnants of an extinct volcano.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

This afternoon's activities will depend on weather and ice conditions. Please standby for announcements!!

1830 Come and join the Expedition team in the Lounge for the Daily Briefing.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

2356 Sunset



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Portal Point

Wednesday 13th December 2017

This morning we will be sailing further south down the **Bransfield Strait** and into the stunning **Gerlache Strait**.

0240 Sunrise

0730 Wake-up call.

0800 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the dining room.

0930 **Katja** would like give a talk on **Climate Change and its effects on Antarctica**. This will be in the **Lounge**.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

1430 After lunch we plan to go ashore at **Portal Point** for our second Continental Landing! If conditions are good we will conduct a split landing with half the group Zodiac cruising while the other lands and swapping half way through. The first 5 zodiacs will go to shore first before cruising.

1830 Please come to the Lounge for the Daily Briefing.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit

2330 Sunset



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Damoy Point & Foyen Harbour

Thursday 14th December 2017

This morning at 0500 we will start sailing through the Neumayer Channel. The Landscape is spectacular and well worth getting up for early if the weather is good.

0225 Sunrise

0630 Wake-up call.

0700 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the dining room.

0800 This morning we intend land at **Dorian Bay** where we will have the chance to visit a Gentoo penguin colony and a British Antarctic Survey historic hut. Additionally for the fit walkers we will offer an energetic guided snowshoe hike onto the ice dome for some great views.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

~1600 We plan to visit **Foyen Harbour**, located at **Enterprise Island** in **Wilhelmina Bay** a place we can often see **humpback whales**. This natural harbour also contains the wreck of the whaling factory ship **Guvernøren**, which can be seen above the waterline. Here we would like to Zodiac cruise in the area and explore some of the small channels and bays.

1830 Please come to the Lounge for the Daily Briefing.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit

2345 Sunset



Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Halfmoon Island

Friday 15th December 2017

0225 Sunrise

0700 Wake-up call.

0730 Breakfast is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

0830 This morning we hope to land at **Half Moon Island** in the South Shetlands, a well-known nesting site for Chinstrap Penguins. Seals often haul out on the beach and an old wooden boat can be seen next to the landing site.

Once we are back on board we will sail for the English Passage. After this this we will be in the **Drake Passage**, please remember to take sea-sickness medication if required and secure your cabin.

1300 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

Dr Moniek will be available at reception after lunch!

Please listen out for information regarding our afternoon program.

1830 Come and join the Expedition team in the Lounge for the Daily briefing.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

2140 Sunset

Please secure breakable items like cameras, computers, etc. in your cabin to prevent any damage. Always keep at least one hand free to hold on to the ship and take sea-sickness medication if necessary.

There will be no wakeup call this morning!!

- 0800 Breakfast is served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 1030 **Ice maidens:** Ali is talking in the dining room about the women who travelled to Antarctica and influenced polar explorers.
- 1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 1500 Join Joselyn in the Dining Room as she explains all about **Life on an Antarctic base.**
- 1630 HAPPY HOUR in the BAR!
- 1700 Come and join Ali in the Lounge as she dons her teachers cap and tests your Antarctic knowledge in the inaugural Plancius Pub Quiz!!
- 1830 Daily Briefing will be in the Lounge with the expedition team.
- 1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

There will be no wakeup call this morning!!

0800 Breakfast is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

1030 Joselyn will be in Dining room to talk about **What lies beneath** – a peak into the amazing diversity of life along the shoreline and underneath the ocean. Bring your snorkel, mermaid costume optional.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

1500 Katja spent 15 months on the German Antarctic Base Neumayer and also worked for the Australian and New Zealand Antarctic programs. She will show you how it is to **Live and work on Antarctic Research Bases**.

At some stage this afternoon we will ask you to return your **rubber boots** to the boot room. This is depending on sea conditions, please listen for announcements.

~1700 Suzanna will call you to reception to settle your **on board accounts**.
Please listen for announcements.

1800 Join Andrew and the expedition team in the Lounge for a **final briefing** and a farewell toast from your Captain.

1900 The last supper is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

After dinner: Electronic payments will commence at reception. Please listen for announcements.

Falkland Islands & South Georgia

Arrival in Ushuaia

Monday 18th December 2017

Although we will be alongside you are not permitted to disembark until we have been cleared by the port authorities. Please wait for announcements!

0700 Wake Up Call.

0730 Breakfast is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

As you leave for breakfast please place your check-in luggage outside your cabin door and return your keys to reception.

0830 All passengers leave the ship. Please take your luggage to the bus.

- If you have an afternoon flight: You can have your luggage stored. Please bring it to the truck on the pier and it will be taken to 'Il Gatto' at ***Avenida Maipú 1210***. This building has a green roof and is located past the service station and approximately 350 m to the left as you leave the pier. ***You will need to pick up your luggage before 1400.***
- If you are staying in Ushuaia: You are free to leave the pier on foot with your luggage by the customs control entrance. Taxis can be found opposite the entrance to the pier.

On behalf of Captain Nazarov, Andrew, and all the staff and crew onboard *M.V. Plancius*, we wish you a safe and pleasant onward journey!