



FALKLAND ISLANDS, SOUTH GEORGIA & ANTARCTICA

on board
m/v Ortelius
16 December 2017 – 3 January 2018



M/V *Ortelius* was named after the Dutch cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) who published the first modern world atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theatre of the World) in 1570. MV *Ortelius* was built in 1989 in Gdynia, Poland, as a research vessel for the Russian Academy of Science and was named *Marina Svetaeva*. In 2011 she was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions. The vessel was re-flagged and renamed *Ortelius*. Now the ship is sailing as a 125-passenger vessel. *Ortelius* is 91 m long, 17,6 m wide and has a maximum draft of 5,80 m, with an Ice Strength rating of UL1/1A, top speed of 12 knots and one diesel engine generating 3200 kW.



Captain Mika Appel and his international crew of 47

including

First Officer:	Toni Salo	[Finland]
Second Officer:	Franziska Braas	[Germany]
Third Officer:	Warren Villanueva	[Philippines]
Chief Engineer:	Aleksandr Bondarev	[Lithuania]
Hotel Manager:	Dejan Nikolic	[Serbia]
Assist. Hotel Manager:	Sava Savov	[Bulgaria]
Head Chef:	Khabir Moraes	[India]
Sous Chef:	Richard Arokiasamy	[Malaysia]
Ship's Physician:	Susan Eckhardt	[The Netherlands]

and

Expedition Leader:	Cheryl Randall	[UK]
Assist. Expedition Leader:	Kurtis Randall	[Canada]
Expedition Guide:	Bill Smith	[Scotland]
Expedition Guide:	Jerry Zhao	[China]
Expedition Guide:	Victoria Salem	[UK]
Expedition Guide:	Sandra Petrowitz	[Germany]
Expedition Guide:	Mick Brown	[Ireland]
Expedition Guide:	Arjen Drost	[The Netherlands]

Welcome you on board!

Day 1 – Saturday 16 December 2017

Embarkation, Ushuaia

GPS position at 1600: 54°49'S, 068°17'W

Air Temp: 10°C Sea Temp: 11°C Wind: W 6 Sea state: 3

Boarding *Ortelius* started around 4pm and we were soon checked in by our Hotel Manager and his assistant (DJ and Sava). We were shown our cabins and had some free time to get unpacked and settled in. Lovely to know that we don't have to change 'hotel' again until we're back in Ushuaia.

We soon began exploring our new home; perhaps the most important place to find was the Bar on Deck 6, where coffee/tea can be accessed 24/7 and where Barman Rolando can often be found if we fancy something stronger. Of course doors to the outside deck-space were also important to locate, so that when 'whales' and other delights are announced, we know how to get out there as quickly and efficiently as possible.

At 5 pm we were summoned by Expedition Leader Cheryl to a mandatory briefing in the Lecture Room on Deck 3. She welcomed us on board and introduced Third Officer Warren, who gave an all-important Safety Briefing and Lifeboat Drill. Now we are aware of what we should do if we see a fire or man

overboard, and know precisely what to grab and where to go in the event of the ship's general alarm going off. Seven short and one long blast calls us (warmly dressed) to the Bar, which doubles as our muster station. Once we are all there, radio communication between the bridge officers and ship's crew keeps us informed of developments. The 'abandon ship' signal is a verbal command given by the Captain or Chief Officer, and we hope that today is the only time we hear it, followed by the reassuring words 'for practice



only'...Filing outside in orderly fashion and gathering next to the lifeboats completed the drill; we were then free to continue our explorations of the ship, or come out on deck with our cameras to watch *Ortelius'* departure from Ushuaia.

Captain had quite a job to get us off the pier! The wind was trying to pin us down and it took quite a while to get free and turn into open water. We waved our goodbyes to this city (almost) at the end of the world and headed down the Beagle Channel towards the open ocean.

Before dinner we again gathered in the Lounge/Bar on Deck 6 in order to meet key crew/staff and learn about ship routine during our voyage. Hotel Manager DJ imparted useful information about mealtimes, Internet/Webmail access and treating the toilets nicely. He was followed by Expedition Leader Cheryl, who introduced Captain Mika – the person who will get us there and back again safely – and then handed over to her team of staff for self-introductions. We raised a glass of bubbly (or orange juice) to the success of our voyage and then it was time for our first dinner aboard.

After dinner Dr. Susan was available in the ship's hospital to hand out seasick medication and valuable advice. A stroll on deck, a cup of tea or something stronger, and then most of us fell into bed after a busy and exciting day – hoping to be fast asleep before the rocking and rolling begins. Tomorrow morning will find us well on the way to our first stop – the Falkland Islands.

Day 2 – Sunday 17 December 2017

At Sea towards the Falkland Islands

GPS position at 0800: 54°05'S, 064°09'W

Air Temp: 7°C Sea Temp: 10°C Wind: SW 4/5 Sea state: 4

Cheryl's dulcet tones awakened us at 7.30 this morning with a gentle 'Good Morning' and some information about weather, wind speeds and our progress towards the Falklands. We can definitely feel that we're at sea, but for most of us the rolling was tolerable; a few people were affected by seasickness and turned to our doctor for help.

Patches appeared behind ears and pills were ingested, which worked for the majority.



After enjoying a buffet breakfast, many of us wrapped up warm and went outside to gaze at the waves and the seabirds – which are in their element. Pintados (Cape petrels) skimmed the water close at hand, and further afield Giant petrels and several species of albatross glided, using the air currents to demonstrate their skill at dynamic soaring. Every now and then they would fly right past the deck or bridge window and we could stare straight into their eyes...At the other end of the scale there were tiny Wilson's Storm petrels darting low over the waves – the smallest species to be seen here. And already a Commerson's dolphin has been spotted riding our bow-wave...

By 9.30 am people were getting excited at the prospect of the rubber boot handout! Of course these boots are essential to our activities in this part of the world, and it was important to get the best fit possible. Sadly, there was only one colour choice available – black. Zodiac life jackets were handed out and tried on too (these are orange). Now we are ready and eager to make the first landing tomorrow...

Next up was Victoria at 11 am. Her presentation was entitled the 'History of the Falkland Islands' and covered from first



discovery up to the 1982 conflict. Many people were surprised to learn that the Falkland Islands were first settled by the French, rather than the British, Spanish or Argentines. After this it was already time for our buffet lunch in the Dining Room – a delicious boeuf bourguignon.

After a welcome siesta break, most people joined Mick in the Lecture Room to find out all about 'The Falkland Islands, Wildlife & Landscapes'. Mick really whetted our appetites for the scenery and animals of the smaller islands, and for the charm of Stanley itself – it's very helpful to know what to look out for before arrival.



Tea time came and went, and also today's mandatory briefing session. Assistant Expedition Leader Kurtis told us everything we needed to know about safe Zodiac operations. We'll need to use these newly-acquired skills as soon as we reach the Falkland Islands and make our first landing of the voyage.

The final official event of the day was our first Recap & Briefing in the Lounge/Bar (which was open). Cheryl had a lot to tell us about the next couple of days and you could feel the excitement and anticipation growing as she spoke. There was

a lot of chat as we descended to the Dining Room afterwards. Our first sea day was drawing to an end and we went to bed early, to dream of albatross and penguins...

Day 3 – Monday 18 December 2017

Carcass Island & Saunders Island, Falkland Islands

GPS position at 0800: 51°18'S, 060°38'W

Air Temp: 13°C Sea Temp: 9°C Wind: W 6 Sea state: 3

Our first day of landings dawned – many of us got up early in order to enjoy the seabirds and *Ortelius'* approach to the stunning landscapes of the West Falklands in the sunshine. Soon after breakfast we neared our first stop, which was Carcass Island. The island's owner welcomes ships and so we dressed in waterproof layers (there was quite a strong wind at sea level), marked ourselves 'out' on the tagboard and headed for the gangway to the Zodiacs. We took our time boarding as there was some movement at the gangway due to wind and swell, but soon enough we were all on our way to shore.





We landed on the beach near the small settlement and were greeted by an abundance of wildlife, including Kelp geese and even a few Magellanic penguins. Within a short walk of the beach the birders were enjoying themselves immensely, with sightings of a Cobb's



wren, snipe and Black-chinned siskin to name but a few. The most enthusiastic hikers set off in the footsteps of guides Mick and Arjen, determined to see as many shore-birds and passerines as possible.



Whether we chose to walk the whole four km to the southern beaches, or lingered nearer the homestead close to the landing site, there was plenty to see. There were a number of Striated caracaras perched on fence posts, garden benches and roofs around the McGill home, eyeing us warily. And there were wild flowers scattered through the island grass, yellow gorse blooming everywhere (pretty, despite being an introduced species) and blue, blue ocean framing the beach; just lovely.

Last stop before we headed for the Zodiacs was an absolutely wonderful example of local hospitality. 18 different types of cake and biscuit were counted on the table in the main settlement house, washed down with tea or coffee; it doesn't get better than this!



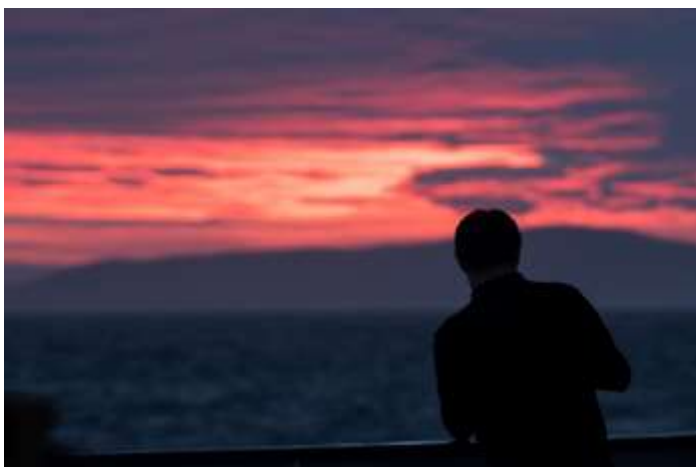
It was a challenge after all that cake, but we tried hard to do justice to our buffet lunch. Captain and officers repositioned *Ortelius* to the afternoon's landing spot at Saunders Island (where the British first settled back in 1766). It was obvious to all observers that wind speeds had increased over lunch as we



came out of the shelter provided by Carcass Island, so on arrival at our afternoon's destination it was necessary to play a waiting game. Rainbow-coloured 'williwaws' constantly whizzed by – VISIBLE wind gusts of whirled-up sea water. Just as we thought wind speeds were calming a little, suddenly there was another one coming through. Impossible to launch Zodiacs in these conditions and although we waited patiently for a couple of hours it was clear that the weather was not going to relent in time for us to go ashore this

afternoon. Never mind: we could still see Black-browed albatross riding the air currents and we watched out for porpoising Rockhopper penguins. We gazed longingly through binoculars at the bird colonies on the slopes above the beautiful long, sandy beach...so near, yet so far.

Some recompense came later in the day as we began our voyage to South Georgia. That evening three (and later more) Commerson's dolphins were spotted in front of *Ortelius*, enjoying a glorious joy-ride on our bow wave. It looked such FUN as they darted and rolled and spun just below (and sometimes above) the surface of the water. And it was almost as much fun watching all the passengers leaning out over the bow, focussing intently on the ocean. Once they remembered to look up as well, there was a very pink and orange sunset to admire. And so we made progress round the top of West and East Falklands towards Stanley for tomorrow's excursion in the capital. The weather forecast suggests a fine day, so a lot to look forward to.



Day 4 – Tuesday 19 December 2017

Stanley, Falkland Islands

GPS position at 0800: 51°41'S, 057°51'W

Air Temp: 10°C Sea Temp: 11°C Wind: W 3/4 Sea state: 2

The morning saw *Ortelius* sail into Port William under overcast skies. In order to get into Stanley Harbour we had to pass The Narrows, the aptly-named passage between Navy Point and Engineer Point. Shortly afterwards we arrived at our destination for the morning and were eager to go ashore.



intrigued by the Falkland Steamer duck and her little ducklings which huddled together on shore.

We then continued to Gypsy Cove and had a pleasant walk with beautiful views over the bay, the sweet scent of gorse wafting in the air. Down on the white sandy beach we could see Magellanic penguins. One penguin had its burrow right next to the footpath, eyeing us quizzically from its shelter as we passed by.

Those of us who wanted to visit Gypsy Cove came to the gangway first and were shuttled to the small floating pier right in front of the Visitors' Centre. Soon we were off in a bus, first stopping for a look at the wreck of *Lady Elizabeth*, a three-masted iron-hull barque stranded there. The ship once served as a timber warehouse but broke her moorings in a storm in 1936, after which she drifted into her current position. Some of us, however, were much more





There were Falkland thrushes hopping around in the Diddle-Dee, and we found Night herons and even chicks on one of the rocks towards the headland.

Meanwhile, all the other guests and quite a number of crew had disembarked and were enjoying this beautiful summer day on shore in Stanley. Some chose to stroll along the waterfront, visit the museum or the church, stop by the post office or go for a coffee and a snack in one of the cafés. Some serious souvenir shopping had to be done as well! Those returning from Gypsy Cove by bus joined in, and everyone had a great, sunny time at this very colourful British outpost.

Around noon we had to return to the ship, and after heaving up anchor we made our way out through The Narrows again, then turned to starboard to start our long voyage towards South Georgia. A few dolphins were seen in the course of the afternoon, splashing about but obviously not interested in a bow-ride. Albatrosses and shearwaters glided past, and we looked at the very calm seas in amazement and wonder; how was it possible that one of the most notorious stretches of water in the Southern Ocean could be this peaceful? A little

later we gathered in the Lecture Room; in his talk about whales, Arjen introduced us to the marine mammals which live in these waters.



Afterwards we found ourselves out on deck basking in the sunshine, or in the bar going for one of Rolando's famous cocktails – after all, a Happy Hour had been announced from 6.30 pm! Together with the Expedition team, we looked back over our time on the Falkland islands: Sandra told us how Carcass Island had gotten its name (and why both Horatio Nelson and a polar bear feature in the story); Victoria raised the secret of the mizzen mast of *SS Great Britain* which we had passed in Stanley; Mick summed up our Falklands experience with a set of great images, and finally Arjen showed a video he had been able to get while some Commerson's dolphins were bow-riding yesterday. Off to dinner and back outside again for many of us – light conditions were just too good to waste!

Day 5 – Wednesday 20 December 2017

At Sea towards South Georgia

GPS position at 0800: 52°19'S, 052°11'W

Air Temp: 7°C Sea Temp: 9°C Wind: NE 6 Sea state: 4

What a contrast to the glorious sunny summer weather experienced the previous day in Stanley... passengers awoke to mist, a mist that enveloped the ship all day through into evening. Long lens cameras and binoculars were given the day



off...they rested in cabins or on the sofas in the lounge. The one consolation was the lack of movement



on the ship as *Ortelius* slid along at a steady 11 knots through a relatively calm sea. People relaxed and appeared on deck to chat in groups and wander about without having to clutch guard rails. Many passengers visited the bridge and coffee-drinking was also a popular activity.

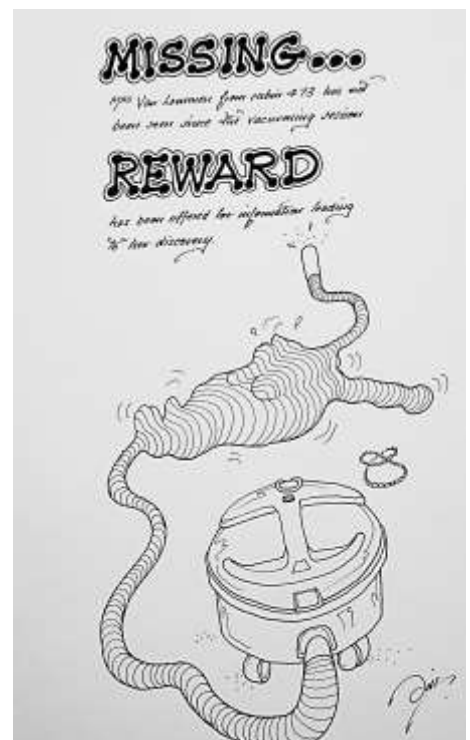
In the morning Sandra delivered a highly informative presentation on the technical side of camera usage...photography de-mistified! Bill followed with a lengthy lecture encompassing the development of sealing and whaling in both the Arctic and Antarctica: a sad tale of the death and destruction of animals, men, ships and businesses.

Undoubted highlight of the day was the after-lunch IAATO bio-security briefing, followed by a vacuuming session in the lounge area. Passengers eagerly and quite meticulously turned out every seam of their clothing, delving into every pocket (removing long forgotten sweets and crumpled bus tickets) to search and suck out each and every alien substance. It became the afternoon 'sport', as every gaily-coloured Gortex garment, piece of camera equipment, back-pack and assorted accessory received the treatment. All were thoroughly investigated and the necessary confirmation signature appended to the 'bio-security completed' list.



This activity was inspiration for more amusing cartoon responses from Bill, which appeared on the lounge walls later in the evening.

Recap educational presentations included Kurtis explaining 'The



Antarctic Convergence' and Bill on 'The secret places of Ortelius Part I...the Engine Room'.

In the evening after dinner, a large number of passengers relaxed in the Lecture Room as they watched an episode of 'Blue Planet' - which included a section on South Georgia.

Day 6 – Thursday 21 December 2017

At Sea towards South Georgia & Shag Rocks

GPS position at 0800: 53°11'S, 044°44'W

Air Temp: 8°C Sea Temp: 5°C Wind: N 8 Sea state: 4/5

'Twas the night before South Georgia and all through the ship, all the passengers were preparing for their first day on land...

The morning dawned foggy and breezy and no wildlife was to be seen around the ship except for the occasional Giant petrel passing close by. Victoria regaled us with stories of Shackleton and his men who undertook an ambitious expedition to cross Antarctica from the bottom of the Weddell Sea to the shores of the Ross Sea. Before their trip really began, they became trapped in the ice and had a harrowing story to tell by the end of it.

Those who were outside searching for wildlife were persuaded in to watch a short video about South Georgia and to get details about what to expect when we arrive. All in all, it was a quiet, contemplative morning.

After lunch, Mick gave us an introduction on penguins, getting us ready for the vast numbers of them we were to soon see. After his talk everything started to change outside. The fog started to lift, exposing a little bit of blue sky and giving us more visibility. We started to see a bit more bird life around the ship. We passed from very deep ocean into shallower waters and all of a sudden, the ocean came alive! Humpback and Fin whales surrounded the ship, taking advantage of upwelling nutrients.



THE CRUSHED WRECK OF THE ENDURANCE,
LATE OCTOBER 1915



The Captain and his team slowed the ship to give us more time with the whales, some of them coming very close to us. This all came at a most inopportune time for all of the geology buffs - but seeing as the live action outside always takes priority, Kurtis postponed his lecture. The ship also made its way close to Shag Rocks - the first bit of land in between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia, a favourite place for South Georgia shags to nest and call home - and for hours afterwards we enjoyed abundant birdlife and the occasional whale around the ship.

Cheryl's early evening briefing (on tomorrow's potential landing activities) was well-attended, and Victoria contributed a recap on Captain Cook's discovery and claiming of South Georgia for Britain in 1775 – though he was greatly disappointed when it turned out NOT to be the Antarctic Continent itself.



That night we closed up our portholes to keep the light in (to prevent bird strikes) and we eagerly anticipated the morning, when we would wake in the Bay of Isles ready to step foot on land with hundreds of thousands of King penguins.



Day 7 – Friday 22 December 2017

Bay of Isles, Salisbury Plain & Brighton Beach, Possession Bay, South Georgia

GPS position at 0800: 53°56'S, 037°35'W

Air Temp: 7°C Sea Temp: 5°C Wind: NW 4 Sea state: 4

Our introduction to South Georgia was a delightful surprise. We approached the Bay of Isles in a fog which obscured our view. Without warning the mountains, islands and the spectacular panorama of this magnificent bay appeared as if by magic. It was like a curtain being pulled back, revealing a sunlit landscape of great beauty. There were gasps of surprise and amazement. Strong sunlight, blue skies, alpine scenery and masses of wildlife greeted us.



The Zodiacs were lowered and soon we were ashore on the beach at Salisbury Plain. Approximately 60,000



pairs of King penguins nest here along with skuas and Giant petrels. Fur seals in their hundreds occupied the beach and we had to choose a route carefully, that would take us inland to the main penguin colony. Our route was marked out with red poles by an advance party of staff.

Here was one of the world's greatest wildlife spectacles, on a par with Africa's plains reserves. An unforgettable combination of sight, sound and smell! We positioned

ourselves on the edge of the masses of kings. We observed the complex breeding cycle of this magnificent creature, laid out before our eyes, unique in the bird world: from newly-laid eggs to 12-month-old almost fully fledged chicks, it was all there before us. For the birders there were good sightings of the South Georgia pipit and South Georgia pintail. Zodiac cruises also took place, with a change-over system to allow everyone to come ashore.



Our afternoon activity was at a new location not often visited by ships like ours - Possession Bay, named after Captain Cook's claiming of South Georgia for King George of England in January 1775. Our ship anchored near to a 'reef of kelp' and our destination was Brighton Beach (so-named because it gets very crowded in summer, just like the British seaside town!). The sun shone and a northerly breeze kept the temperature low, but not uncomfortable. Our landing beach had large numbers of Fur seals, penguins and Giant petrels in residence.



On shore, walks were offered of varying lengths and the walkers wandered past Fur seal pups, fighting adult males, mating pairs, scavenging Giant petrels and moulting penguins. Zodiac cruises took us along the coast through a forest of giant kelp and we had fine views of two glaciers, one of which had meltwater flowing out in the form of a waterfall.



Finally it was all aboard at 7 pm in time for a Recap of today and a Briefing regarding our next day's planned adventures. After dinner many people gathered out on deck to view the scenery before falling into bed and sleeping well, following so much activity and scenic beauty on our first day in South Georgia.

Day 8 – Saturday 23 December 2017

Grytviken & Stromness, South Georgia

GPS position at 0800: 54°13'S, 036°28'W

Air Temp: 5°C Sea Temp: 4°C Wind: N 4 Sea state: 3

This morning the early risers were rewarded by beautiful sights of the little bay of Maiviken; lovely scenery and lots of wildlife were seen, as we started to get used to South Georgia. During breakfast the Captain brought the ship into King Edward Cove, close to the former Norwegian whaling station of Grytviken. After all the wildlife of yesterday, today our focus was on the human history of the island – though the numbers of seals and



penguins scattered about the site clearly indicated their continuing dominance!



The morning began with a talk given by one of the ladies of the South Georgia Heritage Trust. In our lecture room she spoke about the very successful (though expensive) Rat Eradication Programme they have been running for the past few years. This programme is now in its third and final stage, during which they will check whether all the rats are really gone from the island. So far so good, and the effects of the programme are already noticeable, with a rapid recolonisation of the main island by the South Georgia pipit.

After this briefing we were shuttled ashore, but not before our clothes and boots had been checked for seeds by the government representative. Fortunately we had done a good cleaning job, and all of us were allowed ashore.

Our first stop was the small cemetery, where several whalers and one victim of the Argentine-British conflict in 1982 are buried. The most famous graves however, are those of the Boss, Sir Ernest Shackleton and his right-hand man, Frank Wild. When we were all gathered around Shackleton's grave with a small



glass of whisky in hand, Victoria proposed a toast based around the various aspects of this famous explorer/leader/friend/man, after which we drank a little and gave Shackleton the rest of our whisky, as tradition demands.

Now there were several options available. We could join a tour through the whaling station guided by one of the ladies of the South Georgia Heritage Trust; or we could walk around by ourselves, looking at the different buildings and other remains of the whaling station; we could go shopping in the gift

shop, have a look in the museum or church, or send post cards from the little post office (no guarantees when the cards will be delivered though!). A little later another tour through the settlement was made, this time focusing on Shackleton's time here. For those less interested in human history, there were a surprising number of Elephant and Fur seals in town, as well as some King penguins and South Georgia pintails.

After another splendid lunch on board we headed for another old whaling station, this time at Stromness. As this whaling station was in a very poor state, we were not allowed anywhere near the buildings and had to stay at least 200m away from it. Stromness too has a





strong connection with Shackleton, as this was the place where he, Frank Worsley and Tom Crean finished their epic journey across South Georgia at the end of the *Endurance* expedition. Many of us retraced the very last part of this journey by walking across the valley bottom to the Shackleton waterfall, then back to the beach and the whaling station. Others, who were less inclined to walk and more interested in wildlife, stayed on the beach where many King penguins, Antarctic Fur seals and Elephant seals were resting. Strangely

enough there were also several Gentoo penguins sighted, who were persistently walking inland; the hikers came up with the answer to this as en route to the waterfall, about two km. inland, several small Gentoo penguin colonies could be seen up the left-hand slope, evidently a good place for them to breed.

Back on the ship Recap was postponed to another day and we just had a quick briefing about tomorrow. After



dinner most of us went outside again to enjoy a dramatic sunset over the South Georgia mountains. Another great day had passed and when we went to bed, we were full of excitement over what South Georgia had to offer.



Day 9 – Sunday 24 December 2017 – CHRISTMAS EVE St Andrew's Bay & Gold Harbour, South Georgia

GPS position at 0800: 54°26'S, 036°10'W

Air Temp: 7°C Sea Temp: 5°C Wind: W 6 Sea state: 2



Wow...what a day!

After breakfast passengers emerged on deck to photograph the beautiful mountain-and-glacier-studded landscape of St Andrew's Bay. The captain had once again skillfully helmed *Ortelius* into a position close to the beach, ready for Zodiac launching. The weather was

excellent...offering perfect conditions for a landing.

Having listened carefully to Cheryl's briefing and removed their life jackets, incoming passengers walked slowly along the shoreline following a route of red pole markers laid out by guides, which led inland to the top of a large moraine. This was the best vantage point from which to view the largest King penguin colony in South Georgia... many thousands dotted the plain below – the estimate stands at around 500,000 birds in total. Long ribbons of puffy brown chicks stood moulting patiently along the edges of



streams and ponds amidst a sea of brightly-coloured adults. This was a sensory feast, as an over-powering musty penguin/seal smell and loud cries filled the air, whilst opportunistic hunting skuas wheeled overhead. Passengers were also offered the option of viewing the wildlife from the water, by Zodiac-cruising along the shore.

This St Andrew's bay landing was a stunning experience for passengers and Expedition Staff alike. The highlight of the voyage to date. How could it get better?

Ortelius then cruised a few miles further to Gold Harbour, which was an even more dramatic location with a backdrop of towering peaks and overhanging glaciers. Everywhere one looked, the area was covered in a seething mass of seals and penguins. Once groups landed on the shore they were immediately confronted by a cordoned-off mass of 20 or 30 Elephant seals lying in a belching, snorting,



almost oblivious mass just yards from the Zodiacs. Photographers clicked their cameras and zoomed their lenses, seizing the opportunity to capture images of these huge slumbering creatures. And there was a huge variety of other wildlife too - Fur



seals, Gentoo and King penguins, skuas and blood-covered petrels dining on dead things...

Some intrepid birders were led up a steep, tussocky slope to view (from a respectful distance) a Light-mantled Sooty albatross nest, with other birds riding the air currents overhead. And a few lucky Zodiac-cruisers out with Bill spotted a Leopard seal attacking a penguin. Both on land and by sea it was a magical day.

In the evening the 'Santa Claus-hatted' hotel department arranged a festive meal, which provided the perfect end to yet another superb Oceanwide Expeditions adventure day.

Day 10 – Monday 25 December 2017 – CHRISTMAS DAY

Cooper Bay & Drygalski Fjord, South Georgia

GPS position at 0800: 54°47'S, 035°48'W

Air Temp: 11°C Sea Temp: 5°C Wind: SW 4 Sea state: 2/3



Christmas Day began bright and very early for us, at 5 am in fact! But here we are in South Georgia, in Cooper Bay, with a Macaroni penguin colony in view and so a good reason to get going.

Ashore by 6 am, we took turns to climb the tussock-covered slope to see our only crested penguins on this voyage. With the breeding season well under way, the birds were firmly into the nesting routine in their preferred habitat of dense tussock. We saw lost and discarded eggs, courtship displays,

fight and mutual preening - and the constant raucous conversations were very loud and very distinctly different from the sounds of the King penguins.

We Zodiac-cruised also and on the foreshore we had fine views of the penguins, South Georgia shags and penguins. Light-mantled Sooty albatrosses flew above the cliff tops, sometimes in pairs and highly synchronised. A heavy swell broke at the point, but luckily it did not reach our landing beach as it often does in this open and exposed location, though the floating kelp forest helps to dampen the swell. All too



soon it was time to leave the penguins and get back on board for our Christmas Breakfast: smoked salmon and sparkling wine provided a seasonal treat!

Our next adventure was sailing into Drygalski Fjord. Here we clearly saw the dramatic differences between the various locations in South Georgia. Here, in contrast with the north of the island, we



experienced Antarctic conditions in the form of glaciers, low temperatures and katabatic winds. Our highly-experienced Captain Mika used the wind - gusting at 50 - 60 knots – to manoeuvre the ship into the position he wanted. It was amazing to see such a display of skill and seamanship.



Snow petrels were numerous and on one occasion five of them could be seen following a Fur seal, which was eating a fish on the surface. The wind was so strong that an ice-melt waterfall was blown upwards, defying gravity! We nosed into Larsen Harbour, a location that yachts and ships use when seeking shelter at this most southerly point of the island. This was an incredible opportunity, because there was no way we could have launched Zodiacs here in such wind conditions, so a big thank you once again to Captain Mika.

To keep on schedule we had to leave this haven and face the open sea in order to begin the next stage of our voyage: destination Antarctica.



In the afternoon, Assistant Expedition Leader Kurtis was finally allowed to give his geology talk, with no interruptions from wildlife. The subject was 'A Brief 400 Million Year History of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula', and included a clear and simple explanation of some necessary geological terms before applying them specifically to these three different areas of our voyage.

Recap and Briefing had a strong South Georgia focus, as the Expedition Team summarised key points about and answered questions on the wonderful island we have

just departed. And we had a delicious Christmas Dinner with all the traditional trimmings to look forward to. Merry Christmas Everyone!

Day 11 – Tuesday 26 December 2017

At Sea towards Antarctica

GPS position at 0800: 57°18'S, 039°37'W

Air Temp: 2°C Sea Temp: 4°C Wind: W 7 Sea state: 4/5

Overnight the ship's movement eased somewhat, and in between grey clouds a bit of blue sky could be seen. We passed the occasional large iceberg, an early reminder of the fact that our journey to Antarctica has only just begun.



Most of us had a lie-in after the four intense days we spent on South Georgia, still digesting what we had seen and experienced. After breakfast, Victoria invited us to the Lecture Room for a talk on the 'History of

Constitutional arrangements for South Georgia



South Georgia' from Captain Cook's discovery in 1775 to the Falklands conflict in 1982. As soon as we had had our fill of history it was time to start a vacuuming party once again in the Bar – our outer clothes and backpacks, tripods and walking sticks needed to be cleaned of seeds and soil which might otherwise give unwanted species an easy ride to pristine Antarctica.

Around noon, a good spot to be was the bridge – at least for



those not feeling slightly queasy when the ship pitched in the swell. Every now and then, *Ortelius* took a deep bow, and the waves would wash over the foredeck, sending spray up all the way to the bridge windows - the reason being that we had changed course towards a more westerly direction. The Argentinian base on the South Orkney Islands had reported that the island was engulfed in ice, which meant no chance for us to make a landing. Therefore, the Captain and the Expedition Leader had taken the sensible decision to head straight for the Antarctic Peninsula.

Nevertheless, quite a lot of us came to listen to Arjen's talk about tubenoses, the birds magnificently adapted to a life at sea. We had already seen a fair number of them, including albatrosses, so we were eager to learn more about their biology. Before Bill followed with his talk on 'Paintings of the Sea', we quickly dashed up to the Bar or the bridge for a tea, coffee, hot chocolate – and another look at the endless expanse of water in front of *Ortelius'* bow. We were even getting the odd snow squall coming through, so the weather is becoming more polar by the hour!



At 6 pm we gathered in the bar for the South Georgia Heritage Trust auction, which magically coincided with a Happy Hour. All afternoon the items had been on display in the lounge; they included a t-shirt with illustrations drawn by Mick, a cyanotype print of a Frank Hurley photograph, books, a Sir Ernest Shackleton Gift Box (with whisky

of course), some traditional Chinese calligraphy, a ceramic penguin, and a cushion cover on which a penguin was proudly stating: "One day I'll take over the planet". What a prospect!



After careful examination, we knew what we would like to have and were ready to go. Auctioneer Bill started with the smallest of the lots – a dead rat patch - and for some reason or other already this first item was highly sought after. With loads of jokes, being his usual self truly, Bill led us through the event, which in the end

raised more than 800 GBP for the SGHT. After an hour equally exciting as exhausting, dinner came just in time for us to regain some of the energy we had spent, and afterwards we enjoyed a quiet evening on board.

Day 12 – Wednesday 27 December 2017

At Sea towards Antarctica

GPS position at 0800: 58°55'S, 045°07'W

Air Temp: 3°C Sea Temp: 3°C Wind: W 6 Sea state: 4



How everyone loves these relaxing sea days....

Wake up late, just in time for breakfast. Leisurely chat with fellow passengers in the Dining Room, have a second cup of coffee, amble back to the cabin, tidy up the shambles on the bed, fold up some clothes and stack neatly on the shelves.

Next activity, transfer photographs from camera to computer and put camera battery on charge. Now face the first serious exercise of the day...climb the stairs to the

lounge carrying computer. Have another cup of coffee, this time with a biscuit. Stare out of the window at the undulating seascape. Decide to go outside later, but first some serious editing of the enormous collection of photographs to date. Sit playing with the light and dark controls, adjusting colour, cropping to improve composition, showing the best images to fellow passengers.

Walk outside for fresh air; stare at the undulating seascape.

9.30 Lecture time...descend into the depths of the ship to the Lecture Room. Listen to Mick...'Greenwich Mean Time and Navigation at Sea'. Announcement of 'Fin whales'! Hike upstairs with camera...quick coffee when show is over...descend into the depths of the ship to the Lecture Room.



11.00 Listen to Victoria...'Amundsen the Sportsman / Scott the Hero?' Hike upstairs again.

Tanoy announces lunch....another leisurely chat with fellow passengers in



the Dining Room, have the fifth cup of coffee of the day. Stare out of the window at the undulating seascape.

Return to the lounge, sit playing with the computer, deleting failures and improving the best photographs, showing the best images to fellow passengers.



THE LONG POLAR NIGHT
The ice-battered Endurance, August 27, 1915
Photograph by F. Cook

15.00 Lecture time...descend into the depths of the ship to the Lecture Room. Listen to Sandra... 'Frank Hurley & his Photography'. Hike upstairs again.

Afternoon tea (not coffee this time) and a decadent two slices of cake. Walk outside and stare at the undulating seascape. Descend into the depths of the ship to the Lecture Room again.

17.00 Lecture Time...Listen to Kurtis... 'Ice, Ice Baby!' Hike upstairs again. Walk outside and stare at the undulating seascape.

Recap & Briefing
...love this time of day. The first alcohol of the day



and also the second, all within the hour, and sometimes within just half an hour. Descend to the Dining Room. Tanoy announces dinner....another leisurely chat with fellow passengers in the Dining Room.

Retire to the cabin. Exhausted! Cannot understand this feeling of being totally drained.

Revived enough to join fellow passengers in the Ortelius Theatre (also known as the Lecture Room, on Deck 3) to watch 'Casablanca' with popcorn, or:

early to bed...in order to prepare for another relaxing, but exhausting sea day tomorrow.

Day 13 – Thursday 28 December 2017

At Sea & Elephant Island

GPS position at 0800: 60°38'S, 053°09'W

Air Temp: 1°C Sea Temp: 2°C Wind: NE 5 Sea state: 3/4



When we woke up this morning, there was a lot to see outside. Unfortunately it was a lot of the same: small water droplets in the air creating a dense layer of fog around the ship, making it far more difficult to see other more interesting things. However, for those who spent some time on the outside decks or on the bridge several bird species could be found. There was a fairly large group of Cape petrels flying around the ship and several Southern (or Antarctic) fulmars were seen as well - a species we hadn't seen a lot so far on this trip.

Shortly after breakfast Mick invited us to the Lecture Room to listen to the second part of his lecture on penguins – 'Penguin Summer', covering their breeding cycle. After this, many of us went to see our ship's doctor Susan; not because of a strange virus or because of rough seas, but because she too was giving a lecture, about seafarers' medical problems and superstitions, some of which were truly bizarre.

The highlight of the day, however, came in the late morning/early afternoon. We could see land!! After almost three days of open sea, the fog lifted just enough to enable us to see the steep mountains of Clarence, Cornwallis and Elephant Islands on the horizon. In the past three days we had covered the more than 700 nautical miles that Shackleton and his men did in the reverse direction in the *James*



Caird, over a hundred years ago. It had been a lot more comfortable for us, hardly bearing comparison to what those six men went through in their tiny wooden lifeboat.

Our captain did a great job of bringing the *Ortelius* close to Point Wild on Elephant Island, the place where Shackleton landed with his men from the *Endurance* Expedition, and where 22 of them, under Frank Wild's capable leadership, had to spend nearly five months before they were rescued. We were all very surprised

at how small their little beach was. None of us would want to spend longer than one hour even on this little spit of land, never mind nearly five months.

Now the spot has been taken over by Chinstrap penguins and the only thing to remind us of this historic survival story was the bust of the Captain of the Chilean ship (*Yelcho*) that rescued the men from the island after their ordeal, on 30th August 1916.

Captain Mika kept our ship close to Point Wild for long enough to satisfy our curiosity, and then we moved on. Around Elephant Island several whales were seen, mostly Fin whales. It was now time to head further south towards the Antarctic Sound at the top of the Antarctic Peninsula.

During Recap & Briefing Cheryl informed us about the plans for the next day and Victoria looked back on our Elephant Island visit. After another excellent meal



prepared by our Galley Team most of us went straight to bed, full of anticipation for what was about to come: The Antarctic Peninsula itself!

Day 14 – Friday 29 December 2017

Kinnes Cove & Brown Bluff, Antarctic Sound, Antarctic Peninsula

GPS position at 0800: 63°19'S, 056°29'W

Air Temp: 2°C Sea Temp: 2°C Wind: SE 4 Sea state: 2

Bring on Antarctica proper! In thick fog, *Ortelius* sailed south and when we first glanced at the world around us in the morning, to some it may have seemed rather bleak. The colours had almost completely vanished and given way to a monochrome world of serene beauty. On the way to Kinnes Cove, those who had risen early enjoyed views of Humpback whales, iceberg arches, and porpoising penguins galore. While we were having breakfast, the Expedition Team scouted the landing site and surrounding areas. Soon it was time to head ashore or board the Zodiacs for a cruise, and we were advised to dress warmly. The wind had picked up a bit, we were surrounded by ice cliffs, and later on it started to snow softly – Antarctica proper indeed!



to be busy - dashing out of the water or carefully tiptoeing towards and finally plunging into it, cleaning themselves (preening), calling out, waving their flippers, pecking at each other, stealing pebbles, commuting to and from the colony situated higher up on the slope ... which is where we went too, just nowhere near as elegantly and effortlessly as the Adelies and Gentoos, which were also present.

Much to our delight, we found that many of the penguins had chicks - little grey fluffballs snuggled up against the belly of the parent bird. Some of them gave us a curious glance, and we marveled that we were experiencing such a sight - exchanging looks with penguins in Antarctica. There was constant movement both in the colony and on the penguin highway, and it was not easy to decide where to look and photograph first, the snowfall adding to the special atmosphere!



Those who dared made their way further up, some to the very top hoping for good views. However, by now the snow was falling faster, obscuring visibility. But there was never a dull moment with all the penguins nearby, climbing the slopes and tobogganing down, quizzically eyeing the strange big multi-coloured penguins following the line of red flagpoles. Meanwhile, the Zodiac-cruisers had been out in the bay, the drivers skilfully navigating the ice-filled waters. At halftime, we swapped and got treated to some special moments: penguins on the ice, Humpback whales next to the Zodiac, ice arches and blue icebergs

at a perfect distance for great photos, Wilson's storm-petrels flitting here and there, Cape petrels gliding past beautifully-sculpted pieces of ice art. Everybody came back ultimately excited – and hungry.



While we were having lunch, *Ortelius* sailed across Antarctic Sound towards Brown Bluff, and even if lots of ice created a certain navigational

challenge, we arrived on time. There was next to nothing to see just yet – heavy snowfall and fog made the



approach to the landing site an eerie experience. We hoped the Zodiac drivers knew where they were going! Sure enough, we were all landed safely at the bottom of the towering cliffs which, thanks to the weather, had lost all of their colour. Lots of smaller icebergs lay grounded just



offshore. Groups of Adelie penguins marched along the pebbly beach coming out of and going into the water. Gentoos were nesting here, there and everywhere, unperturbed by the conditions, snow heaped upon them by the driving wind. A little way further up the guides had found Snow petrels nesting under a huge boulder, and those interested in birding or genuinely curious went up to have a look. It took us quite a while to spot the bird tucked away in the very corner of the little cave, let alone photograph it!



Those who went on a Zodiac cruise were



rewarded with views of flying Snow petrels, and some of us even managed to catch a glimpse of the elusive Leopard seal patrolling the coastal waters in search of a penguin snack. The inclement weather made many of us return to the ship after a while on shore, back to where a wonderful surprise was waiting for us: DJ and his team had prepared hot chocolate with cinnamon – yummy!

Completely excited by our Antarctic experience, we gathered in the Lounge prior to dinner to hear from Cheryl about the plans for tomorrow and from Arjen about the very special Snow petrel. What a day it had been!

Day 15 – Saturday 30 December 2017

Half Moon Island & Deception Island, South Shetland Islands

GPS position at 0800: 62°36'S, 059°54'W

Air Temp: 2°C Sea Temp: 1°C Wind: SE 7 Sea state: 3



Today we made our way west of the Antarctic Peninsula and spent the day in the South Shetland Islands. The morning dawned cool and windy and there was a little movement on board as we left the Bransfield Strait to take shelter in between Livingston and Greenwich Islands, entering the bay on the inside of Half Moon Island. Here the staff

tentatively put a Zodiac on the water to investigate conditions, which we found to be quite alright and so took everyone ashore.

The Chinstrap penguins we encountered were industriously making their way to and from their nests, taking one determined hop after another, from precarious rock to steep snow slope. These little mountaineers made scaling the sharp rocks and steep gradients look easy as they shuttled small stones back to their partners in the endless task of



nest-building - as pebbles from the other side go missing almost as quickly as they get added! Why are penguins such dedicated kleptomaniacs?



On a different part of the island we got our first close-up look at a Weddell seal snoozing on the snow, digesting his most recent meal. Terribly relaxed, he managed to sleep his way through our entire excursion without so much as lifting his head to see who had come to visit; this is just another reminder of the sanctuary land provides for much of the wildlife of Antarctica, since there are no land-based predators.

We pointed our ship south-west along the South Shetland Island group and made our way towards a small island at the end of the chain; its cliffs descended right to the water revealing a small gap, which was the gateway into Deception Island's Port Foster. Through Neptune's Bellows, Captain Mika skilfully sailed our ship, so close to the cliffs on starboard side you could almost reach out and touch them. The waters opened up ahead and we sailed into one of only a few volcano calderas like it in the world.



Towards the back of the bay, we seemed to find some shelter from the 50 knots of wind streaking across the surface of the sea and again the staff went out to investigate the shoreline, to see if landing Zodiacs was possible. This time when they reached shore, the waves were breaking over the back of the boat, half-filling it with water. An investigation of the beach showed no protection from the pounding waves and it was decided (after getting Jerry totally soaked when a wave broke over the Zodiac bow, pouring sea water down his neck) that we would all be safer and drier enjoying the views from the ship!



We then made our way from Fumarole Bay to Pendulum Cove, where from the decks of the ship we could see steam rising from the beach, a reminder that we were inside an active volcano with intermittent geothermal activity. The backdrop was impressive, with steeply-rising hills of black volcanic sand and ash framed by patches of white snow and glaciers - a stunning monochrome world.



After this we made our way back again through Neptune's Bellows and

promptly came across a group of Humpback whales. Chief Mate, on the bridge, eased the engine and slowed to take us in for a closer look. And a closer look we got, just a few hundred metres away from where the whales lazily breathed and dived, giving us some fantastic views. Finally it was time to leave them and be on our way, as we turned the ship south in anticipation of waking again on the shores of the Antarctic Continent tomorrow.



Just time for a quick briefing before dinner and after eating, we retired to bed early, as our final day in Antarctica is going to start EARLY.

Day 16 – Sunday 31 December 2017 – NEW YEAR’S EVE

Foyn Harbour & Portal Point, Antarctic Peninsula

GPS position at 0800: 64°32’S, 061°56’W

Air Temp: 7°C Sea Temp: 2°C Wind: Light airs Sea state: 1



Zodiac cruise at Foyn Harbour on Enterprise Island.

The weather had calmed down considerably during the night. (In fact, as our photographer Sandra remarked to her colleagues in the Expedition Team, it was a ‘Foyn morning’!). Beautiful icebergs filled the bays and our first goal was the *Gouvernoren*, an old factory ship from the whaling era that caught fire and was sunk in 1916. Today it was being used – somewhat ill-advisedly - as a yacht mooring station, whose occupants must have been somewhat surprised to be surrounded by a fleet of Zodiacs so early in the morning. Apart from this wreck, several other remains from the whaling era could be seen, such as some water boats and mooring pins in the rocks.



And here it was, the last day of 2017 and also our last day in Antarctica and the last day of shore activities on this trip. As we had to depart around lunchtime for the infamous Drake Passage, Cheryl decided to start early to get the most out of the day. At 5am we were woken and, after some small pastries, we queued up on both sides of the ship for a 5.30 am gangway. The boarding operation went smoothly, and off we all went for a



There was wildlife around too: three species of seal were seen - a Weddell, a Crabeater and an Antarctic Fur seal either on the ice or on land. Shags nesting on a cliff face, a few skuas out for an early morning reconnaissance and some beautiful Antarctic terns caught our attention too. And towards the end of the excursion several Humpback whales showed up as well, allowing a few of the boats glimpses of these massive marine mammals from sea level.

Back on the ship it was time for breakfast, although it felt more like lunch with this much activity already behind us. During lunch the captain brought the ship into Charlotte Bay for our regular morning landing at Portal Point. Just when we were ready to board the Zodiacs more Humpback whales showed up, so the plan was quickly changed. The first half of the group was brought ashore, while the second half went for a short Zodiac cruise with the whales. After a good hour the groups swapped places.



The landing was popular too. We could all enjoy fantastic views of iceberg-filled Charlotte Bay (with whales!), and we took advantage of the opportunity to stretch our legs for the last time before heading into the Drake Passage. Most of us hiked past the remains of Wally Herbert's hut at shore level to a snowy



view point over two different bays, one of which contained 30 – 40 Weddell seals dozing contentedly on the ice. Our guides enabled us to observe a couple of these seals more closely, and at one point a few



lucky people heard them 'singing', or vocalising in their sleep.

Towards the end of the landing a number of people were crazy enough to take part in the Polar Plunge and go for a little swim - although in most cases it was in and out again rather rapidly, with not a lot of swimming involved! From the Zodiacs of course, more swimming could be watched, but in this case it involved great views of Humpback Whales (close enough to hear them breathing), who were in their element.

Now lunch was served (though it felt a bit like dinner!) and we made ourselves and our cabins ready for open sea again, although the forecast predicted a very calm Drake Passage. Most of us had a little nap in the afternoon, after our early morning start. During an extended Recap & Briefing later in the day Sandra talked to us about the secret life of lichens, Victoria told us about the history of Deception Island, Kurtis answered the question of why ice is blue and Mick told us all about the biology of Leopard seals.



After our New Year's Eve dinner we were all called back into the bar for the great Ortelius New Years Eve Quiz, in which Arjen tested whether we had actually learned anything during this trip. Questions about the Falklands, South Georgia, Antarctica, our time at sea and even different mystery sounds had to be answered. The winning team was awarded several bottles of fizz with which to celebrate the New Year...scores were impressively high, showing that much thinking and listening had gone on during the lectures and recaps.

With this phase of the evening over, several of the guests wanted to say a few words to acknowledge the end of this year and the rapidly-approaching end of the voyage, ranging from an amusing slide show given by a real amateur photographer (thanks Stewart) to drawings/speeches created especially to mark the idiosyncrasies (and most lovable traits?!) of various Expedition Staff members. To the accompaniment of



much laughter, it was then time for the captain to officially close the book on 2017 and open 2018, although to do this we went back to the South Georgia time zone, so that we could celebrate at 11 pm while most people were still awake! Toasts were drunk from special *Ortelius* New Year glasses and Happy New Year Greetings were widely exchanged. It was an awesome way to end the year, and we all hoped that 2018 would bring plenty more of the adventure and companionship we have experienced in the past two weeks on board MV *Ortelius*.

Day 17 – Monday 1 January 2018 – NEW YEAR'S DAY At Sea, Drake Passage

GPS position at 0800: 61°02'S, 063°01'W

Air Temp: 3°C Sea Temp: 4°C Wind: W 4 Sea state: 3

On the first morning of the New Year, Cheryl woke us up with exciting news: Humpback whales were passing close to the ship, and there was also a Wandering albatross circling! Those already out on the decks or the bridge greatly enjoyed the views while others rushed for jackets and cameras. A little while later, more whale blows were seen. The Drake Passage was as calm as the metaphorical lake – we were incredibly lucky again.

After breakfast, another cup of tea and coffee and some more views over the endless expanse of water surrounding *Ortelius*, we joined Victoria in



ATS articles:

- Peace
- Shared science
- No sovereignty recognised
- Demilitarised, non-nuclear zone



the Lecture Room to hear all about the Antarctic Treaty System. Having visited this very special continent and seen its splendour, we were curious to learn who governs it.

While *Ortelius* made her way north, we had lunch and then a little snooze, took time to edit photos or just sit and let the previous days sink in. With very little ship's movement, the crossing was as pleasant as it could have been – by far the calmest this season, according to the guides. A few birds were around and a Leopard seal was spotted sticking its

head out of the water, eyeing the ship as it approached.

At 3 pm Kurtis invited us to the Lecture Room to hear about the oceans we were navigating; his lecture on



Southern Oceanography made us familiar with the powerful currents, severe weather conditions and huge seasonal changes of this region. Afterwards, Bill took us to the North Atlantic and

introduced us to the ship's journey from Aberdeen to Spitsbergen/Svalbard - a very different experience, but no less fascinating. Just in time we headed to the Bar for the daily recap at 6.30 pm. Arjen showed a much-admired video sequence of King penguins - including a chick pecking at his camera. Following up on his engine-room presentation, Bill provided us with glimpses of what the galley work on board looks like (including an amazing video sequence created by Head Chef Kabir), and we got an idea of what it means to cook for 160 people every day, prepare all the delicious meals and serve them. When we marched to the Dining Room this evening, our admiration for the Chef and his team had multiplied enormously!

'Around Cape Horn' showed in the Ortelius Theatre after dinner – a hilarious and insightful film from the last days of the square-rigged sailing ships, with a commentary by the original cinematographer. And the Bar was buzzing until well after 10 pm as we gathered to talk over our trip, our plans for the coming year, and our hopes for meeting again – maybe even on *Ortelius*.



Day 18 – Tuesday 2 January 2018

At Sea, Drake Passage

GPS position at 0800: 57°17'S, 066°20'W

Air Temp: 4°C Sea Temp: 7°C Wind: SW 4 Sea state: 3

And so our last full day at sea dawned and the Drake Passage was STILL behaving incredibly kindly! Only the birders were truly longing for more wind, as the skies were quiet...but the reprieve for all of us, so that we could relax and get some rest before we left this wonderful floating haven of *Ortelius* – well, we were very grateful for the lack of wind and swell. These conditions also enabled us to make excellent time, so we had the opportunity to diverge from our direct route to Ushuaia, and approach the renowned and



infamous Cape Horn sometime after lunch! This was a bonus we were not expecting, and there was a feeling of excitement and anticipation on board all morning.

Mick was in the Lecture Room on Deck 3 to deliver the last in the Expedition Team's lecture series – 'Birds of a Feather', in which he regaled us on the usage of feathers, by both birds and people! Then for many of us it was time to head back up to the bridge to check on our progress towards the tip of

South America.

Lunch was announced at 12.30 pm - a Croatian lamb stew, which certainly hit the right spot. Before we allowed our thoughts to stray to the puzzle of packing



(why did we buy all those souvenirs in Stanley and Grytviken?!) it was time to look out to the horizon to spot land ahoy – the bottom of South America was just coming into sight.

Hung about with binoculars and cameras, we went out on deck and laid eyes on Cape Horn - for the first time for most of us.

The iconic albatross statue could just be made out, symbolising the souls of all the sailors who have died rounding the Horn...Beneath it the following words are inscribed (originally in Spanish) by Sara Vial:



'I am the albatross that awaits at the end of the world...
I am the forgotten soul of the lost sailors,
rounding Cape Horn from all the seas of the world.
But they did not die in the fierce waves,
for today they soar in my wings towards eternity,
in the last crevice of the Antarctic winds'.

And now it was a case of from the sublime to the ridiculous, as DJ and Sava summoned us deck by deck to reception, to settle our ship accounts. The moment of reckoning had arrived! It wasn't too painful, but parting with our rubber boots and life jackets to the Expedition Team in the Lecture Room hit hard; no more landings or Zodiac cruises to look forward to. Better get on with packing then.



After a peaceful afternoon of reminiscence and trying to make our suitcases close, we approached the Beagle Channel and the Pilot Station. There were still a couple of treats ahead. The first came at 5.45 pm, when we were called to the Lounge/Bar to be shown a wonderful slide show of our voyage (thank you, Sandra), a timely reminder of all we have seen in the last two and a half weeks. This was followed by the Captain's Farewell Cocktails, in which we toasted a successful and exciting trip and some formal farewells were said.

And so to dinner at 7 pm. Tonight was the last chance to share our best photos with other passengers on the computer in the bar, and of course also our last chance to enjoy the company of our fellow passengers in said bar. It was a convivial evening. Not forgetting to put our luggage outside the cabin door for collection before breakfast tomorrow, off we went to bed and sweet dreams on this, our last night of the voyage on *Ortelius*.

Day 19 – Wednesday 3 January 2018

Ushuaia, Argentina

GPS position at 0800: 54°49'S, 068°17'W

All good things come to an end, as they say. Today was our last morning on the *Ortelius*. After a last night in our cabin, which had come to feel like home, it was time to move on to new adventures. We put our luggage in the corridors this morning as asked, so the crew could take it off the ship for us. After one last wakeup call from Cheryl and one last breakfast on board, it was time to say goodbye. Goodbye to our ship and its crew and staff, and to our new friends. Arrangements were made to stay in touch and farewells were said. We could look back on an excellent and successful trip, and all of us had many memories of wildlife and spectacular scenery during our days at sea, Zodiac-cruising activities and shore landings.



At 8:30 am we handed in the keys to our cabins, picked up our luggage from the pier and made our way into Ushuaia or to the airport for our onward journeys. May we meet again somewhere, some day!



Thank you all for such a wonderful voyage, for your company, good humour and enthusiasm. We hope to see you again in the future, wherever that might be!

Total Distance Sailed: 3450 Nautical Miles

**On behalf of
Oceanwide Expeditions,
Captain Mika Appel,
Expedition Leader Cheryl Randall,
Hotel Manager Dejan Nikolic
and all the crew and staff,
it has been a pleasure travelling with you.**

Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)
26

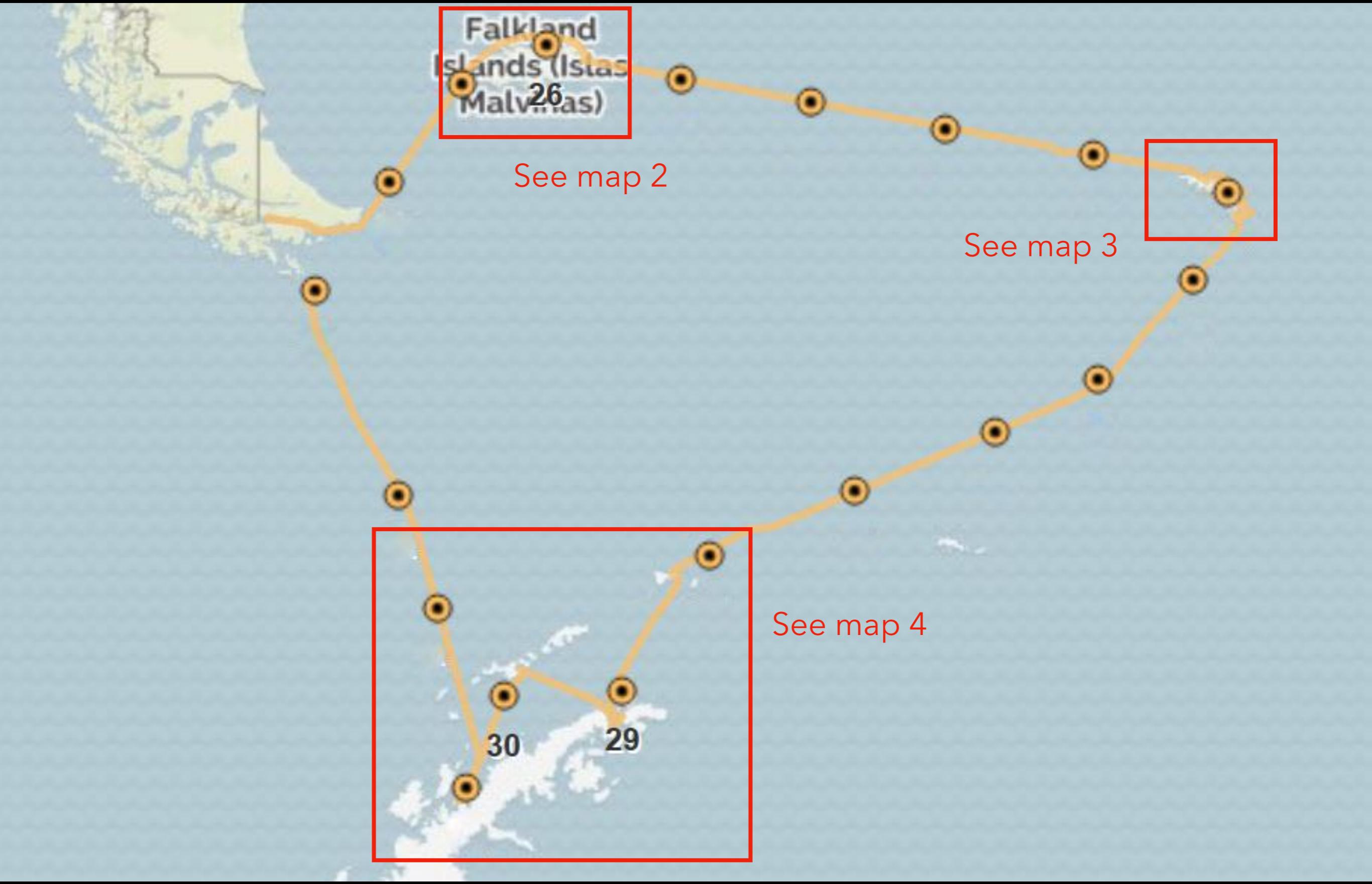
See map 2



See map 3



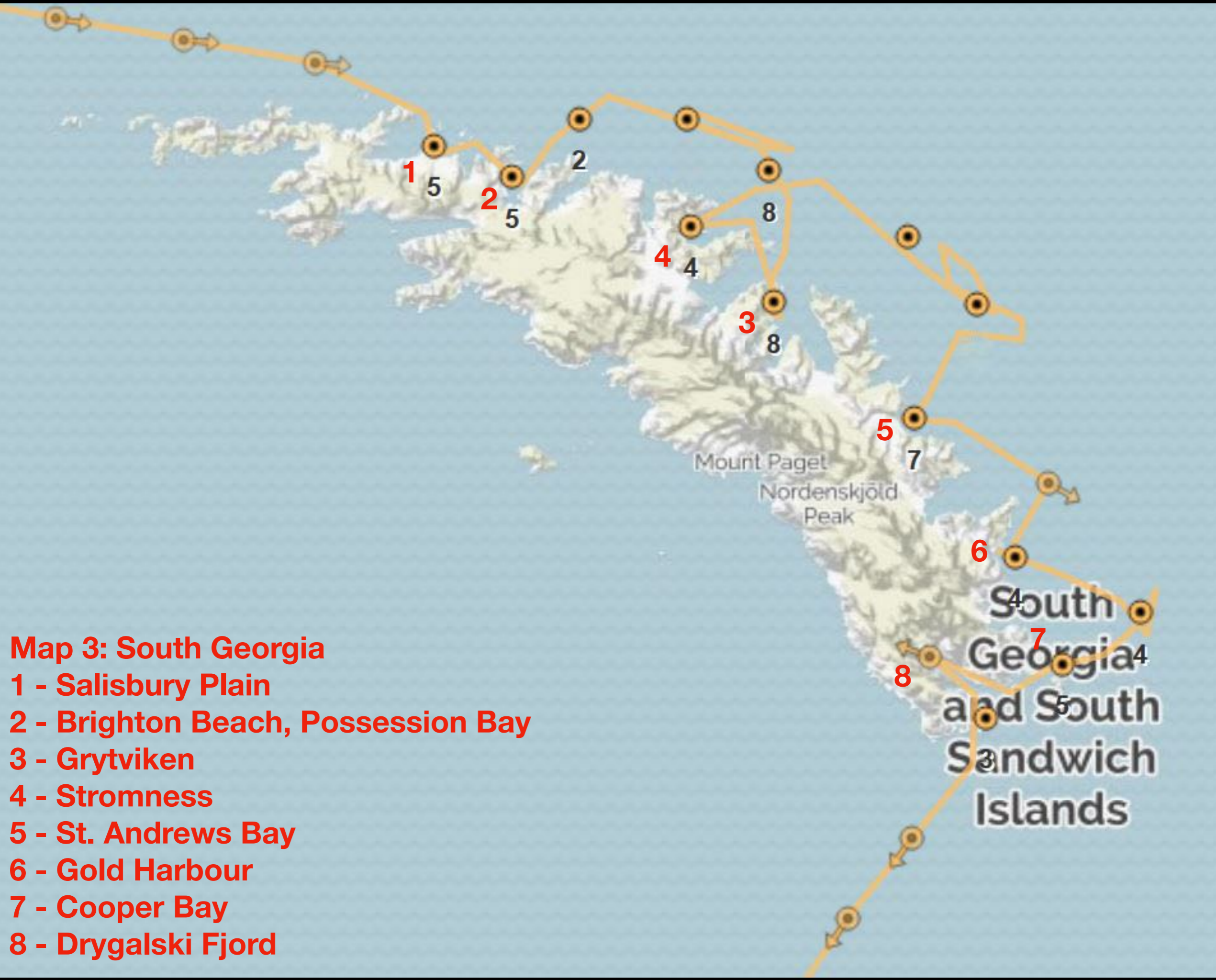
See map 4





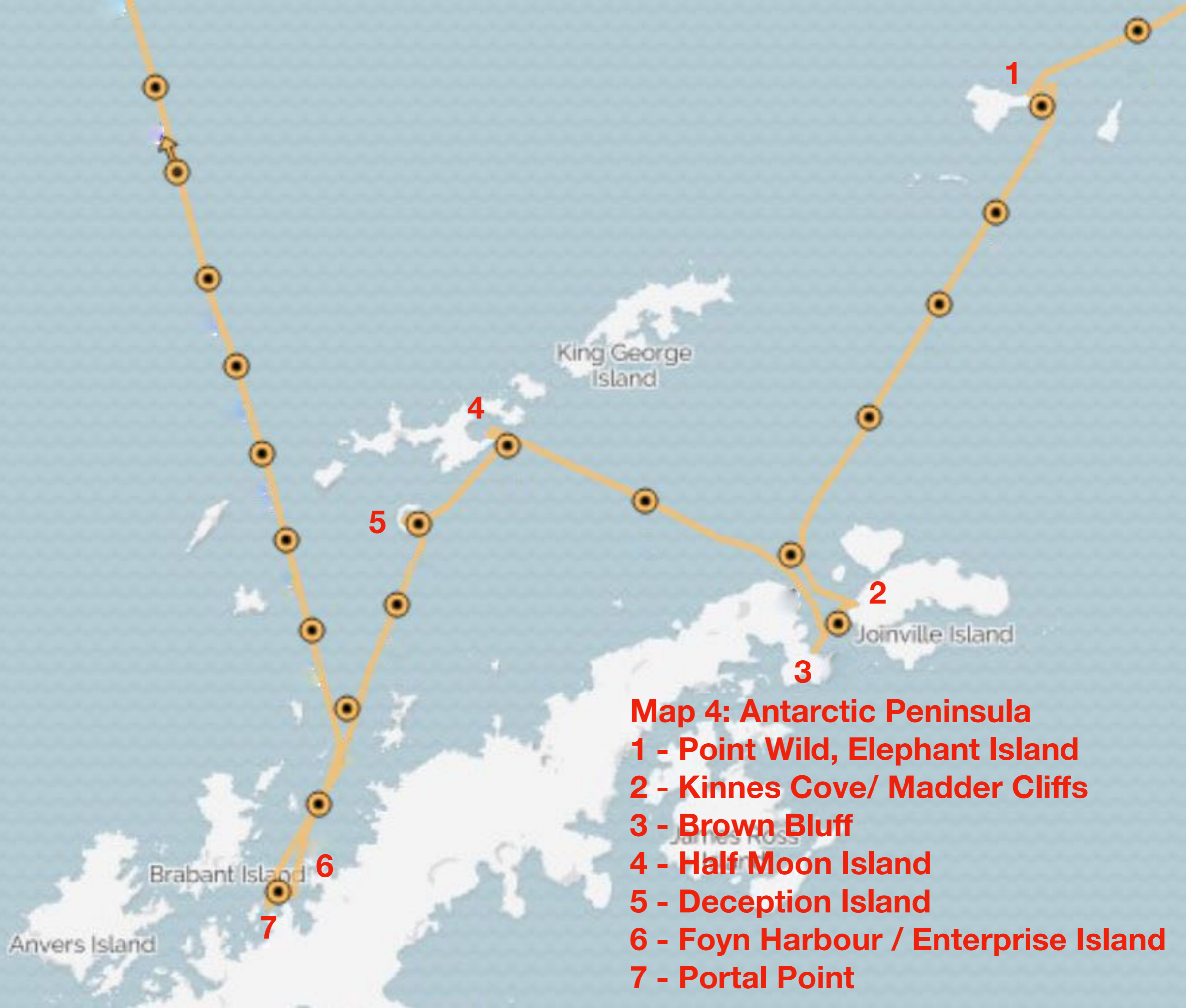
Map 2: Falkland Islands

- 1 - Carcass Island**
- 2 - Saunders Island**
- 3 - Stanley**



Map 3: South Georgia

- 1 - Salisbury Plain**
- 2 - Brighton Beach, Possession Bay**
- 3 - Grytviken**
- 4 - Stromness**
- 5 - St. Andrews Bay**
- 6 - Gold Harbour**
- 7 - Cooper Bay**
- 8 - Drygalski Fjord**



Map 4: Antarctic Peninsula

1 - Point Wild, Elephant Island

2 - Kinnes Cove/ Madder Cliffs

3 - Brown Bluff

4 - Half Moon Island

5 - Deception Island

6 - Foyn Harbour / Enterprise Island

7 - Portal Point

2016: Consultative parties to the Antarctic Treaty:

Argentina (1961)
Australia (1961)
Belgium (1961)
Brazil (1975)
Bulgaria (1978)
Chile (1961)
China (1983)
Czech Republic (1962)
Ecuador (1987)
Finland (1984)
France (1961)
Germany (1979)
India (1983)
Italy (1981)
Japan (1961)
North Korea (1986)
Netherlands (1967)
New Zealand (1961)
Norway (1961)
Peru (1981)
Poland (1961)
Russian Federation (1961)
South Africa (1961)
Spain (1982)
Sweden (1984)
Ukraine (1992)
UK (1961)
US (1961)
Uruguay (1980)

2016 Non-consultative parties to the Antarctic Treaty:

Austria (1987)
Belarus (2006)
Canada (1988)
Colombia (1989)
Cuba (1984)
Denmark (1965)
Estonia (2001)
Greece (1987)
Guatemala (1991)
Hungary (1984)
Iceland (2015)
Kazakhstan (2015)
South Korea (1987)
Malaysia (2011)
Monaco (2008)
Mongolia (2015)
Pakistan (2012)
Papua New Guinea (1981)
Portugal (2010)
Romania (1971)
Slovak Republic (1993)
Switzerland (1990)
Turkey (1996)
Venezuela (1999).



Captain Mika Appel

and his international crew of 47

including

First Officer:	Toni Salo	[Finland]
Second Officer:	Franziska Braas	[Germany]
Third Officer:	Warren Villanueva	[Philippines]
Chief Engineer:	Aleksandr Bondarev	[Lithuania]
Hotel Manager:	Dejan Nikolic	[Serbia]
Assist. Hotel Manager:	Sava Savov	[Bulgaria]
Head Chef:	Khabir Moraes	[India]
Sous Chef:	Richard Arokiasamy	[Malaysia]
Ship's Physician:	Susan Eckhardt	[Germany]

and

Expedition Leader:	Cheryl Randall	[United Kingdom]
Assist. Expedition Leader:	Kurtis Randall	[Canada]
Expedition Guide:	Bill Smith	[Scotland]
Expedition Guide:	Jerry Zhao	[China]
Expedition Guide:	Arjen Drost	[The Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	Mick Brown	[Ireland]
Expedition Guide:	Sandra Petrowitz	[Germany]
Expedition Guide:	Victoria Salem	[United Kingdom]

Welcome you on board!



Welcome on board! Your luggage will be delivered to your cabin as soon as possible. After we are all onboard, please check and notify Reception if you are missing anything or have the wrong luggage. While we are embarking please feel free to explore the ship. The lounge is located on Deck 6.

~17.00 **Mandatory Safety Briefing in the Lecture Room (Deck 3).**
ALL PASSENGERS are required to attend this important safety briefing.

We will conduct the mandatory Lifeboat Drill right after. Please listen for the Alarm.

~18.00 Approximate sailing time. As we leave Ushuaia we recommend that you enjoy the views from the outside decks.
Please Note: The Bridge and will be closed for departure while we navigate the Beagle Channel.

18.30 Soon after sailing we would like to invite you to the **Lounge** (Deck 6) for a **welcome briefing** by Expedition Leader Cheryl Randall and an introduction to the ship by Hotel Manager Dejan Nikolic.

Afterwards there will be Captain's Cocktails with Captain Mika Appel. You will also meet the rest of the Expedition Team.

19.30 **Dinner** is served in the Dining Room located on **Deck 4** behind **Reception**.
Bon appétit!

Please note that tonight we will be sailing into the open ocean so please secure your valuables and make sure your cupboard doors and drawers are tightly closed.

Remember: KEEP ONE HAND FOR THE SHIP AT ALL TIMES & BEWARE OF DOOR JAMBS.



Sunday 17th December, 2017

At sea towards the Falkland Islands

- 08.00 **Breakfast buffet** is served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- We encourage you to wrap up warm and take a stroll on the outside decks to enjoy the ocean and seabirds. Should the conditions prohibit this, we will close the outer decks for your safety.
- 09.30 Please listen for announcements as we call you deck by deck to **collect a pair of rubber boots**, yours to use for the duration of the voyage. Bring your thick socks to get the right size.
- 11.00 Victoria will talk about the **History of the Falkland Islands**. Who discovered the Falkland Islands? Who were the first settlers? When did sheep farming begin? What's Stanley like? What and where is the Camp? This talk covers from first beginnings in 1592 up to the Falklands conflict of 1982. In the Lecture Room (Deck 3).
- 12.30 A **buffet lunch** will be served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 15.00 Join Mick in the Lecture Room (Deck 3) for his talk: **The Falkland Islands, Wildlife and Landscapes**.
- 16.30 Please join Kurtis for a **mandatory briefing** on the **zodiac procedures** we'll be following to get on and off the vessel. Everyone must attend this essential talk.
- 18.30 Join the Expedition Team in the Lounge for our first daily recap.
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.

A reminder if you are visiting the bridge please to keep your voices quiet - remember it is a working place - and to leave your drinks in the bar! Thank you!



Monday 18th December, 2017

Welcome to the West Falklands!

Today we are aiming to visit Carcass Island and Saunders Island. Our ability to land at either island will be dictated by the weather. Please listen out for announcements for updates. We highly recommend wrapping up warm and spending time on deck to enjoy the stunning landscapes and wildlife of the rugged West Falkland Islands.

As with all shore landings, please **wear your rubber boots** and **be prepared for all weather**. Please make sure you have your camera in a waterproof bag for the zodiac ride; salt water and electronic equipment are not friends! Also remember to slide your tag to "out" as you leave reception.

- 07.00 Wake-up call
- 07.30 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the Dining Room.
- 09.00 Excursion at **Carcass Island**. We are welcomed by owner Bob McGill to enjoy the island with its many shorebirds and passerines near the homestead as well as the endemic Cobb's wren. You can walk as much of the 4km path between the homestead and the southern beaches as you like.
- 13.00 Lunch buffet is available in the Dining Room.
- 14.30 Excursion at **Saunders Island**. A paradise of long white sand beaches, with Gentoo, King, Magellanic and Rockhopper penguins all breeding on the island. A little walk up the hill also takes you to nesting Black Browed albatross.
- 19.00 Daily Recap. Join the Expedition Team in the Lounge for tomorrow's plans and a recap of today.
- 19.30 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit!

REMEMBER to **give way to wildlife** – Watch where you are walking and keep your distance; be careful not to trample on Magellanic penguin burrows. Please don't use flash photography in or near the burrows.



Tuesday 19th December, 2017

Welcome to Stanley, Capital of the Falkland Islands

- 06.30 Wake-up call
- 07.00 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the Dining Room.
- 08.30 **Excursion in Stanley.** Landing is by zodiac onto the pier at the Jetty Visitor Centre so you do not have to wear rubber boots. Having some waterproofs (pants and jacket) on is a good idea! Those signed up for the trip to Gypsy Cove, please come in the first few zodiacs and have your fare ready for the bus driver (£20/30USD/€30).
- 11.00 First zodiac from the jetty back to the ship
- 12.00 Zodiacs will shuttle from the jetty back to the ship continuously
- 12.30 **Last zodiac back to the ship**
- 13.00 Lunch buffet is available in the Dining Room. If you plan to take sea sickness medications, now is the time.
- 16.00 Join Arjen in the Lecture Room for his talk **Whales - evolution, ecology, behaviour and threats**
- 19.00 Please join the Expedition Team in the Lounge for our Daily Recap
- 19.30 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon Appetit!

There are many places to see and visit in Stanley:

- West Store (supermarket), Post office (Philatelic bureau), Museum, Souvenirs hops (Capstan Gift Shop, The Pod Gift Shop, Falklands Conservation, Harbour View Gift Shop) and the Cathedral will be open at 09.00
- There are several cafes and pubs available and most will open from 10.00
- There are NO ATMs in the Falkland Islands. Most outlets will accept cards but it is worth carrying some cash too. Standard Chartered Bank Approximate Exchange Rates: US Dollars: \$1 =75p, Euro 1 =80p (these rates are for guidance only)



Wednesday 20th December, 2017

At Sea towards South Georgia

- 08.00 Breakfast buffet is available in the Dining Room.
- 09.30 Join Sandra in the Lecture Room for her talk **Towards Better Photos** where she will share some tips and tricks and give you photographic inspiration in anticipation of our arrival in South Georgia.
- 11.00 Bill will be in the Lecture Room talking about **Whaling in the Arctic and Antarctic**. A significant part of the history of South Georgia.
- 12.30 Lunch buffet is available in the Dining Room.
- 14.30 Please meet in the Lecture Room for the mandatory **International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) briefing**. Cheryl will describe the procedures that we will use ashore to keep everyone safe, to minimize our impact and to protect the wildlife we are hoping to enjoy. **Everyone must attend.**
- 15.30 The crew will have a fire drill; the alarm will sound. This exercise is for crew only.
- 16.00 **Vacuum Party!** As required by the Government of South Georgia, please come to the Lounge to vacuum camera bags, backpacks, pockets and velcro of pants and outer jackets that you plan to take ashore. We'll call you deck-by-deck to minimise queues. Staff will be here to help you. Once you've completed your vacuuming please sign the biosecurity declaration.
- 18.30 Join the Expedition Team in the Lounge for our Daily Recap.
- 19.00 Dinner is served. Bon appetit!



Thursday 21st December, 2017

'Twas the night before South Georgia...

- 08.00 Breakfast buffet is available in the Dining Room.
- 09.30 Join Victoria in the Lecture Room for her talk: **Ernest Shackleton and the Greatest Expedition of the Antarctic Heroic Age**. Ernest Shackleton is famous for his amazing leadership skills during the *Endurance* expedition of 1914-17. What made this brilliant failure of a man so admirable? Was he skilled or lucky? Come and find out more about him and his men in one of the greatest adventure tales of all time.
- 11.00 In the Lecture Room Cheryl will give a **South Georgia Briefing** and we will play a **short mandatory film** produced by the Government of South Georgia especially for visitors to the island, which includes guidelines for our behaviour onshore. **Everyone must attend.**
- 12.30 Lunch buffet is available in the Dining Room.
- 14.00 Mick will be preparing us for some of the inhabitants of South Georgia with his talk: **Air Breathing Feathered Fish**; join him in the Lecture Room to learn all about penguins.
- 16.30 Kurtis will be in the Lecture Room discussing the Geology of the Scotia Arc in his talk: **A Brief 400 Million Year History of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula.**
- 18.30 Join the Expedition Ream in the Lounge for our Daily Recap.
- 19.00 Dinner is served. Bon appetit!

Listen for announcements for when we expect to pass by Shag Rocks, a great opportunity for abundant wildlife, (when visibility permits!)

00.00 Tonight we will change to South Georgia time: move your clocks forward one hour.



Friday 22nd December, 2017

The Bay of Isles & Possession Bay

Today we are aiming to visit Salisbury Plain and Brighton Beach on the Northern coast of South Georgia. Please keep in mind that all landings in South Georgia are very much dependant on the weather as almost all shoreline is exposed to ocean swell and winds! Please stand-by for announcements regarding disembarkation.

When landing onshore, most of us will disembark together, with two zodiac groups meeting 30 minutes later at gangway for a zodiac cruise before going ashore. For our first landing, zodiac groups A and B will zodiac cruise before coming ashore. On our second landing, those cruising first will be zodiac groups C and D, and so on throughout our journey.

- 07.30 Breakfast buffet is now available for one hour in the Dining Room.
- 09.00 **Excursion at Salisbury Plain.** We hope to take you ashore at this very scenic site, hosting as many as 250 000 King penguins! This will be a great opportunity to see the endemic South Georgia Pipit! Please remember to dress warmly and to stay with a buddy to watch out for Fur seals. If approached, stand your ground, stand tall and make some noise, for example by tapping rocks together.
- 09.30 **Zodiac groups A and B** meet at gangway for a zodiac cruise before going ashore.
- 13.00 An extended lunch buffet is available in the Dining Room.
- 15.00 **Excursion at Brighton Beach.** Possession Bay, in which Brighton Beach is located, was first explored by Captain James Cook when he discovered the island and landed here on 17 January 1775. The harbour became well known to sealers and then whalers.
- 15.30 **Zodiac groups C and D** meet at gangway for a zodiac cruise before going ashore.
- 19.00 Join the Expedition Team in the Lounge for our Daily Recap.
- 19.30 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.



Saturday 23rd December, 2017

Grytviken and Stromness Harbour

In the morning, we will visit Grytviken, a restored whaling station where we will meet some of the “South Georgia Locals” who spend part of their year here. In the afternoon, we will visit Stromness Harbour, the location of the whaling station where Sir Ernest Shackleton finally reached help after his notorious journey. We will offer a walk up the valley to the Shackleton waterfall retracing his historic footsteps one hundred years ago.

- 07.30 Breakfast buffet is now available for one hour in the Dining Room.
- 09.00 Her Majesty’s Government Officer will come on-board and clear the ship before we are allowed ashore in Grytviken. Meanwhile there will be a presentation in the **Lecture Room** by Sarah Lurcock and her team, from the South Georgia Heritage Trust, about the rat eradication project.
- 09.30 Shortly afterwards we will have an **excursion in Grytviken**. We will first come ashore at the cemetery where we will pay our respects to “The Boss” Shackleton before walking down the shore into the remains of the old whaling station. Some of the museum staff will offer two guided walks around the factory with their *Whaling and the Life of the Whalers* tour and for the Shackleton buffs a *Shackleton in Grytviken* tour.
- The Museum will be open as well as the Post Office. The gift shop and Post Office accept cash (British Pound, Euro and US Dollar) and credit cards, though the machines are slow so they prefer cash. All proceeds go to the South Georgia Heritage trust.
- 13.30 Lunch buffet is available in the Dining Room.
- 15.30 **Excursion in Stromness Harbour.** For those who want to, they can hike the historic last footsteps of Shackleton as he completed his infamous crossing of South Georgia. We will also be surrounded by Fur and Elephant seals and King penguins on the beach.
- 16.00 **Zodiac groups E and F will Zodiac cruise** before coming ashore.
- 19.30 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.



Sunday 24th December, 2017

St Andrews and Gold Harbour

- 07.00 Wake up call.
- 07.30 Breakfast buffet is now available for one hour in the Dining Room.
- 09.00 **Excursion at St Andrews Bay.** If wave conditions on the beach allow, we will head to shore to visit South Georgia's largest King penguin colony. On the beach we will of course be in the company of our familiar fur seal friends as well as a number of elephant seals. Please come prepared with your cameras well waterproofed!
- 09.30 **Zodiac groups G and H** will zodiac cruise before going ashore.
- 13.00 Lunch buffet is available in the Dining Room.
- 15.00 **Excursion at Gold Harbour,** one of the most beautiful bays in South Georgia where the Bertrab hanging glacier overlooks a very busy beach; a King penguin colony surrounded by Gentoo Penguins, elephant seals and possibly light mantled albatross to name a few.
- 15.30 **Zodiac groups I and J** will zodiac cruise before going ashore.
- 19.00 Join the Expedition Team in the Lounge for our Daily Recap.
- 19.30 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.



Monday 25th December, 2017

A Very Merry South Georgia Christmas

At

Cooper Bay and Drygalski Fjord

- 05.00 Wake up call.
- Zodiac Cruise in Cooper Bay.** Here we will be looking to find our elusive friends the Macaroni penguin. Lovers of cliffs and rough waters, they call the most exposed of South Georgia's shores home. Cooper Bay is also a great place for spotting whales. Keep an eye out on our way in and out of the bay.
- 05.30 Zodiac Groups A to G come to gangway.
- 06.45 Zodiac Groups H to M come to gangway.
- 08.00 Breakfast buffet is now available for one hour in the Dining Room.
- 09:00 The ship will come to the south of the island and make its way into the stunning Drygalski fjord. Framed by towering cliffs and hanging glaciers, we will have a good opportunity to see snow petrels coming and going from their roosts. Don your jackets and hats and make your way outside to enjoy the sensational views.
- 13.00 Lunch buffet is available in the Dining Room as we point our ship south!
- 16.00 Kurtis will be in the Lecture Room discussing the Geology of the Scotia Arc in his talk: **A Brief 400 Million Year History of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula.**
- 18.45 Join the Expedition Team in the Lounge for our Daily Recap.
- 19.30 Christmas Dinner is served in the Dining Room.

*As we head to sea in the afternoon, remember to
take your preventative sea sickness medications.*

Also take a minute to tidy your cabins to avoid anything getting broken.



Tuesday 26th December, 2017

Towards the South Orkney Islands

Today we will spend the day at sea, enjoy life on the ocean as you digest the sights, sounds and smells of South Georgia.

- 08.00 Breakfast buffet is available for one hour in the Dining Room.
- 09.30 From its discovery by Captain Cook in 1775 to the Falkland conflict of 1982, join Victoria as she discusses the chequered **History of South Georgia** in the Lecture Room.
- 11.00 **Vacuum Time!** As required by IAATO, please come to the Lounge once again to vacuum camera bags, backpacks, pockets and Velcro of trousers and outer jackets that you plan to take ashore. We'll call you deck-by-deck to avoid queues. Staff will be here to help you.
- Once you've completed your vacuuming please sign the self-audit biosecurity declaration.
- 12.30 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 14.00 Join Arjen in the Lecture Room where he will talk about some of our seabird companions: **Tubenoses - a Life at Sea.**
- 16.00 You are invited to join Bill in the Lecture Room for an artist's interpretation of the ocean in his talk: **Paintings of the Sea.**
- 18.00 **South Georgia Heritage Trust Auction in the Lounge!** Your chance to own objects from the South Georgia Museum collection not normally available for sale! We'll be holding the auction in aid of the South Georgia Habitat Restoration Project. The lots will be on display in the Lounge during the afternoon. Payment by credit or debit card.
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.

Tonight, we will be **moving clocks backwards one** hour at midnight.



Wednesday 27th December, 2017

At Sea towards Antarctica

*Depending on the sea state, we may have some presentations in the Lounge.
We will keep you updated with announcements.*

- 08.00 Breakfast buffet will be served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 09.30 Through the ages, people have been travelling across the world's oceans, in his talk: **Greenwich Mean Time and Navigation at Sea**, Mick will share some maritime history.
- 11.00 **Amundsen the Sportsman, Scott the Hero?** The south pole was one of the last places on earth remaining unvisited in the early 20th century. A Norwegian skier and an English naval captain both set out to conquer it in 1910. Victoria will compare two completely different characters in Antarctic history.
- 12.30 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 15.00 Join Sandra in the Lecture Room for a presentation on **Frank Hurley**, the official photographer of Shackleton's Endurance expedition. Looking at his life and work, and some musings about early photo editing in the era before Photoshop.
- 17.00 Antarctica is the land of ice. Join Kurtis in the Lecture Room to learn all about glaciers and sea ice in his presentation: **Ice Ice Baby**.
- 18.30 Join the Expedition Team for the daily recap in the Lounge.
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.
- 20:30 The Ortelius theatre is proud to present Casablanca in the Lecture Room with popcorn!



Thursday 28th December, 2017

Approaching Elephant Island

Today we will approach Elephant Island, the site where Frank Wild led the wait for rescue by Shackleton. We hope to pass close to tabular icebergs on our approach to Elephant Island and timings may be adjusted accordingly.

- 08.00 Breakfast buffet will be served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 09.30 Join Mick in the Lecture Room for part two of his penguin series: **Penguin Summer**, where he will give an overview of penguin breeding biology and their lives through the austral summer.
- 11.00 Dr Susan will be in the Lecture Room talking about early **Medical Problems and the Superstitions of Sailors**. Join her for an informative discussion on the advances made since the early explorers.
- 12.30 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- During the late afternoon we will approach Point Wild on Elephant Island. On this inhospitable island, this is probably one of only two areas where they could physically land three small boats. They originally landed further east at Cape Valentine before realising that with high tide there was no living space left. Imagine eating pan fried penguins and elephant seals whilst living under an upturned lifeboat. The problems with ice and rock falling onto their exposed home seem like a dangerous risk to take!
- If the sea state allows, we will launch zodiacs for a closer look; otherwise from the ship we hope to see the place where Frank Wild kept his team alive whilst hoping and waiting for rescue for five long, lonely months.
- 18.30 Join the Expedition Team for the daily recap in the Lounge.
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.



Friday 29th December, 2017

Antarctic Sound

- 07.30 Breakfast buffet will be served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- We will come to **Madder Cliffs** and have a four hour excursion in **Kinnes Cove** where 22,000 pairs of Adelie penguins nest, split between a Zodiac cruise and landing. There is a path up the hill behind the landing site to stretch our legs and gain some elevation and get views over Antarctic Sound. The Zodiac cruise will take in the views of Madder Cliffs, penguins coming and going and a good opportunity to look for Leopard seals.
- 08.30 **Zodiac Groups A-G** come to gangway first and will come directly to shore, before heading out for a Zodiac cruise half way through the excursion.
- 08:45 **Zodiac Groups H-M** come to gangway to come for a Zodiac cruise before coming to land half way through the excursion.
- 13.00 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 15:30 Excursion at **Brown Bluff**. Adelie and Gentoo penguins nest here on the slopes of an extinct periglacial volcano. If they are home, we can sometimes see Snow Petrels on their nest hidden away under boulders a little way up the slopes.
- 16:00 **Groups K and L** can come to gangway to start with a Zodiac cruise before coming ashore.
- 18.30 Join the Expedition Team for the daily recap in the Lounge.
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.

In the evening we are sailing out of Antarctic sound.

We often have great sunsets surrounded by big icebergs.

Spend some time on the outer decks or up on the bridge.



Saturday 30th December, 2017

South Shetland Islands

Our timings today are subject to change, please listen out for announcements and we will keep you informed of our timings.

- 07.00 Breakfast buffet will be served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 08.00 **Excursion at Half Moon Island.** We will come ashore here to visit a Chinstrap penguin colony. The island is also a favourite spot for Weddell seals to haul out and rest, we often find them lounging on the snow.
- 08:30 **Zodiac Groups M and E** come to gangway for a Zodiac cruise before coming to shore.
- 12.30 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 15:30 We will sail through Neptune's Bellows, the narrow gap in the caldera wall of Deception island, one of the Antarctic Peninsula's active volcanoes. This narrow gap is just wide enough to sail our ship through into Port Foster where we will plan to go ashore.
- 16.00 **Excursion in Port Foster.** The contrast of snow on black sand beaches makes the shores of Deception Island unique in the South Shetlands. At the end of the excursion, we will have towels ready for the brave souls who would like to take a polar plunge. Wear your swimwear underneath your warm layers to make the transition easy.
- 16:00 **Zodiac Groups F and A** come to gangway for a Zodiac cruise before coming to shore.
- 19.00 Join the Expedition Team for the daily recap in the Lounge.
- 19.30 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.



Sunday 31st December, 2017

Gerlache Strait

Happy New Year's Eve!

- 05.00 Pastries will be available in the Lounge before our excursion.
- 05.30 **Zodiac Cruise in Foyen Harbour.** This morning we will explore the old Norwegian whaling transport vessel *Gouvernoren*, scuttled here by her crew in 1916 to put out a fire onboard, in order to save as much of her cargo of whale oil as possible. This is also a good location to search for Weddell and Crabeater seals.
- 08.00 Breakfast buffet will be served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 10.00 **Excursion at Portal Point.** We will once again step onto the continent of Antarctica here on Reclus Peninsula. This is a great location to gain a little elevation and get some terrific views of Charlotte Bay. For those who visited the museum in Stanley, you may remember a British Antarctic Survey hut whose original home was on Portal Point and whose foundations you can still see. At the end of the excursion, we will have towels ready for the brave souls who would like to take a polar plunge. Wear your swimwear underneath your warm layers to make the transition easier.
- 10.30 **Zodiac Groups B and C** come to gangway to cruise before coming ashore.
- 13.00 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 18.15 Join the Expedition Team for the daily recap in the Lounge.
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.
- 20.45 Join us in the bar in your Pub Quiz Teams to test your knowledge of polar trivia with Arjen!

This will be followed by celebratory drinks in the Lounge to celebrate the end of one fantastic year and the beginning of a new one!



Monday 1st January, 2018

Drake Passage

Happy New Year!

- 08.00 Breakfast buffet will be served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 10.30 Now we have all stepped on the continent of Antarctica, the most isolated and extreme location on the planet. We have stood among penguins and icebergs, awed at our privilege in visiting this last place on earth. But who owns Antarctica? Everyone or no-one? And who controls and conserves it? Join Victoria in the Lecture room to hear about **The Antarctic Treaty System**. This talk introduces the complex Antarctic Treaty System, some of its advisory organizations and considers its enforceability and effectiveness.
- 12.30 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 15.00 As we sail across the Drake Passage, come to the Lecture Room to hear Kurtis' talk; **Southern Oceanography**. This Ocean is home to the most powerful ocean current, some of the most severe weather, and biggest seasonal change anywhere on earth.
- 17.00 Join Bill in the Lecture Room for his talk **Atlantic Odyssey: A Journey from Aberdeen to Svalbard**.
- 18.30 Join the Expedition Team for the daily recap in the Lounge.
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.
- 20:30 The Ortelius theatre is proud to present *Rounding Cape Horn* in the Lecture Room.



Tuesday 2nd January, 2018

Drake Passage

- 08.00 Breakfast buffet will be served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 10.30 Mic will be in the Lecture Room giving his **Birds of a Feather** talk, where he will talk about feathers: their usage by both birds and people.
- 12.30 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- Afternoon We will pass close to Cape Horn before turning east towards the entrance of the Beagle Channel, listen for announcements and keep a weather eye to the horizon.
- 15.00 Another adventure before reaching Ushuaia: **Settling Your Accounts** at reception! Please listen for announcements as DJ and Sava will call you deck by deck.
- At the same time, we will call alternate decks down to the Lecture Room to collect **rubber boots and lifejackets**. Please stand-by for your deck to be called.
- 17.45 A **super slide show** of the trip will be shown in the Lounge, followed by...
...Captain's Cocktails.
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.



Wednesday 3rd January, 2017

Arrival in Ushuaia & Disembarkation

The bridge, bow and aft will be closed this morning

Please **put your check-in luggage in the corridor** outside your cabin **before breakfast**. It will be brought to the pier for you.

07.30 Breakfast buffet available for one hour in the Dining Room.

During breakfast the stewards will make a start changing the beds, but of course you are welcome to leave your hand luggage on the table, and to use the bathroom in your cabins after breakfast.

After breakfast, we will announce when the ship has been cleared (by the Argentine Customs Officials). Please do not step ashore before you hear an announcement that the ship has been cleared!

It helps us a lot if you DO NOT wait in reception please.

Once the ship is clear, you'll be able to collect your passport, and head down to the pier to identify your luggage.

We anticipate that buses will be ready for disembarkation at around 08.30 if we have cleared Customs by that time. Do listen for announcements for disembarkation and bus timings

For those of you heading into town or to local hotels, taxis will be available from the end of the pier, a short walk from our berth

On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Mika Appel, and all the crew and staff, it has been a pleasure travelling with you and we hope to welcome you back on board again soon!

Victoria's advice for a good historical read:-

GENERAL

Let Heroes Speak: Antarctic explorers 1772 – 1922 by Michael H. Rosove – contains chapters on the great and the forgotten heroes of Antarctic exploration, including Otto Nordenskjold of the 1901 – 03 Swedish Antarctic expedition to the Weddell Sea.

SCOTT & AMUNDSEN

Scott's Last Expedition/The Voyage of the Discovery – very well-written and readable account by Scott himself

The Last place on Earth/Scott and Amundsen by Roland Huntford – very detailed and well-researched account of Scott and Amundsen's famous race to the Pole. A great supporter of Amundsen and a great debunker of Scott. Very interesting, though extremely (obsessively?) anti-Scott.

Captain Scott by Ranulph Fiennes – A much easier read than Huntford's tome; sets out to debunk the debunking of Scott and vindicate his heroic reputation. Extremely (obsessively?) pro-Scott. Also very interesting – draw your own conclusions!

The Worst Journey in the World by Apsley Cherry-Garrard – A wonderfully written account of Scott's last expedition, with emphasis on Cherry-Garrard/Wilson/Bowers' winter journey to Cape Crozier for emperor penguin eggs.

SHACKLETON

Endurance and Shackleton's Boat Journey by F A Worsley – An easy and fascinating read by a great supporter of Shackleton.

Shackleton by Roland Huntford – Very detailed and well-researched account of Shackleton's life and expeditions. But bear in mind Huntford's obsessive debunking of the Scott myth when considering his objectivity over Shackleton.

Shackleton – A Life in Poetry by Jim Mayer – A recent publication by a personal friend (check for my name in the acknowledgements!). An interesting, new approach to Shackleton and his life via both the poetry he loved and the poetry he wrote. Sheds new light on Shackleton the man, the poet & the explorer.

SHACKLETON'S ROSS SEA PARTY

Shackleton's Forgotten Men by Lennard Bickel – A fascinating account of the fate of Shackleton's Ross Sea Party, who were laying supporting depots for his Antarctic crossing; he never came, but they completed their appointed task at great cost.

Also try:-

Polar Castaways: The Ross Sea Party of Sir Ernest Shackleton by Richard McElrea.

The Ross Sea Shore Party 1914 – 17 by Richard W. Richards.

The Lost Men: The Harrowing Saga of Shackleton's Ross Sea Party by Kelly Tyler-Lewis.

NOVELS ON ANTARCTICA

Antarctica by Kim Stanley-Robinson – a sci-fi, futuristic, political novel set against a backdrop of one version of a future Antarctica. Highly recommended.

Skating to Antarctica by Jenny Diski – a compelling account of a journey to Antarctica and an inner journey of the spirit.

Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition by Caroline Alexander – a cat's eye view of Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition!