



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Ushuaia – Ushuaia

11 February - 10 March, 2025

On board *m/v Ortelius*



M/V *Ortelius* was built in 1989 in Gdynia, Poland as a special-purpose research vessel for the Russian Academy of Science. She was originally named “*Marina Svetaeva*” after a well-known Russian poet. The vessel was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions in 2011, re-flagged in The Netherlands, and re-named *Ortelius*. She was extensively re-fitted in 2019 and complies with the latest SOLAS-regulations (Safety of Life At Sea). M/V *Ortelius* is 90.95 m long, 17.2 m wide and has a maximum draft of 5.4 m. She has ice class UL1 (Equivalent to 1A), 10.5 knots average cruising speed and propulsion is 6 ZL 40/48 SULZER. *Ortelius* is 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. Her home port is Vlissingen.



Captain Remmert Koster [Netherlands]

and his international crew of 60...

Chief Officer:	Sjoerd Van Hoek	[Netherlands]
Second Officer:	Warren Villanueva	[Philippines]
Third Officer & HLO:	Sander Witsenburg	[Netherlands]
Third Officer:	Taras Kovalov	[Ukraine]
Chief Engineer:	Aleksandr Bondarev	[Lithuania]
Second Engineer:	Ionut Daraban	[Romania]
Hotel Manager:	Volodymyr Cherednychenko	[Ukraine]
Assistant Hotel Manager:	Lilian Van Meurs	[Netherlands]
Head Chef:	Heinz Hacker	[Austria]
Sous Chef:	Norman Estrada	[Philippines]
Bosun:	Philip Malang	[Philippines]
Bosun:	Lauren Malatag	[Philippines]
Bartender:	Glaiza Loterina	[Philippines]
Ship's doctor:	Amar Mashru	[United Kingdom]
Expedition Leader:	Sara Jenner	[United Kingdom]
Assistant Expedition Leader:	Chloé Maréchal	[France]
Expedition Guide:	Claudio Ghiglione	[Italy]
Expedition Guide:	Chris Long	[New Zealand]
Expedition Guide:	Matilda Ballinger	[Australia]
Expedition Guide:	Dr. Gary Miller	[Australia]
Expedition Guide:	Tennessee Blackmore	[United Kingdom]
Expedition Guide:	Allan White	[Falkland Islands]
Dive Team Leader:	Henrik Enckell	[Sweden]
Dive Guide:	Clara Iachetti	[Argentina]
Dive Guide:	Peter Nilsson	[Sweden]
Dive Guide:	Luce Moussiere	[France]
Mountain Guide:	Philip Poole	[United Kingdom]
Helicopter Landing Officer:	Jens Binderup	[Denmark]
Chief Helicopter Pilot (Tango):	Julio Arce	[Argentina]
Helicopter Pilot (Sierra):	Marcelo Lira Contreras	[Chile]
Helicopter Pilot (Quebec):	Marcelo Yáñez	[Chile]
Chief Helicopter Engineer:	Mario Solano	[Chile]
Helicopter Engineer:	Fernando Silva Soto	[Chile]
Helicopter Engineer:	José "Cazely" Mansilla	[Chile]

WE WELCOME YOU ON BOARD!

Day 1 – Tuesday 11 February. Ushuaia, embarkation day.

08:00 GPS Position: 54°48.4' S / 068°17.6' W

Wind: W force 5 • Sea: Choppy • Weather: Mainly cloudy • Air temperature: +6°C



The day had finally come! It was time to board the good ship *Ortelius* for our Antarctic expedition to the Weddell Sea! It was a typical mixed weather kind of day for Ushuaia and many of us walked down the pier to *Ortelius* in light rain. Despite that, the surrounding scenery of the mountains was spectacular. Approaching the ship, we could see a helicopter sitting on *Ortelius*' flight deck, one of three that would be

sailing with us. The one on deck had a callsign CC-CHQ, otherwise known as 'Quebec', which was flown on to *Ortelius* the previous evening as she passed the Chilean town of Puerto Williams, en-route to Ushuaia. The crew and Expedition Team had loaded our luggage onboard and delivered it to our cabins earlier in the day. All that remained was for us to take a few photos of *Ortelius*, our home for the next 28 days, before heading up the gangway.

We were warmly welcomed by the crew and staff who assisted us with check-in at Reception and finding our cabins. We had some time to explore the ship, get our bearings and grab a coffee in the Bar. Everyone was on board by 14:30. Then it was time to gather in the Bar for a mandatory briefing on ship safety procedures. Once complete, we could sail. We met Expedition Leader Sara Jenner, who introduced the mandatory safety video. Next, it was time for an abandon ship drill. Upon hearing the emergency alarm we went to our cabins, put on something warm, grabbed our lifejackets, and went to the muster station back up in the Bar. From there we were guided outside and up to the bridge deck where the lifeboats are located, so we knew where to go in the event of a real emergency.



While the lifeboat briefing by the Chief Officer was concluding, Captain Remmert pulled *Ortelius* away from the dock and got us underway. We departed Ushuaia just after 15:00. At first *Ortelius* traveled at a reduced speed because we had to receive our last two helicopters which were waiting to take off from Ushuaia Airport. The flight deck was prepared, 'Quebec' was moved to one side, and the call

was made. Expedition Leader Sara made an announcement, and we gathered on the blustery outer decks to see the helicopters arrive. In no time at all the first helicopter was seen approaching. This helicopter's callsign was LV-CUT - 'Tango' - flown by Chief Pilot Julio Arce. The engineers, pilots and deck crew quickly removed the blades and pushed Tango into the hanger. Then our third and



final helicopter arrived, making an exciting pass down the starboard side of the ship before landing. This was LV-CUS - 'Sierra' - flown by Marcelo Lira. The blades were removed, and Sierra joined Tango in the hangar. Quebec remained out on the flight deck, firmly lashed down and wrapped in a protective 'jacket'. It felt very good to have these guys onboard with us!

With the excitement over, Captain Remmert got *Ortelius* up to full speed and we headed off down the Beagle Channel. It was amazing to see several Black-browed albatrosses in these sheltered waters. Sara invited us to join Captain Remmert in the Bar for champagne and canapés, to raise a glass and toast the voyage ahead. This was followed by an introduction to shipboard services by Hotel Manager Volodymyr, and an overview of our expedition by our illustrious leader Sara. Before this concluded we met the Expedition Team and the six guys from DAP Helicopters – 3 pilots and 3 engineers.

With briefing formalities concluded, it was time for our first evening meal, with a delicious buffet selection prepared by Head Chef Heinz and his galley team, and served by the ever-friendly dining room staff. After dinner, we were



called back to the bar for two more mandatory briefings. Because 100% attendance is required, these briefings were done while *Ortelius* was still in the sheltered waters of the Beagle Channel. Expedition Leader Sara first briefed us on the Antarctic Visitor Guidelines, as laid down by IAATO – the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators – of which Oceanwide is a founding member. And then Sara gave us the Zodiac Safety Briefing. How lucky we were to have both

Zodiacs and helicopters at our disposal on this exciting voyage.

After a long day of travel, it was time for bed and some well-earned rest. What would tomorrow bring. The infamous Southern Ocean laid ahead. We hoped (some prayed) it would be kind.

Day 2 – Wednesday 12 February. At sea, Southern Ocean.

08:00 GPS Position: 54°50.0' S / 062°18.9' W

Wind: S force 5 • Sea: Moderate • Weather: Partly Cloudy • Air temperature: +5°C

We got our first wake-up call of the trip from Sara, with her trademark – “Good morning, good morning, good morning”. *Ortelius* was back in her element now, and it was exciting to be out here with her. There was some movement in the night as we left the sheltered coastal waters of Argentina and headed out into the mighty Southern Ocean. Some of us were up and about

before the wake-up call, enjoying a coffee in the Bar and taking in the vast seascape. Several albatross and petrel species delighted us with their presence around the ship.

Sara wanted us all to have an easy first day on board, so after a buffet breakfast some of us ventured up to the Bridge, while others relaxed in the Bar. Some wandered the decks in search of their sea legs! Others just preferred to lie down. A big storm in the region two days earlier had generated a heavy swell, which we were feeling the effects of. At 10:30 we were invited down to the lecture room on Deck 3 to receive our Muck Boots, which would keep our feet warm and dry throughout the voyage. Soon after the 'Boot Party' it was announced over the PA system that a pod of Long-finned Pilot Whales were approaching the ship. That got quite a few people outside for some fresh air.



At 11:30 Dr. Gary Miller kicked off the lecture program with a presentation called 'Seabirds of the Southern Ocean'. He set the scene by explaining why this region is so rich in seabirds and went on to talk about the species we had already seen, and those we hope to see during the voyage. Appropriately, some of these magnificent birds could be seen passing by the Bar windows during Gary's talk. Next on the agenda was a buffet lunch, which was announced soon after the conclusion of the lecture.

After lunch, there was some free time to enjoy the birds outside. Three albatross species graced us with their presence, including the magnificent Wandering albatross with its incredible 3-metre wingspan. The most common birds seen throughout the day were Black-browed albatrosses, because 70% of their global population lives in the Falkland Islands to the north of us. Various species of prions and petrels were also seen. Wind and swell both increased as the afternoon wore on. Perfect conditions for the seabirds, but some of us found it tough going.

At 16:15 historian Tennessee Blackmore invited us to the Bar for his swash-buckling presentation on 'The Age of Sail', with a particular focus on those early explorers who first ventured into the waters through which we will travel on this voyage - Sir Francis Drake, Captain James Cook and James Clark Ross. For those experiencing Tennessee's engaging



presentation style for the first time, his talk was an absolute treat. And those who had sailed with him before were delighted to see him in action again.

At our first daily recap in the evening, Sara gave us an update on our progress so far and talked about the colossal distance we would be traveling on this trip. It was all about how difficult it is to estimate arrival times, when a drop of just one or two knots in ship speed can add one or two days to the longest legs of the voyage. Chloé talked about Colossal Squid, and Chris explained nautical miles, latitude and longitude. And so ends our first full day on *Ortelius*.

Day 3 – Thursday 13 February. At sea, Southern Ocean.

08:00 GPS Position: 54°19.3' S / 054°15.7' W

Wind: S force 5 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: +3°C



As dawn broke over the Southern Ocean, *Ortelius* continued her journey on an easterly heading towards South Georgia, cutting through the deep blue waters with very good speed. After a day of heavy seas and relentless motion, this morning's improved weather was a welcome relief. The ship progressed more smoothly now, allowing most people to move about with greater ease. The vast expanse of water stretched unbroken in all directions, an endless seascape where the only interruptions were the gentle swell and occasional seabirds circling the ship.

With better conditions, life onboard *Ortelius* felt much more relaxed. The morning began with a hearty breakfast in the dining room, where conversations reflected the growing anticipation of reaching South Georgia. Many took the opportunity to step out onto the deck, enjoying the fresh air and the beauty of the Southern Ocean in better weather. The ship's bridge

remained a popular spot, offering panoramic views across the vast ocean and the chance to watch for wildlife. Several different albatross species glided effortlessly by our fine ship.

At 09:00 we were instructed to make our way up to the Bar for another mandatory briefing. The first part was a video narrated by Sir David Attenborough about South Georgia's fragile natural environment, and visitor guidelines. Sara followed this up with a biosecurity briefing and encouraged everyone to start checking and cleaning their equipment. All of this was an essential part of preparing for our upcoming visit to South Georgia. Sara emphasised the importance of adhering to the strict environmental guidelines and biosecurity protocols, measures such as boot cleaning and gear inspections were explained in detail. Preserving the pristine landscape and diverse wildlife of South Georgia required everyone's cooperation, and the briefing underscored the responsibility that came with the privilege of visiting such a remote and extraordinary place.



Later in the morning, the ship's lecture program continued, offering guests a chance to deepen their knowledge of the wildlife they might soon encounter. Assistant Expedition Leader Chloé delivered an enthusiastic and engaging lecture about whales and dolphins of the Southern Ocean. She shared fascinating insights into their behaviour and migration patterns. As she spoke, guests listened attentively, some taking notes, others absorbed in the great images. The chance of spotting these magnificent creatures during the voyage added to the excitement.



At midday, the ship's time advanced by one hour to align with the upcoming South Georgia visit. The adjustment was a small but significant step, reminding everyone that their long-anticipated arrival was drawing nearer. Lunch followed shortly after, providing another opportunity for guests to exchange thoughts on the morning's activities and their hopes for the days ahead. With a

couple of clear hours in the afternoon, many enjoyed a little siesta, while others kept a vigilant watch for wildlife, enjoying the beautiful weather in this usually tempestuous region.

Later in the afternoon we were treated to another lecture, this time by Sara, the ship's photography expert. With many guests eager to capture the breathtaking scenery and wildlife of South Georgia, her talk on photography techniques was met with great enthusiasm. She covered the essentials of composition, lighting, and camera settings, offering practical advice on how to take stunning shots in the often-challenging conditions of the Antarctic region. Whether seasoned photographers or casual smartphone users, everyone took away valuable tips that would enhance their experience and help preserve lasting memories of the journey.



As the day drew to a close, guests gathered in the Bar for the daily briefing and recap. Sara gave a rundown on the next day's activities, and members of the expedition team expanded

on some of the day's highlights. The warm atmosphere reinforced the sense of community that was developing on board in these early days.

Dinner followed, bringing the day to a satisfying end. As plates of delicious food were served, conversations continued to flow, and excitement for the approaching South Georgia adventure remained palpable. Outside, the Southern Ocean stretched on, vast and mysterious, as *Ortelius* carried her guests ever closer to one of the most remarkable places on Earth. With another day at sea completed everyone retired to their cabins knowing that we were now well over halfway to South Georgia.

Day 4 – Friday 14 February. At Sea, Southern Ocean.

08:00 GPS Position: 53°47.3' S / 046°01.3' W

Wind: SSW force 6 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: +3°C



Happy Valentine's Day! During the night we passed our first milestone of the voyage - the Antarctic Convergence. This is a natural oceanic boundary encircling Antarctica, where cold, northward-flowing Antarctic waters meet relatively warmer sub-Antarctic waters. This creates a distinct ecological zone with unique temperature, salinity, and biological differences, and is the biological boundary of Antarctica. Fog is often a feature of the Antarctic Convergence, along with increased wildlife activity.

However, the most obvious feature is a sharp drop in sea surface temperature, often by 2 - 3°C over a short distance. The Antarctic Convergence line marked on charts is only a mean position, as it fluctuates back and forth by some 30 nautical miles or so.

Our third day at sea dawned overcast but clear, with the Southern Ocean stretching endlessly to the horizon. *Ortelius* romped steadily towards Shag Rocks, a remote outcrop on our approach to South Georgia. Conditions were favourable, with only a slight swell, allowing for a smooth and comfortable passage. Sara's pre-breakfast wake-up call informed us that we had made good progress overnight, and *Ortelius* was rapidly closing in on the South Georgia Marine Protected Area.

The morning saw the continuation of our onboard lecture program. First up was Sara, who gave an engaging introduction to Penguins, the charismatic inhabitants of the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic regions. Her lecture covered the various species we might encounter, including the regal King penguins of South Georgia, their remarkable adaptations to the harsh climate, and their complex social behaviours. Everyone was captivated by her enthusiasm as she shared anecdotes and her own stunning images of these wonderful birds.





Following a break for coffee and a few laps of the outer deck, it was time for the second lecture of the day, delivered by Allan who gave an overview of Antarctic Whaling. His talk provided a sobering account of the industry that once thrived in these waters, nearly driving several whale species to extinction. Through archival photographs and historical records, he painted a vivid

picture of the whaling stations that once operated on South Georgia, the brutal efficiency of the operations, and the circumstances that led to the industry's demise after six decades of wholesale slaughter. The lecture was both enlightening and thought-provoking, leaving many in the audience reflecting on the miracle that some whales survived.

At 12:30, another sumptuous buffet lunch was served by the ever-attentive hotel department. Then the afternoon was dedicated to an important and meticulous task in the Bar - South Georgia Biosecurity Inspections. As part of ongoing conservation efforts, every guest participated in ensuring that no invasive species, such as seeds or small organisms, would be inadvertently introduced to the fragile ecosystem of South Georgia. Vacuuming pockets, scrubbing boots, and thoroughly checking personal belongings became a collective effort, emphasizing the responsibility we all carry in helping to preserve these remote and unique islands.



The final lecture of the day was delivered by Tennessee, titled *Pray for Shackleton*. His talk delved into the harrowing survival story of Sir Ernest Shackleton and his crew following the loss of *Endurance* in the Weddell Sea. Through gripping storytelling, Tennessee brought to life the trials and tribulations faced by Shackleton and his men as they navigated treacherous waters in search of rescue. His lecture left all of us in complete awe of the sheer determination and resilience exhibited by these legendary explorers in the face of such extreme adversity.



As the day wound down, we gathered in the bar for the daily briefing and recap. Some found it difficult to drag themselves away from the increased seabird activity outside, where true icons of the Southern Ocean were now more abundant. Sara gave her usual outline on the following day's activities, which generated great excitement. We would arrive at South Georgia tomorrow! Then some of the Expedition Team presented a light-hearted special edition Valentine's recap.



The plated dinner was another delightful culinary treat, with a special Valentine's cake served for dessert. The highlight of the evening, however, came as *Ortelius* made a close approach to Shag Rocks, a tight formation of 6 jagged, sea-battered rocks that rise sharply from the ocean. The highest rises some 75 metres (246 ft) into the sky, dwarfing *Ortelius* by a considerable margin. The near vertical surfaces are crowded with South Georgia Shags, which nest there and give the rocks their name. A lone Wandering albatross passed between us and the rocks, followed by a stunning Grey-headed albatross. Cameras clicked as guests took in the dramatic sight, marking the end of our Valentine's Day in the Southern Ocean.



Day 5 – Saturday 15 February. At Sea & Right Whale Bay.

08:00 GPS Position: 53°51.6' S / 038°42.5' W

Wind: S force 5 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Lightly overcast • Air temperature: +1.5°C

The fourth full day of our expedition dawned with very good sea conditions. In the distance, a breathtaking sight emerged – the majestic mountains of South Georgia. The excitement on board was palpable as we neared this magical island, teeming with wildlife and history.



Unlike previous days packed with lectures and briefings, this morning was left blissfully free of scheduled activities. This allowed everyone to enjoy the scenery as we sailed along the rugged northern coast of South Georgia. Expedition staff and guests alike gathered on the bridge and outer decks, binoculars in hand, scanning for wildlife. We were welcomed to South Georgia by a spectacular female Blue Whale that cruised across our path with her

calf. The sighting was brief for a lucky handful of people, but it was precious. The jagged cliffs and glacial valleys carved into the island's dramatic terrain painted an awe-inspiring panorama.

The occasional blow of a whale or the soaring silhouette of an albatross added to the sense of adventure as we continued along the coast. King penguins, Macaroni penguins and Fur seals were seen as we closed in on our destination for the afternoon.



By midday, *Ortelius* was approaching Right Whale Bay, a pristine and remote landing site on South Georgia's northern coast. As we enjoyed lunch on board, the expedition team set off in a Zodiac to scout the site, ensuring conditions were suitable for a safe landing. Soon, the all-clear signal was given, and guests donned their waterproof gear, packed cameras in protective bags, and

prepared for an unforgettable afternoon ashore. The sunny vista from the ship was stunning!

Upon arrival, we were greeted by an incredible spectacle - a vast colony of King penguins stretching along the shore, their golden plumage glistening in the sunlight. We walked to a small hill that gave us an incredible overview of the main part of the colony, and then descended to the same level as the colony for a more up close and personal encounter. The sight and sound of thousands of these regal birds, interspersed with fur seals and elephant seals, created an unparalleled wildlife experience. Towering behind the far end of the colony, a cascading waterfall added a dramatic backdrop, enhancing the ethereal beauty of the scene.



We spent all afternoon immersed in this thriving ecosystem, observing the penguins' interactions and watching the comical antics of the Fur seal pups as they barked and jostled for territory. Despite the chill in the air after the sun disappeared, no one was eager to leave. The sense of connection to nature in such an untouched environment was profound.

The divers did their check-out dive on the south side of the bay near Bluff Point. It was obvious right from the start that visibility wasn't going to be great, with glacial run-off giving the water a murky appearance. Nevertheless,



all divers enthusiastically entered the water and enjoyed their experience. Visibility was around 5 meters, and the water temperature was between 1 and 3 degrees Celsius depending on depth. A few divers were lucky enough to get fleeting glimpses of playful Fur seals. The bottom provided a kelp forest habitat with some nice sea stars. Following the dive, everyone headed for shore to enjoy the spectacular King penguin colony along with the rest of the guests.

Although the King penguins were the stars of the show, the seal activity was also fantastic. A few Elephant seals were found among the mass of young Fur seals, including a rare "blondie". Roughly one in a thousand have this colour pigmentation imbalance known as leucism. Eventually, the time came to return to *Ortelius*. As the last Zodiacs departed shore, many guests cast longing glances back at the unforgettable landscape. The experience had left a deep impression on all who had stepped onto South Georgia's wild shores after 3½ days at sea. The experience was particularly profound for those who were experiencing this magical island for the first time.



Back on board, it was soon time for the daily briefing and recap. Sara explained our plans for tomorrow's landings and possible wildlife encounters, while Dr. Gary Miller, our very own penguin expert, told us all we needed to know about the life cycle of King penguins. What a way to begin our time on South Georgia. Thank you, Right Whale Bay!

Following another great dinner, the evening concluded with another round of South Georgia Biosecurity checks. Tomorrow would see us in Grytviken where a thorough biosecurity



inspection was scheduled by a South Georgia Government Officer. Nothing but the highest standard was acceptable. A very high pass rate was necessary to allow us to conduct further landings on the island. Everyone took the process seriously, recognizing the importance of preserving the fragile ecosystem we were privileged to explore. Everyone strode off to bed with arms full of spotless outdoor equipment. Some set out editing hundreds of photos!

Day 6 – Sunday 16 February. Grytviken & St. Andrew's Bay.

08:00 GPS Position: 54°17.1' S / 036°28.9' W

Wind: NW force 2 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Rain • Air temperature: +0.5°C

The day began with heavy rain as *Ortelius* made her way into Cumberland Bay, the gateway to King Edward Cove and Grytviken Whaling Station. Despite the dreary weather, the sea was calm, with little or no wind to trouble us. During breakfast we dropped anchor just off King Edward Point, the hub of South Georgia's administrative presence, with its cluster of modern buildings nestled against the rugged, mountainous backdrop. As we enjoyed our breakfast, the officials came on board to conduct their rigorous biosecurity inspection. This process is essential to protect the island's delicate ecosystem, and we were pleased to pass with a perfect score of 100%.



We gathered in the Bar for a brief but informative presentation from a representative of the South Georgia Heritage Trust. The talk provided us with a fascinating overview of the island's history, wildlife, and the vital work being done to preserve its natural and cultural heritage. Energized and eager to explore, we donned our waterproofs and prepared to disembark.

The Zodiac ride to the landing site at the old whaling station was a little wet but exhilarating, with the rain adding a certain wild charm to the approach. Grytviken is like a ghost of the past, with rusting machinery and weathered buildings whispering stories of a bygone era. We took our time to explore the ruins, imagining the bustling, gritty life that once filled this remote outpost, and the near annihilation of whales that took place here. The excellent museum offered a deeper glimpse into the whaling history, the island's ecology, and the extraordinary exploits of Shackleton. A visit to the gift shop and post office gave us a chance to buy some souvenirs and send postcards from this far-flung corner of the world. Some of us mailed a postcard to ourselves just for fun, to see which arrived home first. The race was on!



With the rain easing off, we took a short walk around the bay to the whalers' cemetery, the windswept final resting place of the great man himself, Sir Ernest Shackleton. Our superb historian, Tennessee, gave a heartfelt tribute, recounting Shackleton's legendary leadership and endurance. We raised a toast to "The Boss," reflecting on the spirit of adventure that had brought us all to this remarkable place. Young fur seals dotted the

landscape, their playful antics providing endless entertainment, while a few elephant seals lounged here and there. Keen birders in the group were thrilled to spot some of the endemic South Georgia pintails, a reminder of South Georgia's uniquely rich avian diversity.



By midday, we were all back onboard, where a warm lunch awaited us. The anchor was heaved up and *Ortelius* headed off around the coast to St. Andrew's Bay. At 14:00, Sara gave a briefing on the next day's activities. Then shortly after 15:00 we arrived at St. Andrew's Bay, home to the largest King penguin colony on South Georgia, and one of the largest colonies in the world. The expedition team scouted the area, and we soon got the call to make our way to the gangway to take the Zodiacs ashore for a spectacular afternoon and evening.

Stepping onto the black-sand beach, we were greeted by thousands of King penguins, Fur seals, and a small number of elephant seals. And then, the magic happened. The clouds parted, out came the sun, and with clear blue skies overhead, St. Andrew's Bay was bathed in glorious



sunshine. We set off on a hike towards the main colony, which involved an exciting river crossing where the dive team was on hand in their drysuits to provide a strong arm and solid support in the fast-flowing current. Winding through a glacial moraine, we finally arrived at a viewpoint offering breathtaking panoramic views of the vast penguin colony. With a backdrop of ice-capped mountains and blue skies, it really was a sight to behold. The cacophony of calling penguins created an unforgettable atmosphere. We stood mesmerised.



It was hard to leave, but returning to the landing site, there was the promise of a Zodiac cruise along the shoreline to view the colony from the sea. There was an almost unbroken mass of King penguins running the entire length of the beach. We had landed at the most sheltered spot near the north end of the beach. As we progressed south the swell and waves got bigger, and we saw many King penguins and young Fur seals frolicking in the surf. Back on *Ortelius* dinner was being prepared, and there was just enough time for a quick change before heading off to the dining room. Meanwhile, Captain Remmert got *Ortelius* underway, bound for an overnight anchorage off Gold Harbour a short distance away.

Day 7 – Monday 17 February. Gold Harbour & At Sea.

08:00 GPS Position: 54°37.4' S / 035°56.2' W

Wind: E force 2 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Light overcast • Air temperature: +3.3°C

Our overnight stay off Gold Harbour offered a serene and awe-inspiring start to the day. As the first light broke over South Georgia, the weather was remarkably calm, clear, and dry. From the ship, the rhythmic calls of King penguins carried across the water, a gentle yet evocative soundscape that hinted at the extraordinary wildlife encounters awaiting us ashore. The scenery was nothing short of spectacular. With a backdrop of jagged lofty peaks and the hanging Bertrab Glacier, Gold Harbour presented an image of wilderness perfection. The contrast of ice, rugged mountain slopes and verdant coastal grasses was almost surreal in its beauty.



During breakfast, the expedition team landed to assess conditions. Then the remaining Zodiacs were lowered, and we made our way to the beach for a morning ashore. The landing itself was magical - a threshold into a world teeming with life. The beach was alive with activity:

many thousands of King penguins stood around in clusters, while others engaged in courtship rituals or tended to their chicks. Fur seals lounged everywhere, and a small number of Elephant



seals slumbered here and there, adding to the vibrant pulse of this extraordinary place.

Walking among the wildlife was a humbling and immersive experience. The sounds, sights, and even the distinctive, earthy scent of the penguin colony made for a sensory-rich encounter that left an indelible impression. For many of the guides, Gold Harbour is a favourite landing site, and it was easy to understand why. The combination of close wildlife interactions and the stunning natural surroundings made this visit feel particularly special. At the far end of the trail marked out by the guides, we entered a dense belt of native Tussac Grass which at times was



taller than us. A short clamber through it brought us to an elevated spot on the edge of the vast congregation of penguins, from where we had an incredible view over the colony. It was a fantastic perspective! Up close and personal yet concealed and non-intrusive.



The divers headed for the north end of Gold Harbour, to a rocky promontory called Gold Head. The exposed nature of the site meant that quite some surge was present, and the visibility was typically poor. So much so that some divers found it difficult to keep sight of each other. That said, it was a privilege to dive in this remote and extraordinary site.

By noon, we reluctantly returned to the ship, taking one last look at the unforgettable landscape before setting sail for the South Sandwich Islands. As South

Georgia receded into the distance, the mood onboard was reflective yet exhilarated, with everyone savouring the memories of a remarkable few days on the most magical island on the planet. Quickly, the weather changed, and the Southern Ocean was up to its usual tricks again. *Ortelius* merrily rolled along at full speed, bound for new horizons.

The afternoon was spent at sea, with the gentle motion of the ship providing a welcome opportunity to relax and recharge. At 16:15, a lecture by Chris offered an engaging perspective on the efforts to make these remote islands predator-free, highlighting the importance of conservation projects and the remarkable results achieved by biosecurity initiatives around the World.

Later, the daily briefing and recap in the bar included a celebratory champagne toast to mark our 100% success in the South Georgia Biosecurity inspection –



a result that highlighted the collective care and commitment of everyone onboard *Ortelius*. Dinner felt like a continuation of the celebration, with lively conversation and shared excitement, mostly about King penguins! As the ship forged southeastwards through the South Georgia Marine Protected Area, our thoughts and focus turned towards what lay ahead – the remotest island chain in the World. A land where fire and ice are in constant conflict, and few people dare to venture – The South Sandwich Islands.



Day 8 – Tuesday 18 February. At Sea & Zavodovski Island

08:00 GPS Position: 55°43.4' S / 030°05.2' W

Wind: SW force 5 • Sea: Moderate • Weather: Cloudy • Air temperature: +0.7°C

Despite the overnight motion, the morning dawned bright with blue skies overhead. The wind had dropped considerably, but a large swell kept *Ortelius* rolling. Outside, a light dusting of snow covered the decks, and there were icebergs all around us. The morning at sea brought us two more lectures. At 9:15, Gary gave a talk on Whale Identification, providing an insight into the subtle differences in fluke patterns and blow shapes that help distinguish the various species. Later, at 11:30, Allan introduced us to the South Sandwich Islands, the remote chain of volcanic islands rarely visited by people, that we were rapidly closing in on.



After lunch, some of us took the chance to relax, while others gravitated to the bridge to watch for the first sign of Zavodovski Island. We didn't have to wait long. At around 13:15 it was announced that Zavodovski was visible at 25 nautical miles away. As we drew closer to the island, it clouded over, and snow showers drifted by. Cape petrels flew around the ship, and whales were spotted quite frequently, as if to welcome us.

Zavodovski Island, the northernmost of the South Sandwich chain, is a place that seems almost otherworldly. Named after Ivan Zavodovski, the Russian naval officer who first saw it in 1819, the island is dominated by Mount Curry (more often referred to as Mount Asphyxia), an active stratovolcano. The island is also home to the largest penguin colony on the planet, with around 1.3 million breeding pairs of predominantly Chinstrap penguins.

As we approached, all of us hoped for a clear view of the smoking summit. Snow squalls drifted by, obscuring the entire island from view for a while, and then Zavodovski would reveal itself once again. Even from a distance, the volcanic nature of the island was evident, with steep, ash-covered slopes rising sharply from the sea. The huge crater on the west side of the island was an incredible sight, with massive clouds of steam venting from it.



Captain Remmert took *Ortelius* around the north side of the island in search of shelter from the strong winds. We sailed under a huge plume of steam being blown downwind, and those outside caught the strong scent of "Eau de Zavodovski" – a mixture of sulfur from the volcano and ammonia from penguin guano. We passed aptly named features such as Reek Point, Asphyxia Plain, Pungent Point, Noxious Bluff and Stench Point.



Sailing down the east side of the island, we could see penguins everywhere! By far the highest concentration was along a stretch of coast to the northeast of Fume Point, at the south end of the island. The waters around Zavodovski teemed with penguins. It was obvious to all that it was far too rough for any kind of Zodiac operation, so Captain

Remmert pointed *Ortelius* to the south and we continued on our way. Some of us stayed out on deck and watched the island fade in our wake. It felt like we were at the edge of the world - a place of raw, untamed beauty, where the forces of fire and ice meet in a timeless dance.

An hour after leaving Zavodovski, the next island in the chain came into view – Visokoi. Meaning ‘high’ in Russian, it was also discovered by Admiral Bellingshausen’s expedition in 1819. The highest point is Mount Hodson at 1,005 m (3,297 ft). Although the top of the island was shrouded in a cloud, sitting like a woolly hat on a head, we had great views of the lower part of the island as we sailed along the west side. Briefing, recap and dinner followed. Candlemas and Vindication islands were up ahead, but alas, they were engulfed in darkness by the time we passed them during dinner.

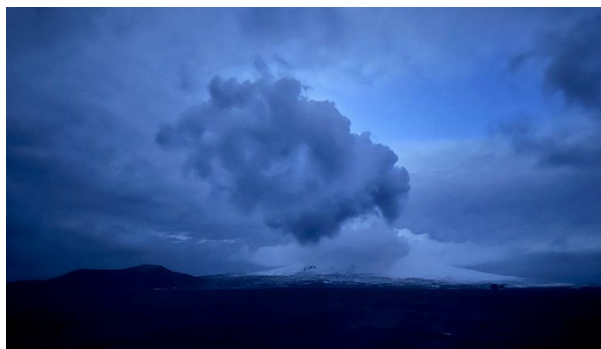


Day 9 – Wednesday 19 February. Saunders & Thule islands.

08:00 GPS Position: 58°19.4' S / 026°31.8' W

Wind: SW force 8 • Sea: Moderate • Weather: Cloudy • Air temperature: +0.2°C

The day started very early for many of us with a first light viewing of Saunders Island. This involved waking up at around 04:00 for the 04:38 sunrise. What we hoped to see was a nice glow above the Mount Michael volcano caused by the lava lake within that was only discovered in 2022. Alas, dense, low cloud denied us the glow, but we did see an enormous plume coming



out over the sea. The above photo on the left was taken at 03:50 local time. Captain Remmert steered *Ortelius* into Cordelia Bay for a closer look at the shore, where penguins could be seen at the opening to a canyon that leads into Ashen Hills. It was windy, very cold, and yet many guests ventured to the outer decks for a view of the island. By 05:30 we were back on course and heading south for the next island. Many of us returned to our bunks for a little more sleep.

Sara's wake-up call at 07:45 informed us that Montagu Island was now visible ahead of the ship. This is the largest of the South Sandwich Islands, and Mount Belinda is also the highest point in the chain at 1,372 m (4,501 ft). There was no sign of Belinda as a veil of low cloud covered the upper part of the island. This was typical of these islands. But there was still a good view of the rugged and uninviting coastline, with some impressive icebergs offshore.

Assistant Expedition Leader Chloé delivered the first lecture of the day with a passionate and enthusiastic presentation entitled ‘Drifting life Part 1 - Floating Forests: Phytoplankton's Vital Role in the Southern Ocean’. It was clear that this was Chloé’s favourite subject. Later in the morning Sara was scheduled to give a lecture on Seals, but Bristol Island was in sight and the weather was nice and clear, so she postponed her talk.

We gathered on the Bridge and outer decks to enjoy the dramatic scene. Three enormous



rocks called Grindle, Wilson and Freezland stood in a line off the western corner of Bristol Island. Many dramatic icebergs were grounded in the shallow waters around the rocks. Freezland Rock was particularly impressive at 305 m (1,000 ft) high and is historically important for being the first part of the South Sandwich Islands to be seen by human eyes. It's named after Samuel Freezland, a

crew member on *HMS Resolution* with Captain Cook who first spotted it in 1775. This was a spectacular scene of dramatic, raw, unspoiled beauty.

Lunch followed, and by mid-afternoon *Ortelius* reached Douglas Strait, the sunken caldera between Thule and Cook Islands. Here, Captain Remmert maneuvered us into the relative shelter of Thule Island's lee, where the sea was calmer, and conditions were good enough for an excursion. The Zodiacs were prepared, and the expedition team took to the water. Bundled up against the cold, we descended the gangway where there was quite a bit of swell. But with help from the deck crew, we were soon on our way.



The shoreline teemed with life. Chinstrap penguins dominated the rocky beaches, their raucous calls filling the crisp air. Interspersed among them were groups of Antarctic Fur seals, their sleek forms slipping in and out of the surf. We spotted a small number of Gentoo penguins



and even a few massive Southern Elephant seals. A highlight was a single Weddell seal, found resting serenely on the beach among the mass of Chinstrap penguins and Fur seals. As we cruised along the base of towering cliffs, the volcanic geology was nothing short of spectacular. Sheer walls of basalt and tuff, streaked with mineral deposits, told the story of the region's fiery origins. On Hewison Point, the ruins of an old Argentine station stood

as a stark relic of geopolitical tensions. Built without permission from Britain, and in breach of international law, it opened in 1977 and was occupied continuously for over 5 years. It was destroyed by British Forces, as a sort of "mopping up" operation after the 1982 Falklands War.

The divers headed for the dramatic cliffs closest to the ship, between Beach Point and Hewison Point. The cliffs continued underwater giving the divers an exciting wall dive with variable visibility up to 8 or 10 metres. They found several species of fish, lots of limpets and

ctenophores (comb jellies). The water temperature was very cold at around freezing point. All the divers were very happy to dive in such a remote place, and thoroughly enjoyed the dive.

By the end of the Zodiac cruise, the cold was beginning to find its way through even the thickest layers of outdoor gear. Reluctantly, we returned to the warmth of *Ortelius*, where a hot shower and hot drinks awaited. The vessel departed Douglas Strait and headed south for the Antarctic continent. Passing Twitcher Rock, we were treated to one final spectacle: a beautiful iceberg with mesmerizing wavy blue stripes, likely formed by compressed ancient ice and the process of meltwater refreezing. It was a fitting end to an unforgettable day in one of the most remote, extreme and stunning places on Earth.



Our time in the South Sandwich Islands was brief, but we achieved so much, and it's worth reflecting on a couple of things. Firstly, we saw and sailed by 8 of the 11 islands in the chain. That in itself is quite a remarkable achievement given the short time we were there, and also considering that this region is notorious for bad weather and poor visibility. Secondly,

it is quite likely that the Zodiac cruise we did was a 'first' along that stretch of coastline, and that the divers were the first ever to explore such a remote dive site. Congratulations everyone!

Day 10 – Thursday 20 February. At sea, Southbound for Antarctica.

08:00 GPS Position: 61°55.8' S / 024°04.1' W

Wind: NE force 3 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Partly cloudy • Air temperature: -1.4°C

Ortelius pressed on towards the Antarctic continent. During breakfast we crossed the 62nd degree of latitude, a silent yet exciting milestone. The sea was remarkably calm, with slight swells that gently rocked the ship as we made full speed southwards. The clear skies and good weather seemed to welcome our steady progress towards the great white south.



The day's activities began with a mandatory helicopter safety briefing in the bar, delivered by our intrepid leader, Sara. This came in two parts, beginning with the DAP Helicopters safety video. Sara followed that up with information that was specific to helicopter operations onboard *Ortelius*. The briefing ensured that we understood the procedures for a safe and enjoyable flying experience in Antarctica. We also met Helicopter Landing Officer Sander Witsenburg.

Shortly afterwards, Matilda delivered her enlightening lecture, "Introduction to Ice." Her passion for glaciology shone through as she explained the different types of sea ice and icebergs that we would encounter, as well as the crucial role ice plays in the global climate system. It was an informative talk that deepened our appreciation for the stark beauty of the Antarctic.

Following another delicious buffet lunch, the afternoon unfolded with a series of interactive workshops. On the bridge, Tennessee continued with his sextant and navigation workshops, offering a fascinating glimpse into the age-old art of celestial navigation. Guests had the opportunity to handle the sextant, learning how sailors once charted their courses long before the advent of GPS technology. Simultaneously, Chloé and Clara led a plankton workshop in the bar, showcasing the microscopic wonders of the Southern Ocean. Participants peered through microscopes at the delicate, alien-like forms of phytoplankton, gaining insight into the foundation of the Antarctic food web.



After the workshops, everyone enjoyed a quiet afternoon. The weather was incredibly good. Guests relaxed or hung out on the Bridge watching for wildlife, while the expedition team prepared equipment for the highly anticipated helicopter landings. The staff also underwent their own helicopter training, ensuring a seamless and safe experience for all. Later in the



afternoon, Tennessee returned with the second part of his lecture series "Pray for Shackleton." This explained the early years of Shackleton's life, and his introduction to exploration through the British Antarctic Expedition under Robert Scott on *Discovery* in 1901-04. Tennessee's gripping narrative left us all with a deeper respect for the legendary explorer and the men around him who braved the inhospitable Antarctic wilderness.

After dinner, we all gathered in the bar to enjoy some popcorn and watch the National Geographic documentary "Lake of Fire," about a 2022 expedition to Mount Michael on Saunders Island in search of a lava lake. This was the team's second attempt, after horrendous weather thwarted them in 2020. Happily, this time they made the first-ever ascent of the 843 metre (2,766 ft) volcano and confirmed the presence of a lava lake, which is only the eighth known to exist in the World. Mount Erebus in the Ross Sea also has a lava lake.

Day 11 – Friday 21 February. At sea, Southbound for Antarctica.

08:00 GPS Position: 65°53.3' S / 018°27.9' W

Wind: S force 5 • Sea: Choppy • Weather: Partly cloudy • Air temperature: -0.9°C

Another day at sea, and the journey south towards Antarctica continued in earnest. After a good breakfast, we gathered in the bar for a lecture by Mountain Guide Phil, who recounted a “safe return doubtful” kind of journey he made by snowmobile along the Antarctic Peninsula during the summer of 1988-89 when he was working with the British Antarctic Survey. Using his own high-quality photos, Phil brought the icy landscapes to life, and shared tales of isolation, scientific discovery, and the sheer magnitude of the Antarctic wilderness.



With guests divided into two groups, Tennessee conducted a meridian reading to determine our latitude, in a bid to predict when we would cross the Antarctic Circle. There was obvious excitement as we prepared to celebrate this fantastic milestone, acknowledging the rarity and privilege of venturing so far south. Throughout the remainder of the morning Tennessee did occasional updates over the PA system, counting us down to our crossing of the ‘Circle’.

The remainder of the morning was spent getting familiar with the helicopter procedures. This dry run was what might otherwise be called “a full-dress rehearsal”. Firstly, we had to wear and carry everything that we would when the time came to do it for real. We learned where we had to go for the check-in (the Bar) and what preparations were required before flying. This included de-activating the automatic inflation devices on our life jackets. Lastly, we were issued with ear defenders and then guided out to the





helideck by Expedition Staff. For the first time we had the chance to get in the helicopters. There's not much space, but it was great fun, and the engineers were happy to oblige with taking photos. Firstly, we tried 'Quebec' the 4-seater helicopter sitting on the helideck, then we went inside the hangar to try 'Sierra' - one of the 5-seater helicopters. With the dry run completed, we all felt better prepared for the real thing when the time came.

Just after midday, Tennessee's countdown to the Antarctic Circle gathered pace, and he invited everyone to join him on the bridge for the big moment. With guests gathered around every navigation screen, eyes glued to the changing latitude figures, *Ortelius* edged closer and closer. Then, at 12:13 precisely, the ship's horn was sounded to signal that we had 'crossed the line'. There was a cheer and ripple of applause. The magic latitude was 66° 33' 49.4" South.

Lunch followed, then Chloé and Clara led another plankton workshop, enthralling more guests with a fascinating dive into the microscopic world that thrives beneath the surface of these cold southern waters. As the afternoon progressed, *Ortelius* began to pitch more than she had done so since leaving the South Sandwich Islands. The moderate south wind was generating a very long, lazy swell that we were meeting head-on. All the same, our speed was still good, and outside it remained clear and sunny, if a bit on the cold side! Icebergs dotted the horizon. We could only expect to see more.



At 16:15, Sara gave her lecture about the 'Pinnipeds of the Southern Ocean', showcasing the various species we might encounter and their adaptations to the harsh environment. Her insights into their behaviour, diet, and conservation status painted a rich portrait of these marine mammals, and we all felt more prepared for the sightings that would hopefully come.



The day's events concluded with the daily briefing and recap in the Bar, a chance to ponder what tomorrow might bring as we made our final approach to a stretch of Antarctica's coastline known as Neuschwabenland. Dive Guide Luce introduced her great Trans-Antarctic Expedition Treasure Hunt, which would start tomorrow lunch time and be an ongoing interactive event. After dinner, the evening took on a more light-hearted and charitable air with happy hour in the Bar. An auction was held to raise funds for the South Georgia Heritage Trust, with grand auctioneer Tennessee being the master of ceremonies. A handful of generous guests walked away with some wonderful South Georgia memorabilia, while the remainder simply had a fun and entertaining evening.

Day 12 – Saturday 22 February. Final approach to Neuschwabenland.

08:00 GPS Position: 69°42.6' S / 012°03.0' W

Wind: SE force 3 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: -1.8°C

The day began as it so often does on *Ortelius* – “Good morning, good morning, good morning” - as we steadily closed in on the icebound coast of Neuschwabenland. Conditions were perfect, with very little wind and hardly enough swell to make *Ortelius* move. It was another day at sea, with the morning dedicated to lectures.

First up was Gary, an experienced Antarctic veteran, who shared his story of spending a winter at an Australian Antarctic station. This was all about Gary's personal experience when he worked at Mawson Station in 2008. He talked about the harsh realities of polar isolation - the months of darkness, the howling winds, and the camaraderie with fellow personnel. He spoke about the intricate logistics, from food storage to maintaining vital research equipment in subzero temperatures. Gary painted a vivid picture of life at the edge of the world.

Later in the morning, Tennessee discussed the extraordinary history and geography of Neuschwabenland, a region of Antarctica claimed by Nazi Germany in the late 1930s. Using a superb collection of archive photos, maps and video, he delved into the expedition that first mapped the area, and the persistent myths and conspiracy theories surrounding it. Many of us were astonished to learn about the non-sensical stories that persist to this day regarding secret nazi bases and conflicts with aliens in Neuschwabenland. The lecture sparked lively discussion, proving that Antarctica's past remains as fascinating as its future.

After lunch, we underwent a mandatory Antarctic biosecurity inspection. Every piece of outdoor gear, including backpacks and camera bags, was thoroughly checked for seeds, dirt, and biological contaminants. Even the smallest foreign organism could threaten the pristine Antarctic ecosystem, so the inspection was taken seriously.

By mid-afternoon, excitement ran high as the ship neared the icy coast of Neuschwabenland. We soon encountered the icy cliffs of an enormous tabular iceberg, which is being tracked and has been designated D32. Originating from the Amery Ice Shelf in East Antarctica in October 2022, iceberg D32 has been on a long journey and currently measures 35.25 nautical miles square. Snow showers drifted by, at times almost obscuring the monster iceberg from view, making for dramatic photographs. We turned east and sailed parallel with it, soon crossing longitude 10 degrees west – the western boundary of Neuschwabenland. At last, we had arrived at the scene of one of the least known and mysterious chapters in Antarctic history.



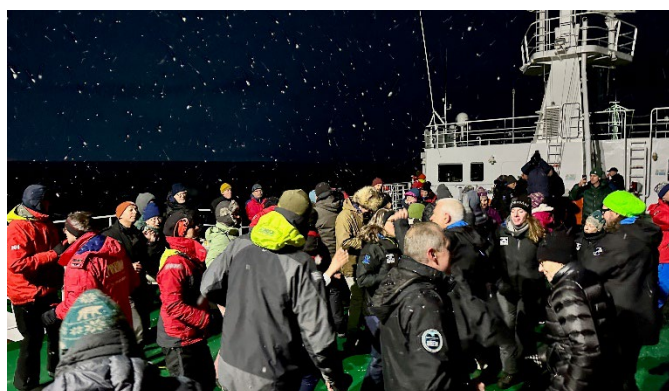
There was great excitement when it was announced that an Emperor penguin was seen swimming near the ship. And a little later, another was spotted standing on an iceberg, completely at ease as we passed close by with the ship. Antarctic petrels circled the ship, along with the occasional pure white Snow Petrel, delighting anyone with an interest in birds.

The first sight of the Antarctic continent emerged as we rounded the end of D32. Neuschwabenland lay before us! The cold, crisp air filled our lungs, as the sheer scale and isolation of Antarctica became truly tangible. As Captain Remmert guided *Ortelius* in closer to



the edge of the Ekström Ice Shelf, we gathered on the bow for a group photo with this colossal wall of ice as the backdrop. This was followed a short time later by hot chocolate and rum served on the bow, where the outside temperature was a bracing minus 8° Celsius.

Neuschwabenland, or New Swabia, was claimed by Nazi Germany in 1939 during the Third Reich's Antarctic expedition. Located within the Norwegian-claimed territory known as Queen Maud Land, it was named after the expedition's ship, *Schwabenland*. Though Germany never established a permanent presence at the time, the claim fuelled conspiracy theories about secret bases. Today, Neumayer III Station located on the Ekström Ice Shelf, a mere 33 nautical miles from where we enjoyed our hot chocolate, is Germany's permanent presence in this historically important region. The station plays a crucial role in Antarctic climate research.



Following the daily briefing and recap, we donned many layers of warm clothing and ventured out on Deck 7 for a BBQ dinner. The temperature was minus 6.5° Celsius! But it didn't matter. Everyone got into the spirit and embraced this unique experience. We were below the Antarctic Circle, close to the edge of a colossal ice shelf, in one of the remotest parts of Antarctica. We ate well and we danced the evening away on deck. Appropriately, flurries of snow added to

the party atmosphere. What a fantastic way to celebrate our arrival to the Antarctic continent.

Day 13 – Sunday 23 February. Exploring Norselbukta.

08:00 GPS Position: 71°27.0' S / 012°42.2' W

Wind: E force 2 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: -4.2°C

The morning dawned bright and clear as *Ortelius* approached the edge of a dense belt of pack ice in an area named Norselbukta, on the coast of Queen Maud Land. The frozen ice shelf cliffs of continental Antarctica were clearly visible a few miles away. There was no wind, making for ideal conditions for helicopter operations. Captain Remmert guided *Ortelius* steadily into the pack ice, her strong hull pushing aside the huge ice floes. The scene was breathtaking! Pristine ice covered with fresh snow stretched endlessly in all directions, interrupted only by the occasional seal and a few inquisitive penguins observing our arrival.



At approximately 07:00, the scout helicopter lifted off, its mission to locate a suitable landing site on the nearby ice shelf. However, despite the clear skies, the lack of contrast made it difficult for the pilots to discern surface details, rendering the ice shelf unsuitable for landing. Adapting to the conditions, they diverted to a large tabular iceberg, a towering, flat-topped mass of ice floating serenely offshore. Upon landing, our experienced mountain guides immediately roped up and set about checking the area for crevasses. Their thorough inspection confirmed that the surface was stable and safe for further activity.

More staff and equipment were flown in, allowing for the rapid establishment of a base camp. This would serve as the focal point for the landing portion of the upcoming activity, a combination of scenic flying and an iceberg landing. The first flight with guests took off at around 08:30, and quickly our engineers got all three helicopters into action. The pilots did a wonderful job, giving us both low level and higher altitude perspectives of the icescape below us. It looked so empty and barren, but there were signs of life. Tracks and trails in the fresh snow told us there was life out there.

The flights provided an unparalleled aerial experience over the frozen wilderness, offering breathtaking views of icebergs and the vast, pristine expanse of sea ice. Each tour included a landing on the iceberg where some of the expedition team greeted us and allowed us to walk within a designated safe perimeter. Experiencing the surreal sensation of standing on a huge

iceberg, along with the isolation, incredible beauty and silence between helicopter landings, was truly unforgettable.



So unique was the experience, that Captain Remmert joined us for a while. Returning to the ship, the flights took an indirect route to give everyone even more of a view of the ice-covered world below. The pilots thrilled us all with their exhilarating flying skills. Some were treated to sights of emperor penguins and seals dotted on the ice below. By 14:15, all helicopter operations had concluded successfully, marking the end of a spectacular first outing in the Weddell Sea.



After lunch we were invited to the Bar for a lecture by Faith, scuba diving legend and owner of Blue Green Expeditions. Her presentation, entitled "What Lies Beneath the Waves in Antarctica," offered a fascinating insight into the hidden marine world beneath the ice. No



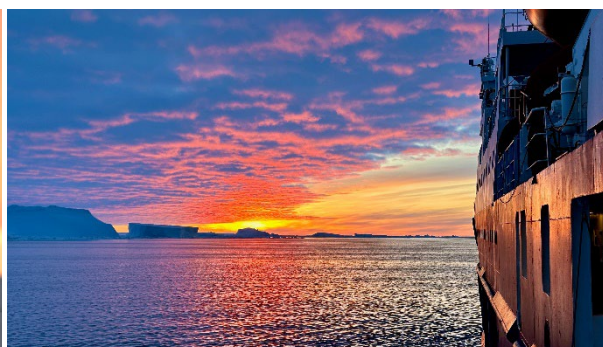
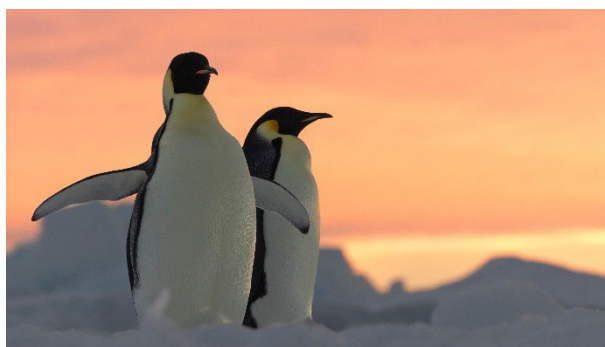
sooner had Faith finished, and Sara announced that the Zodiacs were being prepared for an exploratory Zodiac cruise along the ice edge. The divers also prepared for an expedition dive. We piled on multiple layers of warm clothing and headed for the gangway. Outside we could see that *Ortelius* was close to the towering ice cliff that was the coast of the Antarctic continent.

The Zodiacs headed out in pairs to search for wildlife along the ice edge. Hopes were high because several Emperor and Adelie penguins had been spotted from the ship earlier. Conditions were almost ideal, with hardly any wind. Several small groups of Adelies were found hanging out on ice floes. These little guys are a long way from home, as the nearest known



breeding colony is Thule Island in the South Sandwich Islands. The ice was extremely dynamic, moving quite dramatically in the swell and current. It was fun going into the ice with the Zodiacs, but the drivers had to keep one eye open for a safe route out.

And then we found some Emperors! A few were scattered here and there, but it was a group of six on an ice floe a short distance in from the ice edge that stole the show. They showed no concern whatsoever for the presence of our Zodiacs and went about their business as if we weren't even there. As if that wasn't amazing enough, the sun came out an hour before setting.



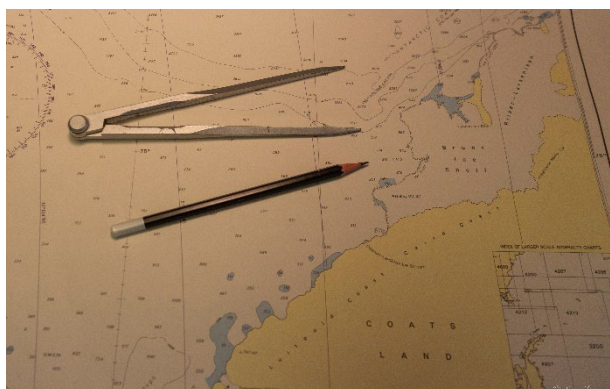
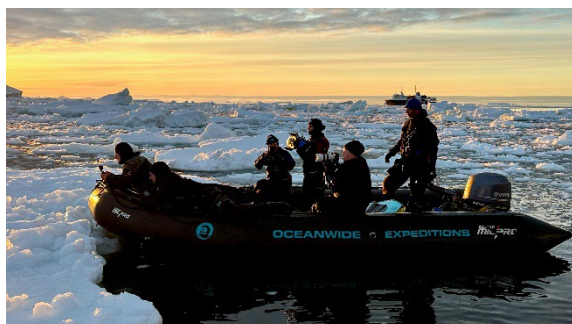
The 'golden hour' light was exquisite! The Emperor penguins looked like they were painted with liquid gold. Some of us couldn't drag ourselves away, and stayed until the sunlight was lost. With numb fingers and flat camera batteries, we reluctantly returned to the ship. What a privilege it was to be out there with those remarkable creatures. And to top it all, we had the most incredible Antarctic sunset. A perfect end to an unforgettable adventure-filled day.

Day 14 – Monday 24 February. Southbound in the Weddell Sea.

08:00 GPS Position: 72°18.9' S / 018°28.0' W

Wind: ENE force 7 • Sea: Moderate • Weather: Heavily overcast • Air temperature: -2.7°C

Today's wake-up call was rather special. The PA system crackled into life and the legendary voice of the one and only Sir David Attenborough echoed around the ship. Where had he been hiding? How come we didn't know he was onboard with us? What was he doing on *Ortelius*? As the announcement progressed, the familiar humour of our very own Tennessee started to show itself, and we all realised that sadly, the great Sir David was not onboard with us. That said, it was a lot of fun and raised many a smile.



Every day in the Weddell Sea is an adventure, and today's weather certainly emphasized that point. We woke up to find the wind gusting at over 50 knots, and a large swell causing *Ortelius* to pitch and roll. With such bad weather, any hope of activities off the ship faded very quickly, and Sara soon announced that we would have a day at sea with a program of lectures and workshops. But there was some good news. *Ortelius* was going with the wind and swells, making excellent speed in the direction we wanted to go..... SOUTH.

The first lecture by Chloe, was a follow-up to her previous talk on marine life. Titled 'Drifting Life Part 2 - Zooplankton Diversity: A Hidden Universe Beneath the Waves', Chloe took the audience deep beneath the surface, describing the vast, often invisible world of zooplankton. Her lecture was a reminder of how much we still don't know about life beneath the waves, a theme that resonated strongly against the dark, churning waters outside the ship's windows.

Matilda followed, shifting the focus from microscopic life to something much larger - glaciers. Her talk explained how glaciers shape the environment and the climate, with particular emphasis on the glaciers of Antarctica. As snow continued to fall softly on the deck, her lecture painted a vivid picture of the ice-covered world around us.



During lunch, *Ortelius* crossed the 73° South parallel. For those keeping an eye on our latitude, this was a very exciting navigational milestone. Unfortunately, Tennessee's sextant workshop had to be cancelled due to the lack of sun. However, two other workshops went ahead.

Chloe and Clara led the plankton workshop, diving deeper into the methods of collecting and studying plankton from the surrounding waters. Meanwhile, Henrik and Peter hosted a diving



workshop, where they discussed the challenges of polar diving. Their expert insight into how divers prepare for such extreme conditions and the equipment used was fascinating. Polar diving is not for everyone, as drysuits present buoyancy challenges that warm water divers are not used to. Oceanwide Expeditions require a high level of experience on their dive trips.

Later in the afternoon, the final lecture of the day was part three of Tennessee's 'Pray for Shackleton' series. Focusing on the 1907-09 Nimrod Expedition, Tennessee shared the extraordinary story of Shackleton's second visit to the Antarctic, detailing the successes and

failures of his “close, but no cigar” attempt at reaching the South Pole. He got to within 97 miles of the Pole with companions Frank Wild, Jameson Adams and Dr. Eric Marshall.

Sara's daily briefing revealed that the unsettled weather was forecasted to continue tomorrow, and we would therefore keep pushing southwards. Of course, if an opportunity to get off the ship presented itself, we would take it. That's what expedition cruising is all about.

Day 15 – Tuesday 25 February. Southbound in the Weddell Sea.

08:00 GPS Position: 75°28.5' S / 028°46.1' W

Wind: E force 9 • Sea: Moderate • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: -4°C

Overnight *Ortelius* continued to make good progress towards the south, crossing the 74th and 75th parallels as we headed deeper into the Weddell Sea. The weather remained quite bad this morning, the wind howling over the deck at 30-40 knots, and the grey sky stretched endlessly above us. But there was some good news, because the wind remained behind us, pushing *Ortelius* steadily along. We looked forward to another day of learning onboard.

The first lecture of the day was from Gary, who delved into the remarkable life history of Emperor penguins. His talk painted a vivid picture of these incredible birds, detailing their grueling breeding cycle, the endurance of the males as they incubate eggs through the polar winter, and the astonishing deep dives they undertake in search of food. We sat spellbound as Gary showed his own brilliant images, and shared firsthand information drawn from his own personal experience gained during field studies at various Emperor penguin colonies.

As the morning progressed, keen observers of our ever-increasing latitude happily noted our crossing of 76° South. Another huge and exciting milestone on this extraordinary voyage. Now we started to dream! Could we possibly make it all the way to 78° and that seemingly unreachable place on the chart - Vahsel Bay? The ice charts suggested we might just do it.



At 11:30 Sara gave a behind-the-scenes look at life aboard *Ortelius*. Her talk pulled back the curtains on the complexities of running an expedition ship in Antarctic waters. From logistical challenges to the teamwork required to keep everything running smoothly, Sara's insights provided a newfound appreciation for the unseen efforts that ensured our journey was safe

and successful. Stories of past voyages, unexpected challenges, and the quirks of life at sea added a touch of humour to her lecture.

After lunch, there was some more hands-on learning. Tennessee did a second part of his sextant and navigational workshop for a group of enthusiastic participants who were keen to expand on what they'd learned in part one. Meanwhile, Chloe and Clara continued their exploration of the world of plankton, offering another immersive session in microscopic observation, with guests peering through lenses at the alien-like forms of tiny marine organisms.

As the afternoon rolled on, another lecture was presented by Allan who took us on a historical journey with his talk on 'Sledge Dogs: Unsung Heroes of Antarctic Exploration'. With gripping stories of exploration and endurance, he recounted the vital role that huskies played in helping us humans unlock the secrets of Antarctica. Thousands of these marvelous creatures were born, lived, explored and died on the frozen continent. The tales of their unwavering determination, of their bonds with the men who depended on them, and of their ultimate sacrifices stirred emotions among us all.

As the ship continued southwards, with a rapidly growing likelihood of reaching the hallowed coastline of Vahsel Bay, it was with a heightened level of anticipation and excitement that we headed off to the daily briefing and recap. With the weather improving all the time, Sara delivered the thrilling news that we hoped to be approaching Vahsel Bay very early in the morning. All being well we would do both helicopter operations and an ice walk.

Then Tennessee shared something very exciting with us. Earlier in the day, which had been largely overcast, he managed to get a brief sun sight with his sextant and successfully calculated our position. There was something vaguely familiar about the longitude and latitude that he scribbled on a piece of paper. After some head-scratching, Tennessee thumbed through his well read and dog-eared copy of Sir Ernest Shackleton's 'South', and made a remarkable, spine-tingling discovery. The sight he had taken was within a few miles of the exact position recorded by Captain Frank Worsley where *Endurance* was finally beset in ice. This incredible revelation raised a collective gasp in the room and stirred a few emotions among Shackleton fans.



Day 16 – Wednesday 26 February. Vahsel Bay.

08:00 GPS Position: 78°03.5' S / 036°03.3' W

Wind: SW force 6 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Partly cloudy • Air temperature: -17.5°C



So far, our journey to Vahsel Bay, the southernmost point in the Weddell Sea, had delivered plenty of excitement. *Ortelius* had boldly progressed southwards at a steady rate, consuming the degrees of latitude one by one. A small crowd gathered on the bridge just before 05:00, eager to witness our crossing of the 78th parallel. It was a hugely exciting moment, as our mighty ship weaved her way through the ice-laden waters. It was bitterly cold outside! Wrapped in

warm layers, we braved the cold to photograph the dramatic scene of ice bathed in soft early morning sunlight.

The thermometer bottomed out at a bone-chilling minus 19.7 degrees Celsius, but the clear skies, golden sunlight and vast icy expanse combined to present a breathtakingly beautiful vista.” The following words from the ‘Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ by English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge and published in 1798 seemed very fitting...

“And then there came both mist and snow, and it grew wondrous cold.
And ice mast high came floating by, as green as emerald.”



Sea smoke drifted over the open water, lending an ethereal quality to the morning. This mesmerising phenomenon occurs just before the sea freezes and is something that only those who live and work at the highest latitudes get to experience. How appropriate it was that the very distinctive opening guitar riffs of ‘Smoke on the Water’ by Deep Purple suddenly filled the bridge. As the song progressed, many of us embraced the music with a few dance moves and joined in the chorus.... “Smoke on the waaater, a fire in the sky”.

Steadily weaving through the ice, *Ortelius* pressed on until just after 08:00 when we came up against the inevitable – a solid barrier of impenetrable multi-year fast ice. We could go no further! Our ship had reached her furthest point south, with the land of the Antarctic continent just a few miles away. On the bridge Captain Remmert was thanked and congratulated in equal measure. With a little forward power, he held the ship bow-in to the fast ice edge, and there she sat for the day. We had arrived at Vahsel Bay! Our position was as follows....

78° 03.5206’ South - 036° 03.5413’ West



Vahsel Bay is approximately 7 miles wide and forms part of the Luitpold Coast. Two glaciers, the Schweitzer and Lerchenfeld, flow into the bay, which was discovered by the German Antarctic Expedition of 1911-12 under Wilhelm Filchner. He named it after Richard Vahsel, Captain of the expedition's ship *Deutschland*.

Expedition Leader Sara had planned helicopter operations, but a mechanical issue with Quebec caused a delay. While the engineers worked hard to repair it, we prepared for a landing on the fast ice. A Zodiac was lowered, which was our shuttle for the very short distance to the edge of the vast, undisturbed ice sheet. As we set foot on this frozen landscape, the feeling of isolation was overwhelming - just miles of pristine white stretching to the horizon. The expedition team had marked a route around a safe area in which we could free roam, enjoy the silence, and photograph *Ortelius* from a unique perspective.

Meanwhile, the helicopter engineers had moved poor Quebec to one side and wheeled Tango out of the hangar for the scout flight. Her blades were quickly fitted, and she was soon in the air, heading towards land in search of a continental landing site. A suitable location was found on the polar plateau, nine nautical miles east of *Ortelius*, with a fantastic overview of Vahsel Bay and the surrounding scenery. More staff and equipment were flown in to establish a base camp, and Sierra was prepared for flight. We would soldier on with two helicopters until our beloved Quebec was back in service. Her pilot Marcelo worked with the engineers.





The flight into the helicopter landing site was indirect and took a very scenic route over towering icebergs, unbroken sea ice and tumbling glaciers. We landed on the polar plateau where we had approximately 40 minutes to walk within a safe zone that had been thoroughly checked for crevasses. It was windy up there, and that generated a dramatic spin-drift effect that made for exciting photographs. The views over Vahsel Bay were nothing short of breathtaking. In one direction, the frozen expanse stretched unbroken over the continent towards the South Pole; in the other, the tiny outline of *Ortelius* rested against the fast ice, a stark reminder of our isolation in this remarkable wilderness.



Back on *Ortelius*, great news! Quebec had been fixed and was departing for a test flight. All was well, and she joined in with the scenic flights and landing operation. While that activity gathered pace, we

continued our exploration of the fast ice around the ship. For those lucky enough to be out on the ice, an unexpected visitor suddenly appeared: a lone Emperor penguin. It approached with cautious curiosity, its regal posture and striking plumage standing out against the ice. It walked around inspecting people and the ship, then continued on its way. The encounter was mesmerizing - a rare and intimate moment in one of the most remote regions on Earth. This was, quite possibly, one of the most southerly penguins in the World.

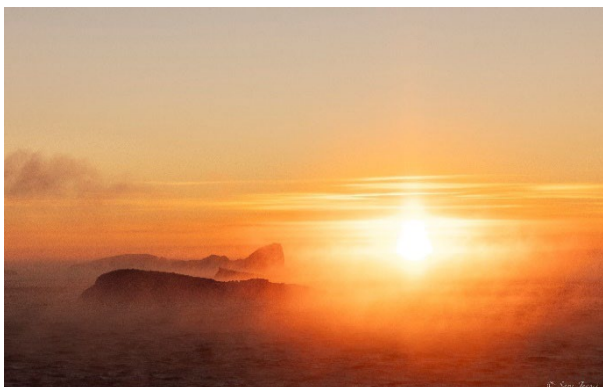
The helicopters completed their operations at around 17:00, marking a unique and successful landing on the Antarctic continent. Shortly after, a team of divers conducted a brief but historic dive just off the sea ice edge. The water was so deep that there was nothing to see, so they conducted a clear water dive. A line with a weight on the end was hung from the Zodiacs to provide a visual depth reference. It was simply a case of going with the flow of the gentle current and enjoying the unique experience. The water temperature was -1.8° Celsius, just point one of a degree away from freezing. This was almost certainly the most southerly dive ever in the Weddell Sea. The search was on to verify the record.





As evening fell, we departed Vahsel Bay. After dinner, our expedition leader Sara delivered a briefing that sparked renewed excitement: we would remain in the deep south for another day, with plans to attempt a visit to Berkner Island, some 160 nautical miles to the west. Tennessee then explained the significance of Berkner Island and what we would attempt to do if we could get there. No passenger ship had ever attempted to visit Berkner Island.

As if the day had not been amazing enough, we were invited out on deck behind the bridge to join the Swiss dive team for a tasty fondue session. Braving the biting cold, the four gallant gentlemen served up two delicious varieties using the very best cheese brought all the way from Switzerland. It wasn't easy, as the gas in the stoves kept freezing, and the canisters had



to be rotated for warm ones. Despite that, their cheese was melted to perfection! This might be the southernmost fondue session ever recorded. Another search to verify the record!

Day 17 – Thursday 27 February. Berkner Island.

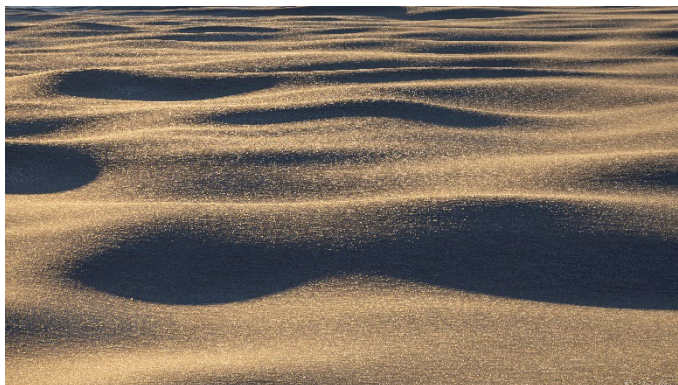
08:00 GPS Position: 77°39.6' S / 046°49.7' W

Wind: SW force 4 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Clear • Air temperature: -9.1°C

We spent the night navigating through challenging waters as we headed west from Vahsel Bay. *Ortelius* encountered strong winds of up to 70 knots roaring off the Filchner Ice Shelf. The sea was rough for a while, and the bridge crew had a challenging task distinguishing ice from white

water. However, by morning, as we arrived off Berkner Island, the weather could not have been more different as blue skies and calm waters prevailed. The scene outside was stunning!

Many of us had been up for hours (some awakened by the motion of the ship) making every moment of our deep Weddell Sea experience count. The very early birds had a wonderful sight at around 4:00 am when *Ortelius* passed through an area of newly formed pancake ice that was beautifully illuminated by the early morning sun. The low overnight temperatures were a sure sign that winter was rapidly approaching! This morning's wake-up call was another Tennessee's masterpiece, with stirring, atmospheric music and a memorable welcome to Berkner Island.



We were the first passenger vessel to reach the icebound coast of this remarkable place. Sitting offshore, it was hard to appreciate that there was in fact an island out there, because it was completely ice-covered. Berkner Island is enormous! It measures 200 miles long by 85 miles wide and has the highest point of 869m (2,851 ft) named Thyssenhöhe. The colossal weight of ice bearing down on the island is so great that a large percentage of the island itself



sits below sea level. Berkner was discovered by an American expedition during the 1957-58 International Geophysical Year season and was named after American physicist Lloyd V. Berkner who served on Admiral Richard Byrd's Expedition in 1928-30. Berkner Island separates the Ronne Ice Shelf to the west from the Filchner Ice Shelf to the east.

Breakfast was accompanied by the sight of a vast, unbroken white landscape that rose steadily into the distance. The plan for the day focused on helicopter operations, but with a menacing

fog bank lurking ominously to the west of us, our schedule was put on hold. The pilots and expedition leader Sara kept a watchful eye on the fog, in a bid to determine if it was moving in our direction. By 10:00, after careful observation, the pilots deemed conditions safe for flying, and the scout helicopter lifted off at 10:30. Everyone on the ship felt great relief.



They flew south-southwest from *Ortelius*, aiming for a set of GPS coordinates in the vast white featureless desert of ice. Approximately 11 nautical miles from the ship they found what they were looking for, a cache of field camp equipment, partly buried under the snow. Marked by neat rows of black flags, the cache belongs to Antarctic Logistics & Expeditions, a company that Tennessee has connections with. In October every year all the equipment is flown down to Gould Bay 10

nautical miles to the north, where a forward field camp is established near the most southerly Emperor penguin colony in the World. It operates for a month or so, then everything is packed up and flown back to the cache site. This is all done with a Basler BT-67 aircraft.

With the discovery of the cache, more expedition staff and equipment were flown in so a base camp could be established. Soon, guests were boarding the helicopters for a thrilling scenic flight over icebergs and along towering ice cliffs before heading inland over the white desert. The flight gave us an incredible view over Gould Bay, and the icebergs looked like frozen sculptures, glistening under the low Antarctic sun.

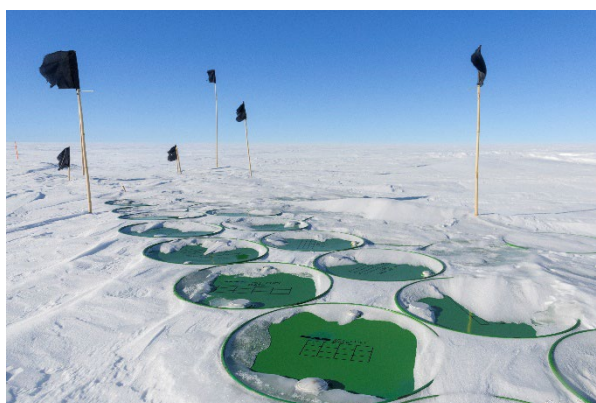


Crossing the featureless landscape, we landed near the cache, where guests were allowed to roam freely within a designated perimeter. After receiving some interesting background information from Tennessee, we took a walk around the site. It was surreal to see man-made objects in such a pristine, remote and hostile location. The tops of row upon row of 40-gallon drums full of aviation fuel were just visible at ground level, and a snowmobile wrapped in a protective cover was buried in the snow. The long row of crates would have contained camp



equipment such as tents, toilets, tables and chairs etc. Undoubtedly the most striking aspect of the site was the eerie solitude and sheer emptiness of the Polar desert. When the helicopters were away, it was utterly silent. Many found it to be quite a humbling experience. Just snow, ice, and the occasional light gust of

wind whispering across the frozen landscape.



As the day wore on, the fog to the west started creeping closer to the ship. The last six flights were in jeopardy, as the pilots expressed concern for people being stranded ashore. Luckily, the fog was not affecting the landing site, as it was only sitting a low level over the sea. *Ortelius* played a crucial role in ensuring that helicopter operations continued, by continuously moving eastward ahead of the encroaching fog. It extended the return flight path for the pilots, but it at least ensured everyone got to fly. There was great all-round relief when the final group left.

It was a race against time because it was obvious that the thick fog would ultimately engulf

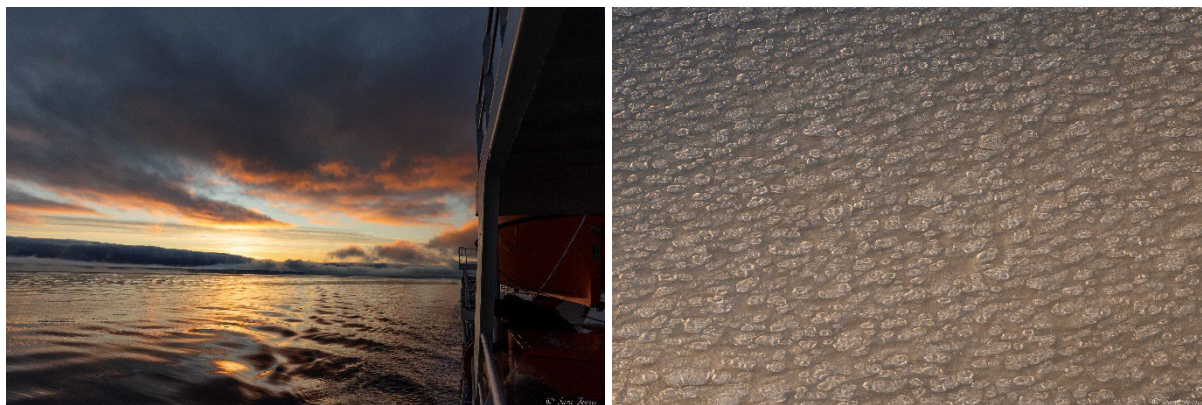


Ortelius. The last helicopter landed safely back on board at 18:50. We were incredibly fortunate to complete the operation, and it is down to the flexibility, experience, and professionalism of Captain Remmert, the pilots and expedition leader Sara that the day went so smoothly.

One man had a particularly big smile on his face – our historian Tennessee Blackmore. Landing at Berkner Island and finding the ALE cache was his number one hope and dream for

this voyage, even though he was aware it was a very, very long shot. From day one, “Berkner or Bust” had been Tennessee’s infectious mantra. Happily, for us all, Berkner it was!!!

With helicopter operations over, the scuba divers and snorkellers prepared to take the plunge. The plan was to explore the frigid waters near Berkner Island, a rare opportunity in this remote corner of the world. However, just as everyone boarded the Zodiacs, the fog caught up with us and engulfed the ship entirely. With visibility reduced to nearly nothing, and the sea rapidly freezing around the ship, the dive was very sensibly called off for safety reasons.



There was a buzz during dinner as impressions of the desolate beauty of Berkner Island were shared. There was also an air of gratitude that the fog, which now completely obscured the outside world, had not brought a halt to the helicopter operations. It had been an extraordinary day - one that epitomised the thrill and challenges of Antarctic exploration. Just after dinner Sara announced that the weather had cleared, and *Ortelius* was passing through a large expanse of beautiful pancake ice. What a perfect end to the day!

Day 18 – Friday 28 February. Northbound in the Weddell Sea.

08:00 GPS Position: 76°44.3' S / 037°22.2' W

Wind: SSW force 3 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Partly cloudy • Air temperature: -6.5°C

Today was a full day at sea, the first of our long northbound journey out of the Weddell Sea. It began with yet more clear signs that winter was taking hold of the region. With the sea quite literally freezing over before our very eyes, we looked out across the ocean mesmerised by



the phenomenon taking place. Our timing had been perfect, and now we needed to head north. Outside it was very quiet in terms of wildlife, as is typical for the deepest part of this vast body of water at this point in the season. But the birds that did put in an occasional appearance were very special – Snow petrel, Antarctic petrel and a lone Emperor penguin seen swimming near the ship. A Minke whale was also spotted in the distance.

After breakfast we had our first lecture of the day, presented by Tennessee, titled "Pray for Shackleton" (Part 4 – The Ross Sea Party). This gripping conclusion to the series delved into the incredible and rarely told story of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition's second ship

Aurora, and the remarkable series of events that unfolded for Shackleton's forgotten Ross Sea heroes. Their mission was to lay critical supply depots across the Ross Ice Shelf to the foot of the Beardmore Glacier — provisions meant for a Trans-Antarctic expedition that would never arrive. But they didn't know that. When the *Aurora* was torn from its moorings by wind and ice, drifting out to sea with nearly all their equipment, the men were left stranded. Undeterred, they salvaged what they could from the three Ross Island huts and pressed on, determined to complete their task despite the overwhelming odds. It is an epic story of immense hardship, survival against all odds, extraordinary resilience and determination in the face of extreme adversity. It is also a tale of tragic loss. We often hear that a picture speaks a thousand words, and this dramatic image of John Lachlan Cope speaks volumes about what the Ross Sea party endured. His filthy, tattered and disheveled appearance is one thing, but it is the so-called "thousand-yard stare" in his eyes that really tells a story. Cope and his surviving comrades went through hell and somehow came out alive.



The second lecture of the day featured Chris, who shared his experiences "Working at New Zealand's Scott Base." Located on Ross Island near Mount Erebus, the base was established in 1957 and supports scientific research on climate, glaciology and ecology. Chris's insights into life at one of Antarctica's most well-equipped research stations gave us a fascinating look into the daily operations, the challenges of working in extreme conditions, and the importance of the research conducted there.

Lunch was followed by an exciting hands-on crevasse rescue workshop with Phil and Clara. This session provided insight into rope techniques, self-rescue, and team-based extraction methods. Critical skills for anyone venturing onto glaciated terrain. The session was a bit of fun, with Phil's British Antarctic Survey field experience at the core. Unfortunately, Tennessee's final navigation workshop was cancelled due to the overcast skies and lack of sun.

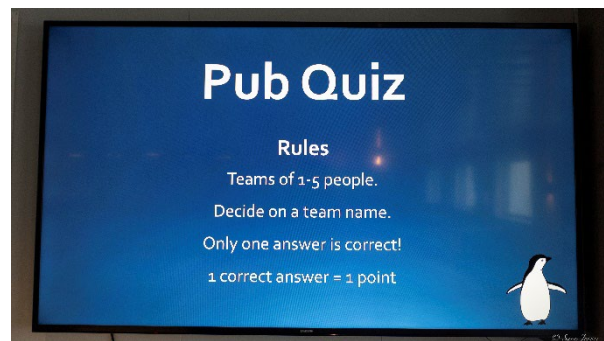


Later in the afternoon, Claudio delivered a very thought-provoking lecture titled "Climate Change: Looking into the Problem through Science." He provided a scientific perspective on this very important global issue, its impact on the polar regions, and the urgent need for action. The discussion raised many interesting questions and sparked conversation among guests.

After dinner, *Ortelius* encountered a light band of ice extending to the horizon. It was necessary to

reduce speed slightly for some hours while we weaved our way through the icy labyrinth. We gathered in the bar for a lively pub-style quiz. With a mix of Antarctic trivia, lecture related questions, and some humorous childhood photos from staff and pilots, the quiz provided a fun and relaxed way to wrap up the day. Laughter and friendly competition filled the room as teams battled for the top spot. The winning team was Quizzzy McQuizface with 40/51.

As the ship continued ever northwards, we retired to the comfort of our cabins reflecting on another memorable day filled with learning, camaraderie, and appreciation for the vast and wild beauty of the Weddell Sea.



Day 19 – Saturday 01 March. Northbound in the Weddell Sea.

08:00 GPS Position: 73°08.2' S / 029°35.1' W

Wind: NW force 6 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Fog • Air temperature: -4°C

The second full day at sea of our northbound journey out of the Weddell Sea began with grey skies and light snow settling on the decks. There still wasn't a huge amount of wildlife around,



although Snow and Antarctic petrels were being seen a bit more regularly. A couple of Minke whales sightings were a very nice addition to the day's wildlife list. *Ortelius* had made good progress overnight, pushing steadily north and west through a vast expanse of ocean with ice scattered all around. Occasionally speed had to be reduced for ice navigation.

At 07:45 the best wake-up call ever rang out around the ship. The wonderful Caroline Hunt delighted us all with her

beautiful voice and a Weddell Sea twist on the classic Good Mornin' from the 1952 film Singin' in the Rain. Not only was it beautifully sung, but it was laced with lots of humour and a wonderful string of references to our voyage. Pure musical genius! Thank you, Caroline.

The first lecture of the day was by Clara, about 'Working at an Argentinian Antarctic Station'. Drawing from firsthand experiences gained over three summer seasons, she painted a vivid picture of life and work at Carlini Base on King George Island in the South Shetlands. Clara also provided a fascinating overview of Argentina's huge Antarctic programme, giving a rundown of all their bases and the work they do. Afterward, another group interested in media and storytelling gathered for a video editing workshop with Claudio. Whether participants were hoping to document their journey through the polar regions or simply learn new skills, Claudio's session covered the essentials of crafting compelling visual narratives.



Before lunch, we attended another thought-provoking lecture, this time by Sara, who discussed 'Marine Threats in the Southern Ocean'. From plastic pollution and overfishing to the impacts of climate change, Sara outlined the major challenges facing this fragile marine ecosystem. Her presentation highlighted not only the scientific research being conducted to monitor these threats but also the steps that can be taken to mitigate human impact. The discussion left us all with a greater appreciation for the delicate balance of life in these waters.



After a hearty lunch, the afternoon brought another interesting crevasse rescue workshop led by Phil and Clara. Even though we were at sea, learning the principles of glacier safety was a fascinating experience. Participants practiced rope techniques, pulley systems, and self-rescue methods - essential skills for anyone venturing onto Antarctica's icy terrain.

Two more groups enjoyed helicopter demonstration workshops with Chief Engineer Mario. These showcased the mechanics and operation of the helicopters we had come to appreciate so much. Watching the aircraft take off and land, especially on the small deck on the ship, was always a great experience. Mario explained the sensitive controls and minute corrections required to control these complicated machines, helping us appreciate even more the skills of those who fly them.



Gary delivered a fascinating lecture on 'Sea Ice: Formation and Navigation'. His talk detailed the different types of sea ice, the challenges of navigating through it, and the crucial role ice plays in the Antarctic ecosystem. For those new to polar travel, understanding sea ice dynamics was essential, especially as our journey continued through these frozen waters. A lucky few who were on the bridge at the right time caught a fleeting view of a beautiful Light-mantled albatross that was well south of the species' usual range.

After dinner, the day transitioned from learning and adventure to relaxation and entertainment. The bar buzzed with energy as the happy hour got underway, offering everyone a chance to unwind and swap stories. Laughter and music filled the bar as crew, guests and staff joined in for a lively evening of karaoke. Whether singing along to classics or simply enjoying the spirited performances, it was the perfect way to cap off a great day at sea.

Day 20 – Sunday 02 March. Across the Weddell Sea.

08:00 GPS Position: 69°42.3' S / 034°52.5' W

Wind: SSW force 7 • Sea: Moderate • Weather: Mist • Air temperature: -12°C

The third day at sea on this leg of the voyage, heading out of the Weddell Sea, began with some gentle motion as *Ortelius* ploughed on through the frigid waters. Outside the wind was a strong 50+ knots hitting us on the port side. The ship was now on a north-westerly heading, taking a more direct course to the top of the Antarctic Peninsula. We were crossing the widest part of the Weddell Sea. The morning air was cool and crisp, making the outside decks very slippery. A layer of snow still coated the ship, and Sara advised extreme caution during her wake-up call. Overnight the ship had made good progress in her new north-westerly direction, encountering little sea-ice in the way. But there were some amazing icebergs out there.

The day's schedule was packed with activities, beginning with a lecture by Matilda on 'Volcanoes in Antarctica.' She gave a fantastic insight into the region's geological activity, explaining how volcanoes such as Mount Erebus and Deception Island play a crucial role in Antarctica's dynamic landscape. This was a superb look into a world where the forces of fire and ice collide, leaving many of us surprised by just how active parts of Antarctica are.



Following Matilda's lecture, many gathered in the bar for another video editing workshop with Claudio. Then Chloe delivered part two of her fascinating lecture series titled 'Drifting Life – The Life and Legacy of Krill; Guardians of Antarctic Biodiversity.' She delved into the vital role that krill play in the Southern Ocean ecosystem, supporting species from whales to seabirds. Chloe touched on the threats posed by climate change and industrial fishing and emphasised the importance of safeguarding the future of this keystone species.

After a hearty lunch, some enjoyed the opportunity to hang out on the bridge, watching Snow petrels circle the ship. Others joined Phil and Clara in the bar for another hands-on session which reinforced the importance of teamwork in high-risk environments. Meanwhile, two more groups took part in helicopter demonstration workshops with Mario, experiencing firsthand the intricacies of airborne operations in Antarctica. Mario explained the challenges of flying in extreme conditions and opened our eyes to crucial safety features on the helicopters such as the emergency inflatable float system.



Doctor Amar led a First Aid workshop, discussing essential skills required for handling medical emergencies in remote locations. From frostbite treatment to CPR and trauma care, Amar gave a calm and reassuring overview of medical procedures on *Ortelius*. We were all grateful to get a refresher on some basic First Aid skills that may be called upon in everyday life.



Later in the afternoon, Allan presented a lecture titled 'An Early Season Icebreaker Voyage to the Weddell Sea.' He recounted a voyage he made in 2004 on the Russian icebreaker *Kapitan Khlebnikov*, which at the time was the most powerful conventional icebreaker in the World with 25,000 horsepower. It was a voyage with leading ornithological experts that facilitated visits to five Emperor

penguin colonies. Visits were also made to Germany's Neumayer II station, and Britain's Halley V station, both of which have long since been replaced by new stations.

As the day drew to a close, everyone gathered for the evening briefing and recap. Finally, we enjoyed another sumptuous dinner prepared by Head Chef Heinz and his team, while reflecting on another day at sea, filled with knowledge, adventure, ice and the return of some seabirds.

Day 21 – Monday 03 March. Across the Weddell Sea.

08:00 GPS Position: 66°46.1' S / 043°18.6' W

Wind: SW force 7 • Sea: Choppy • Weather: Clear sky • Air temperature: -5.6°C

The fourth sea day, as we made our way northwest across the Weddell Sea, greeted us with sunshine and choppy seas - a stark contrast to the previous few days. It was very refreshing to wake up to clear skies, though the waves and movement of the ship kept everyone on their toes. The outside decks were still very slippery, and Sara once again advised everyone to be extremely cautious. Another full programme of activities held the promise of a day with lots of learning and hands-on experiences. Off we went to breakfast full of anticipation for the day.

The morning kicked off with Clara's presentation on 'Mate: An Argentinian Passion.' She delved into the cultural significance of mate in Argentina, sharing its history, ritual, and the sense of community it fosters among those who drink it. It was a warm and engaging talk, setting the tone for the rest of the day. As soon as Clara finished, Gary announced that we had re-crossed 66°33'49.4" South and were once again north of the Antarctic Circle. Then, there was another very popular video editing workshop with Claudio.



Outside it was a glorious day, as *Ortelius* romped on towards the Antarctic Peninsula. We all welcomed the warmth of the sun on our faces, and enjoyed the superb visibility stretching as far as the eye could see. Snow and Antarctic petrels circled the ship, for the most part being the only birds to accompany us at this stage of the voyage. Just before 11:00, Tennessee announced that we were at our closest point to where Shackleton's famous ship *Endurance* lies on the bottom of the Weddell Sea. She was 230 nautical miles off our port side. A long way off, yes, but really no distance at all in the vastness of the Weddell Sea.

Later in the morning, Jens gave a lecture titled 'A Race to the South Pole.' His analysis of the parallel journeys of Amundsen and Scott was very interesting. It is a gripping story of courage, endurance, drama and tragedy, highlighting the harsh realities of exploration in the Heroic Age.



Lunch provided a break in the superb programme of lectures and workshops laid on by the hard-working expedition team, and then the activities continued. Next up was another crevasse rescue workshop led by Phil and Clara who explained how to respond to a crevasse fall, demonstrating essential techniques for self-rescue and the teamwork required in emergency situations. Meanwhile, two more groups took part in the helicopter demonstration workshop with Mario. Among other things, we learned about the practical aspects of helicopter operations in Antarctica, with Mario's knowledge making the session both informative and entertaining.

Later, there was another first aid workshop with Dr. Amar, who shared essential medical techniques for surviving in an extremely cold environment. His insights into trauma care, hypothermia, and frostbite were especially interesting, given our own recent experiences in very low minus temperatures at Vahsel Bay and Berkner Island. Again, the refresher on basic first aid was very much appreciated.

In the late afternoon the Bar became a venue for Chris, who screened some short videos he had made while working in Antarctica at Scott Base. These films gave a unique perspective on life in the field and the challenges of working in such a remote and harsh environment. After Sara's briefing, we settled in for a relaxing dinner followed by the movie 'Happy Feet' in the bar, complete with popcorn. The movie was introduced by Gary, who was a natural history advisor on the project. It was a great way to unwind after a full and busy day at sea.

Day 22 – Tuesday 04 March. The north-western Weddell Sea pack-ice.

08:00 GPS Position: 63°44.9' S / 049°47.4' W

Wind: E force 6 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Clear sky • Air temperature: -1.4°C

Approaching the Antarctic Peninsula from the Weddell Sea is an awe-inspiring experience, with a vast ocean of ice that must be overcome and navigated through. Some of us woke up very early to the sound of ice scraping along the hull, and the occasional bump that shook *Ortelius* as her strong hull connected with an icefloe. Navigating these waters is not for the faint of heart! Happily, for us, we had the right ship and the right Captain for the job. This morning *Ortelius* was deep in "the pack"! Sara woke us up early to announce some great wildlife sightings from the bridge – Emperor penguins, Leopard seals and Minke whales.

It was a beautiful day outside, and it was obvious that our programme of lectures and workshops would be put on hold. While we were enjoying breakfast, the deck crew was busy preparing all the Zodiacs and the expedition team was being briefed by Sara. The plan.... a morning of Zodiac exploration in the pack ice, with an ice floe landing for a unique Shackleton style experience and leg stretch.



Henrik called the divers to a meeting, and they all prepared for action. Sara made an announcement outlining the plan for the morning, and we excitedly donned multiple layers of warm clothing before heading for the gangway with cameras ready for action.

We set off in the Zodiacs, weaving through open leads of water between icefloes. The perspective down at sea level was one of solid ice as far as the eye could see. The Zodiac drivers made good use of any open channels, but the ice was very dynamic, and conditions were constantly changing. Now and then the drivers had to use a lot of power to push the



sturdy inflatables through the frozen labyrinth. It was crucial for the drivers to keep one eye open for an exit, because the danger of getting trapped was very real. It was an exciting experience to be out among the ice in small boats, and we all marvelled at the sturdiness, maneuverability and power of our trusty Zodiacs. Not to mention the skill of the drivers!

Scattered around the ice were lots of Emperor penguins, some stood alone like sentinels, and others in small groups. Their regal presence was impossible to ignore. It seemed at times that they were just as interested in us as we were in them. A case of 'who's watching who'? They looked magnificent in their brand-new plumage having recently completed their annual moult. They were also nice and fat, some more so than others! This is important,





because their breeding season is just around the corner. They posed beautifully for us in the sunshine, allowing us to get fantastic photos from the safety and comfort of the Zodiacs. Occasionally they would gather in larger groups, making for spectacular photos. Beautiful Snow petrels were abundant and flew close to us time and time again, but sadly for them, they didn't get much attention with the Emperors around.



As the morning wore on, some clouds drifted in and obscured the sun from time to time. It became cooler, so to warm up we made our way to a large ice floe, where Chris, Phil and Tennessee were waiting. We landed and gathered to hear Tennessee talk about the harrowing tale of Shackleton and his men who relied on a similar floe to carry them north and out of the Weddell Sea. At one point three Zodiacs were hauled up on our icefloe, a poignant reminder



of Shackleton's three sturdy lifeboats that saved their lives. A few curious Emperor penguins sprung out of the water and waddled up to us, their curious eyes fixed on the strange visitors.

Back in the Zodiacs, we pushed deeper into the ice and encountered a group of moulting Adelle penguins, their shaggy plumage adding an extra air of comedy to their already naturally humorous character. While moulting they aren't

waterproof, so the icefloe on which we found them would be their home for about three weeks until their new feathers allow them to return to the water in search of much-needed food.

The Adelies showed great curiosity, walking to the edge of their frozen raft to gain a better view of us. Their half-moulted state made them even more endearing. A few solitary crabeater seals were seen sleeping on icefloes, their sleek bodies glistening in the sun. Occasionally one reared its head to look at us, but largely they were completely indifferent to our presence.



What an incredible morning! Many of us returned to the ship speechless, and some felt quite emotional after the extraordinary encounters with the Emperors. The ice had closed in tight around *Ortelius*, and recovering the last few Zodiacs on board was a bit of a challenge. The buzz in the dining room during lunch was at fever pitch, as everyone shared stories of their

Zodiac adventure in the ice. Soon after lunch, the PA system crackled into life with great news from Sara. Captain Remmert had found us a nice patch of open water where there seemed to be lots of Emperor penguin activity, so we would go out for another Zodiac cruise, which would again have the option for an icefloe landing. A cheer went up!



Anyone who thought it would just be a repeat of the morning outing was greatly mistaken. Firstly, the ice was heavier making the Zodiac navigation even more exciting. But the Emperor penguins quite seriously stole the show, even more so than in the morning. That's because they were greater in number, they were very active in the water, much larger groups were found gathered on ice floes, and it seemed that they were putting on a show just for us. It was the most extraordinary encounter!



We forced ourselves away from the penguins for a while, to take a walk around an ice floe. Again, a few Emperors were there, watching us watching them!

How wonderful to be in their world, with them showing an interest in us on their terms. A few really enjoyed posing for pictures with our Antarctica flag.

Heading back towards the ship, we marvelled at the durability of the Zodiacs as we pushed and bullied our way between the floes and through newly formed ice. We returned to an ice floe where a large group of Emperors delighted everyone. They were very active, in and out of the water, swimming around and under Zodiacs, calling to each other, generally putting on an amazing show. Many underwater videos were shot of the penguins swimming around us. Some of us were cold and needed to return to the ship. Others chose to stay out a bit longer, soaking up every second of this remarkable experience. It was like a grand finale to a wonderful show that left many of us without words, and some moved to tears.





The divers went out twice today and had an incredible time on both occasions. The Emperor penguins put on a fantastic underwater show for them, which was far beyond their wildest expectations. In fact, many divers opted to snorkel which gave the best perspective. The water level view was excellent for swimming penguins as well as those that were out on ice. The water temperature was -1.8° Celsius, which was again close to freezing. Some were in the frigid water for a very long time, unable to drag themselves away from the action. The visibility was incredible, with divers finding it difficult to judge depth when penguins swam way below them. It was 20 metres, at least. Those that did dive didn't go that deep and enjoyed the experience of diving around the side of a multi-year icefloe, with Emperor penguins on it.



The day was rounded off with another BBQ up on deck 7. The atmosphere for this one was a bit more special with us surrounded by pack ice. It was overcast and cold, but spirits were high and there was a real party atmosphere. Quickly after eating, the deck was cleared of tables and benches, and the dancing began. It was a fantastic way to celebrate the end of another exciting day in the wonderful Weddell Sea!

Day 23 – Wednesday 05 March. Iceberg A76C and the pack ice.

08:00 GPS Position: 63°07.3' S / 051°56.4' W

Wind: SE force 2 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: -1.7°C

The day began in quite spectacular fashion, as Sara's wake-up call announced that we had reached the colossal iceberg named A76C. A towering wall of ice stretched into the far distance, eventually disappearing in the gloom. Sadly, it was overcast and quite dull with a low cloud base, which was not good for our plans to try and land on the iceberg. The conditions resulted in a quick decision by our helicopter pilots - there would be no flying unless the weather improved. The situation would be reviewed later in the morning. We cruised along A76C, spotting seals lounging on ice floes, Humpback whales and lots of Snow petrels.



A76C is a breakaway piece of iceberg A76, which was once the largest iceberg in the World. A76 calved from the Ronne Ice Shelf to the west of Berkner Island in May 2021, measuring a colossal 4,320 square km. Around 148 days after calving, it split into three pieces, designated A76A, A76B and A76C in size order. A76C is approximately 16×7 nautical miles and appears to be currently grounded alongside the smaller (but still huge) iceberg A80A which came off the Larsen-D Ice Shelf in back in November 2022.

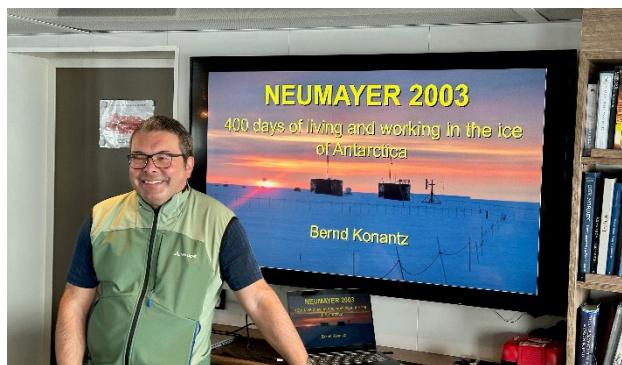


As we cruised in parallel with the icy giant, we encountered dense bands of sea ice that *Ortelius* had to muscle her way through. Male Antarctic Fur seals and Crabeater seals were a regular sight on the ice floes, with the occasional Leopard seal causing great excitement.

At 09:30 Tennessee gave a very enthusiastic lecture titled, 'James Clark Ross: The Man, The Myth, The Legend... Part 1'. He delved into the fascinating life of his hero Sir James Clark Ross (left), a renowned 19th century British polar explorer. Tennessee explored Ross's pivotal

expedition to the Antarctic, his groundbreaking discoveries, and his lasting legacy in polar exploration. The lecture blended history, adventure, and myth, with a look at Ross's extraordinary contributions to scientific exploration and his place in history.

At 11:30 there was another popular helicopter demonstration workshop with Mario, where guests gained an insight into the technical details of these fantastic machines. And at 11:45 guest speaker Bernd Konantz (right) gave a super lecture about his time working at the German Antarctic research station Neumayer II. This was an over-winter stay of around 14 months for Bernd at Germany's only year-round Antarctic station, where he was the meteorological officer. His fantastic collection of photographs gave a fascinating view into life in a station that lies beneath the ice surface.



After lunch the Zodiacs were launched, and we had the opportunity for another exploratory cruise of the pack ice. This time, with the mighty A76C iceberg as the spectacular backdrop. It was overcast and cold, but the glorious labyrinth of ice beckoned with the promise of some marine mammal activity. As the Zodiacs pushed in and through the ice, we started to see distant seals in all directions almost right away. Over the course of the afternoon, we had fantastic encounters with Antarctic Fur seals, Leopard seals and Crabeater seals. Many of the latter were quite heavily scarred, from close encounters with predatory Leopard seals.

A few lucky Zodiacs encountered a sleeping Humpback whale and were able to get to within good viewing range without disturbing it. The pack ice was a hive of bird activity, with Snow petrels and Antarctic petrels being the most abundant. Southern Fulmars, Antarctic terns, Wilson's Storm petrels, Giant petrels and a lone Cape Petrel were also seen. Two lucky Zodiacs found a huge flock of several hundred Snow petrels roosting on an iceberg, while another pair of Zodiacs came across 30-40 Antarctic petrels resting on an ice floe.

Most of us were getting cold, so we headed for an ice floe where some members of the expedition team were waiting. This provided

the opportunity to walk around, stamp our feet, and get the blood flowing again. It was also a chance to have our photos taken in this unique environment and absorb the sounds of the dynamic pack ice as it moved in the long, lazy swell. Looking out across the pack, it was like the rise and fall of a sleeping giant's chest. Departing the ice floe, we cruised some more to enjoy the seals, birds and ice before heading back to the ship. The time passed quickly, despite the cold, and the last Zodiacs returned to *Ortelius* almost 4 hours after leaving. What a fabulous afternoon in the pack ice!



At the evening briefing, Sara informed us that very bad weather was brewing in the northern part of the Antarctic Peninsula, making the area of the Bransfield Strait, South Shetland Islands and Elephant Island completely inoperable for us over the next 24-36 hours. Her screen shots of a “purple monster” from an Internet weather forecasting website drew a collective gasp in the room. Our plan, sensibly, was to stay well away from that weather, which meant spending another day in the ice just north of our position. Dr. Amar followed with a superb talk about frostbite, how to treat it, and what the effects of the most extreme cases are.



Today was the third anniversary of the re-discovery of *Endurance*, Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship that was crushed by ice in 1915 and sunk in the Weddell Sea. To mark the occasion, we gathered in the Bar after dinner to watch a new film about the expedition made jointly by National Geographic and Disney. To add to the occasion, there was popcorn and a special introduction by Tennessee!

Day 24 – Thursday 06 March. In the pack ice south of the storm.

08:00 GPS Position: 62°04.9' S / 052°15.1' W

Wind: W force 6 • Sea: Choppy • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: -1.5°C

This morning found us further north but still within the margins of the Weddell Sea pack ice. The storm that was now hitting the South Shetland Islands and Elephant Island had a very defined southern edge to it, and we had intentionally remained where we were to avoid the awful weather. To the north and west of us, weather conditions were so bad that it would have confined us to the ship had we gone into that area. As it was, Sara informed us during her good morning announcement that we had winds of 25-30 knots — a milder reflection of the extreme weather occurring further north and west. Around us, the pack ice was much looser

than we had seen on previous days, but there were still plenty of seals spotted from the bridge, and lots of bird life to enjoy.



After breakfast, Sara announced that we would attempt a Zodiac cruise while conditions were still within operational limits. The Zodiacs were launched, and we piled on our warm clothing before heading off to the gangway. The first four Zodiacs were loaded quite easily and headed off on their cruise, but then things got challenging at the gangway. Large pieces of ice came down the side of the ship in quick

succession, making it necessary to constantly raise the gangway. It took some time to load the last few Zodiacs, but eventually everyone that wanted to go Zodiac cruising was on their way.

The drivers warned everyone of the likelihood of some spray in the choppy conditions, and to protect camera gear accordingly. We were also told that the likelihood of being recalled was quite high, should the weather deteriorate further. Out among the ice floes we found some



male Antarctic Fur seals, Crabeater seals and a couple of Leopard seals. The Zodiac drivers used larger pieces of ice to gain a little shelter and give us the chance to photograph an occasional “blue lagoon” embayment in the dramatic light. Now and then, the sun managed to break through the clouds for a brief time, but it never stayed out long enough to warm the air.



The bird life was amazing, with Southern fulmars and Cape petrels being the most abundant species. Snow petrels and Wilson Storm petrels were still with us, and the occasional Giant petrel flew by. But the birding highlight was a lone Black-browed albatross that graced us with its presence. It was a very unusual site to see one of these majestic birds so far south and flying around the pack ice. It was a sighting that especially

pleased staff member Allan who lives in the Falkland Islands, which have 70% of the global population of Black-browed albatrosses. It was so good to see one of these lovely birds again.

The wind increased to around 45 knots, and the inevitable recall message crackled over the staff radios. All Zodiacs weaved their way through the ice towards *Ortelius*, where once again it took some time to complete operations because of ice menacing the gangway. We climbed the gangway to be greeted by Sara along with Kyle and Neil from the dining room, who served up hot chocolate laced with rum and topped with cream (both of the latter optional). What a great way to be welcomed back onboard after another wild Antarctic experience. The hot chocolate certainly hit the spot!



Over the PA system, Sara thanked everyone for their spirit of adventure. She then invited anyone who was interested in learning more about upcoming Oceanwide expeditions to join her in the Bar for a presentation on what the company has in store. Exciting itineraries for East Greenland, Svalbard and Antarctica's Bellingshausen Sea provided much food for thought.

Lunch was followed by another Crevasse Rescue workshop with Phil and Clara, and two more Helicopter workshops with Mario. Later in the afternoon, Claudio held another of his popular video editing workshops, and Dr. Amar held another first aid workshop. These took place on opposite sides of the dining room.



At 16:15 in the bar, Gary gave a lecture titled 'The Truth about South Polar Skuas'. He announced his lecture with the territorial warning call of an adult Skua and invited us to join him and learn more about these incredibly intelligent birds. Gary has conducted several years of Antarctic field studies on South Polar Skuas and is widely regarded as the World's leading authority on the species.

The daily briefing and recap followed, with Sara informing us that we would arrive at Elephant Island in the morning with a less-than-ideal weather forecast. All the same, we would approach the island, assess conditions, and see what could be achieved.

Day 25 – Friday 07 March. Elephant Island.

08:00 GPS Position: 61°07.6' S / 054°34.6' W

Wind: WNW force 5 • Sea: Moderate • Weather: Heavily overcast • Air temperature: +2.3°C

The reward for any early birds on the bridge this morning was a distant but dramatic view of Clarence Island as we made our final approach to Elephant Island. Sara's good morning announcement alerted anyone who may have been unaware that Elephant Island loomed large and imposing ahead of the ship. We were off the southeast coast, and soon turned on to a north-easterly direction with the glacier-draped cliffs of Elephant Island off our port side. It was a wild and menacing sight, and we tried to imagine Shackleton's men – in their exhausted, drenched and half frozen state – accepting this place as their best chance of staying alive.

We rounded Cape Valentine where the *Endurance* crew initially set foot on the island, on 15 April 1916. It was the first land beneath their feet in almost 500 days, since departing South Georgia in December 1914. Back then, when reaching the island some of the men, laughing like children, dropped to their knees and scooped up gravel, letting it trickle through their fingers. Alas, Shackleton quickly realized they couldn't stay at Cape Valentine. The beach was too small and there was evidence that it was awash in stormy weather. Frank Wild and some others were sent along the coast in one of the boats to search for a better site. Wild returned with good news!

Now it was our turn to visit that incredible place, named after the man who found it. It was at Point Wild that 22 of Shackleton's men clung on to life by a thread for 4 months through the winter of 1916. Their shelter was two upturned lifeboats perched on top of crude stone walls, with snow and sail cloth plugging the gaps to keep out the draught. The resident penguin and seal populations were their only source of food and fuel. The weather conditions for our visit were fairly typical for Elephant Island – grey, windy and damp. A large swell rolled in off the Southern Ocean, crashing against Point Wild and leaving parts of it awash. Gusts of katabatic winds roared down off the glacier, whipping spray off the top of the waves. This would have been considered a nice day for the 22 men who had survived a horrendous winter here all those years ago!

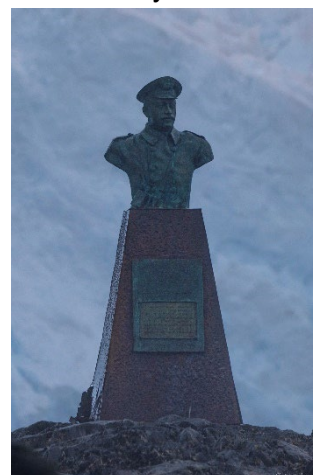
Sara, Allan & Tennessee took a Zodiac to scout Point Wild and see if it was possible to operate Zodiacs with guests. The conditions found inshore on the east side of the point were quite OK,



despite the swell. But it was conditions near the ship that were far from easy, and Sara gave a lot of thought to her decision. In the end, she decided to do two waves of short Zodiac cruising, using only five Zodiacs with a maximum of 8 guests in each. The objective was simply to get everyone in close to shore for a look at the site, and the monument to Chilean Captain Luis Pardo who rescued the castaways with the steam tug *Yelcho*.

Loading the Zodiacs was indeed a challenge, but with two of the deck crew and one staff member there to assist, we all made the transition from gangway to Zodiac safely. The swells were in the region of 2 metres, and the bridge crew did the best they could to turn *Ortelius*' side on to provide some shelter. Leaving the ship, we rode the swells in towards the land. We passed through a narrow channel with Point Wild on our right and an 80-metre-high rock on the left curiously named The Gnomon. Turning the corner we passed Banjo Rock, probably named in honour of Leonard Hussey and his banjo, which was a source of great entertainment for Shackleton's men. One of the many little songs they made up went as follows....

"My name is Franky Wild-o and my hut's on Elephant Isle.
The wall's without a single brick and the roof's without a tile.
Yet, nevertheless, you must confess by many and many a mile,
It's the most palatial dwelling place you'll find on Elephant Isle."



Chinstrap penguins were all over the rocks, with plenty of Antarctic Fur seals scattered among them. A couple of Leopard seals patrolled the waters just offshore, and the second wave of guests to go out saw one of them inflict a slow, nasty "cat and mouse" type death on a helpless Chinstrap penguin. The drivers maneuvered the Zodiacs among the swells and rocks, doing their best to use the wind to steady them, and get us as close as possible to the monument for Captain Pardo. It was a great view with the glacier behind. At one point a lone Weddell seal popped its head up to look at some Zodiacs.

With everyone safely back on the ship, it was time for lunch. Meanwhile, the expedition team and crew set about recovering the Zodiacs. This took some time, as the swell had picked up making for quite a challenging operation. The anchor was raised, and *Ortelius* headed away from Elephant Island, with lots of whale blows all around as the

island faded from view in our wake. It sure was an adventurous morning, and we were all very grateful for the huge effort that had been made to get us as close as possible to Point Wild.

We were now on our way across the Drake Passage towards Ushuaia. With an afternoon at sea, we could look forward to relaxing for a while or taking part in some workshops. Mario's helicopter demonstrations were as popular as ever, and Claudio delivered another of his Video editing workshops. These were the last of the fantastic program of workshops of the voyage. For some, the ocean motion was a good excuse for a little nap.

At 16:15, Dr. Amar gave a lecture about cold water immersion, in response to a variety of questions he had received from guests. It was an interesting presentation, delivered in a highly professional manner. It left many of us with a much clearer understanding of what cold water does to the human body and raised a collective determination that we never experience it.



After Sara's daily briefing, Tennessee surprised us all by saying that today was his first ever visit to Elephant Island, and that it will forever be one of the keystone moments of his life. With great emotion he spoke about the men that were forced to survive there, and showed a series of Frank Hurley's photos that had rocky shoreline features we could now recognize and relate to. In our Zodiacs, we had been right where the James

Caird was launched for the journey to South Georgia. Tennessee finished with a very moving clip from the 2002 film 'Shackleton', in which the Boss is played by classic British actor Kenneth Branagh. The scene, portraying the moment the castaways realize that they are saved, is recreated in the most extraordinarily moving way.

After dinner we all gathered in the Bar for an unusual quiz, that may be a first in Oceanwide history. This time, it was the guests testing the knowledge and memory power of the Expedition Team. The idea came from Rupert & Sarah Chatwin, who worked hard gathering questions from guests and did a great job putting it all together. On the night, the Expedition Team was a little nervous to say the least and were very relieved to come away with a score of 44 out of a possible 50 points. Rupert did a terrific job as quizmaster, injecting lots of humour into the event, while Sarah kept track of the score. Great job, guys! Thank you for a fun evening.



Day 26 – Saturday 08 March. At sea, Drake Passage

08:00 GPS Position: 58°30.6' S / 059°58.0' W

Wind: SW force 8 • Sea: Moderate • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: +1.8°C



The morning started with the now familiar wake-up call from Sara. The ship was gently rolling, which had given most of us a good night's sleep. After breakfast, many headed for the open decks to take in some fresh air. Caution was required as the decks were a little slippery. The wind blew at around 35 knots, and occasional showers produced a little bit of moisture. Some great

seabirds were seen from the bridge, including Wandering, Grey-headed and Black-browed Albatrosses, as well as a few rare Soft-plumaged petrels. Several whale blows were seen during the morning, with Humpbacks and Sei whales being positively identified.

There were some excellent lectures throughout the day. Gary was first up with a fascinating talk about his research on Emperor penguins. After all the wonderful encounters we'd had with these charismatic birds, the in-depth look at their biological characteristics and life cycle was greatly appreciated. Then later in the morning there was a typically entertaining lecture by Tennessee titled "Life in the Freezer", all about his time spent working at the Union Glacier basecamp. This was a recent experience for Tennessee, from which he returned just a couple of weeks before our deep Weddell Sea expedition.

Just prior to lunch, we visited the lecture room on deck 3 to return our beloved Muck boots and helicopter landing cards. It was with a touch of sadness that we handed these items back to the expedition team. Following lunch, there was time to relax and reflect on the fantastic experiences of this voyage. Some took a nap, some sorted through photographs, some hung out with new friends, some thought of our 'helicopter heroes' who were preparing to leave us the next day. One thing we all had in common... our thoughts were still very much in Antarctica! At 16:15 Chloé gave a talk in the Bar titled 'Umwelt: How Animals Might Sense the World'. Umwelt is German for "environment" or "surroundings" and is the specific way in which organisms of a particular species perceive and experience the world, shaped by the capabilities of their sensory organs and perceptual systems.

The daily briefing and recap were followed by another delicious dinner served by the wonderful *Ortelius*



hotel department. Then there was round two of the pub quiz in the Bar, which returned by popular demand. It was another hard-fought competition, with the winning team being 'Peebles Who Need Peebles' with an excellent score of 36 out of 50.

Day 27 – Sunday 09 March. At sea, Drake Passage.

08:00 GPS Position: 55°43.8' S / 065°01.6' W

Wind: N force 7 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: +7.8°C



We awoke to find that *Ortelius* had made good progress north through the night. Conditions had improved considerably with a mere 25 knots of wind and a gentle swell. Although it was overcast, it was a fine day in the Drake Passage. The usual “good morning, good morning, good morning” announcement from Sara was replaced by a fantastic comedy effort by Tennessee and Gary, impersonating Sir David Attenborough and several penguin species respectively. The air temperature had risen considerably from 24 hours prior,

confirming that we had re-crossed the Antarctic Convergence and returned to a more temperate region. The great continent of South America beckoned, as keen observers on the bridge strained their eyes for the faint outline of land. After breakfast we started to deal with some of those pre-disembarkation tasks, such as settling our shipboard accounts.

At 09:15 we joined Allan for a lecture titled “The Curious Case of Admiral Byrd’s Antarctic Snow Cruiser”. The intriguing title drew a sizeable crowd, keen to learn more. Allan went for something a bit out of the ordinary for the final lecture of the voyage, telling the little-known story of a ground-breaking engineering project in 1939 for the US. Antarctic Service Expedition led by Admiral Richard Byrd. Although the Antarctic Snow Cruiser didn’t live up to expectations in Antarctica, it lives on as a legend in the eyes of polar historians and motoring enthusiasts. Later in the morning, Becky Kagan Schott gave a short presentation outlining the activities of the dive team over the course of the voyage. Using incredible images and fantastic video, she invited us all to enjoy a look at the remarkable world beneath the waves and share in the extraordinary underwater adventures of the dive team. As *Ortelius* steadily closed the gap to the entrance of the Beagle Channel, many of us took the opportunity to start packing. Soon, the invitation to our final buffet lunch of the voyage was announced over the PA system.

The afternoon brought brighter weather as land loomed large ahead of us. Those who ventured up to the bridge or outer decks found that the ship was in company with the usual bird life for the region - petrels, prions, shearwaters, and of course a variety of albatrosses. Any albatross gliding over the Southern Ocean is a sight to behold, but the masterful and elegant Wandering Albatross with its 3.5 metre wingspan left onlookers completely awestruck. These are true 'marathon birds', completely at home riding the wild winds of the deep south. The stronger it blows, the happier they seem to be. The love and respect for these incredible birds is hard to put into words, especially when we consider the mariner's legend that every albatross carries the soul of a sailor lost at sea. It is truly the bird of good omen for all who work upon the oceans of the World. The editor of this expedition log can't help but once again draw on the immortal words of English poet Samuel Taylor-Coleridge (1772-1834), from his epic work 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'.....



At length did cross an Albatross, through the fog it came.
As if it had been a Christian soul, we hailed it in God's name.



At 14:40 Tennessee announced that the helicopter team would soon be leaving us and wished them God speed. Many gathered to say goodbye to these wonderful guys who had played such a big part in the success of our voyage. Quebec started up at 14:50, bound for the Chilean town of Puerto Williams, approximately 50 miles west of us up the Beagle Channel. Tango was next, and finally Sierra. The last two were bound for Rio Gallegos on the Atlantic coast of Argentina. They had a long flight ahead of them – 2 hours and 40 minutes.



Ortelius continued in towards the sheltered waters of the Beagle Channel, as preparations for disembarkation quietly progressed below decks. At 18:15 we gathered in the Bar for a farewell drink with Captain

Remmert, and a toast to a very successful expedition. The Captain then had to leave, as the Argentinian pilot boat was approaching with the pilot that would guide us up the Beagle Channel to Ushuaia. A trip slideshow produced by expedition guide Claudio was shown after that. This exciting reminder of a memorable journey was later available for all to save to mobile devices, once we had enjoyed our final dinner onboard *Ortelius*. And what a great dinner it was! Before dessert was served, Hotel Manager Volodymyr introduced his wonderful, hard-

working team. We all noticed, with a touch of sadness, the absence of the DAP Helicopters team at their usual table by the port side entrance to the dining room.



The day ended with the welcome sensation of a motionless deck beneath our feet, as the land on both sides of the Beagle Channel closed in around us. Many went out on deck after dinner to take in the scenery and enjoy a nice sunset. All that remained was for *Ortelius* to complete the last few miles up to Ushuaia where we docked around 23:00. The voyage was almost over, and soon we would embark on the next leg of our individual adventures.

Day 28 – Monday 10 March. Ushuaia, disembarkation day.

08:00 GPS Position: 54°48.4' S / 068°17.5'W

Wind: SW force 8 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: +8.9°C

We woke up alongside the pier in Ushuaia. *Ortelius* had successfully completed the first ever Deep Weddell Sea Explorer voyage! It was a dull, windy morning in Ushuaia, with a bit of precipitation in the air. The crew and Expedition Team handled all the luggage and placed it on the dock, while we enjoyed one last buffet breakfast. At 08:30 it was time for disembarkation. The voyage was over, and it was time to go our separate ways. Fond farewells were exchanged on the dock, as our band of intrepid adventurers dispersed and began the long journey home.

Total distance sailed on our voyage: 5,489.6 nautical miles.
Southernmost position: 78°03.5206' S / 036°03.5413' W (Vahsel Bay).

On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Remmert Koster, Expedition Leader Sara Jenner, Hotel Manager Volodymyr Cherednychenko and all the crew and staff of *M/V Ortelius*, it has been a pleasure and a privilege travelling with you.



Your Oceanwide Expeditions Team.

Back row: Chris, Tennessee, Allan, Claudio, Sara, Jens.

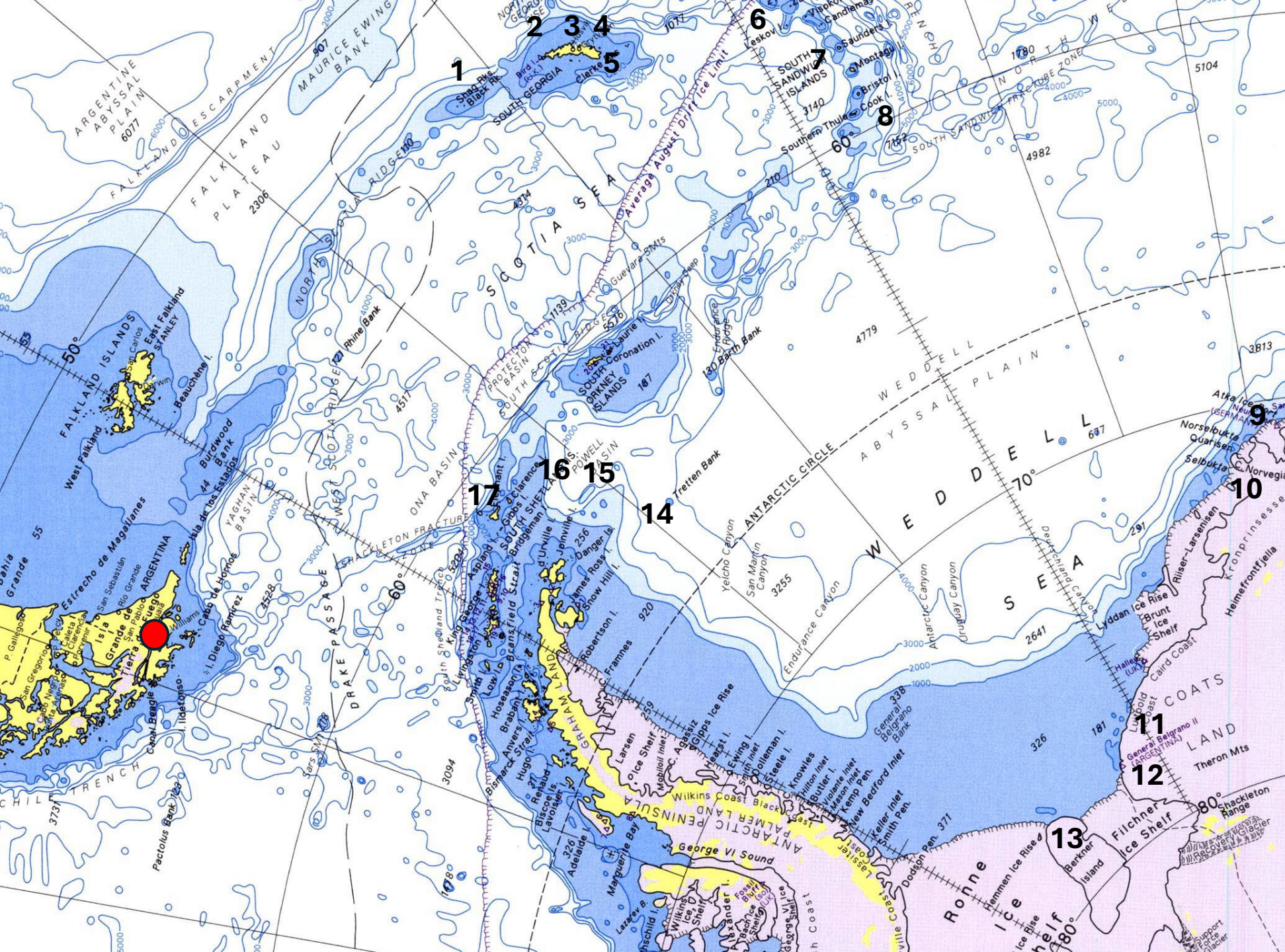
Front row: Clara, Peter, Matilda, Phil, Luce, Chloé, Dr. Amar, Gary, Henrik.



Thank you from your DAP Helicopters team.

L-R: Fernando (Engineer), José (Engineer), Marcelo (Pilot - Tango),

Mario (Chief Engineer), Marcelo (Pilot - Quebec), Julio (Chief Pilot).



Ushuaia Embarkation

1. Shag Rocks
2. Right Whale Bay
3. Grytviken
4. St Andrews bay
5. Gold Harbour
6. Zavodovski island
7. Saunders Island
8. Thule and Cook Islands
9. Ekstromisen Iceshelf 76°46S
09°47W
10. Selbukta Bay
11. Luitpold Coast
12. Vahsel Bay/Filchner Ice Shelf
78°03S 035°21W
13. Berkner Island/Ronne Ice Shelf
14. Emperor Penguins 63°44S
049°48W
15. A76C Iceberg
16. Sea ice cruise
17. Elephant Island

Ushuaia Disembarkation

Birds and Marine Mammals of the Antarctic region

Ortelius: Antarctica - Remote Weddell Sea Explorer 11th February - 10th March 2025

[illegible]

Sara Jenner – Expedition Leader



For as long as Sara could remember she has had a passion for travel and searching for the wildest and most remote places on earth.

Back in the UK when she was only 10, she remembers trading in her favourite pink bicycle for the money to start her travel fund. Every birthday and Christmas she added a little more in the kitty and finally, at 18 she realised her dream of diving at the Great Barrier Reef! At that point the travel addiction was born. Ever since Sara has been travelling the globe in search of wild and remote places and has spent many

months volunteering on wildlife conservation projects in a bid to help some of our most iconic and endangered species.

Sara's love of wildlife and the great outdoors has taken her to all seven continents, and she has travelled extensively in the polar regions including the Antarctic Peninsula, Weddell Sea, Ross Sea, Falklands, South Georgia, NZ and Australian Sub Antarctic Islands, Spitsbergen, Greenland, Iceland, Baffin Island and Canadian High Arctic. Returning to the UK, Sara used this knowledge to work in the travel industry as a polar specialist for several years, until the travel bug hit again, when she decided to swap life on the land for a life at sea and joined the Oceanwide Expedition Team in 2016.

During 2020-2021 she worked extensively on a leopard seal identification project and took the opportunity to fulfil a lifetime dream of visiting South Georgia in winter by working on the M/V Pharos, which is deployed by the South Georgia Government as a fishery patrol vessel.

Sara is a keen wildlife photographer and when she is not wrapped up warm in the polar regions she enjoys working as a photographic guide in Botswana, on the beautiful Chobe River and Okavango Delta, so really has a life of two halves.

Chloé Maréchal – Asst.Exp. Leader



Chloé is a dedicated diver with an insatiable passion for marine life and exploration. Armed with a European master's degree in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation, she's on a mission to share her expertise and promote the conservation of the marine environment. But here's the twist—while everyone else is busy oohing and aahing over flashy dolphins and majestic whales, Chloé's heart belongs to the unsung heroes of the ocean—the often underrated world of plankton and the mysteries of unseen microbes. She's here to show that even the tiniest organisms can have big personalities!

In April 2013, Chloé's dedication and skills were recognized when she was chosen as the prestigious 2013-14 European Rolex Our World Underwater Scholar. This remarkable opportunity allowed her to work alongside renowned leaders in the fields of marine science and diving industry, providing her with diverse experiences and invaluable insights. During this transformative year, her first encounter with Antarctica left an indelible mark, igniting a lifelong passion for polar exploration.

Chloé isn't just a science nerd with a thing for plankton. She's an adventurous soul with an insatiable curiosity. She's dived across all continents, lived in 20 countries, and now sails on her 12-meter aluminum boat. Together with her partner she has recently crossed the challenging waters of the North Sea.

Currently, Chloé calls northern Norway her home, residing just above the polar circle. When not guiding, she explores underwater wonders, uncovers forgotten wrecks, and maps uncharted underwater caves. Her passion for the ocean, sailing, and work with Oceanwide Expeditions fuel her relentless pursuit of adventure.

Claudio Ghiglione – Exp. Guide



Claudio was born in Italy in 1983. He is a marine ecologist specialised in polar regions, expedition guide and nature photographer.

Interested in science and nature since he was very young, he graduated first in *Marine Environmental Sciences* (BA) and then in *Marine Science* (MA). In March 2017 he obtained a *PhD in Earth, Environmental and Polar Sciences* run in cooperation with the Italian National Antarctic Museum (Italy) and the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge (UK).

For several years he worked as a polar researcher focusing his work mainly on the South Pole (Antarctica); his objective is to analyse and evaluate information used for ecological modelling and possible future scenarios following global warming. During his academic career, he actively takes part in some scientific expeditions both in Arctic and in Antarctica in cooperation with Norway and England.

His passion for travel, mainly to cold and often inhospitable places, and his career as a photographer led him to travel a lot, creating and managing – often in complete autonomy – itineraries and logistics. In 2017 – thanks to his professional experience, the skills acquired over the time and the need to spend more time on the field – he starts working full time as a guide Oceanwide.

Specialised in nature, scientific and travel photography, Claudio uses his photos as a means of telling stories to draw attention mainly to his main subjects, namely animals, nature and environment. In the 2019 he published his first book 'Polar Lights' with whom he shares the passion for nature photography.

Chris Long – Expedition Guide



Chris grew up as a part of New Zealand's remotest family two long days hike from the nearest road at a place called Gorge River, on the South Islands West Coast, New Zealand.

His family lives as self-sufficiently as possible in a small cabin surrounded by the jungled rainforest, the rough rugged coastline, and an untouched emerald green river. Most of their food comes from a huge vegetable garden or is fished from the ocean. This wild untouched natural corner of New Zealand was Chris's home for the first 17 years of his life, until, one day, he set

off to explore what the rest of the world had to offer.

Since leaving Gorge River, Chris has set out to see, explore and experience as much of the globe as possible. This constant search for adventure has seen him travel to over 65 countries on all seven continents. Along this journey, he spent two full summer seasons living and working as a field trainer at Scott Base, a New Zealand research station in Antarctica, as well as multiple voyages to the Ross Sea, Antarctic Peninsula, East Antarctica and the Atlantic Ocean.

Chris is also no stranger to the arctic. He once sailed the notorious northwest passage across the top of Greenland, Canada, and Alaska on a small yacht and spent much of the covid pandemic living with 150 husky dogs in Tromso, northern Norway. Here he endured two long cold dark arctic winters training for long distance dog races. He also guides with Oceanwide in Svalbard each summer.

In 2022, Chris published a best-selling autobiography "*The Boy From Gorge River*" and when he is not at sea you will find him training for his commercial fixed-wing pilot's license or exploring a new corner of the globe.

Matilda Ballinger – Expedition Guide

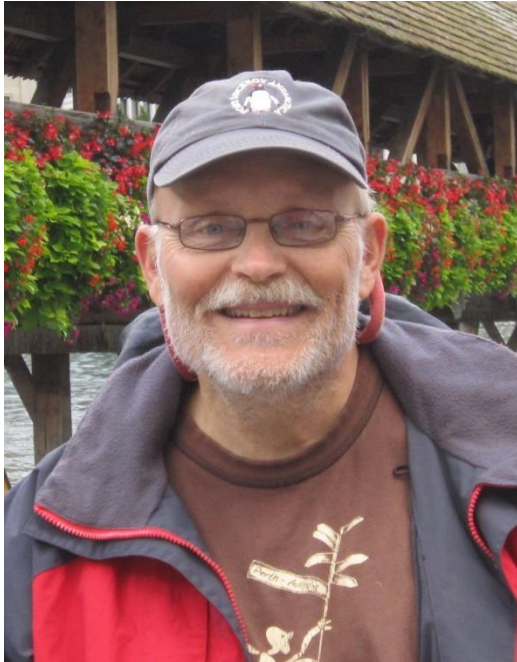


Matilda is an Earth Science lecturer with a passion for Antarctica. Matilda has a Masters of Marine and Antarctic Science from the University of Tasmania, with a focus on Antarctica geology and glaciology. She has contributed to a number of Antarctic research studies, including producing a continent wide geological map of Antarctica and looking at glacial flow over different geology. She has presented at Antarctic and Polar conferences and loves sharing her knowledge of Antarctica.

Matilda has been lucky enough to come to Antarctica numerous times, both as a guide and working at the New Zealand Scientific Research Station, Scott Base where she lived and worked for 5 months. Her favourite part about Antarctica is the scenery and she loves sharing her love for Antarctica with others, in the hope that we can all become Antarctic ambassadors and protect Antarctica for generations to come.

Matilda grew up travelling around the world on her family's sailing yacht, developing a love for the marine environment from a very young age. When not guiding in Antarctica she loves surfing, skiing, hiking, biking and being out in nature. When not sharing her love for glaciers and ice with visitors to Antarctica, Matilda is lucky enough to enjoy the glaciers of New Zealand from her backyard in Mt Cook Village.

Gary Miller – Expedition Guide



Gary's love of the polar regions began over 40 years ago when he studied polar bears in Canada for his MA in Zoology. He started by following an academic career as a scientist studying wildlife. During that time he also worked on bowhead whales and gray whales in Alaska and Mexico and then a 3-year study of desert bighorn sheep in Arizona for his PhD in Behavioral Ecology in 1986. After that his life took a dramatic turn to the south when he began research on Antarctic penguins and skuas. He immediately fell in love with the Antarctic and has continued to work there for his career. Starting with 6

summers of research on Ross Island, deep in the Ross Sea, he has logged 10 summers and one winter at research stations studying South Polar Skuas, Adelie, Gentoo, Chinstrap, Royal, King, and Emperor penguins. Gary has tremendous experience with Emperors having spent an entire winter studying the emperor penguins at Auster colony in East Antarctica.

For the past 30 years, Gary has split his time between research expeditions and ship-based tours to the polar regions. He enjoys sharing his knowledge, enthusiasm and experience with passengers from all over the world. In his many years he has circumnavigated Antarctica, visited a wide range of penguin colonies in different parts of Antarctica, and has managed to visit 10 different Emperor penguin colonies. Gary is one of the most experienced naturalist/guides working today.

Tennessee Blackmore – Exp. Guide



From the UK, Tennessee is a historian and expedition specialist with an infectious enthusiasm for the human history of the Southern Ocean. He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and Royal Anthropological Institute.

Tennessee began his career expeditions aged 18 in the sweltering rainforests of Borneo and remote outposts in the Himalayas before finally heeding a lifelong call South in the footsteps of great polar pioneers.

He is presently writing the first dedicated biography of Sir James Clark Ross, a project Tennessee began in 2017. This new biography tells the stranger-than-fiction career of arguably Britain's greatest polar explorer and investigates the critical influence of Inuit culture on Ross's successful polar endeavours.

Having been greatly inspired by tales from the heroic age of exploration, Tennessee is deeply fascinated by the personalities and character dynamics behind the iconic figures of the era.

Aside from polar exploration history, Tennessee has worked on a range of projects as a historical consultant specialising in the Falklands War. He recently conducted year-long research on the Falklands Air War, interviewing over twenty-five British and Argentinian veterans.

Having worked in Polar Tourism since 2018, his greatest passion is connecting people with tales of endurance and misadventure in the places those stories unfolded.

Allan White - Expedition Guide



Allan was born and raised in the Falkland Islands. He's a fifth generation Islander, and a descendant of one of the original British colonists in 1840. His higher education was completed in England, after which he embarked on a military career.

He joined the British Army aged 17. After serving in West Germany for two years during the Cold War period, he completed deployments in Northern Ireland, Cyprus as a United Nations peace-keeper, and with British Forces South Atlantic Islands. He left the Army to settle back in the Falklands.

While working as a Port Agent, Allan worked with the late Lars-Eric Lindblad, the inspirational pioneer of the small ship expedition cruising concept. He encouraged Allan to become a Zodiac driver and go to sea for a year. Twenty eight years later, he's still at it. His voyages have taken him all over the world, with particular focus on the Polar regions. His travel experience ranges from 90° North to 76° South.

In the Falklands, Allan and his wife owned and operated their own tourist lodge for over a decade. More recently they managed a privately owned island, where they were the sole residents for almost 5 years, with thousands of albatrosses, penguins and seals for neighbours.

Allan is an experienced guide and Zodiac driver, with a keen interest in natural history and polar exploration. He lives in the Falklands capital Stanley, with his wife Jacqui and their Labrador Bosun.

Henrik Enckell – Dive Team Leader



Henrik is an experienced dive instructor and rebreather instructor trainer. He was one of the first persons to bring tourists diving in Antarctica

He has been diving for over 30 years and as a Rebreather Instructor Trainer he is teaching all levels of recreational and technical diving up to Advanced Trimix CCR.

Henrik is a keen wreck diver and has been involved in deep wreck expeditions all over the world. Some of the interesting wrecks he has visited are the WW2 disasters General von Steuben

and Wilhelm Gustloff in the Baltic and HMS Victoria ("the vertical wreck") at 145 meters/475 feet off the Lebanese coast.

He has a military background having served in peace keeping and peace enforcing missions in the Middle East and former Yugoslavia. He has also led dive expeditions in the Antarctic and Arctic regions for more than 20 years and has supervised thousands of dives in polar waters. Henrik also works as a submersible pilot and surface officer.

Henrik holds a M.Sc. degree in Electrical Engineering and has previously lived and worked in Japan and India several years before becoming an expedition guide full time. He now lives in Sweden with his wife, his three daughters and his son.

Clara Iachetti – Dive Guide



Clara is Argentinean, who is born in Buenos Aires. Since she was a child Clara loved the ocean and the adventure. In 2011 she obtained her bachelor's Marine Biology-oriented degree in Biological Sciences, at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and a European M.Sc. in Marine Environment and Resources (MER) in 2012. Since 2012 she has been working in the Austral Centre of Scientific Investigations (CADIV- CONICET) at Ushuaia, Tierra de Fuego (Argentina). Firstly, on her PhD on plankton dynamics, then with her postdoctoral project on harmful algal blooms, and

nowadays as a researcher at CADIC. For the last 10 years she has participated of several research expeditions to the South Atlantic and Antarctica, even spending some time in the Shetland Islands, at the Argentinean Base "Carlini".

On top of her scientist career, she is a member of Beagle Secretos del Mar, a non-profit organisation that supports marine conservation in which she is responsible for the education program, lecturing and diving. Living in Ushuaia (and previously in Bariloche) has also led her passion towards mountaineering, mainly backcountry skiing and climbing.

Peter Nilsson – Dive Guide



Peter is a Swedish diver with a great interest in diving and the marine life. He started to dive in 1996 and ever since those days, diving has been his greatest passion. For many years, all focus was on tropical marine life, but since the last 10 years, he has been diving a lot on the wrecks in Sweden.

Peter is member of a Canadian / Swedish team that works with the salvage of a Canadian Halifax bomber that went down during the World War II. Every year, the team organizes and dives on the wreck and bring up as much of it as possible. The pieces are brought

to a bomber museum in Canada where they eventually will be put together to a complete Halifax bomber.

Peter is ready for a unique polar diving experience with you!

Luce Moussiere – Dive Guide



She knew how to swim before she could walk. Luce is a young French scuba diving instructor, swimming instructor and hiking guide. She left France after a degree of Neuro-Linguistic Programming with the ambition to bring the most extraordinary experiences accessible to anyone.

She lived in Asia, and Australia where when she wasn't teaching recreational courses, she enrolled in multiple marine life conservation projects and coral reef restoration, working together with the Great Barrier Reef marine parks authority. She supervised explorations

to survey remote untouched coral reef systems where she could then guide experienced divers to educate over climate change impacts. She led special trips on private yacht to encounter big marine life, such as bull sharks, tiger sharks, minke and humpback whales.

After 5 years in tropical waters, she then specialized in cold water environment, where she lives now in Iceland. She trained to adapt and work through Icelandic winters, with little to no daylight, and temperatures reaching -30 degrees Celsius (-22F). She is now diving or snorkelling in between the clear water of Silfra, fissure in between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates.

She specialized in technical decompression diving, ice, cold, deep, night, wreck, and enriched air diving, and is always keen to add to her career more skills, to be able to dive and guide through the most challenging environments.

She also is an on-call guide when Icelandic volcanos erupt, hunting the best routes through volcanic lands to safely bring hikers to witness these events. When she is not working, you will find Luce hiking on fjords, glaciers, exploring ice caves, free diving in arctic kelp forests: enjoying this huge playground the raw Icelandic land can be.

Philip Poole – Mountain Guide



Philip is an IFMGA Mountain Guide and has enjoyed extensive polar experience both in the Antarctic and Arctic.

His first career highlight was working for the British Antarctic Survey as a field guide for 2 seasons: one supporting geological surveys on James Ross Island on the north of the Peninsula and the other ice core drilling on the Dyer Plateau and then hot water drilling on King George VI Sound ice shelf. He completed a very memorable 1000km snowmobile journey between these two sites with his scientist, down the Antarctic Peninsula.

More recently, Philip completed 17 seasons working in East Greenland running ski touring and mountaineering expeditions to some of the remotest parts of the continent. He led several first ascents and 3 successful expeditions to the 3 highest mountains in the Arctic: Gunnbjørn Fjeld, Cone and Dome. Clients enjoyed not only the mountaineering achievements but also the shared experience of close living in tents on the glaciers.

For 9 years he was Head Snowmobile Guide for a company in East Greenland leading a team of drivers on multi-day journeys, over sea ice and glaciers, to transport client expeditions to their locations. He was also involved in running polar training courses and led an early (possibly the first) North - South Liverpool Land traverse on ski.

Philip has also worked for 3 winter seasons in Hokkaido, northern Japan, running back country ski programmes, in what some consider to be, the best powder skiing in the world.

When not in the mountains, he works for a multi-national management training company, where he advises on safety and trains and assesses staff for outdoor qualifications. He lives in the Lake District, where he enjoys a wide range of outdoor activities, including climbing, caving, kayaking and canyoning.

Jens Binderup – Expedition Guide



Born on a farm in central Denmark, later working as an air traffic controller in Copenhagen for many years, now living near the coastline on the countryside south of the capital.

A keen interest in wildlife has been a lifelong companion, and the majority of travelling through the years has been to all 7 continents, where animal life- and behaviour was the main focus.

Whether it was swimming with the orcas in northern Norway, dogsledding in Finland, experiencing the abundance of wildlife in southern Africa or enjoying the magnificence of landscapes and animal

life in the Arctic and Antarctica.

Jens is a sociable and talkative person, loving to share all the experiences with our guests – and his enthusiasm has made him guiding friends and colleagues on several occasions.

He also possesses a deep interest in the polar expeditions – both to the Arctic and Antarctic – made by the brave men a hundred years ago, exploring the last frontiers by ships, planes, airships and dogsleds.

When not travelling, spare time is used enjoying the massive migration of birds of prey near his home, mountain biking, trekking in the Scandinavian wilderness and flying gliders together with all the predatory birds.

Fulfilling a lifelong dream of being an expedition guide, Jens is looking forward to his first season in the Antarctic with passion and enthusiasm, sharing the magnificent experiences that await all on an expedition cruise.

Amar Mashru – Ships Doctor



Dr Amar is an Emergency Medicine & Prehospital Emergency Medicine Consultant trained and working in London, UK.

Amar has worked in Helicopter Emergency Medicine Services since 2016 and currently works for Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance, and London's Air Ambulance as a Doctor in Prehospital and Community Emergency Medicine respectively. Amar also currently works at London's largest Major Trauma Centre.

Outside of the UK, Amar has worked in Australia, New Zealand, India, and South Africa, and as a medic for expeditions and events in Nepal and the Arctic. Always keen to try new things and explore new places, Amar approaches adventure with good humour, open-mindedness and a desire to learn, and enjoys using his 21 years of professional training to help others stay safe, thrive, and discover, whether travelling or at home.

Outside of work Amar enjoys exercise, gigs and festivals, a decent flat white, and learning about wine through the medium of first hand experience!



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer Welcome on Board!

Date: 11 February 2025

Day 1 Ushuaia

Please make yourselves at home in your cabins and check you have received all your luggage! Tea/coffee is available in the Bar located on Deck 6.

PLEASE LISTEN FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 15:00+/- Ship safety briefing, in the **Bar on Deck 6**. Attendance to this is **MANDATORY**. After the briefing the emergency alarm will be sounded, and you will need to go back to your cabin and get your life jacket. All guests will go to their **MUSTER STATION** which the **Bar on Deck 6**.
- 17:00+/- Please join the Expedition Team and Captain in the **Bar on Deck 6** for a celebratory toast to the forthcoming voyage. This will be followed by a welcome briefing by the Hotel Manager and Expedition Leader to orientate you to life on board and explain the plan for the forthcoming days.
- 18:00 Buffet dinner in the **Restaurant on Deck 4**.
- 19:30 Please join Sara, the Expedition Leader, in the **Bar on Deck 6** for the **Mandatory IAATO and Zodiac Briefing** and to hear more about plans for the forthcoming days. Attendance will be checked.

Please note that tonight we will be sailing into the open sea. Take your seasickness medication before you really feel the movements of the vessel, the doctor will be available in the bar after dinner to assist with such matters. Make sure that all your belongings are put away safely and that doors and drawers in your cabin are tightly closed. Walk slowly on the ship, always use one hand for yourself and one for the ship and beware of your fingers because of doors slamming!

"All things considered there are only two kinds of men in the world; those that stay at home and those that do not, the latter are more interesting." - Rudyard Kipling



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 12 February 2025

Day 2 Drake Passage

07:45 Wake up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

10:30 You will be called deck by deck down to the Lecture Room on Deck 3 to collect your Muck Boots, please bring your thick socks so you can try them for size.

11:30 Please join Gary in the Bar for a presentation about Sea Birds of the Southern Ocean.

12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

13:30 Please could **the divers** meet Henrik and the dive team in the Bar for the **Mandatory Dive Briefing**

16:15 Tennessee invites you to join him in the Bar for a presentation titled 'In Search of Terra Incognito - Magellan to Cook.

18:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap, this is a daily event where we go through what we have seen during the day and plans for tomorrow.

19:00 Plated dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

Remember: walk slowly on the ship, never rush. Keep one hand for yourself but at least one hand for the ship. Shut all doors firmly and keep fingers away from door frames.

*"One must never be in haste to end a day; there are too few of them in a lifetime". -
Sir Francis Drake*



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 13 February 2025

Day 3 Scotia Sea

07:45 Wake up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

09:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for a screening of the **Mandatory South Georgia Visitor Video**, this will be followed by a short Introduction to South Georgia by Jens.

11:00 Please join Chloe in the Bar for an Introduction to Whales and Dolphins of the Southern Ocean.

PLEASE NOTE - At midday the clocks will go forward 1 hour.

13:00-14:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

16:15 Please join Sara in the Bar for a presentation about Photography - how to take photos you are happy with.

18:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for daily recap.

19:00 Plated dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

Remember: walk slowly on the ship, never rush. Keep one hand for yourself but at least one hand for the ship. Shut all doors firmly and keep fingers away from door frames.

"A journey is a person, no two are alike. And all plans, safeguards, policies, and coercion are fruitless. We find after years of struggle that we do not take a trip, a trip takes us." – John Steinbeck



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

❤️ Happy Valentines Day! ❤️

Date: 14 February 2025

Day 4 Approaching the South Georgia Maritime Zone and Shag Rocks

- 07:45 Wake-up call.
- 08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 09:15 Sara invites you to the Bar for an Introduction to Penguins.
- 11:30 Please join Allan in the Bar for a lecture about Whaling in the South Ocean.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 13:30+ We will call you deck by deck for the **MANDATORY South Georgia Biosecurity** inspection. When called, please bring all your outer garments, bags, boots, life jackets, tripods, etc. that you plan to use in South Georgia for the expedition staff to check. Please make sure everything is clean before proceeding to the Bar and ensure you sign the self-declaration form once you have approved by the Expedition Team.
- 16:15 Tennessee invites you to the Bar for his lecture titled Pray for Shackleton.
- 18:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap.
- 19:00 Plated dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

Around dinner time we hope to approach Shag Rocks, a group of six islets located about 150 miles (250km) west of the mainland of South Georgia. They are home to thousands of nesting imperial cormorants, plus petrels, prions and penguins. The waters around them can also be fantastic for spotting whales during the austral summer.

As we enter the South Georgia special protection area, we must minimise the light pollution to prevent birds striking the ship. **PLEASE PUT ALL THE BLINDS IN YOUR CABINS DOWN BEFORE DINNER!**

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page" - St. Augustine



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 15 February 2025

Day 5 Approaching South Georgia, Right Whale Bay

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

We encourage you to spend the morning out on deck as we approach South Georgia looking for wildlife and enjoying the magnificent scenery.

12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

14:00+/- We hope to start embarkation for a landing at Right Whale Bay.

14:00 Please can the divers meet the dive team on the Zodiac deck.

Please ensure you are dressed in full waterproofs, Mucks boots and that your lifejacket is correctly fastened before coming to the gangway. Please use the Virkon solution provided to clean your boots, tripods, monopods etc before you leave the ship and on your return. Remember, no sitting, kneeling, crouching or placing anything on the ground while you are ashore. Move slowly and quietly around wildlife.

18:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap.

19:00 Plated dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

After dinner we will call you deck by deck for the **MANDATORY South Georgia Biosecurity**. When called, please bring all your outer garments, bags, boots, life jackets, tripods, etc. that you plan to use in South Georgia for the expedition staff to check. Please make sure everything is clean before proceeding to the Bar and ensure you sign the self-declaration form once you have approved by the Expedition Team.

PLEASE PUT THE BLINDS DOWN IN YOUR CABINS BEFORE DINNER! DECK 3 & 4 PORTHOLES MUST REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL WE LEAVE SOUTH GEORGIA!

"Sailors, with their built-in sense of order, service, and discipline, should really be running the world." - Nicholas Monsarrat



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 16 February 2025

Day 6 Grytviken and St Andrews Bay

06:45 Wake-up call.

07:00-08:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

On arrival we have to clear customs, during this time there will be a short presentation in the lounge by the South Georgia Heritage Team about their recent work and the rat eradication project.

Before going ashore, we will be individually inspected at the gangway, this can be a timely process so please be patient. We hope to land you near the two shipwrecks in front of the museum, you can then visit the church, museum, post office, and gallery.

IMPORTANT:

- Do not enter any of the old whaling buildings.
- Do not sit, kneel, crouch or put anything on the ground.
- You can only use credit or debit cards. No cash or American Express accepted.
- Please do not take tripods or monopods ashore.
- If you would like to make a toast to Sir Ernest Shackleton, please be at the cemetery either at 10:30 or 11:00.
- There will be a 30 min tour of the Whaling Station leaving at 10:00 from in front of the museum.

12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

14:00 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap.

16:00+/- We would like to invite you to the gangway for a landing at St Andrews.

20:00 Dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

PLEASE PUT THE BLINDS DOWN IN YOUR CABINS BEFORE DINNER! DECK 3 & 4 PORTHOLES MUST REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL WE LEAVE SOUTH

"Human effort is not futile, but man fights against the giant force of nature in a spirit of humility." - Sir Ernest Shackleton



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 17 February 2025

Day 7 Gold Harbour

- 06:45 Wake-up call.
- 07:00-08:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 08:15+/- We hope to start disembarkation for a landing at Gold Harbour.
- 08:15 Please can the divers meet the dive team on the Zodiac deck.
- 12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 13:00 For those of you who have signed up for the sextant and navigational workshop please meet Tennessee on the bridge.
- 16:15 Chris invites you to Bar for a lecture about making islands predator free.
- 18:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap and a celebratory toast to our 100% South Georgia Biosecurity result.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

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



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 18 February 2025

Day 8 Zavodovski Island

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

09:15 Please join Gary in the Bar for a presentation about Whale Identification.

11:30 Allan invites you to the Bar for an Introduction to South Sandwich Islands

Please remember to sign up at reception for your activity groups before midday

12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

13:30 For those of you who have signed up for the sextant and navigational workshop please meet Tennessee on the bridge.

Late afternoon we hope to approach Zavodovski Island, which is the Northernmost island of the South Sandwich Islands. Depending on the weather and sea conditions we might be able to offer a Zodiac cruise, so please listen to announcements.

18:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap.

19:00 Dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

"Mystery creates wonder, and wonder is the basis of man's desire to understand..." - Neil Armstrong



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 19 February 2025

Day 9 Saunders, Thule and Cook Islands

- 04:30+/- We aim to be at Saunders Island around sunrise, we encourage you to join us on the bridge and outside decks before we continue to sail south towards Bristol Island and Freezland Rock which was the first rock to be sighted on 31 January 1775 by a sailor named Freezland on James Cook's HMS Resolution.
- 07:45 Wake-up call.
- 08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 09:15 Chloe invites you to the Bar for a lecture titled 'Drifting life Part 1 - Floating Forests: Phytoplankton's Vital Role in the Southern Ocean'.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 13:30 For those of you who have signed up for the sextant and navigational workshop please meet Tennessee on the bridge.
- Midafternoon we will sail between Thule and Cook Island, the southernmost islands of the archipelago. If the weather allows, we hope to offer a Zodiac cruise and diving, please listen to announcements.
- 18:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

Please note the clocks will go back 1 hour tonight.

"Traveling – it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller" – Ibn Battuta



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 20 February 2025

Day 10 Heading towards Antarctica

- 07:45 Wake-up call.
- 08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 09:30 Please join Sara in the Bar for the **Mandatory Helicopter Briefing**.
- 11:30 Matilda invites you to the Bar for an Introduction to Ice.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 13:30 For those of you who have signed up for the sextant and navigational workshop please meet Tennessee on the bridge.
- 13:30 For those of you who have signed up for the Plankton Workshop please meet Chloe and Clara in the Bar.
- 16:15 Please join Tennessee in the Bar for his lecture Pray for Shackleton - Part 2.
- 18:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 20:30 There will be a screening of the documentary 'Lake of Fire' in the Bar (45mins) which tells the story of Mount Michael, the live volcano on Saunders Island in the South Sandwich Islands.

"The first great thing is to find yourself and for that you need solitude and contemplation - at least sometimes. I can tell you deliverance will not come from the rushing noisy centres of civilization. It will come from lonely places"- Fridtjof Nansen.



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 21 February 2025

Day 11 Crossing the Antarctic Circle

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

09:15 Please join Phil in the Bar for a presentation about his snow mobile journey down the Antarctic Peninsula.

During the morning you will be called to the Bar by your activity group number for the **MANDATORY Helicopter Drill**. We will gather you in groups of either 4 or 5 people and escort you to the Heli deck. Please wear your Muck boots, waterproof clothing, life jackets and bring your camera bags, ruck sacks, helicopter key card and signed helicopter declaration form. We will start with Group 1 and work upwards (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 and 9). This will be a timely process so please do not come to the bar before you are called.

10:00-10:30 Groups 1-4 meet Tennessee on the bridge to take the midday meridian reading to determine latitude in celebration of crossing the Antarctic Circle. Groups 5-9 will meet Tennessee on the bridge at 10:30.

12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

13:30 Plankton workshop in the Bar with Chloe and Clara for those signed up.

16:00 Join Sara in the Bar for a lecture about Seals of the Southern Ocean.

18:00 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap.

18:30 Dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

20:00 **HAPPY HOUR IN THE BAR!**



20:30 South Georgia Heritage Trust Auction in the Bar. We will be auctioning off a selection of unique items and experiences, please donate generously.

"It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves" – Sir Edmund Hillary



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 22 February 2025

Day 12 Approaching Neuschwabenland, Queen Maud Land.

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

09:15 Gary invites you to join him in the Bar for a presentation about overwintering at an Australian Antarctic Station.

11:15 Tennessee invites you to join him in the Bar for a short presentation about Neuschwabenland.



From midday you will be able to pick up your
**Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic
Expedition Quiz Book from Luce at reception.**
Let the search begin!



12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

After lunch we will call you deck by deck for the **MANDATORY Antarctic Biosecurity** inspection. When called, please bring all your outer garments, bags, boots, life jackets, tripods, etc. that you plan to use in Antarctica for the expedition staff to check. Please make sure everything is clean before proceeding to the Bar and ensure you sign the self-declaration form once you have approved by the Expedition Team.

Mid-afternoon we hope to be approaching Neuschwabenland, Queen Maud Land so encourage people to be out on deck to hopefully gain their first views of the Antarctic Continent.

18:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap.

19:00 Dinner will be served outside, please dress warmly.

"The use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are." - Samuel Johnson



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 23 February 2025

Day 13 Queen Maud Land

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

We hope to take you for a scenic flight over Queen Maud Land, and if possible, a short landing on the ice shelf. The final decision will be made with the pilots in the morning so please listen to announcements. As you appreciate, helicopter operations take a significant time, so please be patient, we will keep you updated as we have more information.

As and when your group is called, please proceed to the Bar, ensuring you have your numbered helicopter card with you and clearly visible. Please dress warmly, in waterproof clothing and with your Muck boots. On arrival in the bar, we will deactivate both canisters in your lifejacket.

We will be starting with Group 1 and continue in the following order (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 and 9).

When you return to the ship, please ensure you are swiped back in, and your canisters are reactivated in your lifejacket by a member of staff.

12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

16:15 Faith invites you to Bar for a lecture titled 'What lies beneath the waves in Antarctica?'

18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!

19:00 Dinner is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

"The continent has become a symbol of our time. The test of man's willingness to pull back from the destruction of the Antarctic wilderness is the test also of his willingness to avert destruction globally. If he cannot succeed in Antarctica he has little chance of success elsewhere."- Edwin Mickleburgh



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 24 February 2025

Day 14 Riiser-Larsen Iceshelf

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

09:15 Chloe invites you to the Bar for a presentation titled 'Drifting life part 2 - Zooplankton Diversity: A Hidden Universe Beneath the Waves'.

11:30 Matilda welcomes you to the Bar for a lecture about glaciers.

12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

13:30 For those of you who have signed up for the Plankton Workshop please meet Chloe and Clara in the Bar.

13:30 For those of you who have signed up for the Diving Workshop please meet Peter and Henrik in the reception, please dress warmly. (Please note this is intended for non-divers only)

16:15 Please join Tennessee in the Bar for Part 3 of 'Pray for Shackleton'.

An Expedition Day along the Riiser-Larsen Iceshelf, all timings are subject to change depending on weather and wildlife sightings and if there are any opportunities to do any off-ship activities, so please listen to announcements.

18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!

19:00 Dinner is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

"I have come to the conclusion that life in the Antarctic Regions can be very pleasant." - Scott (1868—1912) at the end of the Discovery expedition.



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 25 February 2025

Day 15 Brunt Iceshelf

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

09:15 Please join Gary in the Bar for a lecture about the Life history of Emperor Penguins.

11:30 Please join Sara in the Bar for a presentation about behind the scenes on the M/V Ortelius.

12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

13:30 For those of you who have signed up for the sextant and navigational workshop, part 2, please meet Tennessee on the bridge.

13:30 For those of you who have signed up for the Plankton Workshop please meet Chloe and Clara in the Bar.

16:15 Allan invites you to join him in the Bar for a presentation titled 'Sledge Dogs; Unsung Heroes of Antarctic Exploration'.

An Expedition Day along the Brunt Iceshelf, all timings are subject to change depending on weather and wildlife sightings and if there are any opportunities to do any off-ship activities.

18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!

19:00 Dinner is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

"Having an adventure shows that someone is incompetent, that something has gone wrong. An adventure is interesting enough — in retrospect. Especially to the person who didn't have it." - Vilhjalmur Stefansson



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 26 February 2025

Day 16 Vahsel Bay

07:15 Wake-up call.

07:30-08:30 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

We hope to take you for a scenic flight over Vahsel Bay, and if possible, a short landing on the ice shelf. The final decision will be made with the pilots in the morning so please listen to announcements. As you appreciate, helicopter operations take a significant time, so please be patient, we will keep you updated as we have more information.

As and when your group is called, please proceed to the Bar, ensuring you have your numbered helicopter card with you and clearly visible. Please dress warmly, in waterproof clothing and with your Muck boots. On arrival in the bar, we will deactivate both canisters in your lifejacket.

We will be starting with Group 3 and continue in the following order (4,5,6,7,8,9,1 and 2).

12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

We hope to offer another off-ship activity in the afternoon depending on ice and weather conditions.

18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!

19:00 Dinner is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

"As we sever connection with our fellow men to follow a mirage in the frozen south, the mind falls into reverie. Doubt, apprehension, inspiration and determination come crowding. What tremendous events may transpire while we are locked away in the great white silence?" - excerpted from diary of Frank Hurley



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 27 February 2025

Day 17 Berkner Island

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

We hope to take you for a scenic flight over Berkner Island, and if possible, with a short landing. The final decision will be made with the pilots in the morning so please listen to announcements. As you appreciate, helicopter operations take a significant time, so please be patient, we will keep you updated as we have more information.

As and when your group is called, please proceed to the Bar, ensuring you have your numbered helicopter card with you and clearly visible. Please dress warmly, in waterproof clothing and with your Muck boots. On arrival in the bar, we will deactivate both canisters in your lifejacket.

We will be starting with Group 6 and continue in the following order (6,7,8,9,1,2,3,4 and 5).

12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

We hope to offer another off-ship activity in the afternoon depending on ice and weather conditions.

18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!

19:00 Dinner is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."- T.S. Eliot



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 28 February 2025

Day 18 Weddell Sea

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

09:15 Tennessee invites you to his lecture 'Pray for Shackleton - Part 4' in the Bar.

11:30 Please join Chris for his presentation about his time working at Scott Base.

12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

13:30 For those that have signed up for the crevasse rescue workshop please meet Phil and Clara in the Bar.

13:30 For those that have signed up for the final navigational workshop please meet Tennessee on the bridge.

16:15 Claudio invites you to the Bar for a presentation about Climate change: looking into the problem through science.

18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!

19:00 Dinner is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

20:30+/- We invite you to join the team in the Bar for a pub style quiz, please make teams of 2-5 people, think of a team name and bring a pen! Questions will be about this voyage, staff and crew.

"Difficulties are just things to overcome after all." - Sir Ernest Shackleton from the heart of Antarctica



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 1 March 2025

Day 19 Heading up through the Weddell Sea

- 07:45 Wake-up call.
- 08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 09:15 Please join Clara in the Bar for a presentation about working at an Argentinean Antarctic Station.
- 10:00 For those who have signed up, please join Claudio in the bar for a video editing workshop.
- 11:30 Sara invites you to the Bar for a lecture about Marine Threats.
- 12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 13:30 For those who have signed up please join Phil and Clara in the Bar for their crevasse rescue workshop.
- 13:30/14:30 For those who have signed up please join Mario in the Bar for a helicopter demonstration, please dress warmly as it will be in the Heli hanger.
- 16:15 Please join Gary in the Bar for a presentation about Sea Ice: formation and navigation.
- 18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!
- 19:00 Dinner is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 20:30 Happy Hour in the Bar! Followed by karaoke with the staff and crew.



"But who wants to be foretold the weather? It is bad enough when it comes, without our having the misery of knowing about it beforehand." - Jerome K. Jerome



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 2 March 2025

Day 20 Following the ice edge

- 07:45 Wake-up call.
- 08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 09:15 Matilda invites you to the Bar for a lecture about Volcanos in Antarctica.
- 10:00 For those who have signed up, please join Claudio in the bar for a video editing workshop.
- 11:30 Please join Chloe in the Bar for her lecture titled 'Drifting life part 2 - The Life and Legacy of Krill: Guardians of Antarctic Biodiversity'.
- 12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 13:30 For those who have signed up please join Phil and Clara in the Bar for their crevasse rescue workshop.
- 13:30/14:30 For those who have signed up please join Mario in the Bar for a helicopter demonstration, please dress warmly as it will be in the Heli hanger.
- 15:00 For those that have signed up for the first aid workshop with Doctor Amar, please meet him at reception.
- 16:15 Please join Allan in the Bar for a lecture about an early season icebreaker voyage to the Weddell Sea.
- 18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!
- 19:00 Dinner is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

Half the fascination an Antarctic expedition possesses is to be found in the sharpness of the contrasts experienced during its course, for it appears to be true that a hell one day is liable to make a heaven the next." - Raymond Priestley.



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 3 March 2025

Day 21 Northern Weddell Sea

- 07:45 Wake-up call.
- 08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 09:15 Clara invites you to the Bar for a short presentation about Mate: An Argentinean Passion.
- 10:00 For those who have signed up, please join Claudio in the Bar for a video editing workshop.
- 11:30 Jens welcomes you to the Bar for a lecture titled, 'A Race to the South Pole'.
- 12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 13:30 For those who have signed up please join Phil and Clara in the Bar for their crevasse rescue workshop.
- 13:30/14:30 For those who have signed up please join Mario in the Bar for a helicopter demonstration, please dress warmly as it will be in the Heli hanger.
- 15:00 For those that have signed up for the first aid workshop with our doctor Amar, please meet him in reception.
- 16:15 Join Chris in the Bar for a screening of short videos he made whilst working in Antarctica.
- 18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 20:30 Happy Feet will be screen in the Bar, with Popcorn!

"I own myself one of those who do not fear the shore, for hardly any great things are done in a small ship by a man that does." - Admiral Lord Nelson



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 4 March 2025

Day 23 Approaching the Antarctic Peninsula

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

09:00 For those who have signed up please join Mario in the Bar for a helicopter demonstration, please dress warmly as it will be in the Heli hanger.

09:15 Bernd Konantz invites you to join him for a lecture about his time working at the German Antarctic research station Neumayer.

10:00 For those who have signed up, please join Claudio in the bar for a video editing workshop.

10:00 For those who have signed up please join Mario in the Bar for a helicopter demonstration, please dress warmly as it will be in the Heli hanger.

11:30 Please join Tennessee in the Bar for his presentation titled 'James Clark Ross: The Man, the Myth, The Legend... Part 1'.

12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

Depending on ice conditions and wildlife sightings, we would like to offer an off-ship activity this afternoon, so please listen to announcements for further details.

18:00 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!

18:30 Dinner will be served outside, please dress warmly.

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." - Albert Einstein



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 5 March 2025

Day 23 Iceberg A76c

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

We hope to visit iceberg A76c. Upon arrival we will look at what options there are for flying, diving and cruising, so please listen to announcements.

If we are able to offer helicopter operations, we will be starting with Group 2 and continue in the following order (2,1,9,8,7,6,5,4 and 3).

Depending on what off ship activities we offer, we will tailor our lecture and workshop plan accordingly.

12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!

19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

20:30 We will screen the new Shackleton Movie about finding the Endurance, which was done three years ago to the day.

"The land looks like a fairytale." - Roald Amundsen (1872—1928) about Antarctica



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 6 March 2025

Day 24 Ice Edge

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

Depending on weather and ice conditions we hope to offer a Zodiac cruise and diving in the morning, please listen to announcements for exact timings.

12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

13:30 For those who have signed up please join Phil and Clara in the Bar for their crevasse rescue workshop.

13:30/14:30 For those who have signed up please join Mario in the Bar for a helicopter demonstration, please dress warmly as it will be in the Heli hanger.

15:00 For those that have signed up for the first aid workshop with our doctor Amar, please meet him in reception.

15:00 For those that have signed up please meet Claudio at reception for your video editing workshop.

16:15 Please join Gary in the Bar for a presentation titled 'The Truth about South Polar Skuas'.

18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap!

19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

"It was a first-rate tragedy, but tragedy was not our business." - Apsley Cherry-Garrard on the fate of Captain Robert Scott



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 7 March 2025

Day 25: Elephant Island, Point Wild

06:45 Wake up call.

07:30-08:30 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

We will spend the morning ship cruising Elephant Island, passing by Cape Valentine. Mid-morning we hope to arrive at Point Wild. It was named for Frank Wild, leader of the party from Shackleton's shipwrecked expedition which camped and managed to survive on the point for four and a half months until they were rescued on 30 August 1916.

If the swell and wind conditions allow, we hope to offer a short Zodiac cruise to get a closer look at this historic site, in particular the bust of Captain Luis Alberto Pardo, who was the commander of the Chilean Navy cutter Yelcho who rescued the 22 men from the island.

12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

13:30/14:30 For those who have signed up please join Mario in the Bar for a helicopter demonstration, please dress warmly as it will be in the Heli hanger.

13:30 For those who have signed up, please join Claudio in the bar for a video editing workshop.

16:15 Doctor Amar welcomes you to the Bar for a presentation about cold water immersion.

18:15 Please join the Expedition Team in the Bar for recap.

19:00 Dinner will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.

20:30 After dinner there will be a quiz for the Expedition Team, made by the passengers, about the passengers. As our very own Tennessee would say... what could possibly go wrong!

"Soon after we were hauling ashore the scant amount that was left of our stores and dragging our boats on to what appeared to us the promised land. We did not know elephant island then - that it was nothing more than a gigantic mass of rock, carrying on its back a vast sheet of ice." - excerpt from Endurance by Frank Worsley



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 8 March 2025

Day 26: Drake Passage.

- 07:45 Wake-up call.
- 08:00-09:00 Buffet breakfast will be served in the Dining Room on Deck 4.
- 09:15 Gary welcomes you to the Bar for a presentation about his research on Emperor Penguins.
- 11:15 Please join Tennessee in the Bar for a presentation titled 'Life in the Freezer' about his time working at Union Glacier.
- 12:15 We will call you to the Lecture Room to return your Muck boots and hire rental clothing, helicopter cards and red waterproof bags.
- 12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 16:15 Chloe invites you to the Bar for her lecture titled 'Umwelt: How the animal might sense the world'.
- 18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for recap! There will be some important information given about disembarkation, settling accounts etc. therefore, we encourage at least one person from each group to attend.
- 19:00 Plated dinner is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 20:30 Part 2 of the Pub Quiz in the Bar.

PLEASE NOTE: Upon arrival in Ushuaia, we will provide free busses to the airport for morning flights only, at 09:00 a.m. Please get from Reception a **Blue** luggage tag if you would like this service. For the Guests with afternoon flights, we will transfer your luggage to the drop-off center (1210 Av. Maipu), and you will need to pick up your luggage before 14:00 hrs. No luggage tag is required for this service, you just need to indicate your luggage at the pier and ensure the stewadors load it into the truck. For guests who have their own transportation or planning to stay in Ushuaia, please wait till the ship is cleared by the port agent and you are free to go, no luggage tag is required for this.

"Notorious for violent storms which quickly turn a moderate sea into violent confusion, turmoil and mountainous waves." - Shackleton describing the Drake Passage.



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 9 March 2025

Day 27: Approaching South America.

07:45 Wake-up call.

08:00-09:00 Breakfast buffet will be served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

After breakfast you will be able to settle your accounts at reception, please ensure your account is settled before 17:00 at the latest.

09:15 Allan invites you to the Bar for a lecture titled 'The Curious Case of Admiral Byrd's Antarctic Snow Cruiser'.

11:30 Please join the divers for a short presentation about what they saw on this trip.

12:30-13:30 A buffet lunch is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

Late afternoon we will be disembarking our helicopters at the entrance of the Beagle Channel. We invite you out on deck to say a fond farewell to our DAP team as they fly off M/V Ortelius for their final time this season.

18:15 Join the Expedition Staff in the Bar for Captain's Farewell Cocktails and a viewing of the slideshow.

A copy of the voyage slideshow will be available for collection from the Bar after dinner, please bring a USB or similar, or we can help airdrop it to Apple devices.

19:00 Dinner is served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

"An Antarctic expedition is the worst way to have the best time of your life." - Apsley Cherry-Garrard



Remote Weddell Sea Explorer

Date: 10 March 2025

Day 28: Ushuaia.

07:15 Wake-up call.

Please ensure your luggage is outside your room before 07:15am.

07:30-08:30 Breakfast buffet will be served in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

PLEASE NOTE: Upon arrival in Ushuaia, we will provide free busses to the airport for morning flights only, at 09:00 a.m. Please get from Reception a **Blue** luggage tag if you would like this service. For the Guests with afternoon flights, we will transfer your luggage to the drop-off center (1210 Av. Maipu), and you will need to pick up your luggage before 14:00 hrs. No luggage tag is required for this service, you just need to indicate your luggage at the pier and ensure the stewadors load it into the truck. For guests who have their own transportation or planning to stay in Ushuaia, please wait till the ship is cleared by the port agent and you are free to go, no luggage tag is required for this.

08:30+/- We invite all guests to disembark.

From all the Expedition Team and Crew on board the MV Ortelius, we wish you safe onward travel and thank you for sharing this incredible voyage with us. We look forward to sailing with you again in the future.

"It's when you are safe at home that you're having an adventure. When you're having an adventure, you wish you were safe at home." - Thorton Wilder