

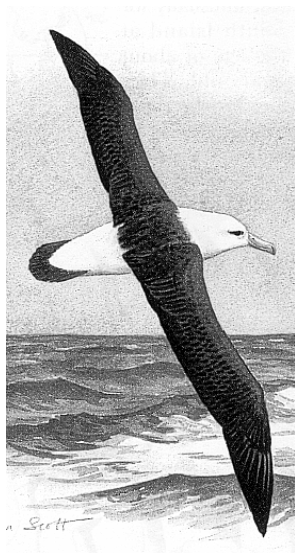


RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:

SPASIBA - Thank you

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

—Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer Abroad*



Position at 2245 on 03 Nov
Latitude: 54°58' S
Longitude: 66°51' W
Course: 125°
Speed: 12 knots
Barometer: 993.9 hPa & steady
Wind: 10 knots from SE
Air temperature: 5° C
Sea temperature: 4° C

PENGUIN POST

South Atlantic Ocean

Tuesday 04 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

After weeks of excited anticipation and long, long flights from around the world, we were finally brought together at the southerly outpost of Ushuaia for the start of our South Georgia and Antarctic Peninsula adventures.

We boarded *Polar Pioneer* on an afternoon of seemingly confused weather in Ushuaia. The strong winds buffeted our bodies and threatened to blow us straight down and off the pier. In the distance, the blue sky provided a brilliant contrast to the snowy peaks of the surrounding mountain range.

Onboard we total 48 expeditioners representing Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA - along with 11 Aurora Expeditions staff and 22 Russian crew.

Once settled into our cabins we explored the ship, ventured down to the dining rooms for afternoon tea then clambered up and down the various staircases. Just before 17:00, Expedition Leader Judd called us to the bar on Deck 4 for an introductory briefing. After welcoming us and speaking briefly about our plans for the coming days, Judd then introduced the expedition team, and trio of talented photographic guides.

The sound of seven-short-one-long from the ship's horn was our signal to don bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster station on Deck 4 behind the bar, to sample the ambience of a Polar Class life vessel. Even without a full

complement of Russian crew, the seating arrangements in the 40-person lifeboats proved cosy and gave us pause for thought.

The flying bridge and outer decks were the place to enjoy our departure as we slipped our moorings and blew(!) away from the pier. The wind continued to pick up as we started to motor down the Beagle, but we were still able to enjoy some of the last of the evening light before getting too cold and blown about. The colours of Ushuaia receded into the distance, and it wasn't long before we caught sight of a range of birds including cormorants, kelp gulls, giant petrels, and South American terns.

We all managed to find our way down to Deck 3 for dinner - perhaps due to the delicious smells wafting out from the galley? Over a tasty meal prepared by our chefs Kirsty and Heather, we took the opportunity to get to know our fellow shipmates. We were also able to wish Martyn a very happy birthday through our dulcet group singing attempt.

Today - the 4th of November - we will be on our own at sea. With windy conditions we hope seabirds large and small will be enticed to accompany our course towards the Falkland Islands. The bridge is the place to marvel at the open ocean and its avian inhabitants.

Let the day unfold, kick back, and take in the wonders of the South Atlantic as we motor toward the Falkland Islands. Let the voyage begin!

- 0800 Self-serve buffet-style breakfast in the two dining rooms (Deck 3)
- 0930 The "Great Gumboot Giveaway" - Lecture Rm (Deck 2)
Please wait for your Deck to be called. Bring thick socks.
- 1100 Mandatory Environmental briefing - Lecture Rm (Deck 2)
- 1300 Lunch in the dining rooms (Deck 3)
- 1430 Mandatory Zodiac briefing - Lecture Rm (Deck 2)
- 1600 Presentation: "Nature Photography 101" with Andy & Josh - Lecture Rm
- 1830 Captain's Welcome Drinks, in the Bar (Deck 4)
- 1930 Dinner in the dining rooms (Deck 3)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to ANTHONY PONZO

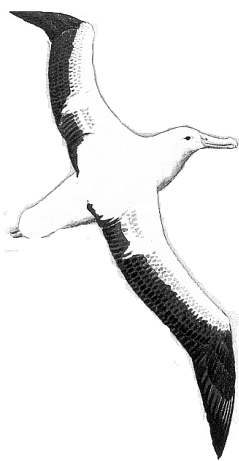


JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
DOBRYAYE UTRA
– *Good Morning*

*For sheer downright
misery, give me a
hurricane, not too warm,
the yard of a sailing ship, a
wet sail, and a bout of
seasickness.*

—Apsley Cherry-Garrard



Position at 2100 on 04 Nov

Latitude: 52°50' S

Longitude: 62°15' W

Course: 023°

Speed: 8.5 knots

Barometer: 998.6 hPa & steady

Wind: 16 knots from NNW

Air temperature: 6° C

Sea temperature: 6° C

PENGUIN POST

Falkland Islands: New Island; West Point Island

Wednesday 05 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

Eighty percent is a pretty good rate of attendance at breakfast on our first day out at sea. Although, it was noted that the enthusiasm for scrambled eggs and porridge did wane fairly quickly for some ... disappearing green-faced back to their bunks.

Mal de mer is an indiscriminate beast – ambushing stomachs regardless of gender, age, size, or indeed sea experience. Thankfully, our Delightful Doctor Helen (aka the 'Phenergan Fairy') was seen scurrying from cabin to cabin with her blue bag of goodies with which to administer to some of us.

The "Great Gumboot Giveaway" was the first activity of the day. Steve, Eirik and Lizzy doubled as charming shoe fitters, equipping us with rubbery boots to keep our feet warm and dry.

Despite the continued rolling and rocking, lunchtime saw a slight increase in percentage of rosy-cheeked versus green-gilled shipmates. And so discussions turned to coping mechanisms on an undulating ship:

- 1) Although the dramatically changing angle of the curtains above your bunk may be fascinating, fight the urge to focus on them for any length of time if you are feeling at all queasy;
- 2) Should your body continue to slide up, then down your bunk *ad infinitum*, consider sewing yourself a pair of "elephant skin" or Velcro pyjamas (with matching sheets);
- 3) Embrace the *Polar Pioneer Waltz* – often spied at the junctions of

companionways and stairways. Always wait for the ship to roll one way before attempting to move in the same direction. A few short side steps may assist in avoiding collision with fellow passengers.

The bridge was the place to be for most of the day for those who made it from their bunks. With an impressive set of rolling waves around us, a number of wandering albatross, black-browed albatross, giant petrels and cape petrels wheeled and soared around the ship. A pod of orcas was also spied off in the distance.

Given the far-from-100% of people able to tolerate extended time out of their bunks, it was decided to shuffle or postpone some of our afternoon activities. And so, the rest of the afternoon was a relatively quiet one around the ship. After a Zodiac operations briefings where we learnt about how we'd get in and out of our black rubbery rides, the decks fell silent once more. The small sprinkling of bridge-goers were blessed with some more albatross sightings, and we were all blessed with a (ever so slightly) calming sea.

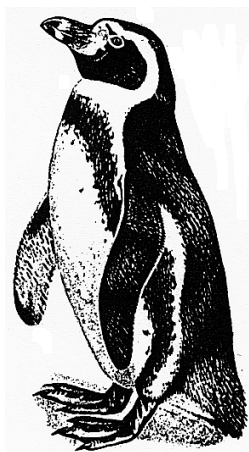
Today – Wednesday 5th November – we will have our first adventures off the ship. We plan to land at New Island in the morning, and take a short walk to see some of the critters the Falkland Islands has to offer. In the afternoon we will visit West Point Island.

0630	Buffet style self-serve breakfast in the two dining rooms (Deck 3).
0730	Landing: New Island
1230	Lunch in the dining rooms (Deck 3).
PM	Landing at West Point Island
1845	Captain's Welcome Drinks (Attempt #2) - in the bar (Deck 4).
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms (Deck 3)



RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
NA ZDAROVYA!
– Cheers!

*I now belong to the higher
cult of mortals, for I have
seen the albatross.*
—Robert Cushman
Murphy



Position at 2105 on 05 Nov
Latitude: 51°10' S
Longitude: 60°10' W
Course: 084°
Speed: 11 knots
Barometer: 991.9 hPa & falling
Wind: 12 knots from NW
Air temperature: 7° C
Sea temperature: 6° C

PENGUIN POST

Falkland Islands: Port Stanley

Thursday 06 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

As we were awoken this morning, bright and early in anticipation of our first landing ashore, the first thing of note was the gloriously still movement of the ship. Gone were the big rolling swells of 24 hours previously, a great start!

From early on the excitement of our upcoming first landing at New Island was palpable and it was soon time to start the big clothing bundle up. Everyone took to their cabins to dig out their thermals, fleeces, hats, gloves and everything in-between before emerging on deck looking snugly and warm. Tags turned, lifejackets donned and boots washed, it was time for the adventure to really start. We descended down the gangway to the zodiacs, driven by Judd, Steve or Valeriy, took our seats and were off!

New Island gave us a rare treat, and after a short uphill stroll we were on the blustery cliffs, surrounded by hundreds of nesting black browed albatross. The beautiful scenery was set off by the sun emerging from behind the clouds just as we arrived, with the albatross swooping in-between us to land at there nests, it was truly a delight to behold. There was also the ever endearing rockhopper penguins to watch, weaving around the albatross and carrying on busily hopping about in small groups. This was only the tip of the iceberg for bird life, with Eirik excitedly moving around spotting striated caracaras, upland geese and ruddy-headed geese. All too quickly it

was time to head back over the island to the awaiting Zodiacs to take us back to shore, where we were given a splendid send off from a small pod of Peale's dolphins before heading back to the *Polar Pioneer*.

The afternoon held yet more excitement with a trip to West Point Island. A beautiful walk across the island led to a busy rockhopper colony, living in perfect harmony with yet more nesting black browed albatross. This amazing sight led to wonderful photo opportunities, for professionals and amateurs alike. The entire population of the island (Kiki and Theiss) provided a delicious afternoon tea in their self sufficient home. Meanwhile, the intrepid kayakers made their way along the coast and had a plethora of wildlife encounters: including an elephant seal, fur seals, and gentoo penguins. During a short tea break on the beach, five plucky caracaras descended upon the kayaks with beaks and claws.

Back on board, bodies leapt in and out of showers and we donned our fancier gear for Captain's Welcome drinks. We were able to toast Captain Yury, his officers and crew while we nibbled on some delicious canapés and washed them down with Elena and Lea's punch.

Today – the 6th of November – we will have the opportunity to explore the historical town of Stanley. Be sure to take some cash (GBP and USD) and your credit card if you'd like to buy a few postcards or souvenirs. After lunch we will start our course for South Georgia.

0730 AM	Buffet style self-serve breakfast in the two dining rooms (Deck 3). Stanley landing
1230	Lunch in the dining rooms (Deck 3).
1600	Presentation by Eirik, " Stormriders: Seabirds of the Southern Ocean"
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms (Deck 3)



JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

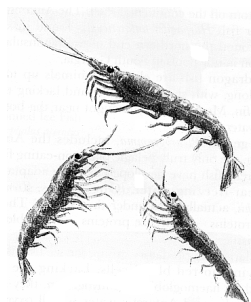
RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:

DOBRY DYEN

– *Good Afternoon*

*I must go down to the sea
again, to the vagrant
gypsy life,
To the gulls way and the
whales way where the
wind's like a whetted
knife...*

—John Mansfield



Position at 2106 on 06 Nov

Latitude: 51°56' S

Longitude: 55°17' W

Course: 097°

Speed: 12 knots

Barometer: 985.3 hPa & rising

Wind: 8 knots from N

Air temperature: 6° C

Sea temperature: 6° C

PENGUIN POST

South Atlantic Ocean

Friday 07 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

After a night of rocking and rolling

around the northern end of the Falkland Islands, we arrived early in the morning at the picturesque Port Stanley. After transferring to the pontoon via Zodiac, we quickly scattered throughout the town. The museum proved a very popular attraction, with an fantastic collection of artefacts, and a very thought provoking exhibit on the Falklands war. Others took delight in photographing the bright-coloured roofs of the white-washed houses, the windswept sea front with its historic shipwrecks and birdlife, or the large whale jawbone arch next to the church. The more tech-savvy members of our expedition headed straight for the various wifi hotspots to log on, make contact with home and share some photos and stories with friends and family around the world.

Postcards sent, penguin paraphernalia purchased and it was time to get back into the Zodiacs for a short but choppy ride back to the *Polar Pioneer*, the accompanying Commerson's dolphins, however, were a welcome distraction from the occasional spray over the boat.

The Falklands (Islas Malvinas to the Argentines) had no native people when first discovered by European navigators in 1592. The first intermittent settlements, by sealers and whalers, were established in 1764 through 1831, with the first permanent settlement only in 1833. Although ruled by Britain since then, the islands are also claimed by Argentina, and in 1982 the two countries fought a brief but bloody war in the Falklands. Several large mine-fields near Stanley, now fenced and off-limits, are a legacy of that

conflict.

And so came to an end our visit to the Falkland Islands, a visit that will stay with all of us for a long time to come. With thoughts of nesting albatross, rockhopper penguins, rugged sea-cliffs, and friendly locals (not to mention a bountiful afternoon tea), the anchor was swiftly lifted and so began our passage to South Georgia.

After yet another wonderful meal prepared by Kirsty and Heather it was time for the first of our lectures. Building on our anticipation and excitement for our visit to South Georgia, Eirik delivered a brilliant talk on "Stormriders: Seabirds of the Southern Ocean". We learned all sorts of interesting facts about albatross, petrels and shearwaters. For instance, a grey headed albatross can circumnavigate the globe in just 46 days! As well as teaching us about these magnificent creatures it was also a lesson in conservation and the fragility of these ecosystems. After the lecture the number of people on the bridge and the stern deck had greatly increased, with everyone inspired to take a closer (and more educated) look!

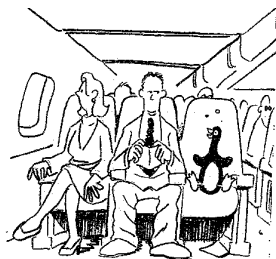
Today – 7th November - will be a full day at sea. With this comes plenty of opportunities to take to the bridge or decks to spot wildlife, or just be mesmerised by the rolling seas. Eirik will often be found on the bridge spotting seabirds as they accompany the ship towards South Georgia. There will also be presentations to suit all tastes, and of course three tasty meals to keep everyone happy. Enjoy!

0800	Buffet style self-serve breakfast in the two dining rooms (Deck 3).
0930	Presentation by Josh & Andy: "Lightroom Processing" (Lecture Rm)
1100	Presentation by Steve: "History of People & Penguins" (Lecture Rm)
1300	Lunch in the dining rooms (Deck 3).
1600	Presentation by Eirik "Giants of the Sea: Whales" (Lecture Rm)
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms (Deck 3)

☆☆☆HAPPY BIRTHDAY to SALLY☆☆☆

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
KAK DYELA?
– *How are you?*

*Who would believe in
penguins unless someone
had seen them?*
—Connor O'Brien



*"I'm kinda nervous. I've never
flown before."*

NOTE FROM HOTEL WORLD

If you would like to pay your final shipboard account by credit card, please listen for an announcement today – you will be able to provide your credit card details to the Hotel Managers in order to speed up accounts at the end of the voyage.

Position at 2104 on 07 Nov
Latitude: 52°44' S
Longitude: 48°07' W
Course: 100°
Speed: 10.5 knots
Barometer: 982.6 hPa & steady
Wind: 16 knots from N
Air temperature: 6° C
Sea temperature: 6° C

PENGUIN POST

South Atlantic Ocean

Saturday 08 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

The morning broke beautiful and sunny, and with the South Atlantic having been kind to us overnight there was very nearly full turn-out at breakfast.

After a delicious breakfast, the day's entertainment quickly got into full swing, starting with a lecture from Josh on how to use the Lightroom workflow software to enhance images. A full lecture room was testament to the enthusiasm of all the photographers on board, as well as the fact that the battle against sea sickness was almost over.

Inspired, the bar was quickly full of laptops and busy groups editing their photos from our previous days adventures. Equally busy were the outer decks and the bridge as new images were captured of wandering albatross soaring with ease around the ship. They were also joined by light-mantled sooty albatross and black-bellied storm petrels.

The hours seemed to melt away and before we knew it, it was time for Steve to enlighten us all on the history of penguins and humans. This was a great insight into the way humans view penguins, and how they have been used as a symbol by government lobbyists, human rights groups and climate change activists, as well as a marketing tool for everything from ice-cream, to chocolate bars and even cigarettes! We were also shown a rare

and exciting short clip of flying penguins! (Although the authenticity of this BBC clip is definitely debatable!)

After lunch most people took the opportunity for a siesta to re-charge the batteries for the evening, although the occasional keen photographer could be spied on the stern deck getting some extra shots of our accompanying seabirds, and just enjoying the view.

Mid-afternoon, Eirik gave yet another fascinating lecture on "Giants of the Sea: Whales". This gave us the opportunity to learn more about these gentle giants that we will hopefully be seeing on our journey down south.

Over dinner we wished Sally a very Happy Birthday with an enthusiastic sing song, and the celebrations definitely continued in the bar after dinner.

Today – 8th November – is another full day at sea. Today we will start our biosecurity measures for South Georgia, including showing a short film, and undertaking the all-important vacuuming of our outer clothing and backpacks. There will also be plenty of opportunity to enjoy the view, keep an eye out for wildlife, and relax in the bar as we continue our voyage to South Georgia.

0800	Buffet style self-serve breakfast in the two dining rooms (Deck 3).
0900	Mandatory South Georgia DVD & EL Briefing <i>Is your cabin on portside? Go to Lecture Rm</i> <i>Is your cabin on starboard? Go to the Bar</i> <i>You will then swap locations for the 2nd activity</i>
1130	Biosecurity checks/Vacuuming of outer gear/bags/etc <i>listen for announcements!</i>
1300	Lunch in the dining rooms (Deck 3).
1600	Presentation by Andy: "Nature Photography 101"
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms (Deck 3)



JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
HARASHO – *Fine*

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

—Ron Naveen, *Wild Ice*



NOTE FROM HOTEL WORLD

Today – 9th November – is linen changeover day. Please ensure that all your personal belongings are removed from your bunks before breakfast in order to assist our lovely stewardesses.

Position at 2050 on 08 Nov

Latitude: 53°33' S

Longitude: 40°46' W

Course: 104°

Speed: 10.9 knots

Barometer: 979.9 hPa & steady

Wind: 10 knots from SW

Air temperature: 2° C

Sea temperature: 2° C

PENGUIN POST

South Georgia: Grytviken

Sunday 09 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

Our little sturdy ship continued to barrel along at a good speed overnight, and so it was with great joy that Judd announced that our arrival in South Georgia was imminent! And so, the day began with what would be our final preparations before landing in South Georgia.

Soothing background panpipe music and a very proper British narrator's voice wafted up from the lecture room as we learnt about what to expect in South Georgia, and indeed what it and its creatures expected from us. We were also able to join Judd in the bar for a briefing on where we plan on visiting in South Georgia, and what to do should we meet a testosterone-fuelled male fur seal on the beach!

By mid-morning the loud whirr of duelling vacuum cleaners echoed throughout Decks 2 and 4 as we completed our bio-security procedures for South Georgia. This very important process removed various bits of alien grasses and seeds from our jackets and backpacks.... and it is reported that a stowaway spider also met its demise.

After a delicious lunch of frittata, salad and freshly baked ciabatta bread, Andy took centre stage in the lecture room with his presentation on nature photography. Andy shared his years of experience and knowledge in this area, highlighting the key tips to produce top quality wildlife images. Our challenge remains to try and tell a story as we compose and capture images of the many magnificent critters and landscapes of the icy south.

The bridge and outer decks were well-populated by mid-afternoon as we kept our eyes peeled for the first sign of Shag Rocks. Alas, the heavy fog ensured that we were only to see this small rocky outcrop in the middle of the South Atlantic on the bridge radar! Still, as we moved through the relatively shallow ocean around them, we were rewarded with waters full of playful fur seals.

An afternoon of card playing, photo processing, lively discussions and cold beers passed by, and it was not long before the sky darkened and our thoughts turned to our adventures in South Georgia.

Today – the 9th of November – we will be arriving in South Georgia. Enjoy the views from the bridge and outer decks as we approach this remote and mountainous island that will be our playground for the next five days.

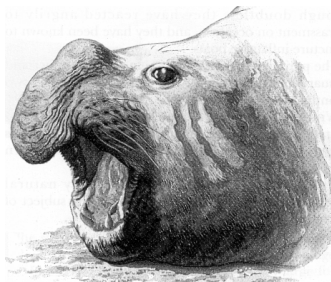
After clearing customs, we will then be able to enjoy a landing at the historic whaling station remains at Grytviken. Those who would like to pay homage to Shackleton (and his colleague, Frank Wild) can also visit his gravesite nearby. If you'd like to buy any souvenirs from the museum gift shop, be sure to bring along your credit card (not AMEX), and/or cash (GBP, USD).

0800	Buffet style self-serve breakfast (Deck 3).
AM	Approaching South Georgia
1230	Lunch in the dining rooms (Deck 3).
PM	Landing at Grytviken
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms (Deck 3)



RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
PAZHALUSTA
– *You are welcome*

A first walk in any new country is one of the things which makes life on this planet worth being grateful for.
—Charles William Beebe



Position at 2030 on 09 Nov
Latitude: 54°04' S
Longitude: 36°43' W
Course: 289°
Speed: 10 knots
Barometer: 975.9 hPa & steady
Wind: 8 knots from WSW
Air temperature: 2° C
Sea temperature: 3° C

PENGUIN POST

Prince Olav Harbour; Prion Island; Salisbury Plain

Monday 10 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

Land a'hoi! A perfect sound to the ears of those starting to suffer the onset of cabin fever, and for all of us who have dreamt of visiting South Georgia for the past few months or indeed years. As we drew back our porthole curtains upon our wake-up call, there she was! Emerging out of the horizon - immense, snow-covered cliffs projecting high above the sea.

A pod of curious humpback whales greeted us, and thanks to Captain Yury's expert manoeuvring, we were able to enjoy their presence around the ship for a good half hour or so. One did have to wonder though... just who was looking at who?!

After lunch and an informative talk about the Habitat Restoration Project from South Georgian resident, Sarah, we were off to experience Grytviken ourselves. Our first landing in South Georgia offered a visit to their wonderful museum as well as the opportunity to indulge in affairs of the philatelic and "souvenir-itic".

Those who made their way around the bay were delighted to come across several king penguins – their beautiful splashes of orange-yellow feathers resplendent in the afternoon light. Nearby, a group of elephant seal weaners gazed sleepily at us with their big, round, black eyes. A few feisty fur seals kept us on our toes, but obliged as we later raised our lenses to photograph them.

Most of us were able to pay silent homage to Shackleton at his gravesite,

and take a moment to reflect on his extraordinary achievements. Brian even produced a flask of whiskey with which to toast "the boss".

The opportunity to tour the whaling station also gave us an chance to sombrely consider the huge number of whales that were slaughtered in these waters. Our thoughts turned to our morning cetacean sightings – a reminder of the slow recovery of these species within the large marine protection area and sanctuary that now surrounds South Georgia.

The paddlers amongst us were given a very special treat as they made their way along the coastline – over 500 elephant seals of all ages lying prostrate on the beaches and popping their large heads up to view the floating fibreglass intruders go by.

As we cruised our way out of Cumberland Bay and the sun began to set, large lenticular clouds of brilliant pink and purple hues delighted our already happy expeditioners.

Today – the 10th of November – will be a big day, with a early morning Zodiac cruise at Prince Olav Harbour, followed by a rare visit to one of the last remaining island refuges for the wandering albatross, Prion Island. In the afternoon, we plan to visit the second largest king penguin colony at South Georgia, at the vast glacial outwash of Salisbury Plain.

0500	Zodiac Cruise: Prince Olav Harbour
0730	Buffet style self-serve breakfast (Deck 3)
AM	Cruise/Landing at Prion Island (weather permitting)
1300	Lunch in the dining rooms (Deck 3).
PM	Landing at Salisbury Plain (weather permitting)
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms (Deck 3)



RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
MEN YA ZAVUT
— My name is.....

If the plan of the expedition does not fit on the back of an envelope it is over-organized.
—Bill Tillman



Position at 2100 on 10 Nov
Latitude: 54°01' S
Longitude: 36°56' W
Course: 105°
Speed: 10.8 knots
Barometer: 1002.6 hPa & steady
Wind: 6 knots from SE
Air temperature: 3° C
Sea temperature: 3° C

PENGUIN POST

Fortuna Bay; Stromness; Hercules Bay

Tuesday 11 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

This morning started, bright and early, but not without the enthusiasm and vigour that has come to be associated with a pre-expedition breakfast. Although today was a day of multiple plans, adjustments, tweaks and changes, this was taken in our stride as everyone waited with bated breath for the next announcement to see what adventures were in store for us.

By 06:00 am Plan D was in full swing and we were almost all off the ship, having mastered the swell-afflicted gangway and safely stepped, crawled or flopped into the Zodiacs, but little did we know the fun was just starting! A brave attempted landing at Prion Island was abandoned, and having already lost one staff member to the crashing surf, Plan E was implemented. A Zodiac cruise around Prion and Skua Islands gave us the opportunity to have a little fun in the swell on the Zodiacs, and get some great shots of ocean waves crashing over the ragged cliffs. A South Georgia pipit even came out to say hello - the early bird catches the worm as they say!

A very welcome and warming breakfast gave us a brief interlude before hauling our gear back on and heading out into Rosita Harbour. Fur seals were the name of the game here, more accurately, trying to keep the feisty males at slightly more than arms distance. It didn't take long for everyone to perfect the arms-up-shake-and-growl move to persuade them to stay a respectable distance, and with a 100% success rate we all

decamped off the beach and back to *Polar Pioneer* with all limbs intact.

A well deserved afternoon siesta seemed to be appreciated by all to recharge our batteries for a spectacular afternoon at Salisbury Plain. Another epic display of Zodiac wrangling by Judd and Liz meant that everyone was able to land and experience the plethora of wildlife on offer. This vast glacial outwash plain is home to 60,000 pairs of king penguins as well as elephant seals and the obligatory fur seals to keep us on our toes. Brown skuas could also be seen picking there way through the king penguin colony in search of any scraps. This was certainly an afternoon to remember, be it for the brown penguin chicks eagerly following after you in search of some food, the clouds lifting to reveal the majestic mountains, or just the sheer beauty of seeing all these different creatures living side by side in such beautiful surroundings.

Today – 11th November – we will be having another early start. A 04:00 am landing in Fortuna Bay will hopefully reward our efforts with some beautiful light conditions and wildlife. Later in the morning we have the option of walking the final part of Shackleton's journey across South Georgia from Fortuna Bay to Stromness, while those not partaking will be taking the opportunity to explore the area. We will be finishing our day with a cruise around Hercules Bay.

0400	Landing at Fortuna Bay
0700	Buffet style self-serve breakfast (Deck 3)
AM	Walkers depart Fortuna Bay for Shackleton Walk
AM	Landing at Stromness for non-walkers
1300	Lunch in the dining rooms (Deck 3).
PM	Zodiac cruise around Hercules Bay
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms (Deck 3)

☆☆☆HAPPY BIRTHDAY to JOSHUA☆☆☆

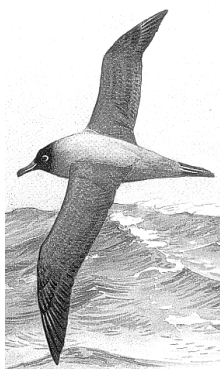


JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
КАК ЕТА ПА РООСКИ?
– *What is that in Russian?*

In intense excitement we watched the chronometer for seven o'clock when the whalers would be summoned to work. Right to the minute the steam whistle came to us, borne clearly on the wind across the intervening miles of rock and snow. Never had anyone of us heard sweeter music. It was the first sound created by outside human agency that had come to our ears since we left in December 1914.

—Ernest Shackleton, from his journal, May 1916, on the last leg of his South Georgia alpine crossing from Fortuna Bay



Position at 2030 on 11 Nov
Latitude: 54°14' S
Longitude: 36°15' W
Course: 123°
Speed: 9.8 knots
Barometer: 1002.6 hPa & steady
Wind: 16 knots from NW
Air temperature: 4° C
Sea temperature: 3° C

PENGUIN POST

St Andrews Bay; Moltke Harbour

Wednesday 12 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

It may seem a dream, but it really was only Tuesday morning that we were awoken at the crack of dawn by Judd's poetic description of South Georgia's gentle morning swell, followed swiftly by a Zodiac launch countdown. It may only have been 3:30 am but that didn't keep us down and it was nearly a full complement that landed in Fortuna Bay to see in the day with its resident king penguins, fur seals and elephant seals - many of which had weening pups enjoying their breakfast. Despite the usual fur seal soap opera being played out on the beach, many turned their eyes and lenses further afield towards the towering Breakwind Ridge that that towered high above the beach.

It was after breakfast when, for 20 intrepid hikers, the adventure really began. They were dropped off on the eastern side of Fortuna Bay and as the Zodiacs disappeared into the distance they turned and began the historical Shackleton Walk, traversing the barren fell field country between Fortuna Bay and Stromness Harbour. With the snow and wind whipping around up-turned hoods they set off into the mist and up the mountain. This was the same route taken by Shackleton, Crean and Worsley on the final leg of their 36 hour crossing of South Georgia (and 18-month journey) before they finally found help at Stromness whaling station almost 100 years ago.

While the hikers were out battling the elements, those left on the ship nursed cups of tea and relaxed as the snow swirled around *Polar Pioneer* en route to

Stromness Harbour. The snow continued to fall as we clambered back onto the Zodiacs and landed in Stromness to welcome our explorers back after their final descent (via snowy bumslide) past the Shackleton waterfall. Photographers quickly dispersed to make the most of the snowy conditions, hoping to get that one exceptional shot where everything 'just comes together'. As the walkers were shuttled back to the ship others took a Zodiac cruise to see the rusting beauty of the old whaling station covered in a gentle dusting of snow.

The excitement just kept building in the afternoon as Captain Yury took us right into the heart of Hercules Bay. Some expert anchoring left us surrounded by snow-dusted mountain peaks, macaroni penguins, rainbow-hued waterfalls and frolicking seals. Zodiac cruising around the harbour provided spectacle after spectacle as we realised how many little gems were hidden around this bay.

Back on board, Kirsty and Heather prepared us a delicious barbeque dinner, although with a sudden change in the wind and swell we did need to enjoy it indoors. Elena and Lea plied us with jugs of glühwein, and our heads were decorated with a range of psychedelic wigs and hats. A wonderful celebration to end a wonderful day.

Today – the 12th of November – we hope to have an early morning visit to the largest king penguin colony in South Georgia, at St Andrews Bay. In the late afternoon, a visit to Moltke Harbour and its nearby glacier is our "Plan A"! Enjoy!

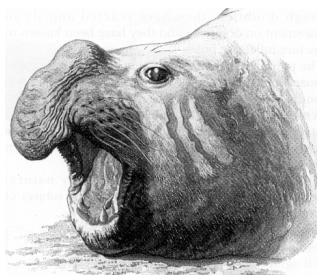
0400	St Andrews Bay
0800	Buffet style self-serve breakfast (Deck 3)
1300	Lunch in the dining rooms (Deck 3).
PM	Moltke Harbour
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms (Deck 3)



RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
YA NYE PANIMAYO—
I don't understand

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

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



NOTE FROM HOTEL WORLD

If you'd like to share any images with your fellow expeditioners and new friends, please feel free to *save copies* on one of the two laptops that are available for use in the bar.

If you need a USB stick to save them on, you can purchase one - please see Elena or Lea.

Position at 1840 on 12 Nov
Latitude: 54°32' S
Longitude: 36°05' W
Course: 085°
Speed: 5 knots
Barometer: 1991.6 hPa & steady
Wind: 7 knots from N
Air temperature: 3° C
Sea temperature: 3° C

PENGUIN POST

Gold Harbour; Drygalski Fjord

Thursday 13 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

If any of us felt bleary-eyed on this morn, it was swiftly obliterated by wide-eyed joy upon seeing the first pink blushes of dawn tinging the tops of the ice-clad and snow bespeckled mountains of the Allardyce Range. This striking backdrop encircled a three kilometre long black sandy beach which sat across from our anchorage in St Andrew's Bay. And once aided with the binoculars, what looked like a simple moraine field to the naked eye, was an expansive mass of the colourful king penguin – the largest colony in South Georgia.

The sheer scale and multitude of the penguins *en masse* was overwhelming, and indeed all we could do in our now-humbled state was to sit and attempt to absorb the scene with all of our (by now, highly stimulated) senses. It was not long before we humans scattered and we lost sight of each other amongst the sea of birds and belching and barking harems of elephant seals.

We watched the penguins do their best at avoiding 'death-by-squashing' from their weighty "blubber slug" (aka elephant seals) neighbours; attempt group body surfs into the beach; and choose fight or flight when challenged by gregarious younger seals. The fluffy kiwi-fruit-like chicks delighted us with their antics and shrill-like calling to their parents for more food, more food, more food! The occasional elephant seal weaner would open its large, round black eyes to gaze upon us (or

investigate us), but only as a quick interlude between their lolling, rolling, and blissful bathing in the glacial stream.

The afternoon saw a change in the weather, and so we opted for the more protected Little Moltke Harbour. Surrounded by steep-sided mountains, nearby glaciers, mossy cliffs and a beach full of large groups of elephant seals, the visit proved most pleasant for landscape lovers and wildlife fanatics alike. A squall of rain moved in, and it was not long after that we moved out and headed back to the warmth of the *Polar Pioneer*. Moreover, Chef Kirsty's freshly baked cookies proved a popular accompaniment to our afternoon brews.

Despite the constant rain, sleet and snow, the final curtain call for the day – at least for 10 hardy (later waterlogged) expeditioners - was a cruise to foot of the Ross glacier where tonnes of blue and white ice twisted and cracked and crushed down to the sea. We were also delighted to see half a dozen pure white snow petrels flitting and feeding amongst the brash ice.

Another incredible South Georgian day.

Today – the 13th of November – we plan to land at Gold Harbour, weather permitting. Then, before we set sail southwards for Antarctica, we hope to sail the ship down the spectacular Drygalski Fjord.

0400	Landing at Gold Harbour (weather permitting)
0730	Buffet style self-serve breakfast
AM	Ship Cruise: Drygalski Fjord
1230	Lunch in the dining rooms
PM	Presentation by Steve: "Shackleton's Trans-Antarctic Expedition"
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms
2045	Movie: TBA

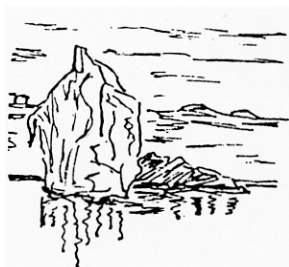


JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
NICHIVO—
No Worries

Here is scenery which, on a crystal clear day, must hold its own with any in the world. We gaze and drink it in; there is a hush as we who have not seen it before stand in a group and watch it unfold.

—Sir Alister Harder, *Great Waters*, 1967. On South Georgia.



Position at 2045 on 13 Nov
Latitude: 55°40' S
Longitude: 38°07' W
Course: 240°
Speed: 11.4 knots
Barometer: 977.3 hPa & steady
Wind: 20 knots from W
Air temperature: 2° C
Sea temperature: 3° C

PENGUIN POST

South Scotia Sea

Friday 14 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

South Georgia, you beauty! Yet again she graced us with a morning as beautiful as they come, for what was to be our last landing in South Georgia at Gold Harbour. This amphitheatre of hanging glaciers and vertical cliffs rising straight out of the surf created an unforgettable backdrop to the sheer abundance of wildlife found on the shore. Elephant seals, resplendent in the glistening sun, welcomed us ashore with a symphony of barks and belches. King penguins busily pattered up and down the beach whilst their chicks indulged in some classic “knock and run” – tourist style. This involved one brave little thing running up as close as he dared to one of the strange human onlookers, before goading their friend to out do them. A game that we were all more than willing to join in with too. Weaner elephant seals also proved to be feeling curious, and took a liking to many tripods, bags and sitting onlookers as they flopped up, big black eyes investigating these strangers, imploring us for food.

Once back on board another delicious breakfast was devoured before people piled onto the bow and into the bridge to watch the coast line pass serenely by as we made our way down the final stretch of coast leading to Dryglaski Fjord. The excitement started before we even entered the fjord. A vast tabular iceberg lay in wait, guarding the entrance and giving us our first real taste of the sheer scale of the huge

icebergs that navigate these southerly waters. As we skirted around it and entered the fjord it became apparent we were in for a treat. The sun shone down on spectacular rugged peaks rising directly out of the sea, interspersed by magnificent glaciers that are still at work, carving deep valleys and sharp pointed glacial horns and arêtes. As we made our way further towards the glacier edge, a flock of Antarctic terns were seen shimmering in the ice blue glow at the base of the glacier, flitting almost butterfly-like against the sheer ice cliff behind them. As we turned around cameras were packed away – but only for a second as huge lenticular clouds materialised, hovering over the snow peaked mountains. And so, with a memorable farewell we left South Georgia. Ne’er fear...our adventure continues, taking us further down south and into the planet’s most remote and pristine wilderness.

Today – the 15th of November – we will be at sea, but edging closer to Antarctic waters. Soon you may notice a drop in temperature. This relates to our crossing of the Antarctic Convergence; the natural boundary between the relatively warm sub-Antarctic surface water and the cold Antarctic surface water. The convergence is an important biological zone, influencing the distribution of plankton, fish and birds.

0800	Buffet style self-serve breakfast
0930	Joshua presents, “Basics of Photography” (Lecture Room)
1130	Steve presents, “Shackleton’s Trans-Antarctic Expedition”
1300	Lunch in the dining rooms
1600	Eirik presents, “Penguins” (Lecture Room)
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms



JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
ADEEN, DVA, TREE—
One, Two, Three

The three great elemental sounds in nature are the sound of rain, the sound of wind in a primeval wood, and the sound of outer ocean on a beach. I have heard them all, and of the three elemental voices, that of the ocean is the most awesome, beautiful and varied.

—Henry Beston



Position at 2045 on 14 Nov
Latitude: 57°58' S
Longitude: 44°51' W
Course: 234°
Speed: 11.3 knots
Barometer: 973.3 hPa & falling
Wind: 10 knots from S
Air temperature: 0° C
Sea temperature: 0° C

PENGUIN POST

South Scotia Sea

Saturday 15 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

It is hard to believe that it is only Day 12 of our voyage. Strangers have become friends, and we have come accustomed to life aboard our floating home away from home. We have seen, smelt, felt, and heard things we could never have imagined. Isn't that the way though, that when your senses are overloaded each successive day while travelling, one tends to lose a sense of time as we know it? Day 12 feels more like Day 120, given the amount of new experiences we have packed in and huge number of brilliant memories we have made in this time.

Sea days generally mean that we have the opportunity to learn more about what we've seen and will see from our historian Steve and naturalist Eirik. The first billing of the day however was by Joshua, who was able to take us through the basics of photography, and indeed, how to capture what we have seen and will see.

Later, Steve took us through an adventurous romp of Shackleton's trans-Antarctic expedition. With the lecture room bursting at the seams with a record turn-out of 99.9% of expeditioners, Steve aptly described this infamous expedition through the lens of photographer Frank Hurley.

Sea days also mean a "sea day siesta" or two, and that was exactly what large numbers of us enjoyed after lunch. Of course the bridge was also a prime spot to be, although more so for quiet contemplation of the open ocean than large amounts of bird or whale action. We did however, view our first few Wilson's storm petrels and also large flocks of Cape

petrels manoeuvring around the ship.

The lure of learning more about our penguin friends was strong, and it was to a near-full house that Eirik engaged us with his facts and stories of these hardy seabirds of the south. In a beautifully illustrated presentation, we also learnt the real reason why penguins huddle together (for overall thermoregulation, not just keeping warm... those ones in the middle need to move in order to cool off)! What Eirik didn't share was that 4 of his images within his presentation were from a total of 11 that were short-listed for the BBC "Wildlife Photography of the Year" competition this year.

Before dinner, Judd beckoned us to the bar for a recap of our voyage thus far. As host, he coaxed a variety of wonderful recollections and reflections and experiences from us. Kelly even confessed to a jacket full of cold water as he lay prostrate on the beach while getting his "shot of all shots".

Today – the 15th of November – we will be at sea again as we edge closer to Elephant Island. Once again, we will take part in a great vacuuming frenzy as we perform our biosecurity checks on our clothing and backpacks before arriving in Antarctica. We will also continue our educational series with presentations by Steve and Eirik. Be sure to also catch part two of Kenneth Branagh's "Shackleton".

0800	Buffet style self-serve breakfast
0930	Steve presents "Whaling in Antarctica"
1130	Eirik presents, "Modern Whaling"
1300	Lunch in the dining rooms
1530	Vacuuming of outerwear & packs before arrival in Antarctica <i>Listen out for announcements!</i>
1700	DVD: "Shackleton" (Part 2) in Cinema One (a.k.a. Lecture Room)
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms
2030	DVD: David Attenborough's "Life in the Freezer (Summer)"

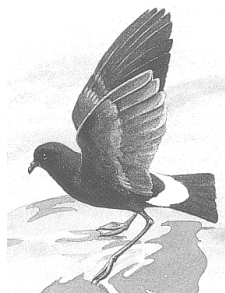


JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
CHITEEREE, PYAT, SHEST—
Four, Five, Six

The hut grows more grimy every day. Everything is sooty black. We have arrived at the limit where further increments from the smoking stove, blubber lamps, and cooking gear are unnoticed. It is at least comforting to feel that we can become no filthier...from time to time we have a spring cleaning, but a fresh supply of flooring materials is not always available, as all the shingle is frozen up and buried by deep drifts. Such is our Home Sweet Home.

—a crew member writing about living conditions at their Elephant Island camp



NOTE FROM HOTEL WORLD

Today – 16th November – is linen changeover day. Please ensure that all your personal belongings are removed from your bunks before breakfast in order to assist our lovely stewardesses.

Position at 1925 on 15 Nov
Latitude: 60°03' S
Longitude: 51°15' W
Course: 239°
Speed: 10.9 knots
Barometer: 979.9 hPa & steady
Wind: 10 knots from WSW
Air temperature: 1° C
Sea temperature: 0° C

PENGUIN POST

Approaching Elephant Island

Sunday 16 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

Our morning sleep was broken
By Judd's most dulcet voice
An iceberg on our starboard
enticed us to rejoice.

Stumbling off to get some tea
Earl grey, mint or rosehip.
Our tastebuds also delighted
With muffins and their choc-chip.

The sea was bumpy, the sky was grey
We zig-zagged down the halls.
We kept a paper bag in tow
In case there were close calls.

Shutterbugs in the lecture room
Their excitement full and shared.
Andy's secrets of black & white
And processing fully bared.

The vacuums were a' whirring
We sucked out grass and seed
All ready for Antarctica
Bio-security is a need.

The final bookend of the day
Was seen in fading light
A berg that dwarfed our little ship
To all did bring delight.

The giant mammals of the sea
Were once desired and caught
Steve described the industry
Where oil and soap were bought.

"To the cinema!" called Shackleton
And down the stairs we poured
To finish watching this epic tale
Of a man who was much adored.

We caught up on our beauty sleep,
We edited lots of pics
We read our books & for bridge-goers
keen
They got their ocean fix.

Today – the 16th of the month -
We sail close to icy lands.
Elephant Island and its wildness
Beckons our brave hands.

Eirik in the afternoon,
With stories of whaling *not* long past.
Our beloved naturalist man
Stuffed our brains with info fast.

The end, the end, the end right now
There ain't but nothing more
The end, the end, the end
I'll now pop this in your door.

0630	Buffet style self-serve breakfast
AM	Approaching Elephant Island
1230	Lunch in the dining rooms
1500	Andy presents, "How to edit your image collection"
1700	Steve presents, "History of Antarctica" (Part One)
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms
2030	DVD: David Attenborough's "Life in the Freezer (Summer)"

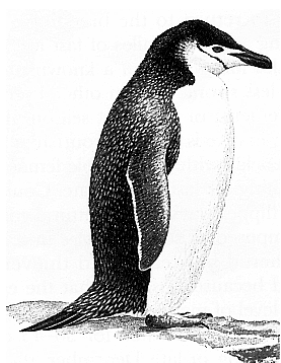


JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
SYEM, VOSYEM—
Seven, Eight

Antarctica is a separate world. One can feel its presence in the approaches, sailing south from more temperate climes. Standing on deck, one may follow the reeling albatross, feel the drop in temperature, the bite of the wind and the motion of the waves. Yet it is the presence of ice, from the first occasional fragments, escalating in shape, form, and frequency, and finally dominating all else, that brings assurance of arrival in Antarctica.

—Mark Jones, *Wild Ice: Antarctic Journeys*, 1990



Position at 2030 on 16 Nov
Latitude: 62°06' S
Longitude: 57°36' W
Course: 246°
Speed: 10 knots
Barometer: 982.6 hPa & steady
Wind: 5 knots from N
Air temperature: -1° C
Sea temperature: 0° C

PENGUIN POST

Yankee Harbour; Deception Island

Monday 17 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

As the morning wake up call beckoned us onto decks in the early morn, all minds were filled with the big question, “will we or won’t we?” It is said that less than one in ten expeditions manage to land on Point Wild, and it was now our turn to roll the dice! This low narrow ridge of boulders and gravel flanked by rocky, near-vertical cliffs on the northern coast of Elephant Island is a wild and exposed place. Sticking out into the Drake Passage, it is buffeted by the notorious Southern Ocean winds. It’s major interest is not traditionally the colony of chinstrap penguins that have made it their home, but that it was home to 22 of Shackleton’s men whom were stranded there after the *Endurance* sank in the Weddell Sea.

Although most could believe it is named after it’s “wild” nature, Point Wild is named for Frank Wild, who led the stranded party whilst Shackleton sailed to South Georgia for help. Rescue finally arrived after three previously unsuccessful attempts on the 30th of August 1916 - almost four months after arriving there.

As we have come to expect from this expedition the answer was a resounding, “Yes!”, from the scouting boat, “We will be landing on Point Wild!” We were warned however, that this was to be a very wet landing. Zodiacs were driven aside a rocky outcrop where the three musketeers, Steve, Al and Eirik, managed to hold the bucking Zodiac in place long enough for everybody to scramble onto this history steeped shore. Chinstrap (and a few gentoo)

penguins, battling against the swirling snow sat on their rocky nests - overlooked by the majestic bronze bust of Captain Luis Pardo Villalon, Master of the *Yelcho*, the vessel that finally rescued the 22 stranded men.

Speaking of rescue, in the short time we had been absorbing the significance of this historical spot, the katabatic winds picked up to 40 knots and the waves breaking over the rocks began to look a bit more challenging. With this in mind it was a quick bum slide over the rocks back into the Zodiacs as we felt the pull of a warm cup of tea, and maybe a well-earned biscuit.

Steve also took a turn on centre stage – in a two-part billing - as he regaled us with tales of Antarctica’s past. A collection myths and legends that surrounded this continent preceded the stories of early travels down south, with explorers such as James Cook, James Weddell and Edward Bransfield.

As the evening and seas rolled on, the horizon appeared to be bedecked in large bright (almost glowing) white bergs. Then Chief Mate Sergey’s excited voice called us to the bridge – orcas! At least 30 or so orcas swam around the ship displaying their large dorsal fins and striking black and white markings.

Today – the 17th of November – we hope to land in the South Shetland Islands. It’ll be up and at it early again in order to maximise our time ashore. Let’s keep our fingers crossed that Mother Nature smiles upon us.

0400	Landing at Yankee Harbour (weather permitting)
0700	Buffet style self-serve breakfast
AM	TBA
1230	Lunch in the dining rooms
PM	Landing at Whaler’s Bay (Deception Island; weather permitting)
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms

☆☆☆HAPPY BIRTHDAY to LOUISA☆☆☆



RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
DYEvet, DYeSET—
Nine, Ten

They are extraordinarily like children, these little people of the Antarctic world, either like children, or like old men, full of their own importance and late for dinner, in their black tail-coats and white shirt fronts - and rather portly withal.

—Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World*



Position at 2130 on 17 Nov
Latitude: 64°12' S
Longitude: 61°23' W
Course: 231°
Speed: 9.1 knots
Barometer: 962.6 hPa & rising
Wind: 5 knots from SSW
Air temperature: -4° C
Sea temperature: 0° C

PENGUIN POST

Neko Harbour; Paradise Harbour

Tuesday 18 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

For most of us, Monday morning dawned in a confused sleep, where was the morning wake up call? Had we been left behind? Why was the ship so quiet? A quick look out of the porthole left us assured that we had not indeed been left behind, but that, as it happened, launching Zodiacs would have been a spectacularly bad idea! The swell was throwing the ship to and fro, the spray working its way up to the bridge windows and the snow, disorientating, as it seemed to fall horizontally down our portholes. And so, for the majority it was back to bed until breakfast. The South Shetlands bared its teeth and reminded us that in this part of the world, at 64 degrees south, we are truly at the mercy of mother nature.

Sprits not dampened, the bridge was packed out with eager storm chasers, lenses pressed against the windows and riotous cheers as another colossal wave broke against the ship. The trusty *Polar Pioneer* ploughed through this incredible spectacle of turbo force waves, screaming winds and white outs. It was truly amazing to see nature's full force out in action - a humbling yet exhilarating experience for all.

The afternoon provided slightly more sheltered conditions, and after a hearty lunch of KB's burgers we were treated to a low down on how to photograph snow and ice by Josh. Something that would, as it turns out, be mighty handy by the evening. As we cruised through

the afternoon, Judd enlightened us as to the plan (Plan E by now!). We were heading to Cierva Cove, home to seals of all varieties, penguins, epic icebergs and an Argentinean research base.

As we arrived the snow was falling, the sun was hazily peaking out through the lazy grey clouds that reluctantly moved to and fro, over the Antarctic Sky. We had made it. Antarctica, the last continent, the epic wilderness that fills the imagination of so many stood before us. Zodiacs were launched and we were engulfed by the mist and snow. Icebergs, took the shape of cloud-like formations and we were mesmerised. Ice blue turned to deep cobalt and purple as we peered deeper into the caves. Snow gently falling on the ice provided the perfect photographic back drop. The kayakers yet again braved the conditions and even found time to enjoy a hot chocolate on the ice floes, before we all headed back to the warmth of the bar.

Tomorrow – the 18th November – Antarctica awaits! A landing at Neko Harbour, followed by a visit to Paradise Harbour. We also plan to have a post-dinner cruise down the Lemaire channel. A better Antarctic day could not be dreamt up!

0600	Buffet style self-serve breakfast
0700	Neko Harbour
1200	Lunch in the dining rooms
PM	Paradise Harbour
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms
PM	Lemaire Channel

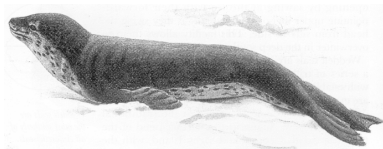


JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
SLADKIH SNOV—*Sweet Dreams*

To anyone who goes to the Antarctic, there is a tremendous appeal, an unparalleled combination of grandeur, beauty, vastness, loneliness, and malevolence — all of which sound terribly melodramatic — but which truly convey the actual feeling of Antarctica. Where else in the world are all of these descriptions really true?

—Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World*



NOTE FROM HOTEL WORLD

Please note that today – the 19th of November – is the last day for laundry. Please ensure that you put your laundry out before lunchtime. Many thanks!

Position at 2143 on 18 Nov

Latitude: 65°07' S

Longitude: 64°01' W

Course: 046°

Speed: 6.1 knots

Barometer: 970.6 hPa & steady

Wind: 8 knots from SSW

Air temperature: -2° C

Sea temperature: 0° C

PENGUIN POST

Cuverville Island; Melchior Islands; Drake Passage

Wednesday 19 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

Antarctica has a way of ensuring that a multitude of adjectives bubble up and out of its visitors. Most of them we discard as too inadequate to describe what it feels like to be in this very special place. But adjectives were heard in great number on this day, as the Antarctic Peninsula entranced us with some of her most majestic and spectacular sights.

Our morning excursion to Neko Harbour represented our first continental landing, and marked a visit to the 7th and final continent for many of us. It also offered a chance to really enter the world of the gentoo penguin. Frenetic cavorting and splashing in the shallows was followed by penguins flying through the water. Patches of brown snow highlighted the penguins knowledge of what is to come over the next few weeks – snow melting away to expose the solid rocks on which to build their pebbly nests and lay their precious eggs. Those of us who climbed the snowy hills above the beach were treated to dazzling views over the harbour and its vast amphitheatre of towering glaciers.

We have been to Paradise! During lunch we sailed the last few miles into the calm waters of Paradise Harbour. The surface of the water looked like a striking dark oil, except for the brilliant peacock blue glow in the shallows around the foot of each bergy bit and iceberg. The clouds lifted during the morning like a stage curtain revealing the most dramatic stage set – surroundings of steep mountains and crunchy, thick honeycomb-like glaciers.

The afternoon saw our little flotilla of Zodiacs cruising around nearby Skontorp Cove. A wall of nesting blue-eyed shags was well-photographed, as were the brilliant colours on the cliff face – orange

and white lichens, green moss and luminescent green copper sulphate leaching through the rock.

Further in the cove, and amongst the thousands of images captured of bergs, glaciers, reflections and snow, some of us took the opportunity to sit in silence for a few minutes – without cameras clicking or engines running. It was a moment to simply “be” and to listen to the wonderful sounds around us. We also stopped to pause and reflect on our journey so far, and our second last day in Antarctica. The call of the terns, crackling of ice, rumbling of the glaciers, and gentle lapping of the water against the Zodiac side were all sounds that we desperately stowed away into our aural memory banks.

Back on board, the photographers lined the decks for the much-anticipated “Polar Plunge”. Sixteen crazy souls leapt from the perfectly warm and stable ship into the frigid waters decorated with the odd bit of brash ice and bobbing bergs. We all cheered and whooped from the sidelines – well done plungers!

But wait! There was one more treat for the day. As the sun set a golden glow over the ice-filled waters, the *Polar Pioneer* headed straight for what seemed like an infinitesimally narrow channel between steep-sided, snow covered “guard of honour” peaks – the Lemaire Channel. Our Captain deftly navigated us into this photogenic body of water, and we continued to fill up our memory cards and visual memory banks.

Today – the 19th of November – will be our last day in Antarctica. Let’s enjoy the sights at Cuverville Island, and the Melchior Islands before heading northwards across the Drake Passage.

AM	Landing at Cuverville Island
0830	Buffet style self-serve breakfast
AM	Zodiac Cruise in the Melchior Islands
1330	Lunch in the dining rooms
PM	Drake Passage
1930	Dinner in the dining rooms



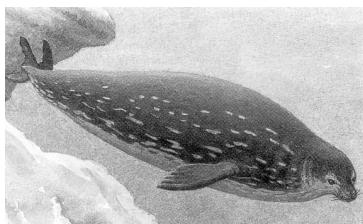
JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
PAKA—See you later

*Antarctica left a restless
longing in my heart
beckoning towards an
incomprehensible perfection
forever beyond the reach of
mortal man.*

*Its overwhelming beauty
touches one so deeply that it
is like a wound.*

—Edwin Mickleburgh,
Beyond the Frozen Sea



NOTE from HOTEL WORLD

Accounts will close the evening
of **Thursday 20th November**.

Thursday is the last day for:
phone & email (by 1700).

Please also ensure you:
**pre-order drinks for 21st
November** (i.e. on your
account).

Friday = cash-only bar.

Position at 2100 on 19 Nov

Latitude: 62°54' S

Longitude: 63°32' W

Course: 351°

Speed: 11.1 knots

Barometer: 981.3 hPa & steady

Wind: 16 knots from NNW

Air temperature: -1° C

Sea temperature: 0° C

PENGUIN POST

Drake Passage

Thursday 20 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

In keeping with our “make the most of each day” expedition mentality, Judd woke us with another wonderful quote at the wee hour of 0500. Though the mercury was still very low and the wind readings high, the majority of us pulled on our multiple layers of thermals, fleece and Goretex in anticipation of our last landing in Antarctica.

A splashy Zodiac ride swiftly woke those still drowsy with sleep – with spray turning to ice microseconds before hitting our bare cheeks like thousands of piercing needles. All was forgotten once we landed on the rocky beach of Cuverville Island.

The strong winds whipped up fine layers of snow, creating airborne waves of white dust that became the focus of many a photographer. For the wildlife lovers, groups of hardy gentoo penguins delighted us with their single-file march along the beach on their way back from a morning of fishing, while others stood or lay in the snow, apparently nonchalant to the freezing temperatures and blizzard forming around them. We were not quite as hardy nor so nonchalant however, and a large amount of time did not pass before we slipped and slithered across the black, ice-covered pontoons and back into our Zodiac rides home.

During breakfast, we cruised a short distance across the Gerlache Strait to the Melchior Islands. The sky had lifted a bit, but the winds had not quite abated. Still, off we went with smiles on our (balaclava-clad) faces.

We were not disappointed. Tucked in amongst the small bays and channels, bergs of every shape and size were found and photographed. A group of Weddell seals was also a highlight – their snoozing interrupted only by the occasional scritch and scratch. A mother and pup lay amongst the group, while another looked up at us with his face covered in fresh snow!

Returning to the ship, we chipped off the thin layer of ice that had formed over our bodies and attempted to warm our frigid extremities. Our very own Norwegian Viking, Eirik, won the prize as “Ice Man of the Day” – returning with his entire body encrusted in ice and icicles forming on the rim of his beanie.

The warmth and shelter of *Polar Pioneer* soon revived us, as did the smells of a hot pizza. Trays upon trays consumed, it was then time to “batten down the hatches” as we prepared our cabins and selves for what looked like it could be a potentially “lumpy” Drake Passage.

Most took to their bunks for the rest of the afternoon, occasionally emerging to sort through their photos, or spend time on the bridge contemplating their last views of Antarctica.

Today – 20th November – we will be on our own at sea, crossing the infamous Drake Passage. Keep an eye out for any accompanying seabirds, the *Phenergan* fairy, and of course, listen out for announcements for our shipboard activities.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 0800 | Breakfast in the two dining rooms (Deck 3) |
| 0930 | Collection of Slideshow Images with Andy & Anthony (Bar)
<i>Pick your funniest and/or your most memorable images! Up to 3 each.</i> |
| 1100 | “Rounding Cape Horn” screening in the Lecture Room (Deck 2) |
| 1300 | Lunch |
| 1600 | Andy presents.... TBA (Lecture Rm) |
| 1830 | Voyage Recap (Bar, Deck 4) |
| 1930 | Dinner |
| 2045 | The Great Antarctic & South Georgian Quiz (Bar)
<i>Make up teams of up to six people! Come up with a good team name!</i> |



JOSHUA HOLKO
PHOTOGRAPHY

RUSSIAN FOR THE DAY:
DA SVIDANYA
– Good Bye

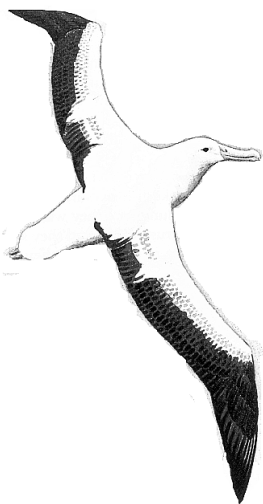
*I am the albatross that waits
for you at the end of the
earth.*

*I am the forgotten soul of the
dead sailors
who crossed Cape Horn
from all the seas of the world.*

*But they did not die
in the furious waves.*

*Today they fly in my wings
to eternity
in the last trough of the
Antarctic winds.*

—Poem inscribed on the Cape
Horn albatross monument
written by Sara Vial.



Position at 2055 on 20 Nov
Latitude: 59°18' S
Longitude: 64°56' W
Course: 347°
Speed: 10.4 knots
Barometer: 978.8 hPa & steady
Wind: 34 knots from WNW
Air temperature: 4°C
Sea temperature: 2°C

PENGUIN POST

Drake Passage; Cape Horn; Beagle Channel

Friday 21 November 2014 aboard Polar Pioneer

Remember those fabulous multiple-choice postcards from the 70's and 80's? While we don't have the cheesy images to go with it, the style of today's Penguin Post harks back to those days, and is somewhat interactive....see how you go.

1. This morning at breakfast:

- a) I ate porridge.
- b) My hard-boiled eggs ended up on the floor.
- c) I quarrelled with my fellow diners over who had the Vegemite.
- d) I was in my bunk zonked out on *Phenergan*.

2. During the film, "Around the Horn":

- a) I learnt a lot that telegraph pole climbing was a good way to practice climbing up ship's masts.
- b) I felt grateful that I was on the *Polar Pioneer* and not the wooden sailboat *Peking*.
- c) I had a great nap, and dribbled on the shoulder of my friend.
- d) I was in my bunk zonked out on *Phenergan*.

3. During the day:

- a) I scrubbed penguin poo off my clothing.
- b) I braved it on the bridge, fancying myself as a true salty seadog.
- c) I was in my bunk zonked out on *Phenergan*.
- d) I reviewed my photos and wished that we could turn around and do it all over again.
- e) All of the above.

4. When looking out to sea, I saw:

- a) a group of Cape petrels darting in and around the ship and waves
- b) a young black-browed albatross
- c) lots and lots and lots of water
- d) a bright blue fairy dancing before me

5. At the voyage recap:

- a) I tried to be invisible when Judd was looking for volunteers to talk.
- b) I developed a nervous twitch when Judd mentioned the words "Point Wild".
- c) I waved madly to try and get the microphone so I could share my memories of the seal... and the time the orcas... and when I got that shot.. and...
- d) The *Phenergan* fairy got me again.

6. My evening consisted of:

- a) Making merry in the bar with my old and new friends.
- b) Watching the roll and splash of the Drake Passage.
- c) Desperately trying to get extra points in the Great Antarctic Quiz order to win, win, win!
- d) Attempting to bribe the quiz master with beer, chocolate, flattery and eye-fluttering.

Today we have a full day of activities during the closing leg of our voyage. Be sure to spend some final hours on the bridge to enjoy the "Roaring Forties".

This will be our final Penguin Post for the voyage, so we would like to take this opportunity to thank all its readers! From all the Aurora staff, we bid you a very fond farewell and safe onward travels!

0800	Breakfast
0930	Disembarkation Briefing – Lecture Rm
1015	Settling of accounts with Elena and Lea (Bar)
1300	Lunch
1600	The Voyage Slideshow – Lecture Room
1730	Gumboot Return - return clean & dry; one inside the other – Lecture Rm
1830	Captain's Farewell Drinks - Bar
1930	Dinner

Most Southerly Point Reached: 65°07' S; 64°01' W