



Your Expedition Journal

Quest for the Antarctic Circle

21 February – 05 March 2023

At Sea (Beagle Channel)

Tuesday, 21st February 2023

Welcome on board the *G Expedition* – our happy little red ship!



We could not have asked for a more interesting day, weather wise, to begin our journey. If you were walking along the main street of Ushuaia, you were never sure if it was going to rain on you or if the sun would shine brightly and light up the mountains.

We boarded the ship, found our cabins and reunited with luggage. Then it was time for snacks in the Expedition Lounge and a little time to explore and find our way around the ship.

Heidi showed us how to put on the *Gumby* survival suit as well as the life jackets and were led to our dedicated lifeboats on Deck 6 where the officers gave us more information.

Soon afterwards, we could see one of the adorable pier dogs helping to untie the lines, the *G Expedition* pulled gently away. Our journey was beginning!

Many of us were out on deck watching the last vestiges of green vegetation and buildings in the town of Ushuaia. Dolphin Gulls, giant petrels, and some shags were flying around the ship or sitting on the water. We even spotted our very first Black-browed Albatross!



Joseph Mascarenhas, or Joe, our Hotel Manager, gave a presentation on the layout of the ship and told us how things worked on board. This was followed by Jonothan Green, our Expedition Leader, who explained the game plan for our voyage to the Antarctic Circle. The Expedition Team introduced themselves, giving a little taste of their personalities and expertise.

After a delicious dinner, everyone received their colorful red parkas at the Parka Party in the lounge. We then sailed down the Beagle Channel and admired the stunning landscape, and then drifted off to our cabins for a well-deserved rest to dream about the voyage ahead.

Submitted by Melanie Glaubitz, Musician

Photos: a) *G Expedition* alongside, b) Safety Drill

At Sea (Drake Passage)

Wednesday, 22nd February 2023



The Drake Passage holds certain infamy in both the past and present - a rite of passage that so few get to make, and for some, a route from which they will never return. Nature is beautiful down to her tiniest creations, unseen to the naked eye, and yet with all the intricacies of a distant galaxy. But

today that is not the case on our ship, *G Expedition*, where Mother Nature has put on a grand display of raw power, throwing us from side to side, up and down, and all around. It was an absolute thrill for some and a less than desirable experience for others. However, in retrospect, I can guarantee that all on board will fondly remember their crossing of the Drake Passage, home of one of nature's mightiest children: Greybeard.

Arms stretched a thousand miles wide, Greybeard rolled forward.

"OOOOOOOOM!"

Ocean waves are born in storm, destined to die on distant rocky shores, but not Greybeard. He was one of the Immortals. Born 30 million years ago, he surged eastward without relent. He had lost count of the number of times he had passed The Narowing. He knew no rocky shore.

"OOOOOOOOM!"

With this latest storm he had grown taller and mightier. The wind had wrought in him an anger as frightening as it was uncontrollable and unstoppable. He had become a vast brine leviathan, a living being of foam and crushing water, thundering onwards and downwards, crushing and swallowing anything lying before him. Monarch of the ocean, all bowed before Greybeard and the cohort of Immortals.

"OOOOOOOOM!"

A great white animal thundered over Greybeard. An expert mass of twisting sinews and drumming feathers the bird skimmed the sea, paralleling Greybeard's long white ridge of cresting froth. A furious wavelet leapt skywards; the Roaring Forties instantly turned the water to shrapnel, pelting the bird with icy shards of vapour. But the aviatrix was unflinching. An eternal wanderer, it swung stiffly down Greybeard's foaming shirtfront and turned its head; for a second they looked into each other. Pelagic exiles both, they saw in each others' souls a part of themselves and then suddenly the bird was gone, soaring high into the sky and vanishing into the spindrift that covered the sea like a mist.

Dr. Alex Cowan, Physical Scientist & Legendary Seafaring Wordsmith

Submitted by Matt Burnaby, Naturalist

Photo: Drake Passage, by Mark Dunsmuir, Photographer in Residence

At Sea (Drake Passage)

Thursday, 23rd February 2023

Through the night the *G Expedition* continued to rock and roll as she proceeded south through the Drake Passage. The wind eased from hurricane force to a mere gale, and the waves lost some of their violence. During breakfast, we heard the wonderful announcement, "Ladies and gentlemen it is now safe enough for us to open the outer decks!" It was just in time, as a beautiful Grey-headed Albatross was circling the ship at close quarters. Several brave expeditioners donned parkas to watch seabirds scudding past in the fresh breeze. A rain shower turned into sleet, then snow - a good time to warm up in the lounge as our educational series of lectures was to resume.



The first presentation of the day was given by John Kernan, our marine biologist. We learned about many of the neighbouring cetaceans in the Southern Ocean, including the largest animal on our planet, the mighty Blue Whale. As the snow squall cleared and more people ventured on deck, the sun came out. The educational series continued, and it was time to

hear from Heidi Krajewsky, our resident ornithologist. This presentation on Southern Seabirds gave us tips to identify the biggest wingspan on the planet, the Wandering Albatross.

The sunshine continued and a jubilant crowd was enjoying the changed conditions after lunch and spending time on deck. It was a great time to be outside as we were graced by the appearance of our first Wandering Albatross. Then we returned to our lecture series with an introduction to Brushtail Penguins. We learned the breeding cycle of the three species we are likely to encounter: Adelie, Chinstrap and Gentoo. Out on deck, the enthusiastic questions continued, as Heidi and John spent time looking for wildlife and sharing tips for binoculars.



The eventful day concluded with a Welcome Cocktail by Captain Gilles Cader, a recap and briefing for tomorrow, a scrumptious dinner in the dining room, and an introductory briefing for the campers.

Submitted by: Heidi Krajewsky, Ornithologist
Photos: a) Deck watch, b) Wandering Albatross

At Sea & Crystal Sound

Friday, 24th February 2023

Following our passage through the Drake, it certainly was nice to wake to a smooth sea as we continued south. The morning's activities revolved around the necessary actions needed to be guests on Antarctica, including information on the Antarctic Treaty and the well-established International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) requirements. All intended for us to be good stewards of the Continent and preserve its unique and pristine condition. Additional briefings were given as to how to safely work around the Zodiacs, how the landings will take place, and how to get into and out of the Zodiacs on the gangway and onshore – all



intended to make our landings safe and efficient. Next came the biosecurity procedures where all of our outer wear was vacuumed, plucked of debris and made as clean as possible before we headed for shore. Finally, came the introduction to the infamous mudroom where we discovered our mudroom numbers, squeezed into our boots and discovered lifejackets - All necessary to go ashore in a safe manner.

At 1430, John, our marine mammal expert, provided us all with the background needed to be able to appreciate Humpback Whales and Orcas, the two species of cetacean most likely to be encountered in the waters around the Antarctic Peninsula. By 1530, the first of many icebergs came into view, which surely indicated that land was not far distant. We passed just north of Lavoisier Island and entered Crystal Sound through the Pendleton Strait. And Crystal Sound certainly lived up to its name; the glacier-covered mountains, all ending in great icy cliffs, created a wealth of substantial icebergs and brash ice. These smaller bergs ringed the edge of the land and many drifted into the waters of the aptly named sound.

At 1800 hours we gathered on deck to acknowledge our transit across the Antarctic Circle (identified as 66°33' south latitude) - an event that many had been waiting for for some time. With drink in hand and photographs taken, the ship's horn rang loud to sanction the occasion. Still not done for the day, the kayakers were called to the mudroom for the required safety briefing and to be outfitted and squeezed into their kayaks.



After the evening meal and to end the day our ship's musician, Melanie, provided her wonderful music and entertainment in the Polar Bear Bar. Without doubt, the day was one of expectation as to what was certainly to come, and it was indeed a great day for all aboard the *G Expedition*.

Submitted by: Keith Mountain, Geologist

Photos: a) Scenery as we entered Crystal Sound, b) All on board noted the transit of the Antarctic Circle, by Mark Dunsmuir, Photographer in Residence

Detaille Island & The Gullet

Saturday, 25th February 2023

When does an adventure to Antarctica begin? In the mind as a notion? Perhaps, when the dream becomes a plan with the formation of a timeline. Maybe when one steps outside the front door, or when one boards a plane or ship for parts unknown. Maybe when a ship casts the lines. And maybe when one sets foot on Antarctica for the first time. It is a bit different for every individual. What does said adventure hold? Mostly unknown – that is the inherent beauty of an Antarctic adventure – much is indefinite, and very little is ever predictable. And surprises can leap forth at any and every turn.

For this writer, many of the staff and crew and most of us paying patrons, the indefinite and unpredictable portion came to the forefront with EL Jonathan's opening statements – we would shoot straight for the Antarctic Circle and parts beyond – a bold stroke based on favorable weather and ice predictions. After two days of sailing a lively (and for a few hours – absolutely tempestuous) Drake our ship came to anchor off the remote location of Detaille Island, some 16-17 nautical miles below the Antarctic Circle (one of the five famous lines of latitude on Earth, which we had crossed the day before – an achievement toasted by all with glasses of champagne on the forecastle deck).



Winds and swells were even more pleasant than what was forecast; both hardly existed, and the sun blazed under a mostly blue sky. Our first Zodiac foray was accomplished with ease. Detaille is a small, remote, and very exposed rocky island. The lone fabricated structure on the island (a wooden BAS hut evacuated in 1959), just up from the landing site, was our primary destination. It stood as a time capsule of sorts, a window back to a period when traveling and working in Antarctica appeared dated yet eerily familiar – an era without

the creature comforts of modern expedition tourist enterprises – a bit like looking at an old family photo album chronicling previous generations.

Around the island, numerous Weddell Seals reposed on the snow and ice and/or swam in the waters near the landing site ever curious of the strange red parka-clad visitors. The island's heights boast a small Adelie Penguin rookery, which was mostly populated by molting adult birds.



By mid-afternoon the *G Expedition* had entered the northern segment of the famed Gullet, a crisscrossing, 'X'-shaped ice-bound channel with the 'Gullet' at its center. Winds and swells had calmed even further to a mirror-like sheen within its confines. Zodiacs were lowered and launched for an exploration. Ice in all its forms littered the waterway. Wildlife was dominated by icy rafts of Crabeater Seals, a few Leopard Seals and the occasional Wilson's Storm-petrel, which gracefully flitted over the still briny.

Submitted by: John Kernan, Marine Biologist

Photos: a) The hut on Detaille Island, by Rex Nelson, Naturalist, b) Crabeater Seals in the Gullet, by John Kernan

Bongrain Point & Horseshoe Island

Sunday, 26th February 2023

Morning broke cool and calm over the *G Expedition* as she lay at anchor at the mouth of Dalgliesh Bay, on the west side of Pourquoi Pas Island. Beautiful icebergs and bergy bits dotted the waters while Crabeater Seals were loafing and feeding all around us. The high clouds were scattered and dappled sunlight moved across the mountains and fjords back dropping the scene.



Shortly after breakfast, Zodiacs were lowered, and we began our morning operation at Bongrain Point. We were whisked through the icy leavings of the glacier to the south side of the bay, where we stepped onto a lively cobble beach. There we found soaring mountain peaks, glacial moraines, fascinating geology, and, of course, Adelie Penguins and Antarctic Fur Seals. The kayakers were able to get out and explore a bit within Marguerite Bay. Amazingly, they made friends with some of the many Humpback Whales that visit these productive waters every austral summer.

In the afternoon we were at Horseshoe Island where the weather continued to treat us to brilliant blue skies and sunshine. We had a few different activities for all to enjoy, with the kayakers once again able to explore the nooks and crannies of the water's edge. On land, we had an exploration of the historic site British Base 'Y' as well as an extended hike up and over a ridge to overlook the Emerald Lagoon. Regardless of which activity you did, Antarctic landscapes and wildlife dominated the scenery in every direction. One highlight among many was the delicate window through a huge iceberg near the mouth of Sally Cove.



After dinner the intrepid campers made landfall at Lystad Bay, a little further south on Horseshoe Island. The bright sunshine that marked our day gradually faded into a lingering pastel sunset.

Submitted by: James Smith, Naturalist

Photos: a) Panorama of Bongrain Point, b) Iceberg window near Sally Cove

Neny Fjord & Stonington Island

Monday, 27th February 2023

Waters and winds up from the night before as the campers arose from their slumber. Onshore breezes were steadily but ominously gathering. We had all seen the weather chart at the previous evening's briefing. Was this an agent of genuine change to inclement weather? Or was it just a pocket of rougher localized conditions? Zodiacs set forth to retrieve the robust souls who spent a night with just a thin veneer of nylon between them and Antarctic elements. Between 0530 and 0600 all were brought safely back aboard to enjoy hot cocoa, warm up, and perhaps even indulge in deeper slumber. Our vessel weighed anchor and steamed southwards for Neny Fjord. The objective – search for wildlife and tabular icebergs in the tranquil seas.

It did not take long. Breakfast was only just completed when the call came over the ship's PA system. "Ladies and gentlemen, apologies for the interruption to your meal, but we have a group of Killer Whales (Orcas) in front of the ship. Time to come out on deck." From the distance where they were first spotted, the ship slowly maneuvered in a watery field marked widely with Orcas. In due course some of the individuals and smaller groups coalesced into a tighter, more unified unit as they approached our slow-moving craft. The scene grew in amazement and tension as the animals made several passes right next to the ship. Port, starboard and the bow were cushioned by groups of the marine mammals practically swimming in formation with our ship. And the water was so clear near the vessel that some Orcas could be seen cruising beneath the briny. The group then swam off in unison towards the east.



In short time, the *G Expedition* was in Neny Fjord. The captain held the ship in position under an overcast yet calm sky. Waters remained still. We had achieved our farthest south for the voyage (68° 17.151'S). This was the perfect setting and opportunity for the famed Polar Plunge, a rite of passage for many Antarctic travelers. Showcasing questionable degrees of common sense, we queued up for plunging into the sub-zero waters. Most were popsicized but happy.



During lunch and as the sun broke through, our vessel repositioned to Stonington Island (at one time a peninsula from which aerial incursions could be launched deeper into the Crystal Desert's interior), a stronghold of lengthy Antarctic history for both the United States and the United Kingdom. Bases of both countries stand well preserved. We had the opportunity to explore both and then board Zodiacs for a short ride to a rocky spit of land, still attached to mainland Antarctica by a tongue of ice. Along the way and near the ship flat, numerous icy rafts of Crabeater Seals meandered by on gentle currents.

As the partially-cloudy western sky cooled into more ominous shades of gray, the day concluded with the vessel's crew band, The Monkey Eating Eagles, performing in the Polar Bear Bar for an enthusiastic, appreciative and highly energetic crowd.

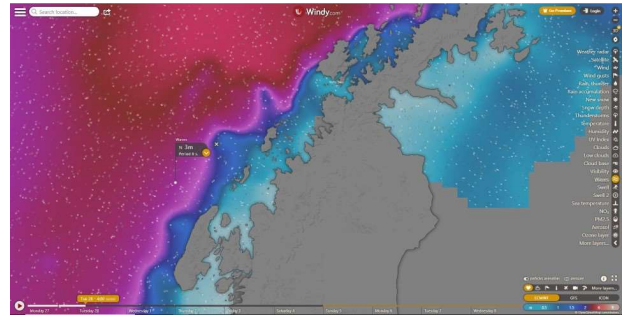
Submitted by: John Kernan, Marine Biologist

Photos: a) Killer Whales near the *G Expedition*, b) Crabeater Seals on ice

Heading North (At Sea)

Tuesday, 28th February 2023

Leaving behind the incredible site of Stonington Island, the historic huts and the spectacular glacial scenery, the *G Expedition* began its run north. Keeping the Antarctic Peninsula to the starboard side throughout the evening and into the morning, a distance of perhaps 250 statute miles was covered by the afternoon of the 28th of February. The intent was to enter into the Penola strait, navigate the Lemaire Channel, and arrive at an anchor point within a short distance of Hovgaard Island.



Weather in the Antarctic can be extreme, and any (and even all) plans can fall by the wayside, becoming collateral damage to its fickle nature. By breakfast, the previous evening's campaign designs appeared in jeopardy. Once outside the protection of Adelaide Island and exposed to the unbridled, strong northwesterly winds the *G Expedition* began to heave and lurch against the steady onslaught. This had been predicted the night before with a Windy.com screen shot highlighting a colorful and well-demarcated blanket of ravenous reds, bruising blues and punishing purples. We had entered the belly of the beast. Yet we had no other recourse. This was the course back to the northern reaches of the Antarctic Peninsula and the Gerlache Strait!

The morning hours were consumed by a sequence of important lectures beginning at 0930 with John dealing with Southern Elephant Seals and Antarctic Fur Seals of the Southern Ocean. As our previous day's encounter was so utterly uncommon and intimate it was only apropos to elaborate further upon the subject of Killer Whales. Matt Burnaby, sculpting a global and expansive look at the oceans' apex predators, handled this topic with wit and aplomb, his knowledge steeped in direct experience that belies his youth. By mid-day, with our vessel barely cracking 9 knots through an ever-steady parade of swells and wind-driven spume, it was clear that we were not going to make it to Hovgaard Island. It would be a full day at sea. Appropriately, Keith followed in the afternoon with a penetrating lecture on Antarctic weather.



By 1530, we were still pounding steadily north, and an unplanned lecture slot opened. Heidi gave a presentation on Antarctic krill. Her salient and illuminating talk focused on the giant krill *Euphausia superba*, Antarctica's most important marine resource and foundation of the continent's marine trophic pyramid. It is a primitive shrimp-like crustacean and a fascinating little animal in its own right. Its life cycle is complex, current harvesting of it is controversial, and its importance cannot be understated. It is also inextricably linked to the presence and persistence of seasonal sea ice and the microscopic algae that grow and thrive within it.

Submitted by: John Kernan, Marine Biologist

Photos: a) Windy.com screenshot of the weather off the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula, b) Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*)

Danco Island & Orne Harbour

Wednesday, 1st March 2023

Much to the delight of all on board the *G Expedition*, we awoke to find ourselves at anchor in the delightfully calm Errera Channel. The skies were slate grey and ominous, yet barely a touch of wind brushed us. Soaring peaks climbed from the waters whilst blue-white glaciers coursed into the inky sea. In contrast to the blue skies and sunshine that had marked the southern reaches of our voyage, this dark and brooding landscape showed us another side of Antarctica.

Within the channel between Rongé Island and the Antarctic Peninsula lies Danco Island, the site of this morning's operation. Hikers were led up a (sometimes slippery) slope towards a number of groups of nesting Gentoo Penguins. On the water, kayakers explored the margins of Danco Island, where they spotted Minke Whales, Leopard Seals, and a number of rumbling glacial calvings. As the Zodiacs made their way back through the ice towards the ship, we visited some lounging and swimming Leopard Seals. These massive seals, with their large heads and long pectoral flippers, were likely enjoying a taste of the juvenile penguins that were entering the sea for the first time.



Our good ship sailed north after lunch to a spit of land that reaches into the Gerlache Strait called the Arctowski Peninsula. On the northwest side of that peninsula is Orne Harbour and a steep hike to fantastic views and a Chinstrap Penguin colony. These noisy little penguins have claimed the heights here as their domain, with most of the birds nesting at 100 meters or more above sea level. Quite the hike for those little legs! The overcast sky seemed to brighten the blues of the surrounding glaciers, and even the muted greens and oranges of the lichens that cling to the cliffs were somehow shining today. After

our hike we also got a short Zodiac exploration to visit a few Antarctic Fur Seals!

In the evening the ship headed over to the stunning Neumayer Channel as huge snowflakes fell lazily to the deck. Sheer rock walls surrounded the ship, making for a dramatic passage in a winter wonderland.

Submitted by: James Smith, Naturalist

Photos: a) An underwater view of one of Danco Island's Leopard Seals, by Mark Dunsmuir, b) A Chinstrap Penguin surveys its kingdom at Orne Harbour.

Port Lockroy & Melchior Islands

Thursday, 2nd March 2023

There are few pleasures in life as sublime as waking up surrounded by sea and glacial mountain landscapes. This trip has had many of those mornings and this was no exception. Snow squalls moved through the area and high grey clouds provided just the right light to make the snow and ice around us glow in every color from white to blue. We lay at anchor near Goudier Island which is home to famous Port Lockroy. It is a former British Antarctic Survey station, now run as a museum, gift shop, and post office by the United Kingdom Antarctic Heritage Trust. After an informative briefing by one of the staff from Port Lockroy, we began our morning operation. We were able to visit both Port Lockroy and nearby Jougla Point to see nesting Gentoos, whale bones, and Blue-eyed Shags. As the last landing of our expedition, many took the opportunity to quietly reflect on what we had experienced over the last week in the Antarctic.



Back onboard the *G Expedition*, we transited north through the Neumayer Channel and out into the Gerlache Strait, and then north along the east coast of Anvers Island. Almost immediately, we realized we were in the midst of dozens of whales. It seemed everywhere we looked around the ship, Humpback Whales could be seen logging, feeding, diving, fin slapping, and even breaching. We moved slowly and carefully through these giants of the ocean; often we were rewarded with incredible up-close views. One special moment was when a group of six humpbacks surfaced right in front of the ship and traveled with us for a few minutes. The sights and sounds of these animals breathing next to us was amazing. They then took one last breath and dove once again, but they left us with the parting shot of 3 simultaneous flukes at once!



Thinking it couldn't get much better than that, we turned north and entered Dallmann Bay, between Anvers and Brabant Islands. Even more Humpbacks greeted us there. Ahead of the ship, initially quite far away, we saw breaching Humpbacks! As we slipped slowly ahead, we found that both an adult and juvenile humpback were repeatedly breaching. What a show they put on! Numerous flukes, fin slaps, and breaches just off the bow of the ship made for a once-in-a-lifetime Antarctic send off.

Our good ship slowly cruised out through the Melchior Islands and out into the Bransfield Strait. From the aft deck, under a darkening sky and increasing swell, we cast our last lingering looks upon Antarctica.

Submitted by: James Smith, Naturalist

Photos by: Heidi Krajewsky, Ornithologist, a) Blue-eyed Shags at Jougla Point, b) Juvenile whale fluke with rake marks

At Sea (Drake Passage)

Friday, 3rd March 2023

With a foreboding sense of Deja-vu, we found ourselves at sea, rolling across Drake Passage once again. But wait a minute. When you look closely you can pick up subtle differences. The morning cup of tea was no longer being held rigidly and conventionally perpendicular to the floor. Instead, a gentle subconscious rocking motion in the hand kept the cup level with the liquid and the liquid contained in the cup. As we traversed the hallways our steps wandered from left to right and back again, but our torsos somehow remained centered. Even when the occasional rambunctious rogue movement sent us sideways faster than average, the butter knife might slip off the breakfast plate, but the precious pastry remained firmly in our grasp. After our rough passage south at the beginning and another day at sea heading north outside Adelaide Island in the middle of our voyage, we were truly getting our sea legs. Conversations at the tea station no longer centered around “how high do you think the waves are?” but instead contemplated our Antarctic send-off show of wildlife yesterday.

The light wind from the east only riffled the sea, while a residual swell from the west was felt. Our educational program continued, and Keith Mountain gave a lecture on Climate Change, Glaciers and the Polar Regions. We learned that ice is not just for swirling in our drinks, but has provided us with a record of earth’s climate for the past 900,000 years. We were thankful to leave the logistics and work to scientists like Keith to figure out, but the results are sobering. Our current atmospheric conditions are well outside those experienced in our earth’s history since man evolved. After a short break, John Kernan then continued his series on Antarctic Pinnipeds. We have been very fortunate to observe Leopard Seals up close during our voyage.

In the afternoon, the education series continued with photographer Mark providing a workshop on camera settings. Then John, James and Heidi were out on deck to lead a wildlife survey. The sightings were sporadic but in the end several Black-bellied Storm-petrels, Soft-plumaged Petrels and a Southern Giant Petrel were all sighted. The final presentation of the day was James’ lecture on Ecology and food webs in the far South.



The curiosity of the everyone onboard was illustrated by the well-rounded questions that carried our last recap until dinner time. Following supper, the Antarctic quiz (our final exam) took place in the Expedition Lounge. The high score was a 40 (out of a possible 40) – a *G Expedition* first. Albeit, the team’s score was aided by the timely (and strongly encouraged) bribing of various staff members.

Submitted by: Heidi Krajewsky, Ornithologist
Photo: Southern Giant Petrel

At Sea (Drake Passage)

Saturday, 4th February 2023

The day began on a different weather note than the previous evening, which was marked by windless skies and calm seas. This morning was born under partly cloudy skies, gathering winds and a mounting briny. Our northbound Drake Passage had so far been kind to us. Now King Neptune was awake, and with wide-sweeping and uncanny aim he was rifling atmospheric fastballs straight down Broadway at the port flank of our vessel. We were rolling once again. Upon entering the Beagle Channel just before midday the winds and swells mercifully eased. The sky remained overcast but bright, and visibility was excellent.

It was a day of closing presentations. They began with biologist John Kernan giving a presentation focusing on the micro life of Antarctica. AEL Jenny then gave us the pertinent details essential for a smooth transition back to 'normal' life. Mark kicked off the afternoon's program with a presentation on the history of Antarctic photography. Our ship's historian, Peter Nichols, then zeroed in on an appropriate subject considering our current location in the Beagle Channel entitled 'Evolution's Captain' – the tale of Captain Fitzroy and the voyage of the *HMS Beagle*. Keith Mountain rounded things out with a presentation on working and researching on large ice sheets. And finally, the Captain's Farewell cocktail party, auction and voyage slide show brought our journey to a heartfelt close.

The transit north across the Drake Passage from Antarctica to South America is such a striking contrast to the initial sail south from Ushuaia, which is marked by giddy anticipation of sights yet unseen. Heading to Ushuaia, we are satiated from our 12-day adventure. From the amazing sights of albatrosses on the wing to sparrow-like Wilson's Storm-petrels dancing upon the crests of small swells, from icy rafts of Crabeater Seals to stately icebergs, from rugged, ice-covered mountains to a once-in-a-lifetime encounter with Killer Whales, and



from the crisp scent of cool Antarctic air to the pungent smell of penguins and the musk of plucky Antarctic Fur Seals, our senses have been filled to their limits. Today, the ship's manifest contains the same list of names as when she set forth from Ushuaia, yet the ship seems filled with people utterly different from those who departed. This experience has changed us; our past selves are now strangers, and the strangers we met when we first boarded the ship are now our kin. Blown by the winds we met each other by chance and became a random gathering of souls who will likely never meet again. For a short time, we all shared in a single adventure that had a life of its own. Like icebergs, no two adventures are identical. Sadly, also like icebergs, adventures have to come to their end, slowly breaking up into smaller parts and melting away until they are only memories. Too soon now, we will melt back into our former lives, but forevermore will the spectacle of Antarctica be a part of us.

Submitted by: Rusty Capstan, Ghost Writer

Photo: Iceberg and Moon in Antarctica