

# IN THE WAKE OF SCOTT & SHACKLETON

## on board HERITAGE ADVENTURER

7 January - 3 February 2023



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### **Days 1 & 2**

**Saturday & Sunday January 7-8, 2023**

#### **Queenstown, Bluff and Departure**

Our Expedition *In the Wake of Scott and Shackleton* began with checking-in at our Queenstown accommodation and enjoying a first dinner together where we met our fellow adventures and some of our expedition team.

The next morning, Sunday dawned fine - Queenstown at its summer best. After breakfast, many guests took advantage of the optional morning excursion on board the *Spirit of Queenstown* catamaran to enjoy some of the South Island's most beautiful scenery. The 90-minute cruise of Lake Wakatipu with commentary gave stunning lake and mountain vistas throughout, with snow-capped Mt Earnslaw/Pikirakatahi (2,819 metres) at the northern end of the lake, a highlight. The high-country station homesteads of Mt Nicholas and Walter Peak were also a feature.

Afterwards there was time for some last-minute shopping in Queenstown and a leisurely stroll back to the hotel for lunch, before departing by bus for Bluff. We passed through more lake and mountain scenery

which gradually unfolded to farm vistas of the Southland Plains and many interesting townships. Guests from two of the three buses had a brief stop at The Queens Gardens, Invercargill for a stretch of legs and (for some) a viewing of a Tuatara before the final leg to Bluff.

As the coaches arrived at the dockside in Bluff we got our first look at our new floating home – *Heritage Adventurer*. What a sleek and beautiful ship she is. We clambered up the gangway and passed through customs to officially leave New Zealand. Then off to Reception to find our cabin assignments. We found our luggage waiting in the nicely appointed cabins and set off on a tour of the ship. So much to see: the Observation Lounge and Library; the Bridge; the Bistro; the Bar, Lounge and Presentation area, the Dining Room; and the Mud Rooms.

As required by maritime law we followed the Captain's instructions to collect our emergency life jackets, convened in the muster stations, and followed the crew to the lifeboats. With a warm, safe feeling we gathered in the Lounge for a presentation from Expedition Leader Aaron Russ. He introduced the Expedition team – 19 strong with a wide variety of nationalities, experience and expertise. In addition, he made us familiar with Zodiac operations and gave us a preview of tomorrow's activities at the Snares Islands.

The Hotel Director, Erik, followed with a rundown on the ship – including the spa, gymnasium, sauna, whirlpool and, of course, restaurants. Appropriately this was followed by dinner, as we ate we slipped away from the dock bound for the Southern Ocean.

With all the excitement sleeping was difficult, but the beds were very comfortable and we knew that we needed the rest for the days to come.



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### Day 3

Monday January 9, 2023

#### The Snares

After a gentle passage *Heritage Adventurer* arrived at the Snare Islands just as we were finishing breakfast. We were thus well fortified for our first excursion.

We had been divided into two groups for this and future operations to ensure that everyone had a good opportunity to experience the activity. In this case the Penguins came first followed by the Parakeets. We had our first chance to check out the Mud Rooms where we confirmed the fit of our Muckboots and adjusted our inflatable life jackets. Then it was down the gangway and onto the Zodiacs.

The unusual easterly wind and swell required that we pay attention to the crew and expedition team during embarkation and disembarkation. It also made for a dynamic ride to the more sheltered coves during the cruise – a true baptism for our expedition.

At the coves, the Snares Crested Penguins enjoyed the surging surf to ride as they returned to the rocks while the New Zealand Fur Seals frolicked curiously around the boats. The Buller's Albatross and Cape Petrels swooped low overhead and settled in large numbers on the sea around the boats feeding on the schools of fish swimming under our bow. What a way to get ready for lunch!

As we would be making our first landing the next day, Aaron gave us an overview of the Auckland Islands. To prevent the introduction of any unwanted pests to this natural place, we were required to pass a biosecurity screening where all of our outerwear was examined for hidden seeds and dirt. Once signed off, John told us some stories of the *History of the Auckland Islands – Settlement and Shipwrecks*.

A very full day continued with a chance to meet Captain Denis, the Hotel Manager Erik, and the other key staff members. This was followed by a briefing from Aaron on what to expect on Enderby Island. Then came dinner and confirmation that the cuisine provided by Adam and his kitchen team, and served by Israel and the dining room team, is truly superb. Bon Appetit.





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#### **Day 4**

**Tuesday January 10, 2023**

#### **Enderby Island**

We woke to calm seas off Sandy Bay on Enderby Island in the Auckland Islands. We could see the impressive volcanic cliffs surrounding Sandy Bay although it was a damp cloudy day.

The weather did not stop an exciting and active day as all guests participated in their activity of choice; a



12 kilometre hike around the island, or a traverse across the island with plenty of time to enjoy the amazing wildlife dominated by Hooker's/New Zealand Sea Lions, or a Zodiac cruise around Port Ross followed by ample time on Enderby Island to enjoy the impressive wildlife that included Yellow-eyed Penguins (Hoiho).

After breakfast the first group boarded their Zodiacs and headed into Sandy Bay to set off for the full day hike around the island. We were greeted by a Department of Conservation researcher who had been on the island for over a month. The route, anti-clockwise around the island, varied from well-formed tracks, to scrambling around large tussock mounds and the impressive still flowering megaherbs. Although most of the Sea Lions congregated in Sandy Bay, there were many to be seen along the route as well as often solitary or small groups of Yellow-eyed Penguins waiting to be photographed and flocks of Shags on the coastal volcanic platforms. Light-mantled Sooty Albatross were seen nesting on the steep impressive volcanic cliffs on the western side of the island before connecting with the boardwalk back across the island to Sandy Bay. A solitary Southern Royal Albatross was also observed nesting close to the boardwalk.

After an exhilarating day, a tired group of hikers returned to the luxury of *Heritage Adventurer* after a truly special day on Enderby Island.



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**Day 5**  
**Wednesday January 11, 2023**  
**At Sea**

After two days of full-on activity, our first sea day was welcomed. Some of us enjoyed a sleep-in while others were up early on the aft decks to check the birds following the ship. The daily programme was full:

Michael gave us some tips and tricks for better photos with his *Introduction to How to Photograph from a*



*Moving Ship or Zodiac*. We had experienced a taste of this at the Snares, and wanted to improve – so this was very welcome.

Matt helped us to understand the subjects that we are trying to capture with his talk on *Southern Sea Birds*. So many beautiful creatures to observe.

We had our first chance to shop on board, with the special opportunity of getting books signed by author Richard McElrea.

As food never seemed to be far away, lunch set us up for another round of biosecurity screenings to make sure that any Enderby Island organisms didn't make it to Macquarie Island.

Michael followed up his lecture with a hands-on workshop in the Observation Lounge.

Arron showed us what to expect for our first day at Macquarie Island and the Expedition Team recapped some of what we had seen so far.

With the chance to stop and see the slideshow on screen by the Dining Room, join the birders on deck to practice what we had learned from Michael, catching up on our photos, or reading, or watching the Southern Ocean out of the Lounge windows, or even napping, dinner capped an eventful day.

## **Day 6**

**Thursday January 12, 2023 Sandy Bay**

### **Macquarie Island**

Our trusty expedition vessel *Heritage Adventurer* arrived on schedule at Sandy Bay on the east coast of Macquarie Island, in the early morning. Conditions were good for Zodiac transport from ship to shore, as the bay was sheltered from the prevailing westerly winds.

Situated 600 kilometres southwest of the Auckland Islands, and north of the Antarctic Convergence, it is our southernmost landfall before reaching the Ross Sea. The island is administered by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

Because of limitations on the number of people allowed ashore at any time expeditioners were split into three groups, each having two sessions of two hours ashore, with lunch on board the ship where there was also a morning and afternoon presentation by staff member Julia on the subject of Ocean Currents. Air Temperature was in the 8°C range and we 'layered up' accordingly.

Our daily briefing sheet referred to what were about to see as 'one of the great wildlife spectacles of the world' and we were not disappointed. The prime spectacles were the respective rookeries of the Royal Penguins, in the green and lush coastal slopes above the beach (with easy boardwalk access), and of the King Penguins on the beach, a few hundred metres distance from our landing spot.

The sight and sound of these wonderful creatures will be a lasting memory for all of us. The bustling and cacophony at the Royal Penguin rookery were a dialled-up version of the more peaceful scene at the King Penguin rookery.

Elephant Seals, Giant Petrels and Skuas seemed to be the other principal players. Expeditioners observed two particular incidents of nature. A Skua took a chick from under a King Penguin and was seen to swallow it in one gulp. A Giant Petrel attacked a Royal Penguin, and was then assisted by some other

Giant Petrels and a Skua or two. Against the odds there was a happier ending this time, with the plucky penguin fighting off its attackers.

An afternoon and late-evening Zodiac cruise option with focus on water photography was taken up by several guests. Wet weather gear was imperative, (because of water splash at times) and participants enjoyed watching Royal Penguins swimming, sighting Orca cruising in the vicinity of Sandy Beach and the King Penguin rookery, observing sea birds and inquisitive penguins checking out our Zodiacs. The expertise of the crew assisting re-boarding was put to good use on the return of the late cruise passengers.

Dinner in the restaurant and bed soon after concluded a memorable first day at Macquarie Island. The ship remained anchored overnight in Sandy Bay.



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#### **Day 7**

**Friday January 13, 2023**

**Macquarie Island Buckle's Bay**

The day dawned with an optimistic sunrise, blue sky and westerly breeze making a landing at this magnificent part of Macquarie a possibility.

Early birders had Royal and King Penguins around the ship as well as three species of Albatross (Wandering, Light-mantled Sooty and Black-browed).

After breakfast, landings began. We were met by a very friendly Andrea on shore who looks after the Macquarie Island National Park and who gave us guidance on the do's and don'ts whilst we were visiting.

Small groups split off and walked along the sheltered eastern beach of the isthmus, past huddles of grumpy, moulting King Penguins and groups of Elephant Seals basking in the warm sunshine. Our first Gentoo Penguins were spotted as well as a lone Subantarctic Fur Seal.

The walk up to the Razorback view point provided magnificent views of the rugged western and sheltered eastern beaches, the isthmus, the base and Wireless Hill beyond. Behind us a pair of Light-mantled Sooty Albatross performed a ballet-like courtship flight in front of the breeding cliffs. This was a truly magnificent place to pause on a day of rare weather on Macquarie.

There were also frequent, albeit brief, views of Redpolls, a small, introduced brown bird, with Macquarie being the only place in Australia that it can be seen.

On the walk back we passed the infamous digesters that Joseph Hatch had installed. The information boards made for grim reading however, they were different times with different values highlighting even more how ahead of his time Douglas Mawson was in proposing an end to the commercial exploitation of the wildlife.

The western beach was much more rugged with lots of Gentoo Penguins and a colony of the endemic Macquarie Shag which is more closely related to the 'Blue-eyed' Shags that occur in the Indian and Atlantic oceans as opposed to the 'New Zealand' Shags.

A Zodiac cruise provided excellent views of smaller, black-faced Eastern Rockhopper Penguins. Our sixth penguin species of the expedition and declining species that feeds around the Antarctic Convergence which is moving southward, making feeding trips longer and less efficient. No other fur seals could be found but pillow basalt could be seen, evidence of Macquarie's past as a piece of the earth's crust raised to the surface.

A wonderful lunch was provided, and on the short cruise down the east side of the island a lone bull Orca was observed.

After anchoring off Lusitania Bay we started Zodiac cruising near the vast King Penguin colony where over 55,000 pairs of King Penguin breed. Penguins were all around the Zodiacs seemingly puzzled as to what strange beasts these were (with perhaps even stranger beasts riding in them). This was an opportunity to sit back and soak in the epic scale of the colony and perhaps reflect on the horrors of the past with rusting digesters set right in the middle of the colony.

The recap today was from Samuel about King Penguins and how the colouring on the bill and the colour patterns of the plumage gives a lot of information to other King Penguins about an individual. Bryan talked about Macquarie's geological past and the evidence of this that we saw on the walks and Zodiac rides. Ian gave a highly amusing talk on the Elephant Seal contrasting how different the beast we have been seeing on Macquarie is to the beast, rarely seen at sea where it spends most of its life, that dives for over an hour at a time to depths of 1,500 metres. Such an alien existence to our human selves.

Aaron then kicked off the first iceberg competition where guests would need to enter the time and date of spotting the first iceberg. Some of the more competitive among us were planning to lob an ice cube over



board at their allotted time were disappointed to learn it had to be at least as big as a double decker London bus above the water. The day ended with Prions and distant Orcas from the back deck. Quite a day!



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## Day 8

**Saturday January 14, 2023**

### At Sea

As we awoke *Heritage Adventurer* was headed southeast on a course to intersect the 175<sup>th</sup> meridian of longitude at approximately 65 degrees south latitude. Expedition Leader Aaron had told us that the ice charts showed this course gave us the best chance of an easier passage through the sea ice.

So, we start a stretch of several days at sea. For most of us this comes as a welcome chance to recharge our batteries (literally and figuratively) after some fabulous expedition days. When Aaron asked who was responsible for our luck with the weather, one or two of us raised their hands. Those doing this good work have kept it going, as we have a gentle tail wind and slight seas. Long may their magic continue – fingers crossed.

While there was time to relax we could participate in the *First Iceberg Sweepstakes* – a guessing game to name the time of the sighting of the first iceberg “bigger than a London double-decker bus above the water”.

Plus, we were able to learn from and enjoy presentations:

From Ian on *Cetaceans of the Southern Ocean*

From Michael on *How to best photograph wildlife portraits and behaviours* – with a hands-on workshop to follow.

From Agnès on *The Albatross – Lord of wind and waves*

From Aaron and the Expedition Team with a continued recap of our visit to Macquarie Island.

The birders could be found on the back decks chatting and scanning the skies. As the day progressed, they were required to add layers as the westerly wind increased – pushing us along just like the old sailing ships – and both the sea and air temperatures dropped markedly as we crossed the Antarctic Convergence.

Needless to say, we did not go hungry or thirsty on this beautiful day.



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## **Day 9**

**Sunday January 15, 2023**

### **At Sea**

The second sea day in this stretch started much as the first had ended – with westerly winds, moderate seas and cooling temperatures. Shortly after breakfast, and just before Steve's talk on *Antarctic Penguins*, we crossed the 60<sup>th</sup> degree of latitude. Thus leaving the Furious Fifties and entering the Screaming Sixties. We also noted that we had now entered the region covered by the Antarctic Treaty and other international agreements that pertain to the conservation and protection of the land, ice and seas south of 60°.

It was exciting to see and hear more mentions of Antarctica in our programme – as with Bryan's presentation in *Antarctica – a frozen continent*, and the distribution of our Antarctic jackets after lunch.

The birders reported good sighting of many species including albatross, prions, and diving petrels.

We had a special afternoon entertainment with a quiz to see how well we paid attention to the information

provided by the Expedition Team. The quiz was preceded by a delicious selection of sweet and savoury treats at afternoon tea – panna cotta and cucumber sandwiches! The quiz was full of tricky questions but Ian got us sorted and the team *The Terror* picked up the \$100 bar credit with a remarkable score of 28, including bonus points, from 30 questions.

Throughout the day the wind and seas were slowly building as a storm passed through. By the time Aaron and the team presented the day's recap the winds were over 35 knots and the seas 5 to 6 metres. Our itinerary had been planned so that the course from Macquarie Island to the Ross Sea would have the prevailing wind and seas behind us.

This worked well and *Heritage Adventurer* continued to give us a smooth and comfortable passage through dinner when the winds and swell had increased to 50 knots and 8 metres. An especially large swell during dessert showed us something of the true power of the Southern Ocean. The Sixties had started to scream.

We settled into our beds wondering about the sighting of that first iceberg and what future adventures awaited.

## **Day 10**

**Monday January 16, 2023**

### **At Sea**

Some of us had wanted to see the power of the Southern Ocean. Others were quite happy to have the calmest conditions possible. Either way doesn't matter as Mother Nature takes no notice of the desires of us mere mortals.

Overnight the storm system continued to pursue *Heritage Adventurer*. Winds built to a sustained 50 knots while seas rose to 10 metres. The occasional larger swell passed through. Still, our beautiful floating home, and the crew who guided her, handled well. We changed course slightly to give a more comfortable ride.

Conditions forced us inside with the outer decks closed and the daily programme was postponed. Care was needed when moving around the ship – “One hand for yourself and one for the ship”. We picked our spots in cabins and lounges and waited for the storm to pass through.

Our Hotel Team adapted to the conditions admirably. They served lunch à la carte in the dining room, and via room service. We were spoiled.

Just as lunch was finished Aaron came on the PA to announce the sighting of an iceberg off the starboard side. It was clearly large enough and verified, we had a winner for the contest at 1400 hours. It was Gavin who had the closest guess of 1410 and claimed the prize.

As the afternoon progressed the Captain was able to slowly bring *Heritage Adventurer* to a more southerly heading to remove us from the main storm. Conditions slowly eased so that access to Deck 6 aft was allowed. It was a brisk 0°C – but refreshing.

Before dinner we had a social chat and beverage with the Expedition Team. After dinner we had the chance to watch the drama/documentary of Scott and Amundsen in *The Last Place on Earth*.





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## Day 11

**Tuesday January 17, 2023**

### At Sea

A hearty few of us were on the Bridge in the wee small hours of the morning to watch as the positioning system ticked over 66°33' to mark the crossing of the Antarctic. They were rewarded for their fortitude with the sighting of a Humpback Whale, and the circumnavigation of an iceberg perforated with several holes.

In a happy coincidence, our crossing of the circle occurred on the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first crossing in 1773 by the ship *Resolution* under the command of James Cook.

After some birding and iceberg viewing, John described the various expeditions, including Cook's, that led to the understanding of the land in the south, in his talk *Antarctic Unveiled*. Steve then explained how Adélie Penguin colonies around the world have grown, shrunk, appeared and disappeared in response to changing temperatures in *Adélie Penguins & Climate Change: Past, Present and Future*.

We could see the brash ice building through Steve's talk, and we soon passed through our first band of pack ice. With the stabilisers housed we experienced greater roll, and could see how effective they have been. Several Crabeater Seals were spotted on ice floes. The environment in the pack ice is so different from that of the open sea. We loved it.

As we were entering a new ecosystem we had another round of biosecurity to ensure that no Macquarie Island seeds, dirt or germs were transported by us to Antarctica.

Samuel gave us an *Introduction to the Ross Sea* and shortly afterward we gathered on the aft deck for a toast of mulled wine for crossing the Circle. Aaron led us in a pledge:

*“Having endured the privations of the Roaring Forties, the rigors of the Furious Fifties, and the ice strewn waters of the Screaming Sixties to cross the Antarctic Circle, paying homage to those early explorers who have not only shown the way but have demonstrated what it means to advocate for continued protection of Antarctic and its wildlife and history, I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby pledge that until my last expedition I will advocate to everyone, even those that will not listen, the importance of the Antarctic and its wildlife and history.”*

With this happily accepted weight of responsibility, we listened as Aaron briefed on the dos and don'ts for Antarctic travel as set out by the International Association of Antarctic Tourism Operators in *IAATO – Antarctic Guidelines*.

Then followed the daily recap, a briefing on what to expect if a landing at Cape Adare is possible, and non-stop chatter and laughter at dinner. Another super day.



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## **Day 12**

**Wednesday January 18, 2023**

### **Approaching Cape Adare**

At 0700 today, we were at 71° 27'S, 171° 20'E. We woke to a calm sea with winds at 10-15 knots. As we passed through bands of pack ice, we saw Snow and Antarctic Petrels flying around the ship, and the occasional Adélie Penguins and Crabeater Seals on the ice floes. The temperature outside was a pleasant -1° C.

At mid-morning we were treated to a very special observation – a Ross Seal on an ice floe! This seal is extremely rare to see and less is known about it than any other Antarctic seal. It breeds on the pack ice and remains dispersed around Antarctica. In fact, for Steve, this was the first time he had seen one despite so many years of travelling in this part of the world. The captain deftly maneuvered the ship around so that we could pass near the seal to get a good look at it and take excellent photos as well. What a great way to begin the day!

Things only got better after that. We had marvellous views of tabular ice bergs, many grounded around the tip of Cape Adare. The cape itself was visible on our port side and, typical of this cape, was shrouded in fog at the top. Moving slowly around the icebergs and pack ice, we were able to anchor just offshore from Ridley Beach and the historic huts, now clearly visible on the beach. At 1700, we began the Zodiac landings on the volcanic sand that formed the beach, covered with Adélie Penguins, and their chicks all about 4-5 weeks old, and a few Weddell Seals in the water and sleeping on the beach.

The rest of the evening was spent walking the beach and then visiting the huts. Only four could enter the Borchgrevink's Hut at a time. The hut placed us back to 1899-1900 when 12 men stayed in this small hut for the winter. Artwork adorned the ceiling above one of the bunks. It is amazing that this hut still stands here after 123 years.

The penguin colony was impressive with over 338,000 estimated nests here, not only filling the beach but also extending up the steep slope at several points at the base of the beach, up to 300 metres above sea level. One wonders how these birds can find the energy to build nests and raise chicks with such a long journey to and from the sea, walking across the beach then up the slope. Most of the chicks looked fat and healthy and many adults had two chicks, a good indication of the quality of food in this area of the Ross Sea and the reason why the colony is so large and still apparently growing.

We stayed on the beach until 2230. Steve and Kate were able to take four volunteers to help collect bone samples. Steve also found old layers of bone in the exposed cliffs at the back of the beach and sampled these. Perhaps they represent an older relict colony now mostly gone? Radiocarbon analysis will be required to answer this question.

A late dinner back on board *Adventurer*, then beautiful light on the ice bergs for great photos as the sun dipped lower towards the horizon. We then spent a quiet night in calm waters heading further south into the Ross Sea, following the path of Sir James Clark Ross on his 1839-1843 expedition.



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### **Day 13**

**Thursday January 19, 2023**

**Possession Islands, Foyen Harbour & Sea Ice landing**

After successfully navigating our way out of the icebergs and ice floes off Cape Adare, we woke to a bright sunny day at the Possession Islands. Impressive towers of rock, believed to be volcanic plugs, could be seen from the ship offshore Possession Island. Our expedition team leaders were already out in a Zodiac scoping out the best landing spot for our day's activities. It turned out to be a landing on Foyen Island, the

southernmost of the Possession Islands, with the option of a Zodiac cruise around the spectacular volcanic scenery of the Possession Islands, tabular icebergs and floating ice floes. The fast-moving currents made for exciting landings and Zodiac cruising, with the high mountains of the North Victoria Land coast providing a spectacular back drop to the day's activities.

The landings on a rocky, wave-cut platform provided cross sections of hexagonal columnar-jointed basalt lava, formed approximately 30 million years ago, as a tectonic rift split Antarctica into East and West and uplifted the Transantarctic Mountains leaving much of West Antarctica below sea level. The shore parties were able to hike inland where Adélie Penguins covered the hilly landscape in quite different environmental conditions to Cape Adare. The distribution of the penguins and dry conditions underfoot allowed us to wander between different groups of penguins for spectacular photographic opportunities with the backdrop of the ice-filled bay and high mountains. The groups of fluffy chicks suggested a healthy colony of Adélie Penguins.

Those that chose the Zodiac option enjoyed close up views of the ice floes charging along fast-moving currents, the volcanic plugs seen from the ship and the volcanic cliffs that included spectacular columnar-jointed basalt as good as anywhere else the world. Numerous Adélie Penguins were photographed on the ice floes and in the sea from the Zodiacs. After a long morning of activity and a late lunch we made our way slowly south through thick ice floes in search of Emperor Penguins off the known colony in Moubray Bay. Our planned evening recap was delayed by an announcement, "*Emperor Penguin ahead*". We were not disappointed as a distant Emperor Penguin came into view much to the delight of all on board. The day's activities did not finish there as after dinner most people, including crew, enjoyed landing on one of two ice floes close to the ship in the calm, warm evening light with Mt Herschel providing a stunning backdrop.

It really was a truly wonderful day in Antarctica.



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**Day 14**  
**Friday January 20, 2023**



## Moubray Bay – Coulman Island

Overnight, *Heritage Adventurer* made her way through the spectacular ice floes of Moubray Bay into relatively ice-free seas abreast of Cape Hallett and, by morning, Daniell Peninsula and Cape Phillips were visible off the starboard bow.

A call from the bridge at about 0800 hours alerted us to a Minke Whale sighting forward of the ship. The weather was blowing from the south with some snow showers and colder temperatures.

With 30 miles to sail to our destination of Coulman Island, visible ahead, there was time for a morning presentation by John on the subject of the *Discovery* expedition (1901-04) and other early 'heroic era' expeditions.

It was a spectacular sight from *Adventurer* as we approached, in sunlight, through the increasingly dense sea ice in Glacier Strait to the east of Coulman Island. A large number of Snow Petrels were evident. Conditions did not allow an approach to the coast of the island, the site of a large Emperor Penguin rookery, occupied in winter months.

In the early afternoon a group of Emperor Penguins (evidently in a moulting phase) were identified from the Bridge, ahead on the sea-ice in Glacier Strait and towards the Victoria Land coast. The ship was halted in continuous sea ice and later moved slightly closer to the group.

After expedition leaders had evaluated the surface snow conditions, and with suitable warnings of wet and slushy snow, but with a solid ice base beneath, expeditioners and crew had the opportunity to venture from the ship to a position some distance from the penguins. Many did so, and some were well rewarded when one of the Emperors approached, appearing out of the snow flurries to survey the visitors from a close distance. The regal Emperor image will no doubt feature in the daily selection of outstanding photographs shown on board and as one of the defining images of the expedition.

After many animated expeditioners returned on board for dinner, the ship started a return to the north of Coulman Island, out of Glacier Strait, to set a course for Terra Nova Bay.



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## Day 15

**Saturday January 21, 2023**

### **Ice navigation en route to Terra Nova Bay**

This morning, many of us took the opportunity to sleep in after our march to the Emperors through slushy snow yesterday evening. We awoke to snow on deck and white-out conditions, which gradually gave way to mostly sunny skies. *Heritage Adventurer* was making her way through dense pack ice in the direction of Terra Nova Bay. As our progress was somewhat slower than expected due to heavy ice concentrations, an educational program was offered.

First up was Samuel with his presentation entitled *Emperors of Antarctica*, about the natural history of the majestic Emperor Penguin. Next was a screening of the third part of the TV series, *The Last Place on Earth*, about the race between Scott and Amundsen to the South Pole in 1911. After lunch we joined Richard in the lounge for part 2 of his presentation entitled *Shackleton's Ross Sea Party (1914-1917: the end of the Heroic Era)*.

Throughout the day we had plenty of opportunities to experience ice all around the ship. We had great views of tabular icebergs and encountered pack ice stretching to the horizon in all directions. Every hour offered a new example of the many moods of the spellbinding Antarctic icescape; sometimes in full sunshine and wind, other times in sombre shade and mirror calm conditions.

Patient observers were rewarded with views of Adélie Penguins, Snow Petrels, Weddell Seals and Minke Whales. At 1800, a pair of moulting Emperor Penguins were spotted on an ice floe. At about that time, the glaciated summit of Mount Melbourne became visible on the horizon. This enormous mainland stratovolcano stands like a sentinel at the northern end of Terra Nova Bay, toward which we were making slow but steady progress. Consulting the nautical charts revealed a distance in a straight line of 83 nautical miles to the mountain.

At recap, Samuel told us all that could be told about the enigmatic Ross Seal. We also got a fascinating insight into the formation of sea ice from Julia. After dinner, many of us went out on deck to admire the



ever-changing icescapes in the golden light of evening. At 2330, Aaron made an announcement updating us on our plan. After consulting the most recent ice charts, which showed increasing ice concentrations in our direction of travel, Aaron and the Captain made the informed decision to retreat out of the ice, lest we become trapped. Aaron was optimistic that we would find more opportunities for excursions in the southern reaches of the Ross Sea. We all fell asleep to the now-familiar rumbling of bow thrusters as we maneuvered carefully through the seemingly endless ice.



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## Day 16

**Sunday January 22, 2023**

**Toward the Lower Ross Sea**

Emperor Penguins began the day early with two showing off for the photographers who were still up at 0130, then two more for the early risers at 0600. Ice floes overnight caused us to change course heading back to open water instead of to Terra Nova Bay. Not only did it slow our navigation to the area but ice conditions there would mean spending the better part of a day to get back out of the bay. At 0800 this morning we were located at 74° 29.121' S / 170° 15.769' E heading to the northeast and were lucky to pass some seabirds feeding on what looked like a dead seal – six Giant Petrels, 14 Wilson's Storm-Petrels, five or six Snow Petrels – and there was another Emperor Penguin resting on an ice floe nearby.

First on the schedule today was Dr Steve Emslie with a lecture about the marine ecology of the Ross Sea. Marine algae, which he is sampling here in the area, plays a huge role at the base of this food chain and we learned how important ice is in supporting algal life and the keystone species that feed on it: krill. We were amazed to learn that krill can live for 7 to 10 years and that sea ice drives productivity in this region. It was incredible for us to learn about everything happening here that we can't see from the surface, and gave us a new appreciation for that green, red, and brown tinted ice we've been passing.

John followed with a lecture about the Weddell Sea Party (Shackleton & the *Endurance*) building on the fascinating history behind this area. Sailing along in comfort on *Heritage Adventurer* as we observed the environment that was seemingly hostile to any human even in the summer months, it was humbling to think of the incredibly driven men who came before us. This quote John read to us from Frank Wild sums it up quite well:

*"Once wedded to Nature there is no divorce – separate from her you may and hide yourself amongst the flesh-pots of London, but the wild will keep calling and calling forever in your ears. You cannot escape the 'little voices.'"*

Seals on the ice were a highlight today, with good views of both Crabeater and Weddell Seals, and just

after 1430 a Leopard Seal was spotted up ahead of the ship, you guessed it - resting on some ice! The ship slowed and everyone was out on deck to marvel at this large phocid (true seal) who seemed to be smiling at us as we passed. Competitive nature aboard became evident as we held our second quiz of the trip hosted by our concierge Eric and the ship's purser David. Team Polar Bears took the prize as a huge gathering of Snow Petrels assembled outside. We raced from the aft lounge to marvel at the spectacle behind the ship! Ice was still on our starboard side, but otherwise we were in open water and surrounded by hundreds of Snow Petrels feeding in small groups, flying up to circle in the clouds above, and passing in gorgeous afternoon light by the port side of the vessel. One South Polar Skua even came in to see what all the fuss was about, but didn't harass any of the smaller, seemingly enchanted white birds as they zipped around us with ease.

Evening hours find us on our way south heading to the Ross Ice Shelf. Currently we have smooth sailing and a clear path... but who knows what tomorrow will bring? Mother Nature and the remote wilderness are in charge of that and we look forward to what they have in store.



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**Day 17**  
**Monday January 23, 2023**  
**Ross Ice Shelf – Cape Crozier**

*Heritage Adventurer* encountered some ice off Franklin Island overnight, and by morning with 25 knot

winds from the south, and the -6°C temperature soon dropping to -10°C, venturing outside for any length of time was a challenge. Luckily *Heritage Adventurer* is equipped a 180-degree Observation Lounge, Bridge and many other superb indoor viewing areas so everyone was able to enjoy the plentiful wildlife and spectacular scenery without having to join the brave folk out on to the decks and vantage points.

We were also treated to a fine lecture by Samuel on Sir John Clark Ross and the British Naval Expedition 1839-43.

The Ross Ice Shelf came into distant view by mid-morning and by midday, the junction between Cape Crozier and the ice shelf was visible at 20 nautical miles. There were passing snow showers but later sunlight highlighted the impressive slopes of Mt Terror, rising to 3,262 metres.

We passed close to an iceberg in the process of slowly calving from the ice shelf. There were many sightings of Adélie Penguins swimming through the icy waters near the ship, and of pods of Orca including one with 20-30 individuals.

All personnel gathered in the sheltered area of the upper deck to toast our arrival at the Ross Ice Shelf, and to James Clark Ross who had discovered it on 28 January 1841.

We were soon off Cape Crozier, at the eastern end of Ross Island, the site of an extensive Adélie Penguin colony, and site of the wintering Emperor Penguin colony. Later in the day we sighted several Emperors on ice floes near the ship.

After sailing eastwards along the ice shelf and gaining excellent views of this magnificent feature, the ship turned westwards making for Cape Bird at the entrance to McMurdo Sound. We maintained a good distance from the edge of the ice shelf, and from Ross Island, a Specially Protected Area at this point with close access not permitted.

After dinner, as we progressed towards Cape Bird, Expedition Leader Aaron announced that taking account of wind and ice conditions, and a forecast that may assist the clearance of ice from McMurdo Sound, we would be moving out of the immediate vicinity of the ice into a 'hold station' overnight.

Today we have reached a very special place with the Ross Ice Shelf stretching for about 800 kilometres to the east.



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## Day 18

**Tuesday January 24, 2023**

**Cape Bird – McMurdo Sound**

The day dawned clear with blue skies and sunshine making for spectacular scenery. Expedition Leader Aaron updated that there was heavy ice at the entrance to McMurdo Sound, which *Heritage Adventurer* would need to pass through, and winds of 20 to 30 knots forecast over the next 24 hours which may be helpful in clearing the ice from the Sound.

The ship soon entered the sea-ice to head around Cape Bird in this stunning setting. Beaufort Island was prominent northwards with US Ice-cutter, *Polar Star*, and a following cargo ship making their way towards McMurdo Station. In the distance, Mt Discovery (2,681m) at the head of McMurdo Sound was visible as were the Trans-Antarctic Mountains flanking the western shores of the Ross Sea, visible as far north as Terra Nova Bay. On the port side of the ship, the northern ice-covered slopes of Mt Bird (1,766m) stood out against the blue sky.

In the morning sunlight, two Leopard Seals on ice floes passed close to the ship giving close viewing. Later Crabeater Seals were close to the ship. An occasional Emperor Penguin and some Adélie Penguins gave good viewing. The Skua and Snow Petrel were also observed in the cold morning atmosphere, where ice crystals were forming mid-air.

Our steady progress through closely packed sea ice continued past Cape Bird and out into McMurdo Sound where we obtained a clear, partial view of Mt Erebus (3,794m). However, by mid-afternoon a combination of the density of the sea-ice and sea currents brought the decision by our Captain to turn *Heritage Adventurer* northwards into the prevailing current and move back towards open water. For the rest of the afternoon we retraced our route back passed Cape Bird. Over dinner there was a clearing of water close to the shore of Cape Bird, and Zodiacs were readied for a possible closer viewing of the Adélie

Penguin rookery. With close monitoring of the dynamic ice conditions, Zodiac cruises launched in incredible light at 2200 and 2300. Expeditioners enjoyed calm conditions in the evening sunshine. A Weddell Seal was at rest close to the ice edge and photogenic Adélie Penguins were present. Researchers led by Professor Steve went ashore at the Adélie Penguin colony taking samples, and several other Zodiacs also managed to negotiate the accumulated ice at the shore to achieve a landing on Ross Island.



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## **Day 19**

**Wednesday January 25, 2023**

**McMurdo Sound - Cape Evans**

*"In Antarctica, patience is the first of virtues":* it was with these words that our Expedition Leader Aaron addressed us on this memorable January 25. Indeed, after several days trying to break through the compact sea ice, suddenly it was a small miracle that a polar breeze rose, blowing more than 45 knots; it moved the sea ice offshore, suddenly making access to McMurdo Bay free. While yesterday the Ross Sea was a virtually impassable ice dam, today it became navigable and allowed us to enjoy several adventures.

In the morning, we landed at Cape Bird (on the northern tip of Ross Island) for an excursion to meet Adélie Penguins and Weddell Seals resting on the beach. The observation of penguins, pursued by their perpetually hungry chicks, was a spectacle that we never tired of. From the New Zealand Science Program huts we enjoyed a panoramic view of the bay and the Royal Society Range.

As we returned to the ship Aaron and Samuel set out in reconnaissance on foot towards a point of view situated at a good height to observe the state of the pack ice: this traditional method works better than ice charts, which are approximations only in these remote areas where the weather can change in a few minutes. There is nothing like a promontory and human eyes, following the example of the polar explorers of the last century, to replace modern satellites!

When they returned to the ship, the news was more than excellent. Practically the entire west coast of Ross Island was now ice-free behind a band of sea ice that was easily crossed with the ship.

First, we took advantage of our glorious incursion into McMurdo Sound to descend to the remnants of the winter ice pack where we beheld a white horizon as far as we could see, along with the Royal Society Chain, the icy cone of the Mt Erebus volcano, and the fast ice: an immense perfectly smooth white surface where a few groups of penguins rested. We reached the latitude of 77°44' S, almost the southernmost navigable point in the world.

Then, at the edge of the fast ice several groups of Orca were seen. The pods offered us one of the most incredible shows where, for more than an hour, we observed them off the bow of the ship plotting their way through the labyrinth of ice, sometimes approaching the ship to the delight of the photographers. The highlight was when three Orca simultaneously made a complete jump out of the water: a perfect illustration of the coordination and cooperation between these amazing creatures.

With a huge smile on our faces, we continued our journey to the shores of Ross Island. We sailed first to Cape Evans, which was the starting point of the tragic *Terra Nova* expedition (1910-1913), led by Robert Falcon Scott, to conquer the South Pole.

At the end of the evening, under a beautiful blue sky, we set foot ashore for a moving visit to Scott's historic hut. Entering this refuge was like going back in time. Everything is still in place, as if the door had been closed a few hours before our passage: the seamen's beds and their blankets, Scott's table where he wrote his log book, a stuffed Emperor Penguin, family photographs on the walls, zoology and geology laboratories, the photographer's dark room, hay in the horse barn, a dog's skeleton still connected to its collar and chain... Many of us had tears in our eyes during this visit in the twilight of time. Flashlight in hand, Richard, one of our historians on board, gave us moving explanations. In the 1970s, Richard participated in the first research aimed at restoring this historic site, which is now one of the most renowned and well-preserved historic sites in the whole of Antarctica. And to say that we were able to reach it!

The visit continued throughout the night, under the shining lights of the midnight sun as two other great pieces of polar history await us tomorrow!



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**Day 20**  
**Thursday January 26, 2023**  
**Cape Royds, Hut Point**

When did the day really begin? Operations at Cape Evans had run through the night and so with the last

Zodiac stored the expedition team, crew, and some guests had an hour or two to rest before breakfast and our adventure continued at Cape Royds.

We landed at Black Sand Beach as Backdoor Bay (a shorter walk) was full of ice. The 1.5-kilometre trek was through spectacular volcanic country walking through bands of basalt columns with magnificent views of Mt Erebus to the east exuding steam and fumes from its lava lake in the crater. When looked at closely the geology was unusual with large crystals formed in the basalt which is called Kenyite. The only other site for this special mineral is Mount Kilimanjaro in Kenya.

Eventually we came to a rise and before us lay the Cape Royds' 3,000 strong Adélie Penguin colony, Pony Lake and Shackleton's Hut. The penguin researchers went to collect samples, but the majority went to the hut and step inside living history.

Pre-fabricated in England it was assembled during the 1907 to 1909 *Nimrod* expedition and is an iconic site of polar history. Restoration was started in 1957 by New Zealand historian Les Quartermain. It was also used in the 1910-1913 *Terra Nova* expedition and by the Ross Sea party of the 1915 Trans Antarctic expedition.

It is a huge privilege to enter this hut and the weight and smell of history surrounds you. It's incredible to think that this 33 feet by 19 feet the hut housed 15 men in basically one room. There was a store room to the left and Ernest Shackleton's bedroom on the right. There were fewer artefacts in this hut compared to Scott's Hut at Cape Evans, but there was still plenty to see. The hams, over 100 years old, hanging on the rear wall looked good enough to eat... if you were hungry enough.

Outside the hut the kennels for 8 dogs, the stables and the garage for the motor car, were less well preserved but still of interest.

Guests walked up the far hill for a distant view and photo of the hut and overview of the Adélie colony and Pony Lake. The lake is unusual as it is fresh water in the summer and salt water in the winter. The algae growing in the lake are of particular interest to researchers.

A return to the ship, a brief evening meal and then a short relocation to Hut Point and we were off again to see the third historic hut in 24 hours and with the option of a polar dip!

We landed on the beach below Discovery Hut with Vince's Cross above us in memory of George Vince of the Cape Crozier party who lost his life when he fell down a cliff and into the sea. Climbing up the slope we were met with the rather solemn sight of the Discovery Hut set against a background of the industrial looking McMurdo base. Where Scott's ship *Discovery* was moored in 1901-1904 was the huge *Ocean Giant* unloading supplies onto a cinder covered ice flow that acted as a floating harbour.

In contrast to the previous two huts at Cape Evans and Cape Royds, Discovery Hut seemed somewhat cold and gloomy, however it played an important role in all the expeditions at that time. The *Discovery* expedition used it mainly as a store but also where they put on shows for the men. It was also used in Shackleton's *Nimrod* expedition and was used as a transit hut in Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition when a stove to burn seal blubber was fitted, and later by the Ross Sea party of Shackleton's *Trans-Antarctic* expedition. It was from here that Mackintosh and Hayward left to cross the sea ice to Cape Evans, never to be seen again.

Later, a number of hardy (or mad) souls opted to numb their appendages in the sea. All survived!

A long but exceptional 24 hours ended with guests and our expedition team and crew alike heading towards their beds and a well-earned rest. Aaron and his team did an incredible great job to pull this off

and a special mention of thanks should go out to the Zodiac drivers and gangway team who dealt with some very difficult conditions at times.



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**Day 21**  
**Friday January 27, 2023**  
**Southern Ocean**

After a fabulous few days in contact with ice and historic sites, walking in the footsteps of James Clark

Ross and Ernest Shackleton, *Heritage Adventurer* set sail to the north. It is time to think about joining civilisation. Our voyage is, of course, not over as the fauna is rich to observe from the ship.

In the early morning, we finally said goodbye to the ice for a day of transit at sea and a well-deserved rest, during which we were lulled by the waves of the Ross Sea. Superb icebergs were seen through the portholes or from the outside decks.

In the distance, on our portside, we saw for the last time the majestic coast of the Antarctic mainland, Coulman Island and Cape Adare – this famous cape where man overwintered for the first time on the continent, in 1898-1899, during the *Southern Cross* expedition.

This day at sea was an opportunity to enjoy several presentations on board. Our historian John told us the very moving and symbolic history of the *Race at the South Pole* between rivals Scott and Amundsen. Bryan presented on the geology of the volcanic terrain we encountered on Ross Island, with those strange basaltic features and lavas so peculiar to Mt Erebus, the southernmost active volcano in the world. Vincent presented us with a surprising academic study devoted to the physicochemical analysis of the notorious *Shackleton's Whisky*. The history of this whisky, the oldest liquor in the world (more than 100 years of maturation!), has been the subject of renewed curiosity since its discovery in 2010 during restoration work on the Shackleton Hut at Cape Royds. Shackleton had in fact hidden three precious cases containing this vestige under the floor of the refuge.

In the evening, golden light fell upon the Southern Ocean offering the opportunity to make beautiful observations of Snow and Antarctic Petrels.

## **Day 22**

**Saturday January 28, 2023**

### **Campbell Island**

Overnight we headed north and a bit west looking ahead to our journey towards Campbell Island, allowing ourselves a bit of flexibility in the path there. At 0800 we were located near 72° 30.046 S / 175° 13.980 E. Anyone who happened to glance out a window knew we were back in the northern portion of the Ross Sea as hundreds of seabirds swirled around and above us some too close for the long lenses most photographers use. Stern decks five and six were perfect for following and photographing Antarctic Petrels plus both Greater and Lesser Snow Petrels. In addition, before taking our position at 0800 we had also seen Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Wilson's Storm-Petrels, Southern Giant Petrels, and South Polar Skuas. The session with the naturalists from 0900 to 0930 was super productive, the Antarctic and Snow Petrels were close enough to photograph with a mobile phone! Some of us were lucky enough to witness the petrels feeding by seizing prey items on the surface or diving completely underneath the waves.

Richard began the morning lectures with one about *Early Conservation of the Cape Evans Hut – LB Quartermain's Party 1960-1961*. The focus was on the Scott Hut at Cape Evans that we visited a couple of days ago. He himself was involved with this conservation work so visiting all three huts in 24 hours was very rewarding since not only could he see the results of this very difficult work, but also share his personal experiences with our adventurers! The excavation of Scott's Hut, which began in the early 1960s, was a huge undertaking since much of the hut was full of ice and snow that had to be removed, plus thousands of items that needed inventory. Delicate items like glassware from the science lab had to be placed outside in the sun to slowly thaw over days, Kiwi ingenuity Richard called it!

Brian informed us about *The Antarctic Treaty, Mining, and Environmental Protection* and how these all came about with so many different countries laying claim to different land areas. The British were the first

to lay a claim in Antarctica constructing Port Lockroy and the surrounding area on the Peninsula. The Antarctic Treaty, which has 14 articles, was not signed until 1959 and this still just covers the land areas only. There have been a number of agreements following the treaty to protect certain flora and fauna in the areas as well as minerals. One interesting piece of information related to gas and oil production in this resource rich area... there was a move to open it for exploitation, but two consultative countries refused to sign – Australia and France – so that was the end of discussion and the amendment was never passed. I think we all shared a sigh of relief!

John lectured on the *Race to the Pole (Part 1)* with some very interesting background on Roald Amundsen, the Norwegian who beat Scott to the South Pole. He had an incredible time working in the Northern Hemisphere towards getting to the North Pole before he set his sights on the South Pole. He didn't tell any of his crew his plans and revealed them just before setting off for the Southern Ocean, giving them a brief window to pull out. Depot laying was a difficult task for Scott and he lost six of the eight ponies he had brought with him for the trip to the pole plus ended up on an ice floe while camping one night on the way back to the hut at Cape Evans! Tomorrow we will hear the rest of the story so stay tuned...

Cape Adare was in view for much of the day as we turned to the west heading out of the Ross Sea. We saw very little sea ice today but found the edge as we finished dinner and now are continuing our navigation with Antarctic and Snow Petrels to escort us overnight.



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**Day 23**  
**Sunday January 29, 2023**  
**At Sea**

When we checked the ship's track on the map as we headed into breakfast, we could see that we had

diverted eastward through the night. Aaron explained that we had encountered the remains of the sea ice blown out of the Ross Sea, and had spent 5 hours going east to find the edge before turning north. Through the morning there were patches of ice and numerous icebergs, including some beauties.

In the first talk of the day, John completed the descriptions that he and Richard have given us of the expeditions of the Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration in the Ross Sea. The final chapter was *Race to the Pole – Part 2*. Steve then followed with a chemistry lesson, background on his research, and how we have helped in *Penguin Bones and Isotopes: Citizen Science with Heritage Expeditions*.

As we were now in the Southern Ocean, we had to get reacquainted with the movement of *Heritage Adventurer* and how to roll with her. Still, the seas remained quite friendly and she provided us with a comfortable ride.

Throughout the day, the “Angels of the Sea” – Snow Petrels and Antarctic Petrels - wheeled around the ship – often in great numbers. Watching was wonderful, but they were so fast that only the most skilful, or luckiest, photographers came away with any images to share.

We had a nice view of the sea and ice as we dropped into Brian’s geology display in the Observation Lounge to chat with him during his *Rock Workshop*.

The biggest event of the day was the afternoon tea with cake followed by the auction of unique treasures for great causes. After much laughter, drama and generosity \$500 was raised for the New Zealand Antarctic Society, \$4,155 for the Antarctic Heritage Trust, and an astounding \$4,900 for the Crew Welfare Fund. The successful bidders proudly displayed their purchases as we applauded the generous donations of Wayne, Ole and Frede from Wild Photo, Richard, and Captain Denis – plus the spirited and entertaining performance of auctioneer Ian.

The parade of floating sculptures continued through the daily recap and dinner. As your humble log writer was closing his account for the evening, four Humpback Whales were seen from the portside lounge window to blow and then dive. Magic. Sweet dreams.



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#### Day 24

Monday January 30, 2023

#### At Sea

We woke to foggy skies and moderate seas – now north of the Antarctic Circle and well into the Southern Ocean. The crowds at breakfast were slightly diminished, but most of us were coping well with the motion of the ocean.

Bryan got our programme started with his presentation on climate change in *Antarctica: Melting Ice in a Warming World*. We picked up the *Who Did It* entry form listing the exploits of the Expedition Team and started asking questions to see if we could guess who did what. Meanwhile, Phil took the wheel of *Heritage Adventurer* to redeem his generous purchase in aid of the Crew Welfare Fund. Under the close supervision of Captain Denis, he smiled for the entire 30 minutes. He did such a great job that most of us didn't even notice the change. The morning concluded with Steve telling us about the changes in Antarctic stations over the last 120 years, and his experiences in life as an Antarctic scientist in *Evolution of Antarctic Research Stations*.

As we approached Campbell Island the signs that we were also approaching the end of our voyage were beginning to appear. The Wild Photo group led by Ole and Frede showed us a slideshow of the best of the approximately 1.5 million(!) photos that they have collectively taken. Beautiful. We had our gear checked for biosecurity for the last time, and returned our warm and comfortable blue jackets that we had borrowed for Antarctica. The last episode of the Amundsen/Scoot docudrama *The Last Place on Earth* was screened in the theatre.

Mixed in amongst that was the Expedition Team guessing game *Who Did It*. We had so many laughs as John had each team member in turn tell the tale behind their exploit. The winning score was only 4 out of 16 – so our team had fooled us well – not that we cared.

As always, the scrumptious food and delightful service warmed our bellies and our hearts.



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**Day 25**  
**Tuesday January 31, 2023**  
**At Sea**

When we woke during the night we could see that it was dark outside! Another sign of our progress north, away from Antarctica and toward home, where our thoughts were turning.

But our adventure was a long way from finished. The outer decks were closed in the morning due to wet conditions and heavy seas. These limited the numbers at breakfast, but there was still a good crowd for the first presentation of the day. It was Bryan who got us started with the stories of his personal journey, and descriptions in the changes over 50 years of field seasons in *Living and Working in Antarctica as a Geologist*. Then Richard took us further back in history as he recounted the tales from his interviews in *Meeting Three Veterans of Shackleton's Ross Sea Party 1914-17*.

Having crossed the Antarctic Convergence the afternoon was mostly one for rest, reading and recreation. To keep us in the swing of expedition activities Bryan again gave a *Rock Workshop* and Aaron told the history of the company and enticed us for future destination in *Heritage Expeditions: The Story So Far*.

Over pre-dinner beverages Quizmaster Extraordinaire Ian tested how well we had paid attention to all the learning opportunities. We passed.

Just before dinner Aaron came on the PA to announce that the headwinds had slowed our progress. The Bridge was doing its best to keep us as fast and as safe and as comfortable as possible – even hand steering all night. Still, Campbell Island was a long way off, and our pace was slowed. We would need good fortune, and a change in conditions, to make it there with enough daylight left in the day to make a landing. Fingers crossed.



Dinner was delightful, as always, then, in a change of plans, some of us watched the inspiring documentary *The Last Ocean*. It is a powerful plea for the protection of this wild place. Highly recommended to those who missed it.



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## **Day 26**

**Wednesday February 1, 2023**

### **At Sea**

As *Heritage Adventurer* headed north through the Southern Ocean, we were greeted by a foggy morning that surrounded the vessel most of our sea day.

After another hearty breakfast, we were transfixed by a heart-warming lecture by Samuel on overwintering in Antarctica for 15 months at the French base Dumont D'Urville in Antarctica.

As we steamed north leaving the white continent behind us, we were reminded of our magical expedition with a presentation from John *Quest for the North Pole*.

The Afternoon highlight was a fantastic presentation given by Vincent on the influences of *Antarctica and the Arctic in Classical Music*... delivered with a classic Vincent style and twist.

After another incredible meal, the fog lifted and we headed out on the decks to witness some of the Southern Ocean's superb sea birds put on a show for us. We witnessed Campbell Island, Southern Royal and the very elegant Light-mantled Albatross. Plus a supporting cast of White-chinned Petrels, Sooty Shearwaters and Northern Giant Petrels.

Before the sunset we entered Perseverance Harbour in Campbell Island to find Antarctic Terns and the endemic Campbell Island Shag.

As the sun disappeared, we headed out of the natural harbour and continued on our bearing north.

## **Day 27**

**Thursday February 2, 2023**

### **At Sea**

The morning of the last full day of this expedition (say it ain't so!) frustrated the birders with fog. Fortunately, it lifted somewhat as we learned the story of one success in saving a threatened seabird species from Kate in her presentation *Pterodroma Petrels – Conservation through Translocation*.

Aaron, joined by Jenny, Matt and Samuel as the panel, gave a wide ranging and informative discussion in *Subantarctic Island and Beyond*.

Over lunch, the fog cleared completely so *Birding Time* with the naturalists was very popular. Those not out on deck were likely attending the screening of the documentary film *Ice in the Sky*, or chatting and exchanging photos and contact info, or in their cabins trying to figure out how all their gear fit into their luggage in the first place.

We gathered in the Lounge one last time for the final expedition recap which featured a number of recollections from Agnes and the superb slideshow from Julia. Didn't we have fun! Then a scramble to share a table with mates, and 2 final renditions of *Heritage Adventurer's* version of Happy Birthday. As we enjoyed drinks in the lounge, we were treated to a glorious sunset with dolphins swimming alongside. A fittingly beautiful end to a beautiful experience.

## **Day 28**

**Friday February 3, 2023**

### **Bluff, New Zealand**

We got our early morning call and managed a quick breakfast, having already put the luggage in the passageway with the correct pretty pastel yarn depending on destination. Then it was off to the coaches via one last round of hugs and farewells.

We know that we have had a super voyage, and in some cases have made lifelong friends. We have had life-changing experiences, and learned so much. So, we turn to face new adventures strengthened and emboldened by our time in Antarctica, the Subantarctic and the Southern Ocean aboard *Heritage Adventurer*.

Bon voyage!