



**OCEANWIDE  
EXPEDITIONS**

Expedition Log

## ***Spitsbergen Circumnavigation***

**June 26 – July 06 2009**

On board the

## ***MV Antarctic Dream***



The *Antarctic Dream* was built in Holland in 1961 for the Chilean navy. Five years ago the present Chilean owners bought the ship and refurbished her as a passenger ship for the Polar Regions. She takes a maximum of 84 passengers, 5 expedition staff, 13 hotel staff and 20 nautical crew members. At 81 metres long and 12 metres wide, she has a draft of 4.6 metres.

With

**Captain Ernesto Barria Vargas**  
and his Chilean and Filipino Crew

Including:

1<sup>st</sup> Mate: Mauricio Vilches  
2<sup>nd</sup> Mate: Juan Condesa Parra  
3<sup>rd</sup> Mate: Jovani Gonzalez  
Chief engineer: Eduardo Hernandez Silva  
Boatswain: Julio Aravena

And the Expedition Staff:

**Expedition Leader:** Troels Jacobsen (Denmark)  
**Assistant Expedition Leader:** Christopher Gilbert (Canada)  
**Guide:** Cecilia Sandström (Sweden)  
**Guide:** Michelle van Dijk (The Netherlands)  
**Guide:** Piero Bosco (Italy)  
**Chef:** Mario Hribernik (Austria)  
**Sous Chef:** Ralf Barthel (Germany)  
**Hotel and Restaurant Manager:** Alan Hogan (United Kingdom)  
**Bartender Extraordinaire:** Beverley Howlett (United Kingdom)  
**Doctor:** Peteler Winfried (Germany)

## June 26 – Day 1

### Isfjord: Longyearbyen

GPS NOON position: 78°14'N 15°36'E

Weather: overcast, high winds

**Embarkation Day.** Those of us who weren't already here landed today at Longyearbyen airport in the early afternoon. We were greeted at the airport and then transported to the centre of Spitsbergen's capital to explore the 'downtown' core for some hours before embarkation. This allowed us to get acclimatized to the Arctic environment, visit the terrific local museum, and poke around in some of the souvenir shops. Longyearbyen (pop. 1.800) is situated in Adventfjord which itself lies within Spitsbergen's largest fjord, Isfjord. Its location at 78° 14' N makes it one of the most northerly towns in the world. Returning to the buses, we were driven to the pier at 16:00, where the *Antarctic Dream* and her crew and staff were eagerly awaiting our arrival and the first attempt of the season at circumnavigating Spitsbergen.

At boarding we were greeted by Alan, our Hotel Manager, and shown to our cabins by the hotel staff. We then began to settle in, explore the ship, and help ourselves to refreshments in the dining room. At 17:30 we convened in the dining room to meet Captain Barria, who welcomed us aboard and toasted our journey. Then our Expedition Leader Troels and Hotel Manager Alan gave us an introduction to the ship, hotel staff, expedition staff, and our doctor.

At 18:00 we cast off lines, and through ferocious howling winds, sped away from the pier – our journey was underway! This was followed at 19:00 by our SOLAS (Safety Of Life At Sea) mandatory safety and lifeboat drill, led by First Officer, Mauricio Vilches. Convening in the muster station (dining room) with our life vests, we then followed Mauricio out to the lifeboats for further instructions in case of emergency.



This had been a tiring day of travel for most, and at last we were able to relax and enjoy our first excellent dinner, prepared by chefs Mario and Ralf. The winds refused to abate, and as we sailed westward the *Antarctic Dream* began to dip and sway slightly in the swell. Most of us found this quite comforting, and once in our bunks it was like being gently rocked to sleep. Here at last, many of us dreamed of what tomorrow's adventures would bring.

## June 27 – Day 2

### Kongsfjord: Blomstrandhalvøya, Ny Ålesund

GPS NOON position: 78°56'N 11°57'E

Weather: 6°C, calm, light rain and mist

We awoke in Kongsfjord to a light drizzle falling upon our vessel, but we could nonetheless see where we were to have our first landing - Blomstrandhalvøya. The area takes its name from a Swedish chemist (Blomstrand), and the fact that it was at one time a peninsula (Nor. *halvøya*). Due to the retreat of the surrounding (and most of Spitsbergen's) glaciers in recent years, the one-time peninsula is now actually an island (*øya*).

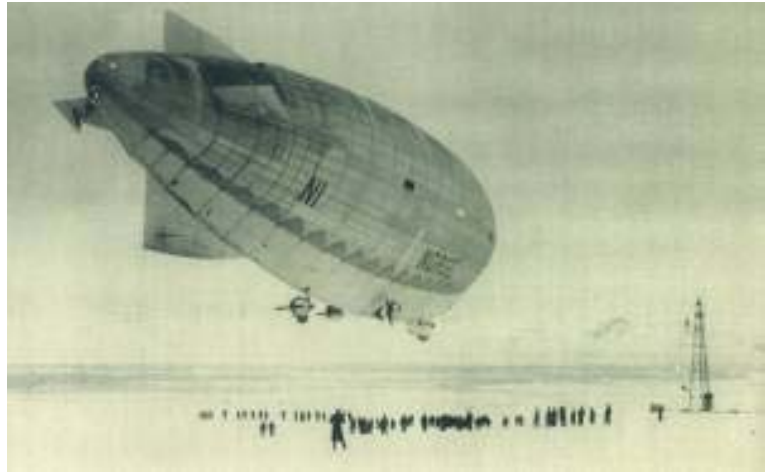
After Troels had briefed us on how to behave in polar bear territory and presented the Zodiac guidelines, we boarded our Zodiacs and landed on a small quiet beach. Once ashore we joined Christopher to hear a few words about Spitsbergen's human history in general and, more specifically, about the Northern Exploration Company (NEC) and their attempts at mining here and elsewhere in the archipelago. We photographed and explored the mining houses and machinery still standing from Ernest Mansfield's NEC. The area, known as Ny London, was in use from 1910-1920. However, the marble they mined here was of exceedingly poor quality, and operations really only ran in earnest for a few years. Although the equipment long ago fell into disuse, the standing houses are frequented by scientists and those from Ny Ålesund who want to get away from it all...

From here, three activity options were on offer: a leisurely walk around the ruins and environs, a more demanding trek to the marble ridge, and a moderate hike to the east. Although we struggled at times through deep snow, the views, wildlife and experience of hiking in the high Arctic made the effort all the more worthwhile.

The groups discovered a variety of Arctic highlights, the largest of which were the Svalbard reindeer. Not only did we get quite close to these docile beasts, but we had the great fortune of seeing several calves throughout the morning. The Svalbard reindeer are the only members of the deer family in which both male and female grow antlers. The males shed annually in the autumn, whereas the females drop their antlers at the time of giving birth (spring).

In addition to the reindeer, it was a birder bonanza this morning. We encountered long-tailed and Arctic skuas, Arctic terns, long-tailed ducks, red-throated divers, snow buntings (the males already displaying their black and white summer plumage), eiders, barnacle geese, and rock ptarmigan, both male (white at this time of the year) and female (in summer cryptic plumage). This is a great start for our voyage as we often do not encounter the ptarmigan and some of these other species only infrequently.

We also found newly blossoming plants, like purple saxifrage, that for a few short weeks each year reach out to soak up the 24 hour sunlight, maximising growth before once again lying under a blanket of snow until May. After three hours and a good leg stretch, we returned to the beach and the ship, a brilliant Arctic beginning under our belts.



Over lunch we sailed directly across the fjord, and soon after we arrived by Zodiac to the small cement pier at the former mining settlement of Ny Ålesund. Situated at 78° 55' N, Ny Ålesund is one of the world's

northernmost year-round communities. Coal mining was the origin for the settlement, but mining was shut down after a serious accident in 1962 took 21 lives.

When the mining ceased the town depopulated, but it wasn't long before Ny Ålesund rose from the ashes. The Auroral Observatory in Tromsø established a branch here in 1966, and the European Space Research Organisation followed in 1967. Its new identity as an Arctic research station was formally recognized in 1968 when the Norwegian Polar Institute initiated permanent research here. Over the years, Ny Ålesund has developed into an international outdoor research laboratory. Each year around 30 people overwinter, whereas in summer the activity (and population) rockets sky-high when scientists from a dozen or so nations arrive to commence various scientific projects.

Ny Ålesund also holds a special place in the history of Arctic exploration. Located here on a lonely plain is the mooring mast that held the famous airship *Norge-1*, in which Amundsen, Nobile, and Ellsworth flew across the North Pole from Ny Ålesund to Alaska in 1926. Two years



later the same mast held the airship *Italia*. In her, Nobile again reached the North Pole, but *Italia* crashed on her return, killing six crew. We joined Christopher and Piero and together walked to the mast to hear about these flights and the relevant characters. The tragic epilogue to this story is that Amundsen, despite his falling-out with Nobile, lost his life in a rescue attempt. Amundsen and a small crew flew a search plane north from Tromsø and were never seen again. After our

history chat, some of the group walked back to town to explore, shop, and visit the museum,

while another group joined Piero and visited the foundations of the airship hangar and the monument to the Italians. Apart from the up-close barnacle geese, the faunal highlight was certainly seeing the tiny fox cubs crawl from beneath the Dutch research station.

Once all were back on board the *Antarctic Dream* steamed deeper into Kongsfjord, and our Captain gave us a ship's cruise past Kongsbreen (King's Glacier) and the other walls of ice in Kongsfjord. This evening some would watch one of the three films on offer, and some would come to the bridge to enjoy the scenery and search for wildlife. Not long after 23:00 we were back out in open waters, heading for the north...heading for the ice...

## June 28 – Day 3

### North Spitsbergen: Woodfjord & Pack Ice

GPS NOON position: 79°41'N 13°45'E

Weather: 6°C, calm with brilliant sunshine, turning to fog

At 07:00 we awoke to the sweet voice of Troels, promising us a wonderful day. As soon as we managed to open our eyes we realised that the ship was surrounded by ice. The surrealistic atmosphere of blue and white distracted us from our breakfast, and we were even more intrigued when a little red hovercraft appeared. With all the polar bear tracks around, the Captain and Troels immediately checked if everything was okay, and so it was.



The further we sailed into Woodfjord, the better we understood how this long fjord received its name – the beaches here are strewn with driftwood, much of it dragged all the way from Siberia on strong ocean currents. But this morning our focus was elsewhere...we had spotted a bear on the far shore from the ship! We are not allowed to go ashore when there is a bear nearby, but nothing prevents us from cruising by in our Zodiacs. These were lowered as quickly as possible, and we prepared for our first Zodiac cruise – towards a bear, no less!

We drove in a group so as not to frighten the bear, passing pristine pack ice and blue ice sculptures. Finally we arrived at the edge of the fast ice, about 200m away. The bear looked in our direction and had a sniff or two, but was really far too engrossed in its immediate surroundings. This big fat male had a small fresh catch at its feet – likely a ringed seal. The catch

was so fresh that the bear had not yet begun to devour the seal. Strangely enough, when some passengers were looking over their photographs later, they noticed a blonde smudge, to the right and farther away than the bear. As Troels had thought he had seen a mother and cub from the ship (before we boarded the Zodiacs), we considered that this big bear might have actually killed the cub prior to catching the seal, but this is only a guess. Still, our first bear of the trip was a fabulous experience, seen from 'ground level' in the Zodiacs.

After observing and photographing the polar bear we cruised a bit more, around Andøyane ('Duck Islands'). The Old Red sandstone coast contrasted very well with the snow and ice, making for beautiful scenery. For those more interested in birds than geology there were the exciting sightings of king eiders and red phalaropes along the shoreline.

After lunch the plan was to land in Mosselbukta where the Swedish explorer Nordenskjöld wintered in 1872-1873. Due to ice conditions this was impossible and we set course to Spitsbergen's northernmost point, Verlegenuken. We planned to land here, or at the slightly more eastern Sorgfjord after dinner.

At 16:00 Troels lectured on polar bears, informing us that the total polar bear population is between 22.000 – 27.000 of which 3000 live in the Barents Sea. These bears split and evolved from brown bears within the last 300.000 years, but they still occasionally interbreed. Polar bears mate from March – May but have a delayed implantation (the egg is fertilized sometime between September – October). Females den from December/January until April, when the tiny cubs are born (birth weight less than 600 grams). A cub will stay with its mother up to two and a half years, and thereafter must catch 50 – 75 seals per year in order to survive.

Right before dinner we reached 80°N! Cecilia thought that we should drink to that, Allan agreed, and within 10 minutes everybody was downing a shot of 80°N vodka. During dinner the pack ice became denser and denser, until the ship's forward progress was stopped. In fact another vessel, the *Polar Pioneer*, was 3 nautical miles east of us and in an even more precarious state – completely enclosed in the ice. She had been able to get farther east a couple of days earlier, before this tremendously thick belt of pack ice had drifted back to North Spitsbergen, cutting off the east-west route. It will take them some time to return to the west... and this is just where Troels and Captain Barria decided to go. This is high Arctic adventure folks! Getting stuck in the pack ice and altering itineraries on the fly – great fun! We are fortunate enough to have a Captain, Ice Pilot, Officers and crew skilled enough to get us that far into the ice, and then to get us back out safely. It would be a long night on the bridge.

With a thick fog surrounding the ship (making ice navigation even more challenging) we turned to Piero and Frank Berger for our evening's entertainment. Piero gave a thought-provoking overview of Spitsbergen's history in English, while Frank discussed Theodor Lerner's icy exploits in German.

## June 29 – Day 4

### Raudfjord; Ytre Norskøya

GPS NOON position: 79°48'N 11°53'E

Weather: 5°C, overcast and windy, some later clearing

How can one not be stunned to silence by these surroundings..? From early morning until late evening we cruised in an Arctic paradise, watching never ending mountain peaks stretching for the sky, divided only by steep glaciers...

We started the day with a Zodiac cruise in Hamiltonbukta, beautiful and calm. The sea was flat as a mirror and the water clear as glass. A bearded seal was hauling out on the ice and numerous eiders were spotted flying



over in formation or resting at the surface, not to mention the grey phalaropes feeding beautifully in pairs at the surface. The female phalarope is very easy to recognise since she is the more colourful of the two. It is the males of this species that incubate the eggs, and are therefore less flamboyant in appearance. Our cruise took us towards Andøyane (Norwegian: duck-islands), which are famous for their birdlife. We heard that the eiders are a few weeks late this year due to the substantial snowfall this past winter, but that most geese are breeding on time. We cruised under high bird cliffs, watching the predatory glaucous gulls as they searched for prey. The verdant vegetation beneath the cliffs is due to the magnitude of guano produced by the breeding birds here. Many of us were by now distinguishing the different bird species by their method of flight: the glaucous gull soars on the airstreams thanks to its impressive wing span, the smaller blacklegged kittiwake appears almost as graceful yet flaps its wings much more frequently, and the Brünnich's guillemot (not the most elegant of fliers) flaps its wings almost continuously.

The glacier front of Hamiltonbreen was striking, as were the large blue icebergs that floated past our boats. The Arctic really showed off its pristine beauty this morning – both visually and audibly. We had never before listened to the sparkling crackling sound of air bubbles escaping from the ice after thousands of years in captivity. A couple of intrepid passengers plunged their bare hands into the sea to hoist a decent chunk of floating glacier into the Zodiac and bring it back to the ship. From the boundless sea to a small glass, the sparkling ice remained with us for the evening, slowly dissolving in whiskies or other choice libations.





We managed to find a small point to land on – not so easy along the precipitous and rocky Raudfjord coast. By the landing beach we found a regurgitated pellet from a glaucous gull and several sea urchins, while others had a great hike up the ridge for some stunning views towards the mouth of the fjord. While ashore the tide dropped rapidly, and our departure became a bit of an adventure. Finally back on the ship, a slightly delayed but the more delicious lunch was prepared for us by our international chefs, Mario and Ralf.

This afternoon we alit on the southwest beach of Ytre Norskøya, the former site of a large Dutch whaling station. Christopher expounded somewhat on 17<sup>th</sup> century whaling in Spitsbergen, and in particular on activity in the northwest islands. This particular site holds 165 graves and the remains of eight blubber ovens. Many of us were surprised that we had likely eaten or used whale products in one way or another as recently as the 1970s (e.g. margarine). We have now been sailing around Spitsbergen for four days and have spotted a couple of whales (always a pleasure!). However, hearing of the difficulties the early whalers had in ‘pushing’ their small ships through waters filled with whales, we realised the deleterious and near disastrous effects that humankind has had on some of the high Arctic wildlife.

Ytre Norskøya, Utkiken. The name almost gives it away, Utkiken meaning “lookout point”. This is one of the most northerly islands in this corner of the archipelago and was used as a lookout point for early Dutch whalers. Many of us managed to climb up to this highest point of the island, even though it was difficult at times over large boulders and through deep snow. The view that greeted us made every droplet of sweat worthwhile. But for some, the cherry on the cake was the return journey. A high velocity slide on our bums and backs had us whooping and laughing like a bunch of gleeful children playing on the slopes. Awesome hike and bum-sliding!



A delicious dinner was served in an amphitheatre of pure beauty. Captain Barria expertly navigated us through the shallow waters around the famous Amsterdamøya and through a passage which only a few captains dare enter. Admiring the magnificence, we ended the evening drinking cocktails (glacier ice!), enjoying the stunning scenery of Nordvestøyane. Just before bed we saw our first walrus swimming nearby! Excited for tomorrow and more walrus, we finally managed to fall asleep to the gentle rocking of the ship.

## June 30 – Day 5

### Poolepynten & Steinpyntvika

GPS NOON position: 78°27'N 11°58'E

Weather: 7°C, overcast, light rain, clearing in late afternoon

Our overnight southbound sail had been quite calm, and by breakfast time we were steaming up the eastern coast of Prins Karls Forland. Today we planned to visit Poolepynten, a site named after one of the very first English whaling captains to come to Spitsbergen in 1610 (Dutch whalers followed in 1611), Jonas Poole. This is a common haul-out site for walrus, but new Svalbard regulations require us to split the group into two, allowing for about 75 minutes ashore for each.



The gangway swell was a bit of a challenge, but everyone managed well and we sped off towards the sandy shores of Poolepynten. Two herds of walrus were present, and we stealthily approached first northern one, but soon moved on to the southern. Not only did this group have a few more individuals, but there were walrus coming and going from the sea. As they became accustomed to our presence, we were able to enjoy the sight (and smell) of these fantastic animals in close proximity. Some

walrus in the water came to within a metre of the waterline, curiously eyeing us and puffing out snotty breaths of contempt – brilliant. Getting back into the Zodiacs was an added adventure as the surf was crashing on the beach. However, we all made it back safely, if a little damp. During lunch we steamed eastwards to the main island of Spitsbergen for our next landing of the day - Steinpyntvika.

Steinpyntvika ('Stone-point-harbour') is an exceedingly rich tundra site that provided us with further close views of grey phalaropes (called 'grey' because earlier ornithologists encountered them there in their grey winter plumage). In summer the female is the most vivid coloured sex – a true breeding role reversal – because it is the males within this species that incubate the eggs. We also saw many breeding geese; among them the noisy pink-footed and the barnacle, flying to and from their nests perched atop the rocky spires. We also encountered several fox traps, had a fleeting glimpse of a fox, and even found a bird-kill outside two fox dens.

An interesting phenomenon we noticed were the small hummocks covered with a more luxuriant plant growth. Intimated by a single bone protruding from one such mound, it reveals just how slowly the bones of whales and reindeer left on the open tundra decompose in this climate. The nutrients are gradually released over the centuries, and certain plants take advantage of this to develop more profoundly than their slightly less privileged neighbours. Some of us came across an amazing find – a whale skull sitting high up on the tundra. The inland location of the bone represents an earlier coastline - thousands of years earlier! The coasts of Spitsbergen have undergone (indeed are still undergoing) a dynamic phenomenon called 'isostatic rebound'. Since the last ice age (c. 12.500 years ago) the melting of the ice has lifted an incredible weight from the bedrock, and the land has been 'rebounding' (at a rate as high as 5mm/year).



We trundled along under a sporadic light drizzle, encountering curious reindeer, some arctic skuas, purple sandpipers and a few snow buntings. Along the shore black-backed gulls were identified on one of the offshore rocks together with some chicks. The gulls seem to be on time this year whereas as many of the bird species are breeding late as a result of the excessive snowfall this past winter.

Prior to dinner Troels gave his lecture on walruses which informed us about the biology of these fantastic animals, and filled in some of the questions that had been lingering since this morning. By late afternoon the skies had begun to clear, and as we sailed south, a fine-looking evening unfolded to escort our ship and our sleepy heads to Spitsbergen's southernmost fjord – Hornsund.

## July 01 – Day 6

### Hornsund: Brepollen & Gåshamna

GPS NOON position: 76°57'N 16°15'E

Weather: 5°C, calm and sunny

Happy Canada Day!

Hornsund, Spitsbergen's southernmost fjord, cuts deeply into this mountainous region. It is not certain whether Willem Barents sailed here in 1596, but we do know that it was named by the English whaler Jonas Poole in 1610, after one of his crew found a large *deere horne* (reindeer antler) along the shore. The fjord is noted for its strikingly beautiful jagged summits, none more

impressive than Horsundtind, at 1413 metres. We were fortunate enough to actually see the upper reaches of Horsundtind, often hidden by thick cloud, enhancing the already breathtaking views.

Captain Barria took our ship deep into Hornsund, to Brepollen ('Glacier-bay'). Most of Hornsund's topographical appellatives were applied by Austrian count Hans Wilczek in 1872 (during the ill-fated Payer-Weyprecht attempt at the North Pole). However, none of Brepollen's landmarks were named by the count. That's because it *didn't exist* in 1872. As late as 1900 all of the glaciers here were combined into a single massive glacier, but they have undergone rapid retreat in the past few decades. In fact, in the last 15 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these (by then) separate Brepollen glaciers retreated five kilometres! Expect further retreat in the coming years.

Our Zodiac cruise this morning was a slice of serenity. It began with virtually no wind and plenty of scenery. Drifting through some colourful icebergs and admiring the glacier front, we came across a pair of ivory gulls, one of only several hundred pairs in all of Spitsbergen. Little is known of these birds in terms of their wintering grounds, though they are thought to remain with the pack ice. We admired the glacier in all its twisted forms and variegated splendour before attempting a landing at the western end. Troels went ashore but, alas, it was far too muddy to continue inland. But Troels picked up a 'Devil's Golf ball' – a wonderful circular accretion of stone around an eon's old organic iota – for all to see. And as always when talk turns to golf, the winds picked up quickly and we made our way back to the ship for lunch.

Later we went ashore at Gåshamna ('Goose-bay'), on an impressive stony beach that stretches the entire length of this wide bay. Once all were present, we joined Troels and Christopher for a few words on the history of Arctic whaling at the blubber ovens, now mounds of dense vegetation. From c.



1618-1650 the English used Gåshamna as a whaling station, processing the blubber for oil, and taking the baleen plates (hence the prevalence of the skulls). For the English, the Dutch, and other European nations whaling here, the majority of shore stations closed down by 1670.

Within a mere fifty years, the coastal whales (mainly bowhead) had been removed from Spitsbergen's waters, and the whalers moved west, pursuing them along the ice edge to Greenland. The massive bowhead skulls, mandibles and ribs scattered about the area recalled the ardent slaughter that fouled these waters and shores 400 years ago.

We began our hike towards the mouth of Hornsund, making our way up to the coastal

moraines and ridges for amazing views under blue skies and sun. Along the way we admired some of the many stones that have undergone *cryoturbation* ('ice disturbance'), wherein water molecules make their way into miniscule fissures in sedimentary rocks, and through centuries of freeze/thaw action the rocks split open along weak planes. These beautiful creations are sometimes referred to as 'Troll Bread'. At the far end of the peninsula is a sheltered bay, and it was



here that we encountered the foundations of huts deserted long ago by Russian hunters. Pomors ('po'= people; 'mor'= sea) hunted in the archipelago from roughly 1700-1850, taking primarily fox, polar bear and walrus, but hunting all of the wildlife for survival and profit. The foundations of their wintering houses have withstood the rigours of time in this frigid, windswept environment.

We made it back to the *Antarctic Dream* by 17:00 and began our sail out of Hornsund – it is a long way to Edgeøya! Later in the evening a group of harp seals were spotted from the bridge, and by 02:30 the next morning we had met the ice south of Sorkapp. Maybe some bears tomorrow?

## July 02 – Day 7

### Freemansundet; Edgeøya: Kapp Lee

GPS NOON position: 78°11'N 21°19'E

Weather: 6.5°C, calm and sunny

Yeahaw, today we could sleep in and dream a bit longer of the beautiful impressions left with us by Hornsund...wake up call at 7.30!

At 10:00 we were supposed to land at Kapp Lee, but another ship had slipped in ahead of us. Such is the expedition situation in Spitsbergen. Troels called them on the radio and found out that there were no walrus there, but they had seen a polar bear on the fast ice near

Freemansundet. So the planned schedule was flipped and we headed for the ice and the bear, fingers crossed that the walrus would arrive at Kapp Lee before our afternoon visit.

During our sail north to the Freemansundet ice, Piero lectured on the tragic expedition of the Swede Salomon August Andrée, who in 1897 tried to sail his balloon to the North Pole along with two other men. The slides he showed us were those recovered along with the remains of the fateful trio in 1930 at Kvitøya. Almost everything that could go wrong went wrong for the men. Their guide ropes were lost at take-off, and thus they had drifted north over the frozen ocean completely rudderless. After they crash-landed they tried to reach Franz Joseph Land, but the currents beneath the pack ice pulled them in the opposite direction. The eventual cause of death after reaching Kvitøya is now thought to have been trichinosis, due to eating undercooked polar bear meat.

And speaking of polar bears... Right after Piero's lecture our Russian Ice Master Alexey spotted one out on the pack ice. Everyone assisted one another pointing out the bear and lending binoculars, so in the end all had a chance to see it. Some of us saw it stalk and catch a ringed seal – very exciting! It dragged the seal a little away from the ship and settled down to eat. All of a sudden, a female bear appeared. Using the telescope you could see that she wore a tracking collar, used by the Norwegian Polar Institute and World Wildlife Fund to follow the bear's tracks. Only females are collared – the male's neck is so thick that collars slide off over their heads. After lunch a third bear was seen! This must be our lucky day.

We still wanted to reach Kapp Lee today, and great timing for us...the walrus had returned to the beach as well! The haul-out was pretty active this afternoon, with lots of jostling and fighting within the group, as well as some rather large males coming and going to the ocean.

Those who wanted to stretch their legs went with Piero and Michelle for an adventurous hike across the plain. Melting snow meant plenty of mud, and all of a sudden our fellow passenger Christa got a little more than stuck. Michelle tried to help her, but she also got stuck. Piero was next on the scene, and then everybody wanted to help but without getting stuck themselves. As they collected



stones to create a sustainable platform poor Christa sat and waited patiently. In the end, her rain trousers had to be cut off by Piero. And the tundra seemed so tranquil!

When the hikers returned to the beach, Christa was wearing Piero's wellingtons (he'll look for hers again next trip). Back on board the hotel crew took care of Christa, offering a hot cup of tea, doing her laundry, and making sure that the sauna was turned on to warm her up.

So after the international rescue operation of Nobile it was good to see that there was again an international effort – this time to rescue Christa. An Italian, Dutch, British, German, Russian and Philippine team succeeded in their joint venture (the North Americans and others were preoccupied on the beach with reindeer and walrus, but were at the ready, of course...).

In the meantime Mario and Ralf had prepared a BBQ with a delicious assortment of meats and salads. The atmosphere and music got a little more energetic as the night wore on and yes, dancing ensued. Well...for most. About fifteen stayed up past sunny midnight. Cameras were clicking and Champaign glasses clinking. Out on the aft deck? One happy bunch of people.



## July 03 – Day 8

### Edgeøya: Delitschøya

GPS NOON position: 77°24'N 22°25'E

Weather: 2°C, overcast, windy

*07:00 wake-up call by Troels (it is very cold and the wind is howling): “Good moorning Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning! It’s a beautiful, truly Arctic day today.”* With this cunning phraseology our highly appreciated Expedition Leader’s cheerful call drew us out of our slumber. We were full of excitement, knowing what a unique opportunity it would be to visit our scheduled sites today. It is highly likely that Delitschøya, together with other sites of significant historical remains, will be shut down for tourism beginning next year.

The sea in this area is very shallow and scattered with shoals. So, the only possibility of reaching Delitschøya is a rather long Zodiac ride, and in these winds, we were happy that the wind was with us (on the way out, at least...). Once ashore at Delitschøya, Troels wisely cancelled the Andréetangen portion of the morning – the weather just wouldn’t allow. Although it was surely an adventure getting to the beach, it was a joyful ride for all. Yes, we are all feeling intrepid in these daunting Arctic conditions! At our approach, a few walrus were popping their heads up in the water, black guillemots were splashing down with storm-landings in their bright red boots, but the most impressive, of course, was how skilfully our guides/polar bear guards/Zodiac drivers handled the inflatable boats!



On the beach we were rewarded with the remarkable 17<sup>th</sup> century ovens, the best of their kind in Spitsbergen. Thought to have been used by English whalers, these are almost certainly the best-preserved 17<sup>th</sup> century whaling ovens anywhere in the world.

Setting off on our hike (leaning a good 30° into the wind), we encountered many of the flowers previously introduced to us by Michelle – purple and tufted saxifrage, yellow Draba, and Arctic chickweed. It’s incredible that these tiny green leaves actually comprise a great forest! The polar willow reaches no higher than 3 cm above ground level, but nevertheless it is a tree. In one of the ponds we saw a breeding pair of red throated divers as well as some pink footed geese.



The wind seemed to be gusting even stronger than earlier, and we decided it was time to return to the ship. The return ride was a struggle in the face of a relentless wind and building seas but once on board, we were treated to a most delicious lunch (and a most appropriate Arctic dessert, Vienetta ice-cream!). While digesting our lunch Cecilia tested us on the birds that we have encountered on our voyage and, even more fascinating, gave us some insight into her earlier research and studies. Engaging, tough, affable, and clever? Who knew?

After Cecilia's talk Frank presented *Eismitte*, the documentary film of Alfred Wegener's 1931 expedition to the Greenland ice cap. Wegener was, as we all know, the first to postulate and prove plate tectonics. First proposed in 1910, his theories were not generally accepted until the 1950s. The original 1931 footage, filmed by the expedition participants themselves, was exceptionally interesting and a real treat to see.



As the day passed the weather began to clear. And as dessert hit the table this evening, the sun was glistening off the ocean's surface. We were indeed exhausted after a very eventful day, yet we couldn't pull ourselves away from the wonderful scenery. Spellbound, we watched as iridescent ice floes slowly slid past our port and starboard. Many stayed up for the midnight sun, accompanied by the graceful soaring fulmars. And no, we were not alone on this beautiful night. Just before midnight the King of the Arctic appeared, magisterially posing on an ice floe, and glowing a soft golden hue in the sunlight. Called by the bridge, Troels soon showed up in his full one-piece float suit (perhaps only pyjamas beneath?). Unfortunately, the bear slid into the ocean and swam off into the distance. Nonetheless, he was a beautiful sight this evening. The Arctic revellers who stayed up after the bear enjoyed a little hot chocolate with a wee bit of rum and sailed into the early hours in our panoramic bar.

## July 04 – Day 9

### **Bellsund: Ingeborgfjellet; Gjøevervillia/Renardbreen**

GPS NOON position: 77°44'N 14°26'E

Weather: 8°C, sunny, turning to brilliant sun, with a few sunny periods

After the exciting night with the polar bear on the pack ice the wake-up call found us still steaming to our next destination. Tom was told to wear his long underwear, but this was not necessary at all – the fist landing at Ingeborgfjellet in Bellsund welcomed us with beautiful sunshine and extraordinary scenery. Just after arriving on shore we had an amazing view of an



Arctic fox, attacking a pink-footed goose that defended its nest valiantly. Tens of thousands of little auks lifted up into the sky in great swarms, forming flickering black and white clouds above us before settling back down on the scree slope. Every time a glaucous gull flew past they repeated their harried flight. Dividing into groups of hikers and watchers, we all had a chance to get very close to small groups of reindeer, some snow buntings, and barnacle geese.

The hikers crossed the tundra to arrive at the huts on the beach. There are the remains of two small camps here: Camp Millar and, farther to the east, Camp Bell. It was here, 90 years ago, that the Northern Exploration Company began (unsuccessfully) to mine other minerals, including gold at Camp Bell. Two beautiful male reindeer with their families were relaxing in the snow in front of one of the huts.

Back at the little auk cliffs, nonchalant reindeer passed by at close range. But the most impressive experience this morning was the appearance, towards the end of our landing, of two little fox cubs. Having crawled out from their den, they entertained us for half an hour or so. The smaller of the two was seen eating the leg of a bird, likely a goose, before burying the remainder under some moss. They learn young, these foxes!

After a late lunch we proceeded to Gjøærvilla, Snatcherpynten. The five star hotel at the beach was closed on Saturday, so we had to make other plans. Again dividing in different groups we

made our way(s) up the massive moraine. Those who reached the top had a spectacular view over Renardbreen ('Fox-glacier') and Recherchefjord, named by a French expedition here in 1938. Many people carried on and were able to actually walk upon the glacier and back down to the lower plain. What an experience! Others remained near the landing site, observing Arctic terns and admiring large, relatively fresh, polar bear tracks. Nobody could really get over the weather. With sun like this and no wind, the entire landscape takes on a mesmerizing aura. Smiling, tuckered out, and noticeably glowing, we returned to the *Antarctic Dream* to begin our sail northwards. Tomorrow we would awake in Isfjord, and enjoy that final day of our wonderful Arctic adventure.



## July 05 – Day 10

### Isfjord: Skansbukta, Bohemanneset

GPS NOON position: 78°31'N 16°02'E

Weather: 13°C, incredible sun

For our final expedition day there was – you guessed it – more sun! We have been treated to exceptionally good weather this trip and this would continue today. We began at Skansbukta, named after the beautiful neighbouring mountain. From the beach we set off to explore this curious place. Unsuccessful mining began here in 1918, only lasting a single season. They were looking for gypsum, but instead found (mixed in with the gypsum) the chemically identical anhydrite. The Norwegians returned in 1930 for another short stint at extraction, and most of the remains we see today are from the latter occasion.

Some of us went on a steep but generally moderate hike into the valley, whereas the rest of us strolled around the old mining site, enjoying the weather, the sights, and taking photographs. We were also treated to several patches of the delightful Jacob's ladder, recently in bloom. Although it blossoms in one or two other places in Spitsbergen, it is truly a rare sight.

After enjoying the region of the landing sight, and once the hikers returned, we set off in our Zodiacs again around the corner to find some of the few Atlantic puffins breeding in Spitsbergen. And there they were... coming to and fro or sitting on the ledges high above us, but far below the pointed peaks. Then it was back to the beach to let the zaniness unfold.

About twenty swimmers took the plunge into the frigid waters of Billefjord. Congratulations to all the dunkers!

Back on the ship for a hot lunch and then – wham! – here it was, our last landing. There was a wonderful

connection for our group and Bohemanneset. The granddaughters of Theodor Lerner, who overwintered here in 1907-08, were with us to walk in the footsteps that their grandfather trod a century ago. Frank told the story of Lerner and Johansen at Bohemanneset, which was very touching, and a lovely tribute to



Lerner, and his visiting granddaughters. Michelle followed with her tale of the early (1920) Dutch mining at this same site.

The tide was dropping and we had a long way to get back to the ship. So, after exploring the huts and camp, or going for a longer walk, we boarded the Zodiacs for one last time (maybe) and, under brilliant skies, slowly sailed back to the *Antarctic Dream*.

Before dinner, Captain Barria bade us farewell with his Captain's Cocktail, and Troels gave us his disembarkation briefing. We all toasted the Captain and Troels and the crew and staff for making this trip so adventurous and safe, and Alan, Beverley, Mario, Ralf and the rest of the hotel staff for making this trip so comfortable and enjoyable.

Our last sumptuous dinner followed, and Alan followed with his lecture 'How to Pay Your Ship Account' – not the most popular of lectures, but full attendance was noted. We had arrived in Longyearbyen, and by the very early morning we would return to the very place where our incredible journey began, ten long days ago.

## July 06 – Day 11

### Isfjord: Longyearbyen

As for you - you have been such an enthusiastic and interesting group – it has been a pleasure to share this voyage with you all. On behalf of Captain Barria, Troels Jacobsen, Alan Hogan and the staff and crew of the *Antarctic Dream*, we look forward to sailing with you again – in the far north, the deep south, or somewhere in between.

**This LOG was a combined effort of the Expedition Staff.**

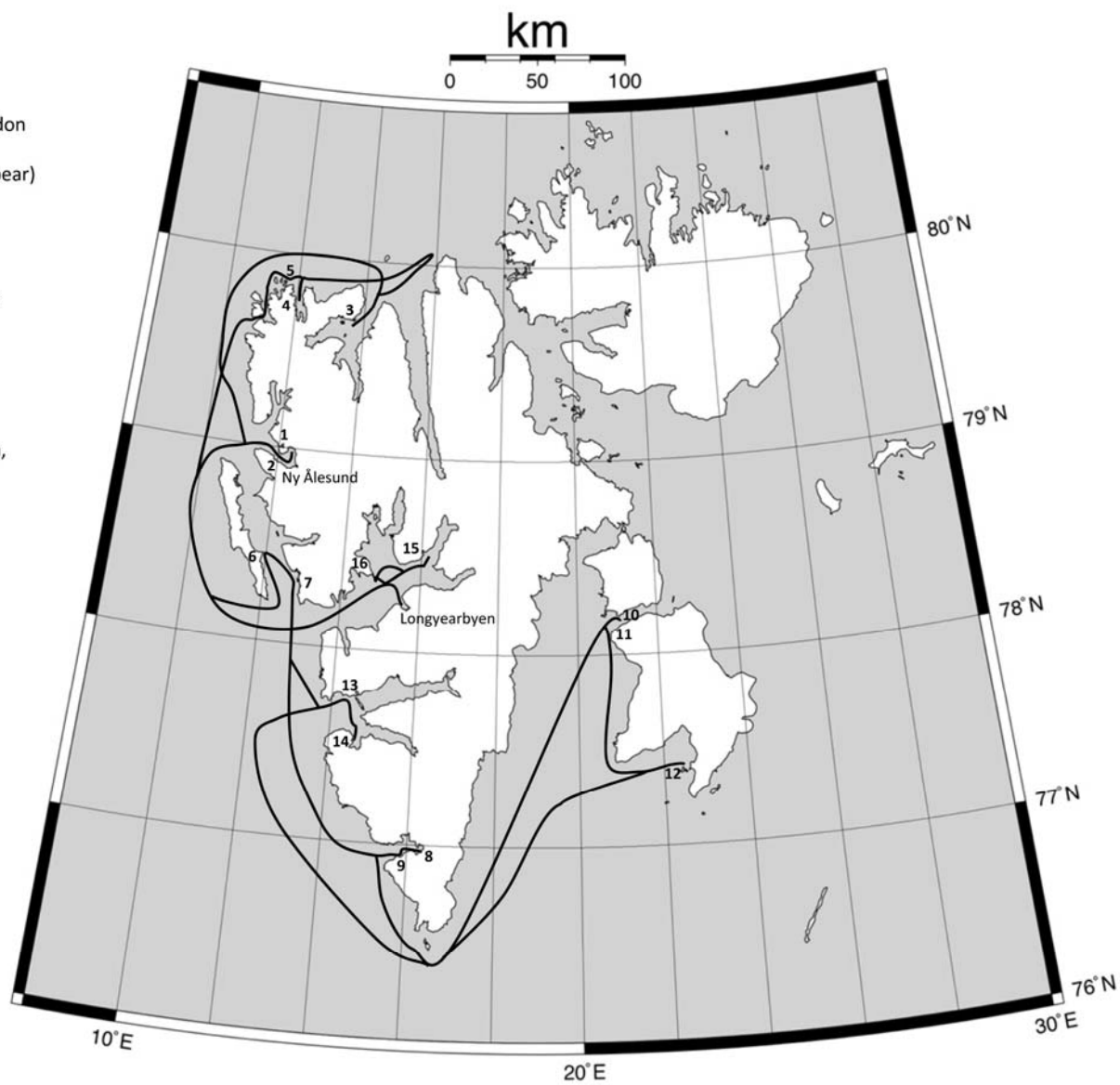
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- 1 Blomstrandhalvøya, Ny London
- 2 Ny Ålesund
- 3 Worsleyneset, Woodfjord (bear)
- 4 Hamiltonbukta, Raudfjord
- 5 Ytre Norskøya
- 6 Poolepynten
- 7 Steinpyntvika
- 8 Mandaleebreen, Hornsund
- 9 Gåshamna, Hornsund
- 10 Freemansundet (bears)
- 11 Kapp Lee, Edgeøya
- 12 Delitschøya
- 13 Ingeborgfjellet, Bellsund
- 14 Snatcherpynten, Gjønevervilla, Recherchefjord
- 15 Skansbukta
- 16 Bohemanneset



English	Latin	German	French	Dutch	Italian
Red-throated diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Sterntaucher	Plongeon catmarin	Roodkeel duiker	Strolaga Minore
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Eissturmvogel	Petrel fulmar	Noordse stormvogel	Fulmaro
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Kurzschnebelgans	Oie à bec court	Kleine rietgans	Oca Zampe Rosee
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Weisswangengans	Bernache nonnette	Brandgans	Oca Faccia Bianca
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Eiderente	Eider commun	Eider eend	Edredone
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Eisente	Harelde boréal	Ilseend	Moretta Codona
Rock Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus mutus hyperboreus</i>	Alpenschneehuhn	Lagopède des Alpes	Sneeuw hoen	Pernice Artica
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	Thorshühnchen	Phalarope à bec large	Rosse franjepoot	
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Spatelraubmöwe	Labbe pomarin	Middelste jager	Stercorario Mezzano
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Schmarotzerraubmöwe	Labbe parasite	Kleine jager	Labbo
Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	Falkenraubmöwe	Labbe à longue queue	Kleinste jager	Labbo Coda Lunga
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Skua	Grande Labbe	Grote jager	Stercorario
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	Eismöwe	Goéland bourgmestre	Grote Burgemeester	Gabbiano Glauco
Lesser black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Heringsmöwe	Goéland brun	Kleine mantelmeeuw	Zafferano
Great black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Mantelmöwe	Goéland marin	Grote mantelmeeuw	Mugnaiaccio
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Dreizehenmöwe	Mouette tridactyle	Drieteenmeeuw	Gabbiano Tridattilo
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>	Elfenbeinmöwe	Mouette ivoire	Ivoor meeuw	Gabbiano Avorio
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Küstenseeschwalbe	Sterne arctique	Noordse stern	Sterna Artica
Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Dickschnabellumme	Guillemot de Brunnich	Dikbekzeekoet	Uria di Brunnich
Black Guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>	Gryllteiste	Guillemot à miroir blanc	Zwarte zeekoet	Uria Nera
Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	Krabbentaucher	Mergule nain	Kleine alk	Gazza Marina Minore
Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Papageitaucher	Macareux moine	Papegaai duiker	Pulcinella di Mare
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Schneeammer	Bruant des neiges	Sneeuwgor	Zigolo delle Nevi

<b>MAMMALS</b>					
Walrus	<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>	Walross	Morse	Walrus	Tricheco
Bearded seal	<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>	Bartrobbe	Phoque barbu	Baardrob	Foca Barbata
Ringed seal	<i>Phoca hispida</i>	Ringelrobbe	Phoque marbré	Ringelrob	Foca dagli Anelli
Harp seal	<i>Pagophilus groenlandicus</i>	Sattelrobbe	Phoque du Groenland	Zadelrob	Foca della Groenlandia
Common /Harbour seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Seehund	Phoque commun	Gewone zeehond	Foca Comune
Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	Zwergwal	Petit rorqual	Dwergvinvis	Balenottera Acutorostrata
Polar Bear	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	Eisbär	Ours blanc	Ijsbeer	Orso Polare
Arctic Fox	<i>Alopex lagopus</i>	Polarfuchs	Renard arctique	Poolvos	Volpe Artica
Spitsbergen Reindeer	<i>Rangifer tarandus platyrhynchus</i>	Svalbard Renntier	Renne du Spitzberg	Rendier	Renna



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