

# Spitsbergen

## Triplog



## s/v Antigua

Chartered out to:

## Arctic Circle

September 30. - October 13. 2012

*The SV Antigua was built in 1957 in Thorne (UK) and served for many years as a fishing vessels, until it was completely re-built in the early 1990s in the Netherlands as a barkentine and equipped as a passenger ship. A barkentine has three masts with square sails on the foremast.*

*With*

Captain – Joachim Schiel  
First Mate – Maarten van der Duijn Schouten  
Second Mate / Engineer – Dan Fisher  
Chef – Sacha Huhn  
Service Manager – Katrin Völker  
Service – Nicole Petresic  
Service – Yvonne  
Expedition Leader – Michelle van Dijk  
Bear watch – Sarah Gerats  
Bear watch – Theres Arulf  
Project leader – Aaron o'Connor



September 30.

## **Longyearbyen**

Position at 14 o'clock: 78°14' N 015°36' E

Temperature: 32°F / 0 °C

Shortly before 2 pm most of the passengers arrive at s/v Antigua, a blue sailing vessel that was going to be our home for the upcoming ten days. We all had to visit our captain Joachim at the wheel house. After that we were welcomed inside with coffee or tea and cake. Captain Joachim gave us a board-safety briefing, telling us that we are not allowed to fall overboard or make bonfires on the ship. After a short coffee break our expedition leader Michelle took over to tell about the do's and don'ts on land. By the time she was finished, at around 5 pm we left the quay to sail out of Isfjorden to Poolepynten on Prins Karls Forland, the island west of Spitsbergen.



October 1.

## Prins Karls Forland: Poolepynten

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°26,8' N 011°47'7 E

Temperature: 32°F / 0 °C – clear sky – no wind



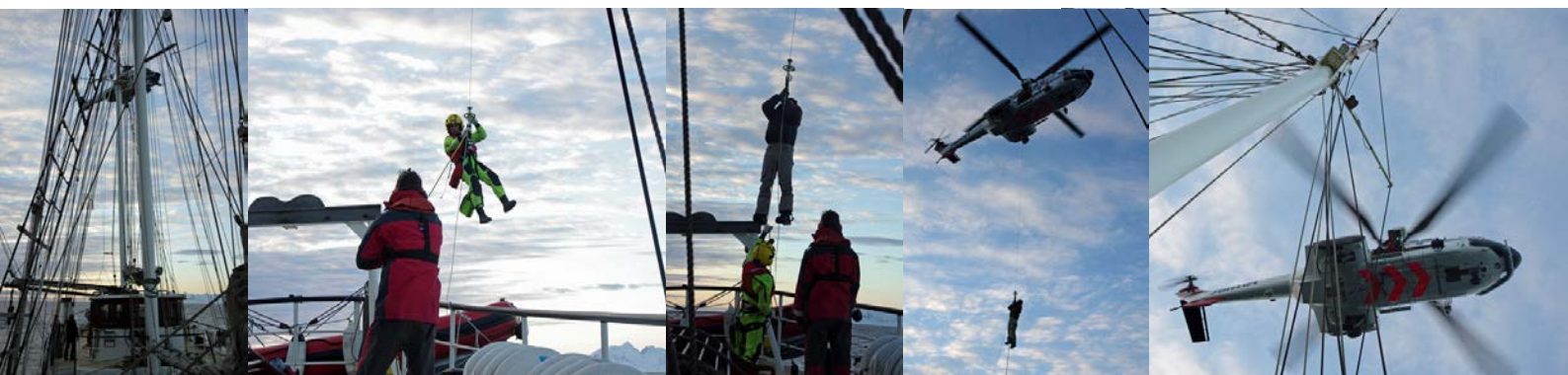
We woke up under a full moon in the morning light at Poolepynten, with a temperature of 0°C. Lots of artists took lots of pictures before breakfast. And after breakfast. Around 10 o'clock everybody gathered at the mid ships, well packed with equipment and life vests. A short introduction on how to get in and out of a zodiac followed.



On land a safe triangle was set out, everybody could freely move, photograph, put up camera obscura tents and test kites. Polar bears were watched out for. About two hours later everybody was picked up again and brought back to the ship for a nice warm lunch. As soon as we were sure that everyone was on board, even the people that forgot to check in, we started heading North. After lunch the weather looked like good sailing weather, and an introduction on knots and sails followed. This fresh knowledge however will have to be saved for later, since the wind had changed a bit during the explanation.

After sailing North for about two and a half hours the ship suddenly changed direction. Some noticed directly, for others it took a while to realize why the sun had changed position. Our fellow passenger Shawn needed to see a doctor, so there was only one direction to take; direction Longyearbyen. After a while we passed our morning landing site, now with an air temperature of 5°C.

After a few hours of sailing back, the captain got into contact with the Radio Medical Advice via Bodø radio, and based on the long distance diagnose, the doctor decided to let a helicopter pick Shawn up. A rush of adrenaline followed, everything was prepared and everyone informed. Exactly after the estimated 50 minutes it arrived. People stood mid ships and watched the helicopter hover above the ship, throw out a line and do the pick up. Seen from the deck, the helicopter didn't seem far above nor aside the mast, more like caught in the rig. The sunset colored evening sky provided a strangely beautiful backdrop. As soon as the helicopter left, the Antigua took another 180° turn and headed back to the way up. We were again sailing North, depending on the ice where to wake up in the morning.



October 2.

## **Krossfjord: 14. July bay**

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°05' N 011°50 E

Temperature: 25°F / -4°C - clear sky – no wind

After a clear night of sailing, with the full moon, and Venus and Jupiter shining brightly we anchored up in Fjortende Julibukta (Fourteenth of July bay), at the east side of Krossfjorden at 03.50. When we woke up for breakfast the sky was still totally clear, and there were no wind at all. This day was our first close meeting with a glacier; Fjortende Julibreen (Fourteenth of July glacier). The glacier was calving into the



sea several times during the day, and the noise was almost like a thunder storm. We were staying in the bay until 16.00 and saw the colors of the landscape changing from dark blue, to pink, to orange and to white as the sun slowly was rising higher above the horizon.

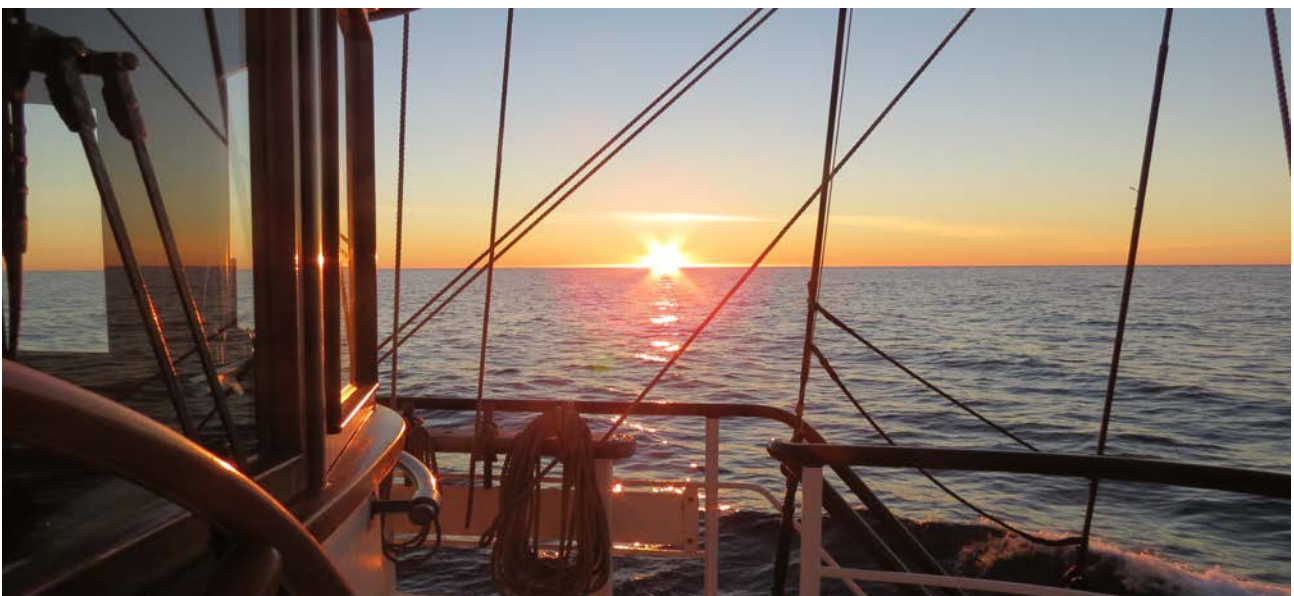


Our landing spot was on the south side of Fjortende Julibukta, and we had one landing before lunch and one landing after lunch. Today the safe area was a bit bigger than yesterday, covering the beach, the small bay full of pieces of ice, and some moraine hills.

Beside the group of people landing we also had two groups going closer to the glacier front with a zodiac. In the afternoon one group went on a little

hike further up in the moraine area, led by Aaron. From the top of the moraine we have a spectacular view of the surrounding mountains in the Krossfjord and Kongsfjord. On the beach Michelle found a part of a crashed airplane, which probably came from one of the few airplanes that crashed on Spitsbergen during World War II.

After coffee and flapjacks we steered the course north again, heading for the Magdalenefjord. Again the sea was calm as a mirror, and there were lots of small ice bergs that we had to navigate in between. A bearded seal was laying sun bathing on an ice berg, and Antigua was only some meters from it before it decided to take a swim. We continued north following the west coast of Spitsbergen, passing the “Seven glaciers”, and seeing the sun sinking into the sea again.



October 3.

## Magdalenefjord: Gravneset

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°33' N 011°02' E

Temperature: 30°F / -1 °C – Clear sky – no wind



Waking up while walking out to the deck we saw rocks and icebergs. Our captain had sailed through last night to get us into this save natural harbor called Trinityhamna, around 130 whalers are buried here since 400 years ago. According to historical sources, Magdalenefjorden was first used by the English in the early days of the whaling era. They erected a land station on the headland and named the area Trinity Harbor. The station was closed in 1623, but the cemetery remained in use. It is known that the first tourists visit it in 1838, the cemetery must have been a gloomy scenery, strewn with whale and walrus bones, like eerie, white remains of enormous extinct species in a far away land. Several of the coffins had made their way through the snow, heaved up to the surface by the permafrost, half open and empty on account of polar bears. Other coffins remain untouched, covered in rocks. In 1979 Gravneset was said to look more like a campsite than a cemetery. The graves have been opened by curious tourists and remains of bones have been taken home as souvenirs. So in 2002 a fence was put around the graves. Another clear and sunny day. Probably everyone still thought this is average arctic autumn weather; we haven't had any cloudy foggy windy cold wet but beautiful gray days yet.

After breakfast we boarded the zodiacs for a short ride to the small but interesting peninsula. The guarded area contained one of the governors huts, a triangle shaped rock, a beach filled with bergy bits, a graveyard hill, polar bear tracks, a sandy shore, wildlife swimming around, more then enough mountains in the background, as well as a perfect blue glacier, and constantly changing light. Enough reasons for three landings this day. People seemed more used to their new offices and studios, and all focused on their projects. They can however still forget to focus on signing in and out, which forces the captain to make us familiar with the 'Whiskey for the crew' rule. This seems to help immediately. At least for the first landing. Zodiacs operated all day. When we all got back around seven, the temperature has dropped a few degrees, but the weather was still as calm and easy as in the morning. The only thing we left on shore are lots of fresh tracks and two igloo attempts. After dinner Michelle told us more about the early whaling history, picturing these fjords in times that they were still crowded with whales and sailing vessels, blubber ovens, work, myths and man. Her lecture added images, stories and moments to the place where we were. Magdalenefjord, these days crowded by tourists over summer, but now it is just us and we will stay for the night.



October 4.

## Magdalenefjord: Gravneset

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°33' N 011°02' E

Temperature: 37°F / 3 °C – clouded – windforce 1 NW



Another day at Gravneset, we could see some clouds drifting in from the Northwest as the sky turned from purple to gray. After Michelle had put Theres and Sarah with the shore party on land, she drove with six of us to Gullybukta around the corner. Then a call came that fresh Polar bear prints were found. An animal had been checking out the igloo that was build the day before. Sarah followed the tracks and saw them leading back to the water again at the other side of the land spit. So it was not only the Gullybre and the nice scenery that was

looked for from the dinghy. When coming back from Gullybukta Michelle drove deeper into Magdalenefjord towards the Wagonwaybre. There they came across a large iceberg with different colors, pale white, light blue, dark blue and turquoise.

In the afternoon a group of 24 people went out for a hike to the Gullybre, while Michelle and Jason who wanted to blow some pipes stayed at the landing site.

Because the hiking group was so large also Aaron and Dan carried a rifle. It was very nice to do some leg stretching and also to see what was at the other side of the hill that we had been looking at yesterday and this morning. The walk led us to the Gullybre where half the group went all the way up with Theres & Aaron, a few went halfway with Dan and another few stayed with Sarah at lower ground.



October 5.

## Sailing to the Raudfjord via Svitjodbreen & Fair Haven

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°33' N 011°02' E

Temperature: 30°F / -1 °C – snow – windforce: 4 NE

This morning we met some more typical weather for Spitsbergen in October. The clouds made it impossible to see the surrounding mountains, and it was wet snow in the air. It was time for us to leave the beautiful Magdalenefjord and continue our travel north. As soon as we reached the opening of the fjord we met the northerly wind. The wind force was not too big, but the swell was about 1.5 metres, so the journey north was quite bumpy. Coming further north also meant slightly colder temperatures. It snowed more intensively and the snow now stayed on the deck, instead of melting away. We passed Smeerenburg and Virgohamna thinking about the hard lives of the whalers that stayed here 400 years ago.



During lunch, we were seeking some shelter from wind and swell in “Fair Haven”, which is a small archipelago. We did a cruise in front of Svitjodbreen (the Svitjod glacier), and then continued slowly in between the small islands of Fair Haven. Michelle and Sarah were scouting patiently for polar bears during the whole day. Finally they saw something red and big lying on the beach, looking more like a small boat than a polar bear. A “rescue group” was sent out, and they found out that the red thing on the beach was a small dinghy, just partly inflated.

A few weeks ago there was a “Kobbskjera”, just north from water, and the situation was both 70 year old British, but they had a problem with small dinghy onboard, but it uninflated. So they started as they could, and could finally using the dinghy instead of the rescued from the sea by was still left some where north of Fair Haven. Probably it was this now on board Tall Ship Antigua.



small yacht which hit a rock on Fair Haven. It started to take in critical. The two men onboard, needed to evacuate the ship, the life raft. They did have a was still packed in the bag, pumping up the dinghy as fast evacuate the sinking yacht life raft. Eventually they were helicopter, but the small dinghy

In the afternoon we entered Raudfjorden “the Red fjord”. It was named like this because of its red rocks that are a result of iron oxidation in the Devon period. However, the red was now covered by white snow and the clouds were low. Going south into Raudfjorden we finally got the northern wind in our back, and could set sails for the first time on the trip. We used all the four sails on the fore mast, and sailed all the way to our night harbour in Alicehamna on the east side of Raudfjorden. We anchored at 19.45.



October 6.

## Raudfjord: Alicehamna & Bruceneset

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°44' N 012°12' E

Temperature: 27°F / -3 °C – dark clouds in the North – windforce 1 E



With the first daylight we could see the area where we arrived last night. Sarah went up to the top of Bruceneset, Michelle checked the bay at the other side and Theres kept guard around the hut.

This cabin, named Raudfjordhytta was build in 1927 by Stockholm-Sven who chose to live as a trapper after an accident. But not only Stockholm-Sven used this place, there is also a cross with the text 'Skipper Erik Mattilas fra Tromsø 1907-1908' and when we could have watched this place a few hundred years ago, we would see whalers in action, a few whaler graves from that time still remain, but were invisible because of the snow that covered everything. Today new stories are

created. Inspired by the dark purple-grey skies of the north and change of colors above the fjord colored the snow in all colors but white. The lack of shadows made the mountains look like a half finished painting.



Beau created some real paintings, Renata tried to catch the light on camera. Barbara found some interesting reindeer antlers. Maarten and Nick did some sound recordings of ship's noise in the water.

After lunch Aaron took a group for a hike around the lake, but halfway they came across some very fresh polar bear tracks, so they turned around and made it back to the ship just before coffee and cake were served. After the coffee break it was Jaime's time to perform. All dressed up she used the stunning area as a backdrop. It was not easy to stand in the cold, so when she was done Maarten came to pick her up at the cabin to bring her back to the warm ship.

On the beach we found a reindeer carcass, but we were not the only ones. When ever we were all on board the ship an Arctic fox (or two) appeared to nibble at it.





October 7.

## Sailing to the Liefdefjord

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°44' N 012°12' E

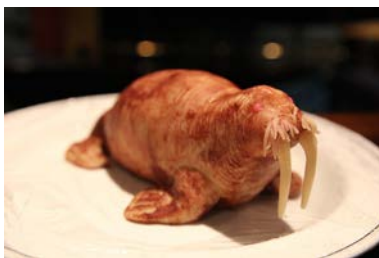
Temperature: 30°F / -1°C – cloudy – windforce 1 SE



It was dark when we woke up, as it has been more dark every morning. Of course we all know the night is getting longer 20 minutes a day, but to experience it as clearly as this gives the fact its meaning. First thing in the morning was jumping in the zodiac to quickly pick up a wildlife camera that has been making photos every 30 seconds since we came here. The camera is nicely decorated with a tree pattern, to easily blend with the environment. As soon as the camera was back on board, we started heading out of the Raudfjord. We were on our way to Liefdefjord. It was foggy gray and just below zero. The thermometer indicated minus a half degree Celcius. When we sailed out of the fjord the mountains hid in the gray, and for a long moment we could have been anywhere. Most people however went back to their bed after breakfast, and it took a while before we saw the first artists appearing on the front deck again. They stood in the snow, watched the gray and helped to sweep the deck.

After lunch Michelle gave a lecture about Polar bears. She could not have waited much longer since certain people started to doubt their existence and were getting suspicious about our ways to get tourists up here. The lecture had almost immediate effect; not long after finishing Michelle spotted a suspicious

white dot that soon turned out to be the back of a polar bear, and not much later a whole Polar bear eating a seal. It stood still, looked at us for a minute or two and then continued eating, getting more and more blood on it's snouts the deeper it got in the animal. We came closer to the shore then seems possible with a ship like this and stayed there for a long while, watching.



Today's cake was a birthday cake. We got Wes out of bed to sing for him in three different languages but roughly the same melody and give him his birthday cake with a marzipan walrus on top.

Later in the afternoon Theres told us a about daily life in Longyearbyen. She structured her talk around the questions most frequently asked to her during the three years she has been here; Do you live here? (Do you really live here?) Do you like it? (Do you really like it?) Have you seen a polar bear? (Have you really seen a polar bear?) She managed to give an idea of what live is like during the approaching dark time.

The ship has a deck surface of 240 square meters, and it was on these 240 square meters that we spent our day. Just before dinner the anchor is dropped and our home for tonight defined; Hornbækpollen, a small bay in Liefdefjord.

October 8.

## Liefdefjord: Hornbækpollen and sailing to Vesle Raudfjord

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°36' N 012°39' E

Temperature: 27°F / -3°C – partly clouded – wind force 0

Antigua was on anchor inside a small bay called after Helge Hornbæk, a hydrographer with Norwegian Polar Institute since 1948, and every year from 1948 to 1962 he undertook sounding in the waters around Spitsbergen. Pollen means the bay, fjord or cove. It has a narrow opening, surrounded by high steep mountains in the west, and a narrow moraine tongue in the east. This beautiful natural harbour is situated on the east side of Liefdefjorden, which means “the Fjord of Love”. It was again a beautiful morning, with pink clouds and calm sea. Aaron led a group for a morning hike, walking a bit closer to Erikbreen. There was also a morning zodiac trip to “Texas bar”, which is an old trapper hut, that is still every now and then in use by local outdoor enthusiasts. In the afternoon there was another zodiac trip, to work with some big icebergs and drift ice coming from Monacobreen.



We had one landing before and one after lunch, both in the moraine area. Before lunch there was some excitement among the Polar bear guards. Michelle saw a very suspicious yellowish rock lying resting on the beach. Jo went to check it out in the zodiac, but it was hiding behind a stone, and was not reacting on whistling. The suspicious yellowish stone still looked very suspicious, so Michelle just had to walk closer to find out if it was a furry animal or not. When she was about 100 metres from it she could finally come to the conclusion that the rock was a rock and nothing else. The polar bear guards were relieved and Joachim could drive back to Antigua.

The anchorage in Liefdefjorden was the easternmost on our trip. After coffee and cake we started our journey to go back south and west again, towards Vesle Raudfjord.

Going in between Andøyene (“Duck Islands”) in Liefdefjorden we found our polar bear back. Our furry friend was in the middle of his dinner, and on the menu was seal. There was blood all around in the snow. He was colored red by seal blood on his face and his paws were quite bloody to. He was licking of the blood from his feet with his long tongue. The focus of the bear was mainly the seal, but it was also keeping an eye at us as we were approaching with Antigua.



After observing, photographing and filming the bear intensively, we continued north. At one point we had a decent wind in our back, and we put up the lower top sail. Two minutes later we took it down again, because the wind suddenly stopped. Sailing in the Arctic is not always easy.

October 9.

## Vesle Raudfjord & sailing to Ny Ålesund

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°46' N 012°32' E

Temperature: 41°F / 5°C – clouded – wind force 1

Shortly after midnight we entered Vesle Raudfjord (“the Little Red Fjord”), a sheltered bay and therefor a good anchorage place.

In the morning it seemed very warm outside, Michelle measured the temperature which turned out to be 10 degrees warmer than the day before. Of course our mermaid Sarah went for a swim again where she found the water temperature even warmer than the day before.

At the foot of the 361m high Botnehaugen and next to the Vesle Russebustraumen (“the Little Russian hamlet stream”) we had a nice spot to work in a wide open space. There's stood at the beach near a frozen pond, Sarah took her position on some big rocks near an old whaler site and Michelle went more inland. Aaron took also a small group for a hike along the Rabotlaguna a bit higher up the mountain where they had a nice view on the Rabotlake.

Michelle wanted to take advantage of the warmth, melting snow is very sticky so she made bear guard snowman, complete with binoculars, radio and rifle.

There were some special requests, Sarah took Wes to the wooden construction on the whalers site. And some sound and film artists wanted to record some rifle shooting, so captain Joachim came to the shore with some old ammunition. And yes of course he wanted to shoot the snowman.



Lunch was pushed a little later but at two pm it was time to leave otherwise we could not make it to Ny Ålesund.

Right before coffee & cake we had some good sailing winds so Maarten & Dan got some extra hands to set sail. After we enjoyed Kati's cinnamon cookies Michelle came up with a lecture about the discovery of Spitsbergen and the geopolitics still going on today.

After dinner she had again a short talk, this time it was the Ny Ålesund-talk, obliged for everyone who want to visit the settlement.

At night we were treated to a rollercoaster-ride.... A two and a half meter swell moved the ship up and down. The only safe harbor for the most of us was our bed. At around 11 pm the anchor break came loose and the anchor fell. But no drama Dan & Joachim picked it up again and we had a little distraction.



October 10.

## Ny Ålesund

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°01' N 011°24' E

Temperature: 36°F / 2°C – cloudy – windforce 2  
SSE



We woke up at sea, a quite calm sea after last nights roller coaster. Fresh dreams of flying blankets, falling anchors and Michelle telling me in the middle of the night that she suddenly understood why they used to sleep in hammocks on ships. Of course it wasn't really much of a wind, it wasn't even called a 'fresh breeze' yet, just a moderate one. We arrived in Ny Ålesund while finishing breakfast. Ny Ålesund is a former mining community, the coal was already discovered by British whalers 300 years ago, but the settlement was established in 1917 by Kingsbay Kul Company A/S, which had their headquarters in Ålesund in Norway. Mining was discontinued in 1929 due to several minor accidents, but resumed in 1945. The following years the community had up to 200 inhabitants. Coal mining was closed down in 1963, after a major accident. From 1967 research activities took over, and Ny Ålesund developed into an unique research village.

To walk into civilization on a paved harbor was an experience on it's own. We discovered what being land sick means, adjusted to take the movement of the ship into our legs, it is the solid ground that suddenly starts swinging and moving. And the slippery ice on the 'always always stay on the roads', didn't help either. We slid and danced to Amundsens mast. With Michelle in the front, generously showing us how slippery the ice exactly was, longing for her rubber boots, bruising a few ribs. We all made it to the mast, where Michelle told us about Amundsen, his victories and the times he was not amused. We stood there in the foggy morning landscape, 2 hours before local time, smiling about his words; "Here I am standing on the south pole, my dream was to be the first person on the North pole, how far can a man be away from his dreams". No one really wanted to go to the next monument, about a hundred and fifty meters further, so we started sliding back to town. There the museum and shop where opened for us. In town everyone could, for the first time in ten days, move around unguarded. If a polar bear would come, we could just open the first door we saw and jump in; in Ny Ålesund every door is always open for this purpose.

Lunch was at home at the ship. Later in the afternoon most of us headed to the AWIPEV-station, the red building at the end of town, to watch the daily release of a weather balloon. It's Wednesday today- a concept we totally forgot about-, so it's a big one. On Wednesdays also the ozone is measured. The balloon will stay up for about an hour and a half and fall down somewhere. Most of the balloons will stay there, somewhere, but some are brought back as well.

We continued to the Norsk Polar Institut, the Norwegian basis in Ny Ålesund, where Martha gave us a tour through the building. Halfway her talk one of the other researchers came up and climbed on the roof. She stood there looking for a while and came back in. She, or someone else does this three times a day. To report the weather, to check the accuracy of the forecast. She confirmed it was actually raining, and not just drizzling as most people believed earlier this morning.

Since we're halfway back into civilization, this is the last opportunity for a decent swim, and after shivering about it for ten days Jason decided he had to do it. He and Jamie undress on the beach and have their arctic swim. And as everyone else who has done it, both of them realize it is actually not that bad and that it could even be really nice to do it every morning. Back on the ship they got a schnapps and their portion of fame. Nicks grabbed a towel too and also had a swim in the fjord.

At five we left Ny Ålesund, on our way to even more civilization. Quite soon after leaving we sailed past a spectacular beautiful small ice berg and in a split second Joachim decided to do one of the things he's very good at; he sailed three beautiful small circles around this iceberg before we continued straight forward. Halfway the night we sailed back into cellphone connection.

October 11.

## Barentsburg & sailing to Pyramida

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°04' N 014°12' E

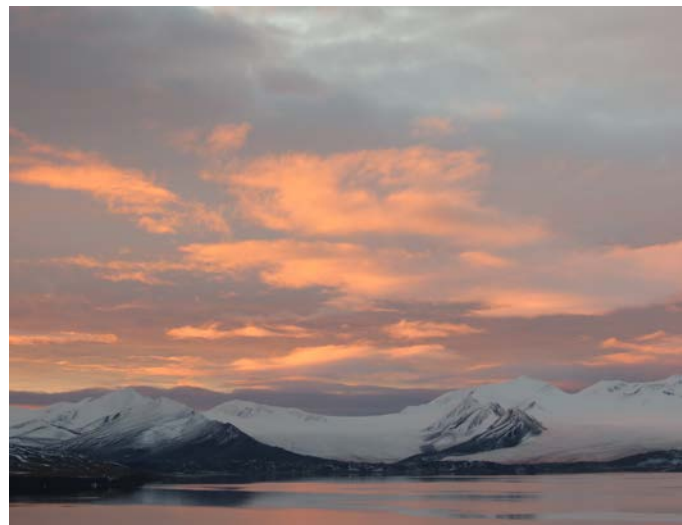
Temperature: 36°F / 2°C – cloudy – no wind

This morning we moored at the pier in Barentsburg around breakfast time. The night sail from Ny Ålesund was much calmer than the night before, which made the sleeping onboard a bit more comfortable. At breakfast Michelle gave us a little introduction to Barentsburg, and she taught us some words in Russian. “Privjet” means “hello”, and “spasiba” is “thank you”. Then it was time for a guided city walk. Some of us joined the guided tour (the Barentsburg tourist manager included), and some others went on own trips in the settlement. There were also possibilities to visit the



hotel, the museum and the souvenir shop. Before lunch we had quite gray weather, but for a short while in the morning we had some beautiful orange and pink colored clouds and mountains surrounding Grönfjorden (“the Green fjord”). Barentsburg is a place that has been falling apart for several years. The latest years more resources have been put into the settlement, and some of the buildings have been restored. It was nice to see that there now again are some cats living in the town. There are three of them and they are well taken care of.

Everyone managed to get back to the ship before departure time, so we left the pier in Barentsburg at lunch time. We sailed out of Grönfjorden towards Isfjorden, and there we had a nice wind our back. It was time to set sails. And this time we set all the 14 sails of Antigua! Just in time for our sailing operation we had some sunlight, and lots of people were on deck helping out with pulling the ropes. Finally all the sails were up, and it was very beautiful to see Antigua sailing in the sunlight. For the ones who wanted to see her from the sea, a little zodiac trip around the ship was arranged. Unfortunately the wind turned from southerly to northerly within short time, so we had to take the sails down again as soon as the zodiac operation was over.



We headed north, towards Billefjorden and Pyramiden. After coffee and cake Therese held a lecture about the geology of Svalbard, and we learned how Svalbard has traveled from the south pole to the north pole, 15000 Km in 600 million years. During the lecture the northerly wind was picking up, and it started to snow. Back to winter conditions again!

Sasha served us pizza tonight, and after dinner the volume of the music was turned up, creating a different atmosphere than the other evenings. We arrived to Pyramiden in the darkness at around 11 pm. It was too windy to moor in the darkness, so captain Joachim decided to anchor, and so we did at 11.15 pm.

Dan and Joachim had to do some shit work in the night, because the toilets were blocked. After a while they found out the system was blocked by lady pads.

It was a clear, but windy night, and the stars were shining brightly.

Even northern lights were spotted.

October 12.

## Pyramiden

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°39' N 016°23' E

Temperature: 18°F / -8°C – clear sky – no wind



We woke up in Pyramiden but not everybody made it before breakfast and a guided tour through town. This is all to blame to the beautiful Northern Lights-show of last night. Just when we went on shore a car stopped at the blue container hotel, Sarah and Michelle went to the guy and asked in their best Russian if he could open the cultural house. During the walk Michelle showed us the first Swedish houses and previously heated and lighted walking paths, London- where the single men lived. Paris – where the single women lived and The crazy house – where the families lived, telling the history. We walked up “The Street of

the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the October-revolution” and got the opportunity to go inside the cultural house, which was the highlight of the day. Here we stayed until lunchtime playing old pianos and admiring the decorations and facilities of the place. Three of us did not want to go back for lunch and decided to stay inside the building to do some sound recordings.

Pyramiden was a Swedish mining community owned by Svenska Stenkolsaktiebolaget Spitsbergen until the 1920's when economical problems made them sell Pyramiden to the Russian state owned mining company Trust Arktikugol. The coal was of good quality and the mine well managed. People thrived in this settlement that was a soviet model town, but still gave people the freedom of being far away from the central authorities. In 1996 the story of Pyramiden changed. A passenger plane with 130 passengers, workers and their families from Pyramiden crashed into Operafjellet during the approach at Longyearbyen airport. There were no survivors. In 1998 Russia could not afford to supply two settlements on Spitsbergen anymore. Barentsburg was chosen as the settlement to keep alive and the people of Pyramiden had to leave their homes and lives here behind.

Nowadays two people live in Pyramiden to maintain and renovate the place. The hotel is ready to go but still waiting for permission from Sysselmannen (Governor) to reopen.

After lunch everyone went (back) onshore. At coffee time Joachim and Kati were so nice to bring coffee and cake to the cultural house. Both Aaron (before coffee) and Joachim (after coffee) walked up to the bottle house, an house as the name implies, made out of empty bottles. By then the first people wanted to go back to the boat and it turned out that they were the lucky few, because they got a ride from the Russian guy.

Slowly the sky colored pink again and we all had to go back for our last supper, but Pyramiden will always remain in our thoughts and work.



October 13.

## **Adventfjord: Longyearbyen**

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°39' N 016°23' E

Temperature: 34°F / 1°C – light snow – no wind

After a final, good Antigua-style breakfast it was finally time to say goodbye at noon. Hard to believe that the trip had come to an end and that so much inspiring arctic experience could fit into a mere 14 days!

All of us had another night or two in town. Many of us knew already now that this was not our last visit to the arctic.



Triplog is written by Michelle, Sarah and Theres.

Photographs by Michelle, Sarah and Theres.

This triplog can be found on <http://www.spitsbergen-svalbard.info>

The *SV Antigua* will continue to sail in Spitsbergen's waters in the years to come; the other sailing ships of the Tallship Company fleet, *Mare Frisium*, *Artemis*, *Elisabeth* and *Atlantis*, sail the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the IJsselmeer and the Canary Islands.

# Arctic Circle Participants

Derek Cote  
Christy George  
Steve Hilyard  
Shawn Brixey  
Barbara Putnam  
Beau Carey  
Caroline Kelley  
Cedra Wood  
Jaime Bird  
Jason de Haan  
Jason Kofke  
Leah Beeferman  
Lukas Marxt  
Mariah Raymond  
Matthew LaRocca  
Nathaniel Miller  
Nicholas Fairbank  
Nick Kuepfer  
Pat Law  
Richard Ashrowan  
Renata Padovan  
Robert Platt  
Ruth Le Gear  
Soyoung Kang  
Wes Miholen  
Aaron O'Connor