29th January

Dear all,

We are now at sea heading towards South Georgia. Position at 14:00 local time on Monday is about 200 miles east of Stanley.

Weather is sunny and quite warm at around 13C. Wind about 20mph from behind which means the sea is a bit lumpy. We have about 600 miles to go to South Georgia where we are due to arrive early on Wednesday morning - if the weather doesn't deteriorate before then.

We spent a couple of hours on deck on Sunday afternoon as we traversed north Falklands looking for sea life. We were about 3-5 miles offshore. Several whales were blowing but none came close to the boat. We had dolphins, a few seals and penguins swim by the boat - but I didn't get any pics of them. Also plenty of sea birds were around the ship.

Contrast that to now. I saw only 2 Albatross whilst outside for 30 minutes at lunchtime. Being 200+ miles from land there is nothing obvious outside - but I am sure there is under the water.

All could change in 100-200 miles or so as we cross the Antarctic Convergence - the join between the warm Atlantic waters and the cold Antarctic waters moving north. At this point there is an upwelling of food from deep down - Krill and the like. So we expect to see more wild life after that. Also the water is several degrees colder so the air temperature will be less and we could have fog. We wait to see when this happens.

The Falklands are much bigger than I expected. It took 10 hours travelling at 15 knots to move from Saunders Island to Stanley = 200 miles.

We anchored outside Stanley at 10.30 pm. Two officials came on board to do their thing. Fresh fruit and veg was also loaded on the ship. I gather we left Stanley at midnight to head east.

That's all for now.

Mandatory briefing just about to start.

**PS - we'd love to hear any of your news - text only please.**

**29th January - At Sea to South Georgia**

"A journey is a person in itself, no two are alike. And all plans, safeguards, policies, and coercion

are fruitless. We find after years of struggle that we do not take a trip; a trip takes us."

- John Steinbeck

0745 Wake-up call

0800 - 0900 Breakfast is served in the Dining Room (Deck 3)

**09:30 Presentation: 'Fur and Blubber - Seals of South Georgia**' will be presented by our Marine

Biologist Annie in the Main Lounge

Members of the expedition team will be offering photo collection assistance in the Main Lounge

**11:30 Presentation: 'Approaching South Georgia: the Avian Perspective'** will be presented by our

Ornithologist Liliana in the Main Lounge

1230 - 1330 Lunch is served in the Dining Room (Deck 3)

**14:30 MANDATORY South Georgia Landing Guidelines and Biosecurity** with your Expedition Leader

Woody in the Main Lounge

After briefing: Biosecurity Procedures: We will all participate in a thorough cleaning of the outer clothing and

equipment we expect to take ashore in South Georgia. Please listen to announcements for

further instruction. You will be required to sign a declaration post cleaning located at the

Expedition Counter.

16:00 Afternoon tea is served in The Club

17:00 Knot Workshop: Join Tom & Juani in the Observation Lounge

17:00 Photo Critique: Join Kyle in the Main Lounge

18:30 Join the Expedition Team in the club for **Mixing, Mingling & Happy Hour!**

1930 - 2100 Dinner is served in the Dining Room (Deck 3)

Dear all, it is 9am local time on Tuesday.

We are currently about two thirds of the way from Falklands to South Georgia. It is looking like we will arrive there late tonight.

Weather is currently 7C, grey with poor visibility (only a few hundred yards). Wind about 25mph from behind is making the sea a little more lumpy than yesterday but still not an issue.

The lower temperatures and fog shows that we are close to the Antarctic Convergence. Of course there is no distinct line that is visible - just a zone of maybe 50 miles wide when you move from the warm Atlantic to the cold Antarctic seas.

The captain decided to **change the ships time zone over night** - so instead of us being 3 hours behind UK , we are now only 2 hours (GMT-2). This is so that we have the same time as the South Georgia officials (shipping, landing, etc) that he is communicating with. We will go back to 3 hours (GMT-3) when we head to the Antarctic Peninsular after our time in S Georgia!

*Not that* ***real time*** *has any bearing on us down here with no live TV or anything that requires us to be somewhere at a specific time! Food times in the restaurant are the most important whilst at sea ;-) The sun rises around 5am and sets around 10pm - depending on cloud cover.*

Seems like Tuesdays agenda at sea is a light one as I suspect the weather is looking like worsening and the sea getting bigger speed bumps for us to go over. So they are probably expecting some people to get sea sickness as the wind speed increases. But, fingers crossed, Ruth and I have so far been OK - after 4 days at sea - and the doctor gave us some pills to take if the sea gets very lumpy.

We have found the **lectures and workshops** over the last few days on board to be very good. We have had little free time to sit and contemplate! Any spare time we have been on the bridge or walking around outside and peering into the distance.

The **speakers are mostly scientists who have worked for a good time in their topic area. They have good knowledge of the area having been down here many years in a row. Many of them also have ongoing technology projects running ashore (eg. time lapse cameras or ringed/GPS tagged birds) that they visit year on year. They are also good and entertaining speakers! We always have one of them sitting on our table at meal times so they get a good grilling.**

We have a lottery going on board as to when we will see the **first sizeable iceberg** - it has to be bus sized or bigger. Guesses range from later today until 7thFebruary.

As I see it there are 3 options -

1. **North west of S. Georgia.** Eg. 30th or 31st Jan. Very large Icebergs travelling north on the Polar current. Some huge bergs last for many years before completely melting. They could be anywhere around this latitude.

2. **Around S. Georgia.** 1st to 4th Feb. Icebergs calved from the many glaciers that run in S Georgia. The highest point is around 9000ft and snow is up there all year round and feeding the glaciers down below.

3. **South of S. Georgia.** 5th to 7th Feb. As we head south west to the South Orkney Islands and Signy (where Sarah has been).

I suspect that we will see icebergs just before or during our time at S. Georgia. I opted for 21:15 on 30th January. Ruth chose 04:30 on 5th February. We will soon find out - **seeing our first big iceberg will be a landmark for this trip.**

BTW - Peter is miffed that we are not visiting the South Sandwich Islands as he was born near Sandwich, Kent! Sadly they are too far east of S. Georgia and way off the route to S. Orkney ;-)

PS - S. Georgia, like the Falklands, belongs to the UK and they use UK pounds as their currency. So when we get there it will be like home - only with high snow capped mountains, glaciers, and millions of penguins, seals and sea birds and very very few resident people who take the bio-security of their islands VERY seriously. They have recently killed all the introduced reindeer that were damaging the areas that local birds bread in. They are also midway in a programme trying to eradicate all mice and rats that predate the young birds. These 'pests' were introduced by the sealers and whalers in 19C & early 20C.

**Agenda 30th January Tuesday** At Sea to South Georgia

*If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in the water… its substance*

*reaches everywhere; it touches the past and prepares the future."*

*- Lorne Eisley*

**SHIP CLOCKS WILL GO FORWARD ONE HOUR AT MIDNIGHT ON JANUARY 29**

0745 Wake-up call

0800 - 0900 **Breakfast** is served in the Dining Room (Deck 3)

0930 Presentation: ***'Life of Plastic'*** will be presented by our ornithologist **Liliana** in the Main Lounge

1130 Presentation: ***'Shackleton'*** will be presented by **Woody** in the Main Lounge

1230 - 1330 **Lunch** is served in the Dining Room (Deck 3)

1430 **Ocean Diamond Cinema:** Please join us in the Main Lounge for a screening of **Survival**

**in Limbo -** *the tale of a man's experience in South Georgia*

1600 **Afternoon tea** is served in The Club (Deck 4 aft)

1700 Presentation: ***'Cetaceans of the Southern Ocean'*** will be presented by our marine

biologist **Annie** in the Main Lounge

1830 Join the **Expedition Team** for a **Recap & Briefing** in the Main Lounge (Deck 5)

1930 - 2100 **Dinner** is served in the Dining Room (Deck 3)

After Dinner Join **Ema** for a casual bar talk ***'Antarctica My Home Sweet Home'*** in the Main Lounge

Dear all,

Lunchtime & just arrived in Grytviken bay and anchored. The sea is calm but wind is still gusting at 20mph so the kyakers will once again be missing out

Grytviken is on the east side of S Georgia about half way down - a large and well protected bay with the whaling station in view. Outside our cabin window is the Shackleton cross - about 400 yards away. Lots of penguins on the beach.

Huge cliffs/hills are sheltering us from the elements. We even have some sunshine and see snow up on the hills. Also the red roofed whaling station is close by. Due to go ashore this afternoon at about 13.30 to explore.

Complete contrast to this morning when we had 35-40mph winds and lumpy sea with poor visibility. However there were lots of fur seals and penguins in the sea heading out past to the ship to feed. They were very difficult to photo!

It is much colder here . Saw my first icebergs as we came along the coast. They were in the mouth of a big bay - having come off the glacier there.

We also heard this morning from Woody (our expedition leader) that 3 ships had been docked in Stanley for the last 3 days. We were so lucky to get out ahead of the storm - as they cannot leave port yet and have lost several days off their itinerary. Whereas we have gained an extra half day in S Georgia!!

Need to get the waterproof gear on now as we will no doubt be getting wet on our short zodiac ride to the beach.

Maybe more later.