Dear All

We had a very early wakeup call at 5.15 today. I think the idea is to make most of the morning calmer and brighter weather. We are in St Andrews bay nearer to the NE side of South Georgia. The swell is still there though making getting on and off the boat challenging. You have to wait for the crest of the wave to make your move. It is cloudy and drizzling and the cloud is low so visibility is poor but nevertheless we have had 90 mins cruising round the bay in our zodiac seeing what there is to see. For us it was two small icebergs, a penguin being eaten by some skuas, one zodiac cutting out and having to be rescued from the surf by its buddy, an elephant seal wallowing in the surf and trying to have some of its catastrophic moult washed off (the epidermis goes too), and the glacier meltwater running into the sea.

Now we have had breakfast and are off for our walk. Again all the zodiacs have to be deployed. It's a big operation but works well. Every one really loves it and the team work very well together. Today we were driven by Kyle the camera man. The youngest I have met is Paterson who is just 21. He is Australian and got his hot air ballooning license at age 16.

It has been mentioned that another storm is coming! Watch this space.

Love to all Ruth

Dear all,

12 noon and anchored in St Andrews Bay which is midway up the eastern side of S. Georgia. It seems like it's a long day already - up soon after 5am and now we are waiting for lunch. I think we have earnt it! Biggest King Penguin colony and lots of fur and elephant seals on the beach. It was spotting with rain for much of the morning.

We had left Cooper Bay at the bottom of S Georgia before dinner last night and headed north up the east coast o anchor in this sheltered location. Sea is relatively calm but some swell in the zodiacs. Kayakers did go boating today - which they were pleased about. Waiting to get the zodiacs/kayaks on board before heading a little further north to Hercules Bay.

**Friday 2nd - St. Andrew's Bay & Hercules Bay**

0515 Wake-up call

0545 We plan to land & zodiac cruise at **St. Andrew's Bay**

St. Andrews Bay is home of the largest king penguin colony in South Georgia with over 100,000 breeding pairs. Elephant seals haul out here regularly. Thirty years ago, the nearby Cook Glacier terminated at the high water mark on the beach in a spectacular 30m high, 500m long ice cliff - since then, the snouts of all three nearby glaciers have significantly ablated and retreated.

**1st Disembarkation: Groups** **Shackleton & Wild** will disembark for a landing at St. Andrew’s

**2nd Disembarkation**: **(30 minutes later) Amundsen & Scott** will disembark for a zodiac Cruise

0815 **Breakfast** is served in the Dining Room (Deck 3)

09:30 We plan to land & zodiac cruise at **St. Andrew's Bay**

**1st Disembarkation: Groups Amundsen & Scott** will disembark for a landing at St. Andrew’s

**2nd Disembarkation: (30 minutes later) Groups Shackleton & Wild** will disembark for a zodiac cruise

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

TBA We hope to Zodiac cruise **Hercules Bay**

Hercules Bay lies approximately 3km northwest of Cape Saunders, the northern entrance points to Stromness Bay. Named Hercules Bucht in the early 1900s by Norwegian whalers after Hercules, a whaling vessel that once sought shelter in the inlet in foul weather. Cruising here offers many delights: macaroni penguins colonies, light-mantled sooty albatrosses soaring overhead, a sparkling waterfall cascading onto a shingle beach, extensive kelp beds and impressive sea caves at the base of 300m high cliffs.

**Disembarkation Order: 1) Shackleton 2) Wild 3) Amundsen 4) Scott**

1830 Join the **Expedition Team** for a **Recap & Briefing** in the Main Lounge

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

After Dinner Standby for announcements regarding evening programming

Dear all,

Well that was the plan for this afternoon ……. However after a 2 hour trip north the wind had become very strong. We abandoned going to Hercules Bay and entered the larger Stromness Bay at 15:30. This bay is BIG and surrounded by mountains. There were 3 whaling stations around this bay in its heyday.

We got some lovely pictures in the sunshine. But the wind still gusted too strongly as we stopped 400 yards off shore from Stromness whaling station. Stromness was the end point for Shackleton's long journey. After he had sailed from Elephant Island to S. Georgia he landed on the west coast and then had a 36 hour hike over the high mountains and glaciers to find Stromness and safety.

It was not suitable for us to launch the zodiacs so we didn't stop there. We are also not allowed to enter the whaling station so no point in trying to land. Now we have left Stromness, are heading out to sea and going further north and west along the top of S. Georgia.

It’s now 5pm and we are at sea - I guess we will find out where we are going when we get there …..

Therefore there is time for reflection.

**There are three things I haven't mentioned recently - Icebergs, Sea-sickness and Whales.**

Two days ago I had photo'd some Icebergs lurking in the fog about 1 mile away. We had seen nothing more until this afternoon. Around the same place as before, the visibility was good, and we could see many double-decker bus sized bergs. There were also lots of small ice pieces in the sea. This ice had come from the glaciers coming down from Mt Paget - the 10,000 highest peak.

After 8 days afloat **we have got our sea legs.** We have not suffered from sea sickness even though at times the sea has been very lumpy - as it is this afternoon. But also the zodiac trips have been through big swells so we are now used to it. I guess the next issue will be land sickness - rocking about when we next stand on dry land.

**We haven't seen any whales.**

This eastern coast of S. Georgia had 6 big whaling stations during the peak whaling time - Grytviken was the first from 1904. Soon came Stromness and the others quickly after. It was very much like the gold rush with investors pouring money in and with young men coming down here to work and earn a quick buck - and they did earn it as conditions were tough.

Whaling stopped commercially in 1965. In those 60 years they had almost wiped out all the whales down here. Whilst the seal population was badly damaged by sealing in the 19th century, the seals appear to have recovered.

However the whales are scarce. It is said that, like elephants, whales have a long m emory and perhaps they know they have to avoid this part of the sea as it is very dangerous for them. Also whales take a much longer time to reproduce.

**Finally let me comment about Glaciers**. We have seen several in the last 3 days but many like at St Andrews Bay have melted in the last 20-30 years. They used to end in the sea but now, like this morning, they end a mile or so inland from the beach. Between the glacier and the sea are piles of moraine (big rocks and stones) carried down by the glacier - covered by penguins and seals. Now there is just a stream of white coloured melt water passing through the moraine and into the sea. However, we have just passed a big glacier that still has its feet in the sea - and so still calving some of the icebergs we are seeing.

That's all for now ..