



## **North Sea and Arctic Ocean – Aberdeen, Foula, Jan Mayen, Pack Ice, Spitsbergen, Birding**

Vlissingen – Aberdeen – Longyearbyen

25<sup>th</sup> May 2026 – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026

On board *m/v Ortelius*



*M/V Ortelius* was built in 1989 in Gdynia, Poland as a special-purpose research vessel for the Russian Academy of Science. She was originally named “Marina Svetaeva” after a well-known Russian poet. The vessel was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions in 2011, re-flagged in The Netherlands, and re-named Ortelius. She was extensively re-fitted in 2019 and complies with the latest SOLAS-regulations (Safety Of Life At Sea). *M/V Ortelius* is 91.25 m long, 17.2 m wide and has a maximum draft of 5.4 m. She has ice class UL1 (Equivalent to 1A), 10.5 knots average cruising speed and propulsion is 6 ZL 40/48 SULZER. Ortelius is named after the Dutch cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) who published the first modern world atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theatre of the World) in 1570. Her home port is Vlissingen.



## Captain Ernesto Barria

[Chile]

and his international crew of 53

Chief Officer:	<b>Don Buren</b>	[The Netherlands]
Second Officer:	<b>Sander Witsenburg</b>	[The Netherlands]
Third Officer:	<b>Ian Vicente</b>	[Philippines]
Chief Engineer:	<b>Alexander Bondarev</b>	[Latvia]
Second Engineer:	<b>Ionut Daraban</b>	[Romania]
Third Engineer:	<b>Twan Boeije</b>	[The Netherlands]
Fourth Engineer:	<b>Sanne Van Beers</b>	[The Netherlands]
Chief Electrical Engineer	<b>Stefan Kirov</b>	[Bulgaria]
Hotel Manager:	<b>Volodymir Cherdnychenko</b>	[Ukraine]
Assistant Hotel Manager:	<b>Charlotte Laumen</b>	[The Netherlands]
Head Chef:	<b>Heinz Hacker</b>	[Austria]
Sous Chef:	<b>Edward Nunag</b>	[Philippines]
Sous Chef	<b>Sergiy Sklyarov</b>	[Ukraine]
Bosun:	<b>Eniano Agarin</b>	[Philippines]
Bosun:	<b>Lauren Malatag</b>	[Philippines]
Bartender:	<b>Raquel Queri</b>	[Philippines]
Ship's doctor:	<b>Elmar Kleimann</b>	[Germany]
Expedition Leader:	<b>Ali Liddle</b>	[United Kingdom]
Assistant Expedition Leader:	<b>Claudio Ghiglione</b>	[Italy]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Allan White</b>	[Falkland Islands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Saskia van der Meij</b>	[The Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Jakub Malecki</b>	[Poland]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Bill Smith</b>	[Scotland]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Koen Hoekemeijer</b>	[The Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Alexander Romanovski</b>	[Russia]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Mark Whiffin</b>	[United Kingdom]

**WE WELCOME YOU ON BOARD!**

## Day 1 – Monday 25 May, Vlissingen, Embarkation Day

20:00 GPS Position: 51°36.6' N / 003°22.7' E

Wind: SE 4 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Clear • Air Temperature: +16.0°C

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The North is a kingdom of eternal ice, cold, and polar bears, and today our journey to this distant and mysterious land finally begins. Perhaps that is why the local weather decided to give us one last farewell gift — either kindly warming us up before the Arctic cold ahead, or trying to incinerate us out of sheer jealousy. The heat was unbearable. The only relief came from the air conditioning on the bus, so at least during the ride from the railway station to the Reimerswaal shipyard we were temporarily spared the risk of heatstroke.

The drive to the shipyard was short but memorable, because for the last couple of kilometers the bus passed endless colossal man-made metal structures, cranes, ships under construction, and enormous industrial buildings whose purpose we could only guess at.

And then, the checkpoint was behind us. The bus passed through the raised barrier, rolled onto the pier, and soon stopped beside a ship whose bow bore the name... “PLANCIUS.” Wait a second — where was our Ortelius? As it turned out, Ortelius was moored alongside Plancius in a second row, so we first had to board Plancius via the gangway and then cross another gangway to reach Ortelius. This is a fairly common practice: it saves space at the dock and also simplifies the use of various repair equipment on both vessels.



We stepped off the bus and, baking under the blazing sun, joined the queue for passport control. By boarding the ship we were technically leaving the Netherlands, so the presence of border officers was hardly surprising. After all, we never find such things unusual at airports. Meanwhile, members of the expedition team were taking care of our luggage, hauling suitcases and using a crane to transfer them aboard Ortelius.

At reception we received the keys to our cabins and went to settle in, making sure our luggage had also made it aboard rather than being left behind on the pier. Once satisfied that everything was in order, many of us grabbed our binoculars and cameras and began exploring the ship that would be our home for the next couple of weeks.

Some time later, around 5:00 p.m., a pleasant female voice came over the loudspeakers. It belonged, as we later learned, to our expedition leader Ali (Alison) Liddle. Ali informed us that everyone needed to gather in the observation lounge for a safety drill. Adventure is adventure, but safety comes first. We hurried to the observation lounge, where we were shown a short animated film, after which we were asked to return to our cabins and come back wearing our life jackets. So that is exactly what we did. A roll call followed, the alarm sounded, and we were escorted to our lifeboat stations. After thanking us for our participation, the crew dismissed us. We hurried back to stow our life jackets in the closet and replace them with cameras hanging around our necks, because now the most exciting part was about to begin!



Somewhere deep in the belly of Ortelius, the powerful engine roared to life. The sailors cast off the mooring lines, the winches began to turn, and Ortelius slowly started moving. We gathered on the open decks, holding our breath as we watched the pier gradually recede into the distance, along with Plancius still tied alongside it. Sailors, officers, and crew members stood on her decks too, smiling sadly and waving goodbye to us. Don't worry, friends — in a couple of weeks you'll also be racing northward through the waves.

We'll see each other there. Goodbye for now!

At first, Ortelius was assisted by a tugboat that carefully guided the stern of our ship, but once we entered a wider channel, the tug left us. Ortelius did not immediately head out into the open sea. Instead, she slowly turned a full 360 degrees. Many of us exchanged puzzled glances, but our guides explained that a very important procedure was taking place — the calibration of the navigation equipment — and for this the ship needed to complete a full counterclockwise turn. Well, for us it was simply another opportunity to admire the surroundings and marvel once again at the enormous and strange machines that surrounded us both on land and at sea. At last the calibration was complete, and our ship set course for the open ocean.



We returned for a while to the observation lounge to listen to a speech by our hotel manager Vova, who explained the peculiarities of life aboard the ship. Soon afterward it was finally time for dinner. Many of us had secretly been looking forward to that moment for quite some time, because all the excitement of the day had given us quite an appetite.

At first Ortelius sailed along the coastline, and a long chain of beaches stretched away along the starboard side. Gradually the shore drifted farther and farther away. The sun, already sinking toward the horizon, finally disappeared, and we found ourselves enveloped in the pleasant twilight of a summer evening. The lights of lighthouses and offshore platforms flickered to life, the sounds of the day faded away, and the first stars began to appear overhead.

The day had come to an end, but our adventure was only just beginning.



## Day 2 – Tuesday 26 May, At Sea Towards Aberdeen

12:00 GPS Position: 54°22.7'N / 001°06.5'E

Wind: NE 5 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Clear • Air Temperature: +15.0°C

After we left Vlissingen behind us, we woke up this morning to a completely flat North Sea, hardly any wind and abundant sunshine. During the night we hardly felt the ship moving so we all had gotten a proper night sleep. Some of us had headed out very early to enjoy the morning sun and the first sea birds of the voyage.

Today we would spend entirely at sea heading north to Aberdeen where we were planned to arrive the next morning. The temperature had dropped a bit compared to





yesterday and that made for perfect weather to enjoy the outside decks. Either to enjoy the sun and fresh sea breeze or to scout for wildlife.

In the morning a lecture was scheduled and it was Bill who invited us to listen to his presentation about Scotland. Being a proud Scotsman, Bill showed up wearing traditional attire including his kilt. His lecture was very informative and although many of us only had met Bill the day before, we already knew that Bill had a good sense of humor and was not afraid to

challenge us. That made the lecture both entertaining and informative.

After lunch many of us went outside again to enjoy the formidable weather and abundance of wild life. Occasionally Common or Bottlenose dolphins were spotted while Gannets, Black Guillemots and Northern Fulmars among others were flying around and past the ship.

Guide Mark is a true birder and he welcomed us in the lounge for his lecture about birds of the North Sea. Mark was really passionate and you could tell he knows all about them.

His lecture inspired many of us to have a quick coffee or tea before heading to the outside decks again for some more birding. The weather was still exceptional and we enjoyed every minute of it.



At 18:15 invited us to the bar for our first daily recap. During recap Ali shares with us some latest updates of the journey and the program for the day ahead. Then it's time for 1 or 2 guides to do short presentations about something we have seen during the day, but it can also be about the history of a place we have visited for example.

Then it was time for a delicious dinner. The galley team had outdone itself and we all enjoyed



the tasty dishes that were served to us.

After dinner we decided to digest our food outside while sitting on one of the benches out on deck or by looking through our well used binoculars a bit more.

Good night!

Day 3 – Wednesday 27 May, Aberdeen, Sands of Forvie, Bullers of Buchan, Footdee.

20:00 GPS Position: 57°21.2'N / 001°43.4'E

Wind: SE 4 • Sea: Rippled • Weather: Clear • Air Temperature: +11°C



Excited by the thought of landing in Scotland some of us woke up at 6am to experience the first sight of the coast, expecting to be first on deck. It was not to be, as the fore-deck was already crowded with eager 'birders' already awake and scanning the horizon in every direction. The sea was an exceptionally calm, a grey lead coloured mass, slowly undulating, dotted with rafts of chattering terns, fulmars, kittiwakes etc. A shout of

'Dolphins' from our ever vigilant

Expedition Leader 'Ali' as she spotted a small pod following the coast inshore, had all the cameras and binoculars swivelling in that direction. Ortelius motored steadily forward until at 1 mile from the harbour the pilot boarded and conned the vessel into the inner reaches to berth at 7.30 at 'Blakies Quay'. A Harbour Board piper appeared at 8 to provide stirring bagpipe music until the two coaches arrived at 8.30. Next we were cleared by immigration officials and we drove off on a tour of the city towards Newburgh and the Sands of Forvie Nature Reserve. Our Scottish guide Bill provided an informative on-board commentary during the journey. En-route we detoured down to the Trump golf course at Menie to give every one a taste of what a very exclusive golf course looks like.

Once we arrived, there was a briefing and safety meeting then everyone dispersed to walk along the Ythan river or into the maram grass covered extensive dunes. The area is noted for the seal population and it did not disappoint as numbers of common and grey seals were seen swimming close to the shore and hauled out on sandy beach on the far bank. Huge numbers of different species of birds were everywhere, eider ducks, assorted terns, fulmars, kittiwakes etc.

At 12.00 we returned to the coaches and drove the relatively short distance north to a complete change of scenery, the massive sandstone cliffs of the 'Bullers of Buchan'. Bill again briefed the group, placing a heavy emphasis on safety. We were told to stick to the paths and to keep well clear of the grass at the overhanging edge of the cliffs along the heavily indented coastline. It was an excellent afternoon as the sun shone and large numbers of birds were nesting on rocky ledges everywhere. The highlight for many was seeing puffins in the water, on rocky ledges and in the air.



We left the 'Bullers' at 2.30 and returned at 3.00 to wander around the delightful quirky granite built houses of the old fishing village of 'Fittie' [ Foot-Dee ] at the mouth of Aberdeen harbour.

By 4.15 we were back at Ortelius with everyone agreeing that it had been a superb day. The ship was now full of new faces as new passengers had arrived at 4.00. By 6.00 our deck crew cast off the moorings and Ortelius headed out turning to port to voyage north past Trump's famous golf course at Menie and the controversial windfarm development off the long stretch of sandy coastline running north from Aberdeen. Destination Foula!



A superb day as a memorable introduction to the Oceanwide Expeditions experience.

#### Day 4 – Thursday 28 May, Foula: Seabirds, Sea Cliffs, and the Journey North

12:00 GPS Position: 60°09.8'N / 002°04.8'E

Wind: SSE 6 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Cloudy • Air Temperature: +11.5°C

The day began under bright skies, with sunshine illuminating the North Atlantic as Ortelius continued its voyage toward the remote island of Foula. Although a steady wind brushed across the sea, producing white caps, conditions provided excellent opportunities for wildlife observation from the outer decks.

As the ship cruised northward, seabirds quickly became the stars of the morning. Northern Fulmars glided effortlessly alongside the vessel, making use of the strong air currents generated by the wind and waves. Northern Gannets regularly swept past the ship as well, their large wings and striking white plumage easy to distinguish against the dark sea. Atlantic Puffins, Common Guillemots also appeared in impressive numbers along with Razorbills, darting low over the water or gathering in loose flocks as the vessel approached Foula.

During the morning, the expedition team conducted the mandatory Zodiac safety briefing for guests. Those guests that joined the voyage in Aberdeen were also issued their Muck Boots, the essential footwear for wet landings in remote locations. The briefing helped prepare guests for the practical realities of expedition cruising in the North



Atlantic, where changing sea conditions can often alter plans at short notice.

By late morning, the ship arrived off Foula, one of the most isolated inhabited islands in the United Kingdom and part of the Shetland archipelago. Foula is renowned for its dramatic landscapes and towering sea cliffs, which support internationally important seabird colonies.

However, conditions on the island's southeastern side — the most exposed part of Foula — proved too challenging for safe operations. Swell and strong winds from the southeast prevented both landings and Zodiac cruising activities. Expedition travel depends heavily on weather and sea state, and safety remained the priority for both guests and crew.



Instead of landing, the captain repositioned the ship along Foula's northern and western coastlines for an extended scenic cruise beneath the island's spectacular cliffs. These towering formations are the second-highest sea cliffs in the United Kingdom after those of St Kilda, rising dramatically from the Atlantic Ocean and creating ideal nesting habitat for thousands of seabirds.

Large flocks of fulmars rested quietly on the sea offshore while Great Skuas patrolled the surrounding waters in search of food. Known for their aggressive behaviour and powerful flight, Great Skuas are formidable predators and scavengers within the North Atlantic ecosystem.

Along the cliff tops, hundreds of puffin burrows lined the grassy slopes. Puffins could be seen constantly arriving and departing, while dense clouds of seabirds circled overhead in an almost continuous motion. Guillemots and razorbills clustered tightly on narrow cliff ledges, taking advantage of every available nesting space.

Gannets frequently passed close to the ship carrying beaks full of nesting material, evidence of the busy breeding season underway across the region. Their streamlined flight and precise movements demonstrated the remarkable adaptations seabirds possess for life in harsh ocean environments.

For several hours, guests observed the immense bird colonies and towering geology of Foula from the comfort of the ship. An additional bonus sighting was a pair of Grey Seals hauled out on the rocks below the cliffs. Although the inability to land was disappointing for some, the sea-cliff cruise offered an unforgettable perspective on one of Britain's most important seabird habitats and highlighted the unpredictable nature of true expedition travel.

Eventually, the time came to leave Foula behind. The ship turned northward once again, setting course across the open ocean toward the remote volcanic island of Jan Mayen, where the next stage of the expedition awaited.

## Day 5 – Friday 29 May, At Sea Towards Jan Mayen

12:00 GPS Position: 63°53.4'N / 002°08.5'E

Wind: ENE 4 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Overcast • Air Temperature: +8.0°C

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Usual excellent breakfast. Koon delivered a totally stimulating photography lecture using superb images that had us all in envy of his sensitivity. It was extremely inspiring and for sure we were all going to make efforts to raise our technical skill and creativity as we voyaged north. This was followed after coffee by our forever smiling guide Saskia with a un-intentional two part lecture relating to clouds, their formation, appearance and names. This was most useful as we all obviously had with experience of seeing the varied shapes but most of us knew very few of the official names. The lecture was a brilliantly presented eye opener!



It was two part as early on, someone shouted orca on the loudspeaker system and the lecture was abandoned as everyone rushed off for cameras and binoculars to crowd the bow and portside rails to record these magnificent creatures. Our captain altered course of Ortelius to maximise the viewing experience. We were really lucky to observe them hunting at a

distance then obligingly very swimming close alongside. A small calf provided the highlight photographs for many, of what was a delightful first orca encounter.

The Cloud lecture was completed after lunch

There are times in life when an educationalist holds you spell-bound with a fascinating topic and thoroughly professional delivery. Next up in the afternoon was our 'University Professor' guide Jacob talking about water. A deluge of interesting facts flooded the room so clearly explained that it had the audience spell-bound.



Recap session started at 5.45 PM Ali

briefed us on weather, our intentions and current and future weather conditions. Then Saskia outlined the early problems of navigation. Delivered an account of the navigation error that resulted in the loss of 5 ships on the rocks of the Scilly Isles. She explained early techniques of using stars to fix position then the Government sponsored competition to solve the technical problems of fixing location at sea. This story would have inspired passengers to read about the development Harrison's Chronometer. Bill then followed with a 'Paintings of the Sea' ...the meaning of the sea in painting art lecture...he presented a Bruegel artwork 'The Flight of Icarus' and explained the meaning in detail.

As the evening progressed Ortelius began to pitch and roll slightly in the increasing swell. This had the effect of some going to bed early and a few requesting assistance from our doctor.

## Day 6 – Saturday 30 May, At Sea Towards Jan Mayen

11:00 GPS Position: 67°38.5'N / 005°35.6'E

Wind: E 4 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Cloudy • Air Temperature: +5°C

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After a very challenging day at sea with rough conditions, everyone was happy to be back outside enjoying themselves and looking for wildlife around the ship.

After breakfast, a lecture was scheduled, and Bill invited us to attend his presentation about Jan Mayen. He shared a wealth of information and knowledge about this fascinating destination, which we are due to reach tomorrow morning.

A little later, we spotted orcas on the horizon, and the ship changed course to give us a better view. We had an incredible encounter with several individuals before continuing our journey northward.

Throughout the day, we also observed several species of seabirds, and a couple of small birds landed on the outer decks for a brief rest.

Lunch was served in the dining room, and as always, it was an excellent meal.

After lunch, many of us headed back outside to enjoy the wonderful weather and the abundance of wildlife. In the afternoon, we encountered another large group of orcas. Mark gave a lecture about birds, and Koen presented one about whales. Meanwhile, Claudio conducted the first session of his workshop in the lounge with the first group of registered participants.



At 18:15, we were invited to the bar for our daily recap. During the recap, Ali shared the latest updates on our voyage and outlined the program for the following day. The guides then gave short presentations about some of the wildlife and experiences we had enjoyed

throughout the day.

It was then time for another delicious dinner. The galley team had once again outdone itself, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the excellent dishes that were served.

After dinner, many of us went back outside to digest our meal, either relaxing on the benches out on deck or continuing our wildlife observations with our well-used binoculars.

Good night!

## Day 7 – Sunday 31 May, Jan Mayen

14:00 GPS Position: 71°03.3'N / 008°29.9'E

Wind: E 4 • Sea: Rippled • Weather: Cloudy • Air Temperature: +2.9°C

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For the early risers this morning, the reward was a stunning view of Jan Mayen as *Ortelius* closed in on one of the remotest islands on Earth. The weather conditions looked extremely favorable! There was very little wind, only a slight swell, and a broken layer of medium cloud above which the sun was doing its best to break through. The mighty Beerenburg (Bear Mountain in Dutch) lay partly hidden before us, for the moment with its head and shoulders obscured by cloud. We were looking at the lower reaches of the most northerly above sea volcano in the World, and hoped that mother nature would give us a glimpse of its lofty summit at some point during the day.



Captain Ernesto brought *Ortelius* to a halt and dropped anchor in Kvalrossbukta (Walrus Bay) on the west side of the island. Towering dark cliffs of volcanic rocks provided a dramatic backdrop to the quiet bay, where an abundance of birds rested on the water. These were mostly Northern Fulmars. A Black Guillemot flew between the ship and shore as if to welcome us to this special place.

Beyond the beach a couple of buildings could be seen, one of which was a recreational hut named Puppebu. The main station was out of sight on the other side of the island, about 10km away. Here Norway maintains a small presence of joint military and meteorological personnel.

Just before 08:00 some Zodiacs were lowered and the expedition team headed for shore. As they sped across the quiet bay, we enjoyed our breakfast and eagerly awaited a report on conditions at the exposed beach. Very soon, excellent news was received on the ship. Conditions could not have been more perfect. With great excitement we climbed into our outdoor gear and made our way to the gangway. The Zodiacs whisked us the short distance to the landing site where Expedition Leader Ali welcomed us with a big smile of relief. At best, Jan Mayen gives a 50/50 chance of landing. But today, 100% success was ours!

Following a short briefing from Ali, we disembarked the Zodiacs and headed off to explore. There to greet us was Lieutenant Colonel Henning-Ove Sørslett, a Combat Engineer in the Norwegian Army. This extremely warm and friendly gentleman was the Station Commander on Jan Mayen. He was soon joined by two ladies from the station who opened up the back of their 4x4 and offered a small selection of Jan Mayen souvenirs. The station commander stayed around the landing site all morning, chatting with guests and answering questions. The flat area immediately adjacent to the landing site was open for free roaming, and soon guests were heading off in all directions. There were safety limits, as there was lots of evidence of falling boulders from the surrounding steep slopes. A maze of driftwood logs made walking in this area more interesting, and a point of interest was a memorial to seven Dutch whalers who died of scurvy during the winter of 1633-34.

A 4x4 track led up the slope behind the beach and away from Walrus Bay, which the station commander kindly allowed us to explore on foot. His only request was that we stay on the track. Half a kilometre up the track we came to a fantastic viewpoint that gave a commanding view over the bay where *Ortelius* was anchored. It all looked so peaceful, and we were blissfully unaware of how nasty the weather is at Jan Mayen much of the time. There was abundant bird life all around us, and for the birders this was something of a birding jewel. The guides led a

couple of groups to the foot of a dramatic rocky outcrop where a colony of Little Auks filled the air with their fabulous vocalisations. Meanwhile, occasional groups of Barnacle Geese flew overhead, and sightings of Snow Buntings added to the birding highlights.

A small group were keen to stretch their legs and have a good hike, so one of the guides gave us the option of taking a longer walk with him along the track in the direction of the station. There was no particular destination in mind, just the chosen time of 11:00 am as the point at which to turn around and head back to the landing. To say the landscape had a lunar-like feel to it is something of an



understatement. The dominant colour was grey, broken only by patches of greenery, the colour of life. The long hikers turned around approximately 4.5 km from the landing site, by which time the island's airfield was well within sight and less than a kilometre away from them. The station was still at least 5 km away and hidden from view. As the long hikers returned, they picked up a large number of walkers who had set off along the track to meet them.

The Zodiacs started shuttling guests back to the ship at 11:00, and just after 12:00 all hikers had returned to Walrus Bay. A few last-minute souvenirs were purchased, and then it was time to bid farewell to the station personnel who had provided such a warm and friendly welcome. Colonel Sørslett seemed genuinely sorry to see us go! As the last Zodiacs returned to the ship, the main engines were already fired up and the anchor was slowly being raised. Lunch was announced and there was an obvious buzz in the dining room as everyone exchanged stories and reflected on a remarkable visit to Jan Mayen. There was more to come! Soon, Ali's voice could be heard over the public address system, encouraging us to head for the outer decks once we had finished lunch. She informed us that Captain Ernesto was taking *Ortelius* along the coast past Beerenburg, and it looked like the cloud around the volcano was showing signs of breaking up.

That was all the encouragement needed. We quickly finished our lunch and dressed warmly before heading outside. The view was already spectacular as we sailed parallel with the dramatic coastline. Up ahead the lower slopes of Beerenburg glistened as the cloud-diffused sunlight reflected off the snow and ice. Slowly but surely, just as Ali predicted, the clouds parted to reveal the upper part of the mountain. It was a breath-taking sight which many of us will never forget. Glaciers tumbled down to the sea leaving the sides of the mountain heavily crevassed and extremely dangerous for anyone who chose to explore this sleeping giant.

It didn't look like a place that humans should ever dare to go! However, we had heard from the station commander that six of his guys were attempting to climb the volcano today. They had left the station at 4:00 am on an expedition that was expected to see them return around 20 hours later. We scoured the mountain for any sign of the group, and eventually they were spotted below the summit. This was quite an achievement for whoever first picked them out because they were just tiny specks on the side of the enormous mountain. They appeared to be heading down, and we all hoped that they had successfully reached the summit. What a view they must have had.



As we continued along the coast, the cloud completely cleared gifting us the most incredible views of spectacular Beerenburg with every bit of its 2,277m (7,470 ft) in full view. Multiple guides were heard saying that they had never seen the mountain so clearly, and some of them can count their visits to Jan Mayen in double figures. As we neared the north end of the island, Captain Ernesto turned *Ortelius* on to a northerly heading,

leaving Jan Mayen in our wake. Many of us lingered on the helideck, watching the island get smaller and smaller behind us. What an incredible day it had been! Jan Mayen had been extraordinarily kind to us, and we had got far more from our visit than we had dared to hope for. Ahead of us lay the east Greenland pack ice. What would we find there?

As Jan Mayen slowly faded away, *Ortelius* pushed on northwards. Several Bottle-nosed Whales put in a brief appearance ahead of the ship but were rather elusive. For many, it was a joy to simply be out on deck, soaking up the sunshine while our eyes drifted back and forth across the vast expanse of ocean. At 18:15 we gathered in the bar for Ali's daily briefing and a special edition recap. Special for two reasons! Firstly, there was a fantastic talk about the geology of Jan Mayen by guest speaker Andy, who left us all impressed with his knowledge, and extremely appreciative of the way in which he helped us understand such a complicated subject. Secondly, we were treated to a stunning six-minute video about Jan Mayen that included some breath-taking drone footage of the island. This included a sequence shot at the summit of Beerenburg. We were immensely grateful to Expedition Guide Bill for sharing this with us. No sooner was recap over, and the call to dinner was announced. And so ended a truly remarkable day!

## Day 8 – Monday 1 June – At Sea Towards the Pack Ice

12:00 GPS Position: 75°03.5' N / 007°18.6' E

Wind: SW 7 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Overcast • Air Temperature: +0.3°C

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We found ourselves, this first day of June, in between the incredible island of Jan Mayen, which we left yesterday, and the coast of Greenland. We are on our way north to reach the pack ice. We had such an amazing trip so far already, but getting into the ice will be a true highlight. Our expedition guide Jacub pointed that out during his great lecture about sea ice this morning. He explained to us how sea ice forms, at which different stages and shapes we might see it later today and how important it is to keep our planet cool. The summer sea ice will, unfortunately, not form forever and over time disappear completely. We therefore felt very privileged to be able to look forward to and experience it during this voyage.

At 11:15 we all gathered in the lounge on Deck 6 again, to join our expedition guide Koen for his lecture on polar bears. A very interesting story where he mixed general information on these bears with statistics and funny anecdotes and experiences. We were ready to go on deck and try to find them in the pack ice.

Before we knew it the restaurant on Deck 4 was opened again for another delicious and varied lunch prepared by the galley team.

Around 14:00 our expedition leader Ali announced over the speaker that the sea ice was in sight and invited us to join the team on the bridge or on the outer decks to enjoy the views. Exactly as Saskia told us earlier this week in her presentation about clouds, we saw the white glow of the ice reflecting off the low hanging clouds above. Ice blink is what that is called. Really cool to see it for real now and comparing it to the dark sky that was besides the ice and not having this reflecting effect.



When we were sailing north our dear home MV/Ortelius was rolling on the swell at sea. The minute we entered the sea ice it changed. There was still a gentle swell over the first hundred meters and then the ice absorbed the movement, and it became calm. The sound was just fantastic and how we were pushing the ice to the side was beautiful

to see. Seeing our ship nestling herself in amongst the loose patches of pancake ice at the edge of the pack. Although Jacob calls it rather pizza ice as the raised edges of the plates of ice round up like a pizza crust. Formed because they bump into each other while the ice is still not thick and solid. MV/Ortelius was slowly gliding through the ice with a speed of 2 knots per hour. When the ice slabs were not too thick, we would push it to the side easily and we could see how one piece of ice would be shoved under the other or pushing it out of the way. When we hit a bigger and thicker piece, we could feel the ship shiver when it hit the ice and from the bow you could see how it would crack open and make space for us to sail through. A spectacle we could and would watch all day. Visiting the ship, we saw the darker coloured Northern Fulmars, Brunnich's Guillemots, Black Guillemots, Little Alks, Glaucous Gulls, Kittiwakes and some of us spotted the first, beautifully white Ivory Gull. In the open spaces of water many times little groups of Harp seals popped their heads up. A beautiful sight.

We were all eager to try and find polar bears. From all over the ship the binoculars stared onto the white, wide landscape around us. Hoping to find that fluffy, mayonnaise coloured bear. To get warm some of us gathered in the bar to have a coffee and cake, but went outside again, not to miss anything of this unreal beauty that we saw. Some die-hard and keen birders did not leave the bow at all. We stayed out till dinner, which was a very special one and none of us wanted to miss out on. We could smell the preparations already.

The hotel team had put out tables and benches outside, on the helicopter deck, for us to enjoy a real Arctic barbecue and free drinks. Surrounded by ice we were enjoying our dinner. What an amazing ending from this first day in the ice. We sailed out from the ice at 22:00 to make some distance overnight, and to enter the ice again in the morning. On



this first day we weren't lucky in finding a bear. But we kept faith for tomorrow. Sleep well!

## Day 9 – Tuesday 2 June – Pack Ice

12:00 GPS Position: 76°22.7' N / 005°12.2' E

Wind: SSW 5 • Sea: Ice 7/10 • Weather: Overcast/Fog • Air Temperature: +1.0°C

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Our second day in the sea ice began with a sense of anticipation. Overnight, the expedition ship had continued northward outside the ice and around 07:00 we would enter it again. Many of us woke early, eager for another chance to spot the Arctic's most iconic resident—the polar bear. The weather was calm, with a light breeze and the visibility was not too bad, creating good conditions for wildlife watching.



After breakfast, passengers gathered on the outer decks and in the observation lounge, scanning the endless white horizon with binoculars. The expedition team reminded us to keep watch in all directions, as polar bears could appear unexpectedly on distant ice floes. Excitement remained high as the ship carefully navigated through the pack ice, occasionally slowing to investigate promising areas.

Throughout the morning, our naturalists searched diligently, studying every shape and shadow on the ice. Several times, hopeful whispers spread across the decks as someone thought they had spotted a bear in the distance. Each time, however, the mysterious object turned out to be an unusual ice formation or a patch of snow illuminated by the Arctic sun.

Although the polar bears remained elusive, the day still offered memorable wildlife encounters. Not long before lunch, a small group of harp seals was spotted resting on a flat section of sea ice. Their pale coats blended remarkably well with the surrounding landscape, making them difficult to see at first. As the ship approached at a respectful distance, a few of the seals lifted their heads to observe us before settling back down on the ice. Watching these perfectly adapted Arctic mammals in their natural habitat was a special experience.



Birdlife provided constant entertainment throughout the day. Numerous kittiwakes followed the ship, effortlessly gliding on the cold Arctic winds. Their graceful flight and distinctive calls accompanied us as we moved through the ice-covered waters. We also observed several northern fulmars, which appeared completely at home in the challenging conditions. They soared low over the sea and circled around the vessel with impressive agility.

One of the highlights of the day was the sighting of several ivory gulls. Their pure white plumage made them appear almost ghost-like against the backdrop of snow and ice. These beautiful birds are among the most sought-after species in the High Arctic, and many passengers were delighted to add them to their observation lists. The expedition guides provided fascinating information about their ecology and the challenges they face in a rapidly changing environment.

As the afternoon progressed, we continued our search for polar bears. The bridge and expedition staff remained vigilant, carefully examining every stretch of ice. Despite our collective efforts and optimism, no bears appeared. While there was some disappointment among the passengers, there was also an understanding that wildlife sightings can never be guaranteed.

As evening approached, the Arctic light cast a soft glow across the frozen seascape. Although we had not found the polar bears we hoped to see, the day had still been filled with remarkable scenery, fascinating wildlife, and the unique atmosphere of the sea ice. We ended the day grateful for the experience and hopeful that tomorrow might finally bring a glimpse of the Arctic's great predator.

## Day 10 – Wednesday 3 June – At Sea Towards Spitsbergen, Poolepynten

11:00 GPS Position: 77°54.7' N / 008°49.7' E

Wind: SSW 3 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Overcast • Air Temperature: +5.0°C

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We reached Svalbard, the final destination of our expedition, under a hazy sky with low clouds, though thankfully the weather remained dry throughout.

The day was packed with intellectual inspiration as we prepared for our final shoreside encounter. We began the morning by diving into Arctic history, joining Allan in the lounge for a fascinating account of the Fridtjof Nansen Arctic Drift Expedition.

Following that, Claudio led a thought-provoking session on climate change, focusing on the dramatic shifts we have witnessed throughout our journey in the polar regions.

During the lunchtime, we finally began to see the shores of Svalbard through mist.

In the afternoon, we were treated to a unique perspective on human history in the high north when Sasha, the former keeper of the abandoned Soviet coal mining town of Pyramiden, shared his personal stories about life in that haunting ghost town.

We were also honored to host guest speaker Peter Prokosch for his presentation, "Visions for the Arctic." Peter Prokosch is a renowned ecologist and conservationist who has dedicated his career to Arctic protection, having served in leadership roles for organizations like the WWF and GRID-Arendal to promote sustainable development and wildlife conservation in polar regions.

After an earlier dinner, we reached the highlight of our final day: a visit to Poolepynten on the island of Prins Karlsforland.

We split into small groups to head ashore, ensuring everyone had ample time to explore the beach and lagoon area. The walrus did not disappoint! Seeing these massive kings of the beach hauled out in their natural habitat was the perfect, serene ending to our expedition. Watching them rest on the shoreline and play in water was a powerful reminder of the fragile and magnificent wilderness we have been privileged to witness over the past several days.



Day 11 – Thursday 4 June – Alkhornet, Ymerbukta

12:00 GPS Position: 78°12.9' N / 013°51.6' E

Wind: Var 1 • Sea: Rippled • Weather: Overcast • Air Temperature: +4.8°C

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Gray skies, a light but chilly breeze, and the distant cries of seabirds—this was how our first full day on Spitsbergen began. Unfortunately, it was also destined to become the final day of our long adventure. Because of this, a faint sadness lingered in the air as we realized that our voyage was drawing to a close. “Everything that has a beginning has an end, Neo,” said the Oracle in *The Matrix*, and there was no arguing with that. Still, it was far too early to be sad, because a day full of adventures lay ahead of us. Forward!



Our morning landing was planned on a shore covered with lush, dense tundra vegetation, above which rose the pointed peak of Alkhornet—a towering vertical cliff favored by black-legged kittiwakes and Brünnich’s guillemots. For many thousands of years, these birds had diligently fertilized the broad shoreline beneath the cliff, creating a truly exemplary patch of tundra. Spitsbergen reindeer, delighted by

such an abundance of juicy grass, had in turn contributed their own share of fertilizer, so local plants had done—and continue to do—remarkably well.

After breakfast, we hurried back to our cabins to prepare for the landing, putting on our warm clothes and waterproof jackets and trousers. Cameras in backpacks, binoculars around our necks, life jackets over our outer layers. Let’s go!

At the appointed time, we gathered by the gangway and, in groups of ten, crossed to shore aboard Zodiacs. The guides were already waiting for us there, each with a rifle slung over their shoulder.

Once ashore, we split into three groups: those who wanted a proper workout for their legs (the long hikers), those who wanted both a hike and opportunities for photography (the medium hikers), and those who preferred a leisurely exploration of the tundra, examining plants and watching the reindeer grazing here and there across the landscape (the leisurely hikers). Each group set off under the guidance of its leaders.

The reindeer, of which there were quite a few, were completely absorbed in eating grass and paid us no attention whatsoever. Only when we came too close did they acknowledge our presence, lifting their heads and gazing at us with a mixture of weariness and curiosity, as if trying to figure out who we were and what we wanted.



Overhead, kittiwakes darted back and forth. Many carried beakfuls of grass or moss—the building materials needed to repair nests damaged by the long, harsh winter. Then again, perhaps some of them were newlyweds constructing nests from scratch. Brünnich’s guillemots, flapping their small wings furiously, flew far too fast to be properly observed. Yet the most delightful part of this avian spectacle was the constant, gentle chirping of snow buntings, the only songbirds found at these high latitudes. Hearing them was one thing; seeing them was quite another. That proved difficult. Every now and then, however, one of us would finally spot a tiny black-and-white bird no larger than a sparrow and cry out, “There it is! There it is!” while pointing excitedly in its direction. More often than not, though, the bird had already flitted away before the rest of us could get a look.

We climbed a hill to the very foot of the bird cliffs, where, in addition to breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape, another surprise awaited us. Moving across the slope in short bursts, pausing frequently, was a predator. A brown coat, a fluffy gray tail, and a curious limping

gait. It was the scourge of all the local birds—the Arctic fox. It was making its way uphill. Closer to the nesting sites there is always something to eat: an egg, a chick, or occasionally an inattentive adult bird. Holding our breath, we followed the fox through the lenses of our binoculars and clicked away with our cameras.



When we descended from the hill, we discovered that two of the three hours allotted for our walk had somehow slipped away unnoticed. It was time to head back toward the landing site. Crossing the tundra plain, we repeatedly stopped to admire the first flowers of the summer: purple saxifrage and tufted saxifrage.

Back at the landing site, most of us put on our life jackets and gradually began boarding the Zodiacs. Others, however, were doing precisely the opposite—taking off jackets and unbuttoning their shirts. The reason was that a polar plunge had been scheduled for the end of the landing, offering those willing the unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the icy waters of Isfjord. Unsurprisingly, the number of volunteers was not large, but there were still around fifteen brave souls. The guides had thoughtfully brought towels and tarpaulins ashore so there would be somewhere to leave clothes. It was cold enough just watching them! Yet according to the swimmers themselves, it was absolutely fantastic.

Back aboard *Ortelius*, we headed to lunch. Afterward, we had some free time to rest and prepare for the afternoon activity. Meanwhile, the ship repositioned itself to the neighboring bay of Ymerbukta.

Having assessed the situation, the expedition team decided that a Zodiac cruise would be a better option than a shore landing, as it would allow us to view the glacier more easily and observe birds at the same time.



At the appointed hour, we boarded the Zodiacs and set off toward the glacier. We could not reach the glacial front itself because a kilometer-wide expanse of fast ice separated us from it, but even so, the view was magnificent. Along the way, we spotted a harbor seal resting on a rock protruding from the water. We managed to approach closely enough to

take a few photographs. Here and there, both on the water and on the ice, we also saw large numbers of eiders—both common eiders and the more striking king eiders with their colorful bills. Unfortunately, whenever we approached, the ducks hurried into the air and flew farther away.

Around 5:00 p.m., we returned to the ship. A gathering had been scheduled in the observation lounge for 6:45 p.m. Ali and the captain each delivered a ceremonial speech accompanied by the clinking of champagne glasses, and Koen presented a slideshow that he had been working on throughout all twelve days of our voyage, ever since Vlissingen.

Dinner followed shortly afterward—our final dinner aboard Ortelius—and then it was time to return our Muck Boots.

Remarkably, the surprises were not yet over. It turned out that the ship had become surrounded by a fairly large pod of beluga whales. These extraordinary creatures were simply passing through the fjord on their way elsewhere. We poured out onto the open decks and watched them in amazement. In my opinion, there could hardly have been a more fitting or more majestic finale to our expedition.

Tomorrow—we go home.

## Day 12 – Friday 5 June – Longyearbyen, Disembarkation

08:00 GPS Position: 78°22.3' N / 015°64.7' E

Wind: SE 2 • Sea: Rippled • Weather: Clear • Air Temperature: +5.0°C

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The sun shone in the sky throughout the entire night. Of course, we all studied geography and astronomy at school, and we all know perfectly well what the phenomenon of the polar day is, but still—damn, it is simply astonishing! To see with your own eyes how, at four o'clock in the morning, the snowy mountain peaks sparkle and blaze with an almost unbearable brightness under the sunlight falling on them is simply beyond words. To step out onto the deck at four in the morning and reach for your sunglasses—that is just surreal! And yet, this was reality—a beautiful Arctic reality.

A completely different kind of reality arrived with the first sounds of the wake-up call. The moment of farewell had come. We placed our heavy suitcases in the corridor and went for breakfast. While we were enjoying our final meal aboard Ortelius, the expedition team moved all our luggage onto the pier.

At the appointed hour, shortly after breakfast, buses arrived and opened their doors for boarding. All members of the expedition team stood by the gangway to see us off. It was sad, but at the same time we felt a sense of closure—a feeling of a journey completed to the very end. And if at some point we ever feel like stepping back on board and setting off again into wind, waves, and adventure, then we can always do so.

So, the adventure continues!

**Total distance sailed on our voyage: 1729.4 nautical miles**

**Most northern point sailed: 78°27.010 N, 011°52.600 E**

On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Ernesto Barria, Expedition Leader Ali Liddle, Hotel Manager Volodymir Cherdnychenko and all the crew and staff of *M/V Ortelius*, it has been a pleasure and a privilege travelling with you.

## Your Oceanwide Expeditions Team



Right to left: Sasha, Jakub, Saskja, Ali, Koen, BILL, Mark, Claudio, Allan, Elmar



**North Atlantic Expedition**  
onboard *m/v Ortelius*  
25<sup>th</sup> May – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026











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# Claudio Ghiglione – Asst. Exp. Leader

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Claudio was born in Italy in 1983. He is a marine ecologist specialised in polar regions, expedition guide and nature photographer.

Interested in science and nature since he was very young, he graduated first in *Marine Environmental Sciences* (BA) and then in *Marine Science* (MA). In March 2017 he obtained a *PhD in Earth, Environmental and Polar Sciences* run in cooperation with the Italian National Antarctic Museum (Italy) and the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge (UK).

For several years he worked as a polar researcher focusing his work mainly on the South Pole (Antarctica); his objective is to analyse and evaluate information used for ecological modelling and possible future scenarios following global warming. During his academic career, he actively takes part in some scientific expeditions both in Arctic and in Antarctica in cooperation with Norway and England.

His passion for travel, mainly to cold and often inhospitable places, and his career as a photographer led him to travel a lot, creating and managing – often in complete autonomy – itineraries and logistics. In 2017 – thanks to his professional experience, the skills acquired over the time and the need to spend more time on the field – he starts working full time as a guide Oceanwide.

Specialised in nature, scientific and travel photography, Claudio uses his photos as a means of telling stories to draw attention mainly to his main subjects, namely animals, nature and environment. In the 2019 he published his first book ‘Polar Lights’ with whom he shares the passion for nature photography.

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# Allan White - Expedition Guide

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Allan was born and raised in the Falkland Islands. He's a fifth generation Islander, and a descendant of one of the original British colonists in 1840. His higher education was completed in England, after which he embarked on a military career.

He joined the British Army aged 17. After serving in West Germany for two years during the Cold War period, he completed deployments in Northern Ireland, Cyprus as a United Nations peace-keeper, and with British Forces South Atlantic Islands. He left the Army to settle back in the Falklands.

While working as a Port Agent, Allan worked with the late Lars-Eric Lindblad, the inspirational pioneer of the small-ship expedition cruising concept. He encouraged Allan to become a Zodiac driver and go to sea for a year. Thirty years later, he's still at it. His voyages have taken him all over the world, with particular focus on the Polar regions. His travel experience ranges from 90° North to 78° South.

In the Falklands, Allan and his wife owned and operated their own tourist lodge for over a decade. More recently they managed a privately owned island, where they were the sole residents for almost 5 years, with thousands of albatrosses, penguins and seals for neighbours.

Allan is an experienced guide and Zodiac driver, with a keen interest in natural history and heroic age polar exploration. He lives in the Falklands capital Stanley, with his wife Jacqui.

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## Saskia van der Meij – Exp. guide

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Saskia is an adventurous girl born in The Netherlands. With a huge national park in her backyard, she felt at a young age how great it is to be active in & part of nature.

Saskia has a background in tourism and hospitality. For almost twenty years she was a product manager for a nature-oriented tour operator. She travelled to develop interesting products in Alaska, Canada, Argentina, Chili, Southern Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

In 2019 she worked for three months in Namibia as an assistant manager in two different remote private game lodge. Two fantastic years followed while spending her time in North Norway, Spitsbergen and the Baltic Sea as a hotel manager on a three mast Barque (Tallship).

But her heart told her to go guiding. She spent almost every season in Spitsbergen from mysterious Blue February until the colourful sunsets in October. Here, she started guiding as part of a two-man expedition team on a small sailing ship. Since 2022 she guides for Oceanwide Expedition in both the Arctic and Antarctic. Saskia loves the vast wilderness of Antarctica, with its fifty shades of white, which is home to her for three to four months every season. As a camping guide, on specific trips, she can't wait to take guests out for a night in the snow on this incredible seventh continent.

She is passionate about nature in general and has a wide interest and understanding, from animals to landscapes and ice. But she developed a deeper love for the fascinating polar history and whales.

Hospitality lies in her core, and her ongoing 'sunshine' is what guests remember Saskia by. She welcomes you on board and likes to share her knowledge and enthusiasm for these amazing destinations.

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# Jakub Malecki - Expedition Guide

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Jakub, born in Poland in 1985, is a university professor in glaciology. He dreamed of becoming an astronaut as a child. His focus later shifted toward astronomy, and he eventually earned a Master's degree and a PhD in Earth Sciences, becoming a glaciologist. As he puts it, researching remote, glacier-covered regions is almost like landing on another planet, making his childhood dream partly come true.

Since 2007, Jakub has been studying glaciers across the world, either directly in the field or remotely using satellite and aerial imagery. His

primary research interest is how glaciers respond to climate change in diverse environmental settings. He carries out most of his glaciological work on Svalbard, an Arctic archipelago located midway between Norway and the North Pole, where he fell in love with ice. Since then, Jakub joins expeditions to remote regions on an annual basis.

Jakub considers public education by the science community to be at least as important as delivering new scientific knowledge. He is an avid glaciology communicator, a published author, and a frequent guest on Polish media outlets and at science festivals, where he comments on polar and mountain affairs. Apart from glaciology, Jakub is a huge enthusiast of planetary sciences and space exploration and tries to play the ukulele in his free time.

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# Bill Smith - Expedition Guide

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“Super Bill” as described by his colleagues and clients, is a fun-loving outdoor pursuits enthusiast, cartoonist and former Head of Art and Design Education at Ellon Academy Aberdeenshire.

Bill joined Oceanwide Expeditions as a guide when Plancius was built and over the last few years has become addicted to the Polar Regions.

He has 58 years’ experience of Art and Design Education and Design for Industry. Plus 58 years leading and instructing a range of outdoor pursuits.

Bill delights in producing humorous cartoon logs of each trip and operates as an Artist / Designer / Illustrator / Cartoonist

Aside from his artistic commitments Bill is qualified instructor in a range of Royal Yachting Association disciplines including sailing, windsurfing and powerboating. He is also a British Canoe Union Open Canoe Instructor and British Caving Association Local Cave leader. He is a safety expert in these fields.

During the winter at home Bill is a National Patroller for the British Association of Ski Patrollers and in addition is a member of Member of the Federation Internationale de Patrolles De Ski.

As Bill lives in the North-west of Scotland he is President of Lochinver Highland Games Committee and former Chieftain Assynt Highland Games.

Bill is an Honorary Member Assynt Crofters Trust and recently awarded Honorary Lifetime Guardian of Island of South Georgia.

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# Koen Hoekemeijer – Exp. Guide

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Koen Hoekemeijer was born in 1974 in The Netherlands. When it comes to nature and wildlife Koen was quite a late bloomer as he had always been more into nightlife and sunny beaches. But that all changed when he discovered his passion for wildlife and photography in 2009 in Costa Rica. It was during this trip that Koen saw his first humpback whales and he fell in love with them instantly. Not only did it make him eager to see more and different types of whales in locations all over the world, but he also wanted to learn to take better photos of these amazing creatures. And with the love for whales

and photography, came a broader passion for all sorts of wildlife.

Since that memorable vacation in 2009, Koen has been travelling the planet to see and photograph the world's most beautiful places. Usually from boats, jeeps or simply face down in the mud, but since 2016 also underwater. Snorkeling in the presence of whales and orcas is bringing Koen pure happiness.

Among his favourite animals are whales, orcas, penguins, tigers and jaguars. But in between safaris, he also likes to do street photography and capture life and portraits of people all over the world.

Koen believes that travelling does not only enrich your life, it also makes you more humble, more appreciative and it provides new levels of perspective and understanding. Koen has won the prestigious WWF Frans Lanting Photo contest, and in 2020 he won the Ellen Fitzgibbon Memorial Photography competition. It's Koen's dream to one day have a Vizsla dog and own a small cabin somewhere in northern Norway surrounded by snow and trees ;).

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# Alexander Romanovskiy – Exp. Guide

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Alexander Romanovskiy comes from Saint-Petersburg, the Northern capital of Russia. He was born in 1981. After having graduated from the boarding school Alexander entered Saint-Petersburg State University, where he spent 5 years studying physical geography, ecology, regional geography and international tourism. Afterwards he was working on his PhD thesis in Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, doing geocological researches.

In the year of 2011 however, Alexander decided to pause his scientific career and start doing something completely

different, which means working in tourism and traveling the world. He spent 2 seasons working as a trekking guide in Fann mountains (Tajikistan), 1 season on Novolazarevskaya Antarctic scientific station (Queen Maud Land, Antarctica) working as a member of a guesthouse crew.

Since February of 2012 most part of the year he spends on Svalbard. For five seasons in a row Alexander has been living and working as a guide in a ghost town of Pyramiden. In 2016 a new page in Alexander's guiding career was opened: he started working as a naturalist guide on cruise ships in polar regions of the world – Svalbard and Antarctica.

3 to 4 months a year Alexander dedicates to his main passion – traveling the world. No public transport, no hotels, only hitch-hiking and staying overnight with locals or sleeping in a tent. This way he has already visited almost all Soviet republics, Middle East (Iran, Turkey), Asia (China), South America (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay), and it is hopefully far not the end! The world is big, friendly and interesting to explore!

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# Mark Whiffin - Expedition Guide

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Mark holds a Master's Degree in Conservation Biology and is an ornithologist and birder with extensive field experience. His passion for birds and travelling started from a very young age in East Sussex, England and expanded from there.

After finishing studying at university, he participated in, and led numerous expeditions and scientific research projects to remote areas of the world in search of birds with a particular emphasis on threatened and endemic species.

Mark first visited Antarctica in 2018 employed by the British Antarctic Survey, and subsequently spent five years living and working on Bird Island, South Georgia as a Zoological Field Assistant working with the penguins and petrels. He developed a deep love for the Southern Ocean, its scenery and the birds that call it home, "seeing the first Cape Petrels on any trip always gives a feeling of arriving home".

In his free time Mark enjoys trekking, running or cycling. He is also a keen photographer and videographer who enjoys documenting and sharing his passion for birds, travel and wild places, his images have been used various NGOs, employers, newspapers and online. He looks forward to sharing your expedition with you.

**WELCOME ABOARD!**

*Luggage will be delivered to your cabin. Please make check to make sure you have received all your luggage. If you have any extra luggage in your cabin – please notify a crew member.*

**\*\* Tea and coffee are always available in the lounge on deck 6 \*\***

±1700      **Welcome & safety briefing** - Please join us in the **lounge (deck 6)** for a **mandatory** safety briefing and lifeboat drill. All passengers must attend. Thank you.

**Lifeboat Drill**

All guests please collect your orange lifejackets from your cabin and proceed to the passenger MUSTER STATION in the **lounge (deck 6)**.

1900      **Hotel Manager** Please join your hotel manager Volodymyr in **the lounge (deck 6)** for an introduction to our ship Ortelius.

1930      **Buffet Dinner** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4)

*We will sail into open sea this evening and the ship may move – please secure your belongings and be careful when moving around the ship. Take your seasickness medication before we head out into open sea- the doctor will be available in the lounge after dinner to assist.*

- 0745      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0800      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 0915      **Introduction to the trip.** Please join your Expedition Leader, Ali for an introduction to the voyage to Svalbard. This will also be a chance to meet with the rest of the Expedition Team. This will be in the Lounge on deck 6.  
After this we will issue you with your rubber boots. Please wait for announcements. This will be forward on Deck 3.
- 1100      **A Taste of Scotland.** Please join Bill in the lounge for an introduction to Scotland – some history, geology, lifestyle and the answers to some frequently asked questions.
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).  
  
After lunch, please join staff out on deck for bird watching. Keep a look out for marine mammals.
- 1500      **Birds of the North Sea.** Please join Mark in the Lounge for a presentation about the seabirds we have seen and might see crossing the North Sea.
- 1815      **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our first daily recap and a briefing for our visit to Aberdeen.
- 1900      **Dinner** is served in the **dining room** (deck 4) – *Tonight's dinner will be plated – please make your way to the dining room promptly.*

*Please walk slowly on the ship, never rush. Keep one hand for yourself and at least one hand for the ship. Shut all doors gently but firmly and keep fingers away from door frames.*

We will collect the pilot at 0630. Enjoy the navigation into Aberdeen and keep a look out for dolphins on the way

0645 **Wake up call** - Good Morning!

0700 **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4). Don't forget to prepare your packed lunch during breakfast.

~0830 **Day Excursion.** Please be ready to board the bus for your trip to Sands of Forvie and Bullers of Buchan. Please listen for announcements. Make sure you have some water, a waterproof jacket, sunscreen and some money. Enjoy your day!

**On returning to the ship please enjoy a tea, coffee, cold drink in the Lounge before 1700 when we will require the space for our embarking guests. Many thanks.**

**For embarking guests**

1700 **Welcome & safety briefing** for our new guests- Please join us in the **lounge (deck 6)** for a **mandatory** safety briefing and lifeboat drill.

**Lifeboat Drill**

Please collect your orange lifejackets from your cabin and proceed to the passenger **MUSTER STATION** in the **lounge (deck 6)**.

1845 **Captain's Cocktails.** Please join us in **the lounge** (deck 6) for an introduction to our ship Ortelius, a chance to meet with your Captain and to learn more about the voyage ahead. All guests are welcome!

1930 **Buffet Dinner** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4)

*Please walk slowly on the ship, never rush. Keep one hand for yourself and at least one hand for the ship. Shut all doors gently but firmly and keep fingers away from door frames.*

- 0745      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0800      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 0915      **Zodiac briefing.** This is a **mandatory briefing** that all guests must attend to learn about our zodiac operations on board Ortelius. This will be in the Lounge on deck 6. This will be followed by a briefing about our afternoon on Foula.
- Boots for Aberdeen arrivals.** Please wait for announcements. This will be forward on Deck 3.
- Enjoy the navigation towards Foula**
- 1200      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- PM         **Foula.** We hope to go ashore where we will meet with the local Ranger, Sheila and will have the opportunity to take a guided walk towards the south of the island where we hope to see skuas, puffins and other seabirds. Please stay with the staff and local rangers.  
If you would prefer to explore independently you may do so but please stay in the region of the settlement and stay on the roads.  
Tea and coffee will be available all afternoon in the Community Hall and here you can buy souvenirs – cash only £, Euro and \$. You can post cards from here. Toilets are available at the Hall and at the airstrip further to the south.  
Please make sure you have waterproof clothing on, a backpack, water, sunscreen and some money.
- 1900      **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and briefing.
- 1930      **Dinner Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4)

*Please walk slowly on the ship, never rush. Keep one hand for yourself and at least one hand for the ship. Shut all doors gently but firmly and keep fingers away from door frames.*

- 0745      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0800      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 0930      **Wildlife photography.** If you would like to learn more about photography and maybe learn how to improve your images, please join Koen in the Lounge.
- 1115      **Special Clouds.** We don't often look closely at the clouds above us, but some can be quite spectacular. If you would like to learn more about clouds, then please join Saskia in the Lounge.
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 1500      **Properties of Water.** As we sail northwards the sea will change in terms of temperature and currents. Jakub will explain more about the properties of water.
- 1630      **Making videos** – Workshop. Claudio will hold a small group workshop in the Lounge
- 1815      **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and a briefing.
- 1900      **Dinner** is served in the **dining room** (deck 4) – *Tonight's dinner will be plated – please make your way to the dining room promptly.*

*Please walk slowly on the ship, never rush. Keep one hand for yourself and at least one hand for the ship. Shut all doors gently but firmly and keep fingers away from door frames.*

- 0745      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0800      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 0930      **Introduction to Jan Mayen.** We're heading towards the island of Jan Mayen so if you would like to learn more about this remote island in the Arctic Ocean then please join Bill in the Lounge.
- 1115      **Arctic Birds.** As we sail further north the bird species we see begins to change. To learn more about the birds of the Arctic please join Mark in the Lounge.
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 1500      **Whales of the North Atlantic.** We're hoping to see some cetaceans on our voyage, whales and dolphins, so to learn more about the species we might see please join Koen in the Lounge.
- 1630      **Making videos** – Workshop. Claudio will hold a small group workshop in the Lounge. Check the list at Reception to see if you are in today's group.
- 1630      **Guest speaker** Peter Prokosch will be in the lecture room on deck 3 to give a presentation entitled "The Secrets of the East Atlantic Flyway." All guests are welcome to attend.
- 1815      **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and a briefing.
- 1900      **Dinner** is served in the **dining room** (deck 4) – *Tonight's dinner will be plated – please make your way to the dining room promptly.*

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In the early morning, we will be approaching Jan Mayen. Enjoy the views as we approach.

0645 **Wake up call** - Good Morning!

0700 **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).

TBA **Jan Mayen.** We hope to go ashore at a bay called Kvalrossbukta where we will meet with the local personnel. We will have the opportunity explore the beach area where there is beautiful driftwood on shore and views of the bird cliffs. We hope to be able to take a guided walk up the road to a viewpoint over to the other side of the island. Please stay with the guides and stay on the road unless permitted by the local personnel and guides.

A small selection of souvenirs will be available by the cabin on shore –

T-shirts - 300kr

Postcards - 30kr

Tote bag - 200kr

Wool hat – 500 kr

For payment the staff will make a note of your purchase and it will be added to your ship account.

Please make sure you have waterproof clothing on, a backpack, water, and sunscreen.

1300 **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).

During the afternoon we will sail along the coast of Jan Mayen. If visibility is good, we will get incredible views of Beerenburg and the glaciers.

1815 **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and briefing.

1900 **Dinner** is served in the **dining room** (deck 4) – *Tonight's dinner will be plated – please make your way to the dining room promptly.*

We hope to be starting to reach the edge of the Greenland ice sometime after lunch so today's programme will depend on our arrival at the ice edge and what we find. If the ice is good then all presentations will be postponed!

- 0745      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0800      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 0930      **Ice.** Jakub already gave a presentation about water and now, as we sail north, he will give a presentation about ice. Please join him in the Lounge.
- 1115      **Polar bears.** We are all hoping to see some polar bears as we sail north along the Greenland ice and reach Svalbard so if you would like to learn more about these incredible animals then please join Koen in the Lounge.
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 1500      **In Introduction to Svalbard.** Sasha spent 5 years living and working on Svalbard so if you would like to learn more about this remote archipelago then please join him in the Lounge.
- 1630      **Making videos** – Workshop. Claudio will hold a small group workshop in the Lounge. Check the list at Reception to see if you are in today's group.
- 1815      **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and a briefing.
- 1900      **Special Arctic Dinner** is served on Deck 6 on the heli deck. Dress warmly and join us for our BBQ!

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We hope to spend most of the day exploring the edge of the Greenland ice. If conditions are good, then all presentations will be postponed.

- 0745      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0800      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 0930      **An Introduction to Svalbard.** Sasha spent 5 years living and working on Svalbard so if you would like to learn more about this remote archipelago then please join him in the Lounge.
- 1115      **Seals.** We hope to see some seals during our voyage as well as some walrus. If you would like to learn more about the Arctic pinnipeds then please join Ali in the Lounge.
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 1500      **Whaling and sealing.** In the past the only visitors to the Arctic were the whalers and sealers hoping to make their fortune from the natural resources found in the north. These were different times of course. Please join Bill in the Lounge to hear more about the industry and the lives of the men who came here.
- 1630      **Making videos** – Workshop. Claudio will hold a small group workshop in the Lounge. Check the list at Reception to see if you are in today's group.
- 1815      **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and a briefing.
- 1900      **Dinner** is served in the **dining room** (deck 4) – *Tonight's dinner will be plated – please make your way to the dining room promptly.*

- 0745      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0800      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 0930      **Fridtjof Nansen – Arctic Drift Expedition.** Nansen sailed the Fram up into the pack ice to find out about the drift of the pack ice between 1893 and 1896. Please join Allan in the lounge to hear of his expedition.
- 1115      **Climate Change.** We are all aware of the subject of climate change, especially in the polar regions. Join Claudio in the Lounge to hear more about this and how it is changing our planet.
- 1200      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 1500      **The Ghost Town of Pyramiden.** Sasha was the manager of the abandoned coal mining town of Pyramiden on Svalbard. If you would like to hear his stories then please join him in the Lounge.
- 1630      **Guest Speaker Peter Prokosch** will give a presentation in the lecture room entitled “Visions for the Arctic”. All guests are welcome to attend.
- 1800      **Buffet Dinner** is available in the **dining room** (deck 4)
- 1900      **Poolepyntyn.** We hope to go ashore at Poolepynten to see the walrus that often haul out on the beach. We need to do this in small groups. You will all have the same amount of time on shore and will have a chance to explore the beach and lagoon area.
- 1900      **Group 1 to the gangway to go ashore.**
- 1930      **Group 2 to the gangway to go ashore.**
- 2000      **Group 3 to the gangway to go ashore.**

- 0645      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0700      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- ~0815      **Alkhornet.** This morning we hope to go ashore at Alkhornet where we will explore the area in our hiking groups. There is a huge cliff where over 60,000 kittiwakes nest along with Brünnich's guillemots. It is often a good place to see reindeer feeding on the grassy slopes and we sometime see Arctic foxes amongst the rocks below the cliffs.  
At the end of the landing we will offer you the chance to take a Polar Plunge – a swim in the Arctic waters! We'll bring the towels, you bring the insanity!  
**Long hikers** please come to the gangway first.
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- TBA      **Ymerbukta.** This is a beautiful fjord with a large glacier at the head of the fjord. The conditions we find there will dictate what we do during the afternoon so please listen for announcements. If there is still fast ice in the bay we may take you out on a zodiac cruise along the ice edge as it is sometimes a good place to see King eider but otherwise, we will take you ashore and to walk towards the glacier face.
- 1845      **Captain's Cocktails.** Please join us in the Lounge for a farewell drink with Captain Barria and the expedition team. We will also explain plans for disembarkation in Longyearbyen and look back on our voyage.
- 1930      **Farewell Dinner** is served in the **dining room** (deck 4)

- 0715      **Wake up call** - Good Morning! Please place your large check in luggage outside your cabin before you go to breakfast.
- 0730      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 1            All guests on Flight **SK4493 (11:20)** and **SK4425 (12:35)** will take a bus from the ship to the airport. **BLUE TAG**
- 2            All guests on the later flight **DY391 (14:05)** will take a bus to Longyearbyen Butikken and must meet the bus again at the drop off place at **1145** to go to the airport. **ORANGE TAG**
- 3            All guests staying in Longyearbyen for additional days and guests who are staying for the next voyage on Ortelius and wish to go to town take the bus to Longyearbyen Butikken. Make your own way to your hotel from here. **RED TAG**

All guests joining for the next voyage on Ortelius make your own way to the port of Bykkaia at 1600 for a bus back to the ship.

**You are not permitted to walk between the two piers.**

**Ortelius is at the Coal Pier**

**TAXI**

Longyearbyen Taxi AS      +47 79021375

Svalbard Bus and taxi      +47 79021305

***From the Captain, all the crew and the Expedition Team on board the MV Ortelius, we wish you safe onward travel, and thank you for sharing this incredible voyage with us. We look forward to sailing with you again in the future.***