

A Voyage to Antarctica

22–30 December, 2001

Akademik Ioffe

This specially designed scientific research vessel was built in Finland in 1989 for the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Oceanology. The ship was named after Akademik Abraham Ioffe, a nuclear physicist with the Russian Academy of Sciences, who went on to head a research institute in St Petersburg. The Akademik Ioffe was specifically designed and built to transmit and receive long distance submarine acoustics, and is capable of “silent ship” operation to assist acoustic research. The Akademik Ioffe often performs research in tandem with an identical sister ship, the Akademik Sergey Vavilov. The Akademik Ioffe is now owned and run by the P.P. Shirshov Institute of Oceanology, which is the primary oceanographic research institution in Russia.

Port of Registry:	<i>Kaliningrad, Russia</i>
Built:	<i>1989 in Rauma, Finland</i>
Length (LOA):	<i>117.04 m</i>
Breadth:	<i>18.28 m</i>
Draft:	<i>6.09 m</i>
Gross Registered Tonnage:	<i>6,450</i>
Engines:	<i>5,000 kW diesel, twin engine, twin propeller, and 600 kW bow and stern thrusters</i>
Ice Class:	<i>KM*L1 (1) A2, Canadian Type B</i>

Akademik Ioffe Crew List

Name	Rank
Poskonny Gennadiy	<i>Captain</i>
Mikhail	<i>Chief Mate</i>
Aleksey	<i>Second Mate</i>
Aleksey	<i>Third Mate & Navigator</i>
Yevgeniy	<i>Fourth Mate</i>
Oleg	<i>Passenger Mate</i>
Pavel	<i>Boatswain</i>

Peregrine Staff Onboard the Akademik Ioffe

Peregrine Expedition Staff

Bill Davis *Expedition Leader*
Scott MacPhail *Hotel Manager/Assistant Expedition Leader*
Adrian Trus *Bartender*
Taka Goto *Japanese program coordinator*
Katie Weeks *Chef*
Daniel Brenton *Sous Chef*

Antarctic Specialists (and recorders of this log)

Lynn Woodworth
David McGonigal

Antarctic Specialists

Robert Clancy
Thomas Bauer
Sean Stephen

Consulting Doctor

Lorne Greenspan

Saturday, December 22, 2001

USHUAIA

54°48'S 68°19W

After a day that became warm and sunny that many of us spent buying last minute things in town we boarded our ship, the Akademik Ioffe, in the afternoon and were shown to our cabins. After meeting the staff and being briefed on important shipboard information and safety issues we waited until a container ship behind us departed then went out on deck as we 'threw the lines' at 7.30 p.m. and sailed away from Ushuaia (most southerly "city" in the world). As we cast off, a South America sea lion could be seen frolicking by the ship while we were still at the dock - it was a good omen. Shortly thereafter, everybody participated in a mandatory emergency drill and observed the procedure for launching a lifeboat. We passed Puerto Williams, Chile (most southerly "town" in the world) on our starboard just after supper. Many of us were out on deck in the late fading light to see black-browed albatross on the water around the ship and islands crammed with blue-eyed shags and a beach packed with Magellanic penguins. Our pilot left the Ioffe at the end of the Beagle Channel and we began to experience rolls of the ship as we crossed into the open water of the Drake Passage.

Sunday, December 23, 2001

Day/date/time: 23/12/01 at 0700

Lat/long: 56°15'S 65°24'W

sunrise/sunset: 0340/2255

Location: At sea, sailing towards Antarctica

Barometer: 998 MB

Wind speed/direction: 35 knots @ 290°

Air temp: 4°C

Sea temp: 5°C

*"For sheer downright misery, give me a hurricane, not too warm, the yard
of a sailing ship, a wet sail and a bout of sea sickness"*
Apsley Cherry Garrard

A few of us stayed up late last night to watch the pilot disembark. The night was calm, but in the morning as we entered the Drake Passage we encountered a fair swell from the west and a few were feeling seasick. After breakfast, Lynn spoke on some of the sea birds and penguins we hope to find over the next week and that was followed by Sean on the whole range of Antarctica's marine mammals. Over the morning the sea calmed somewhat.

After lunch, Robert presented a fascinating look at the discovery and understanding of Antarctica through mapping of the southern region. Following afternoon tea, David filled us in with more detail of the race for the South Pole and Shackleton's remarkable feat of saving his men of the Endurance. The seas remained calm and we were doing a good speed (13 knots) during the day. Meanwhile, the iceberg spotting competition became more heated with extensive calculations being made around the ship. Scott opened the ship's gift shop and gave some of us the rare chance to spend some money on the ship.

The seas remained fairly calm and after dinner, Bill conducted a briefing then later in the bar Lynn found a way to make Antarctic quotes competitive.

Monday, December 24, 2001

Day/date/time: 24/12/01 at 0700

Lat/long: 61°09'S 60°56'W

sunrise/sunset: 0235/2318

Location: Approaching Antarctica

Barometer: 983 MB

Wind speed/direction: 25 knots @ 13°

Air temp: 1°C

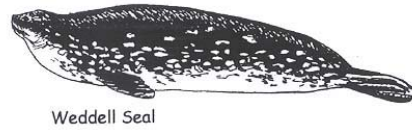
Sea temp: 1°C

"I now belong to a higher cult of mortals, for I have seen the Albatross"
Robert Cushman Murphy

After a very calm night on the "Drake Lake", we woke on schedule for a landing in the Aitcho Island group in the afternoon. The sky was overcast, but the wind was calm and sea very flat. There were a lot of pintadoes around the ship in the morning, but no large albatrosses any more – we're too far south. The first presentation of the day was David with some tips on polar photography. Most of us subsequently headed for the mud room to select our gumboots for the trip – not yet aware just how much time we would spend in them! We then had a mandatory IAATO briefing about environmentally-sensitive excursions within Antarctica followed by a briefing on zodiac operations.

Two humpback whales were sighted just before lunch, and the captain turned the ship so we had a great look at them close to ship. Then another was sighted heading straight towards us and it passed very close alongside. After lunch Bill briefed us on the Aitcho Islands, and soon we could see land. We came in through a misty passage, navigated around several small islets and shoals, and finally put the Zodiacs in the water for the first time.

At the shore we landed on a curved beach with a sloping hill behind, and walked right across the top of the island. There were gentoo and chinstrap penguins to greet us on the beach, and lots more nesting further up the hill. On the opposite beach we found lots of whale bones, plus our first elephant seals, some fur seals and some Weddell seals. On the island's summit we also passed by nesting southern giant petrels, pintadoes and kelp gulls on the high ridges. There was lots of kelp washed up on the beach and moss and algae on the top of the island. It was a prolific scene at wide divergence from the common image of Antarctica as icy desolation.



Weddell Seal

It was Christmas Eve so we celebrated that and our first landing with potent eggnog in the bar and conversations that continued well into the bright night.

Tuesday, December 25, 2001

Christmas Day

Day/date/time: 25/12/01 at 0700

Lat/long: 62°40'S 60°37'W

sunrise/sunset: 0215/2359

Location: Hannah Point

Barometer: 986 MB

Wind speed/direction: 15 knots @ 290°

Air temp: 0°C

Sea temp: 1°C

"No one can stand in those solitudes unmoved and not feel there is more to man than the mere breath of his body."

Attributed to Charles Darwin

We woke to calm seas again, 1000 km south of Ushuaia with Livingston Island ahead. The island has several large glaciers visible from our position. After breakfast we went ashore at Hannah Point, a small rocky beach with a tall headland to the right and a long beach to the left.

Visibility was poor, but it improved as time went by – but that wasn't good because the wind had picked up. The scene ashore was wonderful with an elephant seal on shore and plentiful chinstrap penguins. We were lucky to find two macaroni penguins with their colourful orange crests (or eyebrows), and the staff were amazed



to find gentoos with big chicks as they had only seen eggs or very small chicks elsewhere. We had to leave early as the sea was building up rapidly. It was a rough/fun exit from the beach, and more than a bit damp getting back on board the zodiacs and then across the water to the ship. During lunch we took the loffe around to another part of the island and dropped off our Bulgarian scientists and saw Spain's research vessel "Aspidistra" near the base.

After lunch, we arrived at Deception Island. We sailed through Neptune's Bellows and entered the caldera of an active volcano. The captain sailed very close to shore and we had our first look at Whaler's Bay, where all the old tanks and buildings from the whaling and exploration days were visible above the black volcanic gravel beach. It was snowing hard as we left the ship and on shore we split into groups. Ashore, it was fascinating to see the history of the whalers and the old British Antarctic Survey base, the wreck of the plane (a deHavilland Otter), the hangar and the end of the runway where the first powered flight was made in Antarctica by Australia's Sir Hubert Wilkins. We all walked up to Neptune's Window where a young American whaler named Nathaniel Palmer may have seen the Antarctic continent for the first time. On the way we found old water boats, barrels for whale oil, and wells for fresh water. Later, when the

snow turned to rain, we were glad to board the loffe out of the driving rain.

Back on board it was time for quick changes and showers, then a snack in the lounge before our Christmas Dinner with flaming dessert. That was followed by enthusiastic carol singing in the bar accompanied by hot mulled wine as we crossed Bransfield Straight. An added thrill for many of us was when Joanne and Rich McKeon came into the bar to announce that they had just become engaged. It was a fitting romantic element to a wonderfully adventurous and very unusual Christmas Day.

Wednesday, December 26, 2001

Boxing Day

Day/date/time: 26/12/01 at 1900

Lat/long: 64°31'S 61°54'W

sunrise/sunset: 0203/2357

Location: Wilhelmina Bay

Barometer: 978 MB

Wind speed/direction: 10 knots @ 55°

Air temp: -1°C

Sea temp: 1°C

"Who would believe in penguins unless he had seen them?"

-Connor O'Brien

In the early morning, after a little rocking overnight, we entered Wilhelmina Bay picked up Cathy and Aaron just before 7am. These are our intrepid sea kayakers who have spent the past eight days exploring the Peninsula completely self-sufficient with their kayaks. We had high cloud, great views of Antarctica proper with glaciers and mountains and icebergs all around. We saw two humpback whales and an iceberg full of Adelie penguins immediately after breakfast

We arrived at Cuverville Island about 10 am. This is an island with a hump at one end and we landed at a flat plain below the peak. We crossed the Errara Channel to reach the island and this passage was partly foggy and mysterious. There was lots of broken sea ice and some grounded icebergs in the way of our tough Zodiacs. Some did a zodiac cruise around the island on the way in via the shag colony, then swapped with others observing the gentoo colony that was spread out over this end of the island.



The snow was deep but mainly hard enough to walk on. The wildlife show was fascinating with penguins going to and from their colonies at either end of the beach. The snowshoes were a real help in getting to the eastern penguin colony. Most cruised back to the ship on the other side of the island. The weather was very blowy - pushing dry snow across the land and some of the penguins were buried in 12 inches of powder snow. However, the weather improved while we were there and by the time we left it was clearing, almost sunny, with great views of the mountains. The passage through the Errara Channel during lunch was clear and beautiful.

We approached Neko Harbour in Andvord Bay through a wide band of brash ice studded with little bergs and bergy bits. The hill at which we were landed at the foot had a bunch of Gentoo penguins on it, and there was a large active glacier in the small bay to the left, or north, while the main bay opened out to the south, with many more glaciers in the distance. We climbed upwards from the beach as quickly as possible, as

the glacier has a reputation for calving frequently sending large waves over the landing beach. In fact, the glacier calved a couple of times for us, creating large waves but they were quickly dampened by the brash ice surrounding it. Our climb was up past an Argentinean refugio, complete with a flag painted on it, then upward onto the glacier behind the penguin colony. In the sunshine the view was fantastic – we could all see the zodiacs pushing through the ice, and watch the ebb and flow of brash ice. There was a snowball fight at the top of the hill – Sean versus everyone else – and we report sadly that we think he may have won. A couple of brave people took off varying amounts of gear, posing near ‘naturale’ in the snow. Here in the south we observed that these gentoos are still on eggs and no chicks are visible yet.

After we left Andvord Bay we sailed towards Paradise Harbour. This was through a brilliant evening with sun on snowy peaks and no wind. Towards the end of the evening meal, Bill and the staff poured champagne and everybody toasted the day and our time on the Antarctic Peninsula. We were all outside later and no superlatives are good enough to describe the scene that kept some of us up in awe until 2am. Paradise was blocked with brash ice at all three entrances, and fittingly we had a beautiful gleaming snow petrel flying overhead off the ship only meters from the bridge.

Thursday, December 27, 2001

Day/date/time: 27/12/01 at 0700

Lat/long: 64°55'S 63°09'W

sunrise/sunset: 0241/2358

Location: Paradise Harbour

Barometer: 984 MB

Wind speed/direction: 5 knots @ 40°

Air temp: -1.5°C

Sea temp: 0°C

"Ice is the beginning of Antarctica and ice is its end. As one moves from perimeter to interior, the proportion of ice relentlessly increases. Ice creates more ice, and ice defined ice."

-Stephen Pyne

After a very still, quiet night, we woke to a clear sunny morning, still at the south end of Paradise Harbour. We had fantastic views of snow-capped peaks and glorious ice all around. To make the most of it, we all piled into the zodiacs right after breakfast, and had another great morning as we did a fantastic ice-



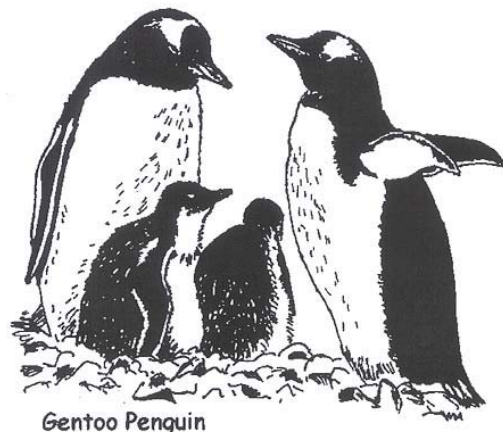
Leopard Seal

cruise through sea ice and icebergs, navigating around a small island and up to some glaciers lining the coast. David's Zodiac found an incongruous bamboo pole with a green flag on top and several zodiacs followed this new banner deep into the ice to see a leopard seal on a small ice floe.

Back on board, the captain steered the ship slowly back out into the Gerlache Strait, heading for Port Lockroy while Katie and Dan put on a great BBQ on the stern deck. The weather had turned a little bit, but we stopped in the middle of the Gerlache Strait and had a “Canadian” barbecue on the back deck – complete with Bob Marley and the Beach Boys with the backdrop of towering mountains and glaciers all around. When the snow started to come down heavily, most retreated for warmer interior locations.

Bill gave us our last landing briefing in the afternoon, telling us about Port Lockroy and the old British base on a small island there. We arrived to a steep set of stairs in the snow, and a bunch of gentoos nesting around the buildings. Dave, Jo and Ken, the total population of the island, greeted us warmly as we arrived,

telling us about the history of the base as well as selling T-shirts, books, pens and stamps and all sorts of other things from their gift shop. Outside, the Union Jack still flies over Bransfield House, Base A from World War II’s “Operation Taberin” that continued as an atmospheric research station throughout the Fifties. Some of us



went straight to Jougla Point, just around the corner from the base, and watched the gentoos shooting out of the water onto the unseasonal fast ice reaching out from the shore. The gentoos and the blue-eyed shags shared a pile of very muddy rocks at the other end of the point. Port Lockroy was also our southernmost landing: at 64°50’S it is just over 100 nautical miles north of the Antarctic Circle, currently locked away behind a wall of ice in this region.

It was with some sadness that we completed our last Zodiac ride back to the Ioffe. Then we sailed through the Neumeyer Channel with the weather only just holding off – wind, fog and clouds were gathering. We entered

the Gerlache with cloud lowering towards the water but later in the evening the visibility was good enough for some last views of Antarctica as we sailed into the Drake Passage.

Friday, December 28, 2001

Day/date/time: 28/12/01 at 0700

Lat/long: 62°35'S 64°04'W

sunrise/sunset: 0220/2340

Location: Drake Passage

Barometer: 984 MB

Wind speed/direction: 15 knots @ 215°

Air temp: -0.7°C

Sea temp: 1°C

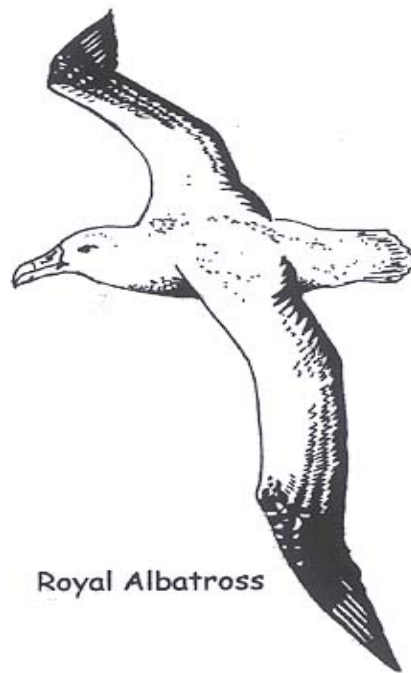
"Their perpendicular walls towered above our masts; they overhung our ships, whose dimensions seemed ridiculously diminutive compared with these enormous masses. One could imagine oneself in the narrow streets of a city of giants."

-D'Urville, fearing his ships would be crushed by heaving icebergs

Our first night back at seas was quiet in fairly calm seas and those who went to bed slept well. Indeed, many slept right through breakfast as the ship continued through subdued seas (with occasional lurches). The big albatross were back and joined the pintadoes around the ship. In the afternoon a beautiful light-mantled sooty albatross also approached the ship.

During the day Lynn gave us a look at the wildlife we witnessed, the conservation that goes on at present and what developments we hope to see in the near future for Antarctica.

Then Thomas took us through the likely future of tourism in Antarctica and just how wildly different tourism



Royal Albatross

is here, compared to anywhere else in the world. After lunch, Lynn and Sean also gave us an insight into the ingenious adaptation that evolution has produced to allow creatures to live in Polar Regions. Then, after a wonderful afternoon tea of scones, jam and cream and a last-minute shopping frenzy at Scott's gift shop, David regaled us with the story of his three-year seven continent motorcycle ride, the first (and probably last) ever.

After dinner, Cathy and Aaron did a show-and-tell presentation about their recent nine-day kayak trip along the Antarctic Peninsula, showing us the equipment they took and telling of the joys and tribulations of wilderness camping in Antarctica.

Saturday, December 29, 2001

Day/date/time: 29/12/01 at 0700

Lat/long: 57°35'S 66°37'W

sunrise/sunset: 0340/2250

Location: Drake Passage approaching Cape Horn

Barometer: 988 MB

Wind speed/direction: 40 knots @ 310°

Air temp: 5°C

Sea temp: 4°C

"To anyone who goes to the Antarctic, there is a tremendous appeal, an unparalleled combination of grandeur, beauty, vastness, loneliness, and malevolence- all of which sound terribly melodramatic- but which truly convey the actual feeling of Antarctica. Where else in the world are all of these descriptions really true."

-Captain T.L.M. Sunter

Our last day at sea started on a tempestuous note as the winds built up during the night and reached Force 10 (55 knots) in the early hours of the afternoon. In the morning, Robert gave a very interesting talk about medical research in Antarctica, including how it relates to the space program. Soon afterwards, we were called, floor by floor to settle our accounts with Scott in the bar. All survived.

After lunch, Bill led a recap of everything we did over the past week or so. Some of us relaxed during the day or took in a video in the lounge; it was a nice break from the fast and furious pace we've been keeping for the last few days.

In the mid afternoon, Bill came on the PA to tell us that Cape Horn was visible. Sailing into the Pacific Ocean then cutting back to "round the Horn" enlivened the afternoon. Just about everyone was on deck and afterwards as we sailed back into the South Atlantic. The Captain's Dinner was a joyful time to thank crew and staff. Many ended up in the bar after the festivities.

Sunday, December 30, 2001

USHUAIA

54°48'S 68°19W

This morning we sailed down the Beagle Channel to dock in Ushuaia at 7 am. Breakfast was a time to say goodbye to everyone and it was with some sadness but with a sense of fulfilment that we saw the bus waiting at the bottom of the gangway to take us on the way to our homes or our next destinations. For the past week, it's been more likely to have been ice or a rolling sea near the bottom of the gangway, rather than the trappings of civilisation. Goodbye and travel well.

Log ends

