



S W O P

Explore · Discover · Belong

Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute Voyage Beyond the Antarctic Circle

29th February – 14th March 2024



“Everything was a highlight. All landscape and wildlife was beyond beautiful. I met the most wonderful people. Just about everything was a surprise, sunsets and sunrises, food, passengers, waitstaff, room, expedition leaders and the Captain.”

Swoop Polar Circle traveller Sandra Sullivan, March 2019

Dear Traveller...

I am delighted to tell you the Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute will be embarking on an expedition voyage to the Antarctic Circle and beyond in February 2024. You are invited to join us on this amazing adventure!

The Friends are partnering with Swoop Travel, a specialist polar travel agency in the UK, and the ship operator, Polar Latitudes to bring you this spectacular journey. Together we have developed an exciting itinerary exploring the beautiful landscapes, wildlife and history of the Antarctic Peninsula. The voyage will take place between 29th February and 14th March 2024 sailing on the ice-strengthened expedition ship *Seaventure*.

In this helpful brochure you will find a detailed overview of this unique voyage, including the itinerary, special guests, information on the ship and cabin options. Places are limited, so early booking is strongly advised.

I look forward to welcoming you aboard the *Seaventure* in 2024!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Sewell".

CHAIRMAN,
FRIENDS OF THE SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Welcome and contents	2
What makes this Antarctic voyage so special?	3
Special guests	4
Route maps	5
Seaventure	6
The accommodation	7
The itinerary: Days 1–3	8
The itinerary: Days 4 & 5	9
The itinerary: Days 6–12	10
The itinerary: Days 13–15	11
Life on board	12
Meet the locals	13
Getting to Ushuaia	14
Pricing	15
FAQs	16
Meet the Swoop team	17

What makes this Antarctic voyage so special?

A unique voyage to the Circle

Designed especially for the Friends of SPRI, you will plunge far south to cross the little-visited Antarctic Circle. This is an immersive exploratory program with an extensive seven days in Antarctica. Whether you are exploring out on the water by zodiac or heading onto terra firma, the phenomenal expedition team will ensure your experience of the White Continent is awe-inspiring.

Get involved with citizen science

Assist scientists from research facilities including NASA and the Scripps Institute by helping to collect critical on-site data during your time in Antarctica. Projects vary and include counting seabirds, mapping cloud patterns or measuring ocean salinity and temperature. The ship has a unique onboard laboratory for further educational opportunities.



GENTOO CHICK FEEDING

Special guests

In addition to the ship's own seasoned expedition team, there will be a number of unique guest speakers hand-picked by Friends of SPRI on board your voyage. Chosen to further enrich and enhance your experience and understanding of the White Continent, many are highly accomplished modern day polar scientists and explorers with captivating stories to tell.

An outstanding expedition ship

Seaventure is ideal for this polar adventure, with its top ice class rating of 1A Super. Fourteen zodiacs and two disembarkation doors make for smooth exploration logistics. Spacious throughout, enjoy the amenities of a comfortable hotel with spectacular views at every turn.



HUMBACK WHALE

Raise funds for Friends of SPRI

By taking part in this voyage you will be directly contributing towards the support and continuing care of **SPRI**'s unique and historic collections, across its library, archives, museum and picture library. Your support also allows the Institute to undertake cutting edge polar research, furthering our understanding of globally important issues.

Pre-voyage event

Booked members are invited to an exclusive pre-voyage evening, hosted by the Friends of SPRI committee in a beautiful Cambridge setting. Meet your fellow travellers and enjoy an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the archives. This is the perfect way to prepare for your Antarctic expedition.



ADELIE PENGUINS

Special guests

Handpicked by Friends of SPRI for your voyage



Dr John Shears is the Chairman of the Friends of SPRI. He has over 30 years of experience in working in the polar regions. He was the Expedition Leader of the Endurance22 mission, which made polar history with the incredible discovery of Shackleton's ship *Endurance* at the bottom of the Weddell Sea, Antarctica on 5th March 2022



Professor Julian Dowdeswell has over 40 years of experience in glaciology, with a current focus on research into how glaciers and ice caps respond to climate change. He was awarded the Polar Medal for 'outstanding contributions to glacier geophysics' and served as Director of SPRI for 19 years.



Falcon Scott has long cultivated his skills in civil engineering. He was able to apply these during his time as a Heritage Carpenter for the NZ Antarctic Heritage Trust, working on his grandfather's iconic Terra Nova hut. He has visited Antarctica extensively over the past five years in his role as an onboard lecturer in polar history.



Dafila Scott originally trained as a zoologist but discovered her true calling in art. Her award-winning drawings and paintings feature wildlife and landscapes both domestic and exotic. On this voyage she will be leading hands-on art workshops for budding artists keen to engage with Antarctica on a more creative level.



Darrel Day is a modern day explorer, conducting intrepid expeditions into the world's most remote locations. He first visited Antarctica in 1999 and has since led over 70 expeditions there. With his yacht the Spirit of Sydney and his extensive polar experience he has supported documentary makers, scientists, mountaineers and divers.



Celene Pickard has served as Executive Secretary of the Friends of SPRI since 2007. A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, previous roles have included working as a researcher for Sir Ranulph Fiennes' seminal biography 'Captain Scott'. A passionate polar advocate, she has organised many previous Friends voyages to both the Arctic and Antarctic.



Seaventure

Perfectly suited for polar cruising, *Seaventure* is an outstanding expedition-focused ship. The high Ice Class 1A Super rating pertains to the ice-strengthened hull, which allows it to push into the more challenging waters beyond the Circle.

The primary aim of this voyage is to offer guests as much time off the ship as possible. The huge expedition team of naturalist guides gives an enviable guide-to-passenger ratio of 1:8. *Seaventure* is equipped with a fleet of 14 highly manoeuvrable zodiac ribs, which are boarded from water-level access doors, making for speedy disembarkation.

The ship provides extremely comfortable accommodation and amenities, with large windows throughout allowing you to soak up the views whether you are dining, relaxing or mid-lecture!

The spacious en-suite cabins have either large windows or private balconies. Watch icebergs pass from the expansive deck areas, or take refuge from biting winds without missing a trick in the panoramic observation lounge.

As soon as you board *Seaventure*, you can tell this ship has been designed with adventure in mind. The pleasing result is the feeling of being on a real expedition, but with the benefit of modern comforts and technology.



“Behind the scenes staff took care of every detail. The cabin was comfortable in all aspects and had windows with welcoming views. The food was always outstanding and pleasantly presented. With an experienced Captain and crew, A-1 service top to bottom, I definitely would choose this ship again.”

Karen Getzel, December 2021

“Fantastic exploration team that provided thorough information, lectures, trips on zodiacs and large ‘citizen scientist’ programmes. Icebergs and all wildlife was observed close up and whenever anyone saw more animals, it was announced over the PA system so everyone could see them.”

Jeanne Rueth, January 2019



The accommodation

The spacious en-suite cabins have a comfortable contemporary feel with warm wood tones. Each has exterior views from your cabin to the spectacular icy vistas of Antarctica. In most cases the cabins can be made up as either two twins or one double bed. Each has a sitting area, complimentary mini-bar and independent temperature controls.

"The expedition crew was excellent, very knowledgeable and friendly. They were obviously enjoying the trip and landscapes and wildlife as much as we were."

Patricia Schenkkan, Jan 2019

- **Window Staterooms** feature a large picture window and are found on both Decks 4 and 5. Cabins on Deck 5 are slightly inset as a promenade deck passes outside, making for quick outdoor access. The cabins measure approximately 188ft² (17.5m²)
- **Veranda Staterooms** benefit from a large glazed patio door leading onto a private balcony. These cabins are ideal for those wanting a small spot of private outdoor space. The combined cabin and balcony size measures approximately 224ft² (20.8m²)



VERANDA STATEROOM



WINDOW STATEROOM

The itinerary: Days 1–3

Thursday 29th February - Friday 1st March 2024: Ushuaia

On arrival in Ushuaia, you will be met and transferred to your included hotel for the next two nights. Settle in and enjoy the spectacular sunset from the pool.

You have a full free day on Friday to relax at the hotel, potter in the city or head out to explore the stunning landscapes of Tierra del Fuego.

In the evening attend a short briefing about embarkation logistics.

“Every day was full of anticipation and delight.”

Dirk Schenkkan, January 2019



USHUAIA

Saturday 2nd March 2024: Embarkation day

Check out and enjoy a relaxed morning in Ushuaia, perhaps visiting the local museums - the Maritime Museum in the old prison has a quirky Antarctic section with some unusual artefacts. Meet in the hotel lobby mid-afternoon for the short transfer to the pier.

After embarkation, settle into your home for the next 12 nights before mandatory briefings and safety drills begin.

As the ship leaves, head out on deck to admire parting views of Ushuaia and its surrounding mountains. The Beagle Channel is a fantastic place to spot wildlife including black-browed albatross, Magellanic penguins and sea lions.

Get to know your fellow travellers, expedition team and crew at a welcome evening to celebrate the start of your thrilling adventure to Antarctica.



BLACK-BROWED ALBATROSS

The itinerary: Days 4 & 5

Sunday 3rd & Monday 4th March 2024: Sail across the Drake Passage

As you begin your crossing of the infamous Drake Passage, it's time to get your sea legs and settle into ship life.

Your expedition team will prepare you for your first landing with important briefings on operational procedures for wildlife encounters and zodiac use, along with biosecurity measures. They will also launch your educational presentation programme; a fascinating way to learn more about Antarctica's history, wildlife and environment. There will also be talks and workshops from your Friends of SPRI guest speakers.

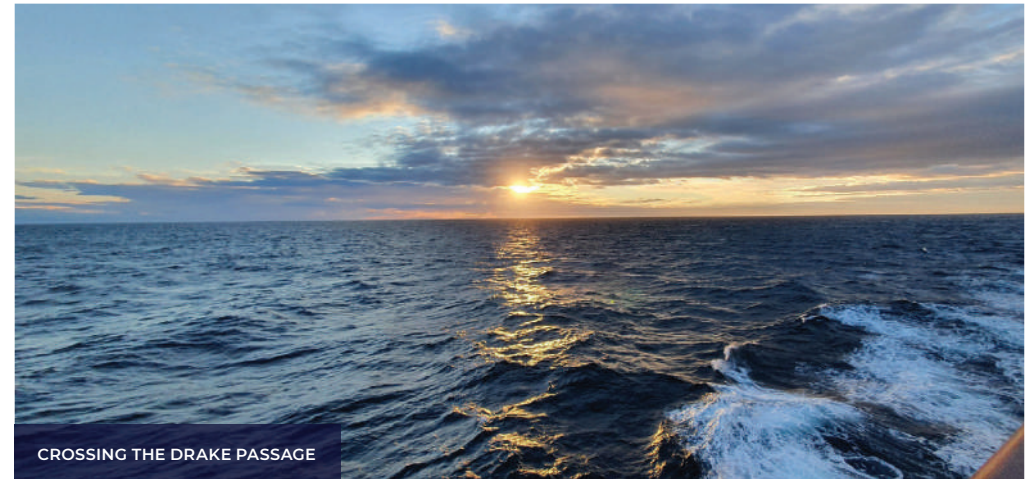
The wildlife opportunities start right from the beginning as you enjoy watching and photographing the many seabirds, including majestic albatrosses and giant petrels following in the ship's wake. They rise and fall skillfully, using air currents created by the ship to gain momentum.

As you near the South Shetland Islands and the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula the excitement will be palpable with everyone converging on deck, cameras in hand, looking for that first iceberg.

The ocean takes on a whole new perspective once you are below the Antarctic Convergence and begin passing the surreal floating ice sculptures.

Throughout your trip the staff will be looking for opportunities to run Citizen Science projects. It's fascinating to help collect data - well worth getting involved.

This special voyage will attempt to cross the little-visited Antarctic Circle - weather and ice conditions permitting. On reaching Antarctica the ship will continue steadily south, aiming for 66°33' S.



CROSSING THE DRAKE PASSAGE



IMMENSE ICEBERG

"It is a different world and was eye opening. I am glad to be able to have experienced this."

Zach Sandler, December 2021

"Seeing our first iceberg, before seeing land, was quite memorable, as was seeing the amount and size of the glaciers."

David Smith, January 2020

The itinerary: Days 6–12

Tuesday 5th - Monday 11th March 2024: Explore the Antarctica Peninsula

It's almost impossible to describe the feeling of arriving in Antarctica. Spotting your first iceberg, being astounded by the sheer scale of the jagged mountains blanketed by endless glaciers, all while taking a deep breath of some of the freshest, crisp air on Earth is an experience that will stay with you forever.

Once you arrive, the expedition leader and Captain will begin plotting a breath-taking course to explore the western side of the Antarctic Peninsula. If the ever-changing ice conditions allow, you may explore rarely visited locations beneath the Antarctic Circle.

Your experienced expedition team of naturalist guides, who have made countless journeys to this area, will use their expertise to design your voyage from day to day, choosing the best options based on the prevailing weather, ice conditions and wildlife opportunities.

You will generally make landings or zodiac excursions twice a day. Wrap up warm before joining serene zodiac cruises along spectacular glacial ice cliffs or

amongst icebergs of every shape and hue. Keep watch for whales, seals and porpoising penguins zooming through the water. Zodiacs will also transport you from the ship to land, where you can visit penguin rookeries, discover historic huts and explore some of our favourite spots along the peninsula.

While ashore you will be able to stretch your legs, wandering along pebbly beaches or perhaps crunching up snow-covered ridgelines to vantage points with mountains towering overhead and ice-speckled oceans below.

In addition to zodiac cruises and shore excursions, the Captain may use the ship as a perfect platform to cruise through some of the narrow, dramatic straits separating offshore islands from the mainland, or linger in scenic bays to watch whales travelling or feeding.

This is a great time to enjoy the panoramic observation lounge or head out on deck for uninterrupted views of Antarctica in all its splendour. Keep an ear out for the creak and deep thundering

rumble of glaciers as they carve their way from summit to sea, and soak up the visual feast that is awe-inspiring Antarctica.

Throughout the trip, your FoSPRI guest speakers will be on hand to help interpret the astonishing landscapes and enhance your experience.

Dafila and Falcon Scott will also be running some art workshops for a unique way to creatively portray and commemorate your polar adventure.

"The number and quality of our landings on the continent and the Shetland Islands were superior in every way. The staff was excellent and the weather permitted us to land twice a day for most days we were there."

Jeanne Rueth, January 2019



ICY REFLECTIONS

The itinerary: Days 13–15

Tuesday 12th & Wednesday 13th March 2024: Drake Passage

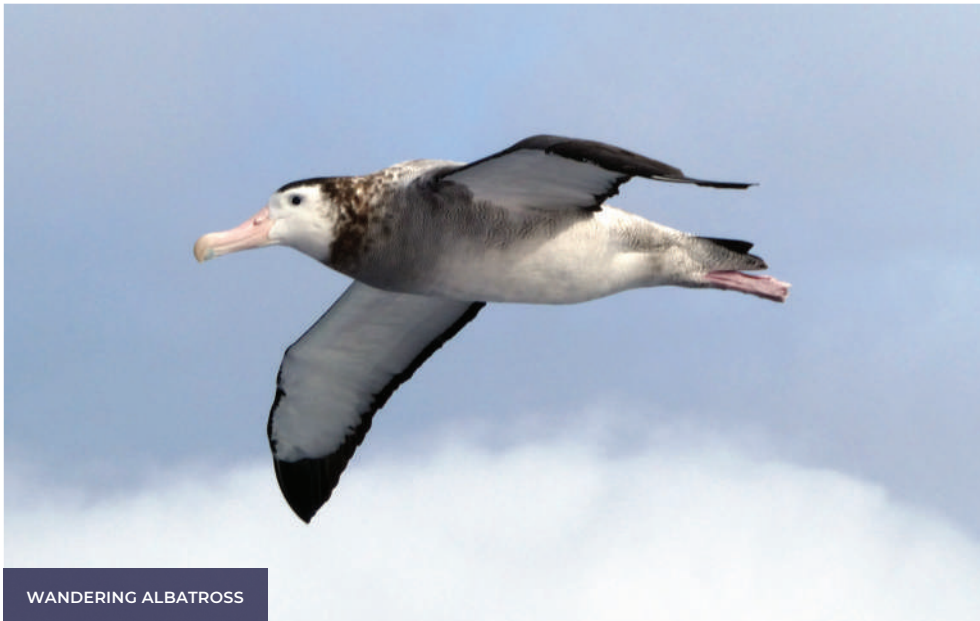
As you head north towards South America, you will once again cross the Drake Passage. The programme of educational lectures will continue, making the most of your time at sea.

Out on deck, keep your eyes peeled for seabirds cruising past the ship. It is likely that your last evening will be spent cruising down the dramatic

Beagle Channel and celebrating the finale of your grand adventure.

“The scenery was beyond beautiful. I literally cried it was so amazing.”

Karin Johansson, February 2020



WANDERING ALBATROSS

Thursday 14th March 2024: Final farewells

After an early breakfast on board, bid a fond farewell to the ship and its crew before continuing with your onward journey, hopefully with a newfound sense of the immense power of nature.

A transfer from the ship to Ushuaia airport is included in the voyage fare.

“The team were the best. I was amazed by their expertise and ability to explain it to a ‘non-science’ guy like me. I liked being able to ask questions without feeling foolish.”

Tim Leitner, December 2021



USHUAIA

Life on board

If the word ‘cruising’ typically conjures up images of vast ships, cocktail parties and evening floor shows, then think again – polar cruising couldn’t be more different. Expedition cruising in Antarctica is the very antithesis of a traditional cruise – it’s active, adventurous, educational and fully immersive. Prepare for busy, action-packed days!

Each day in Antarctica will follow a flexible itinerary responding to local ice and weather conditions and wildlife opportunities. This is the very essence of expedition cruising, with no two voyages ever being the same.

Led by your highly experienced expedition team, on a typical day, you can expect to undertake two off-ship excursions, which may include visiting a penguin rookery or photographing spectacular icebergs by zodiac cruise. The trip is also supported by a full program of educational lectures, with additional talks and workshops provided by your Friends of SPRI guest speakers.

Passengers on this trip typically range from their 30s to their 80s, with the majority typically between 50 and 70. They tend to be independent travellers from around the globe, who are characterised by a strong interest in exploring remote regions. The camaraderie on board and close friendships forged by these shared experiences in the wilds of Antarctica are a surprise highlight for many.



SCULPTURAL ICEBERGS



DIVING HUMPBACK WHALE

“The expedition team was fantastic! Having specialists available to comment and discuss wildlife and geology matters, made the trip more than just seeing those things. It allowed us to understand about them and gave us a better appreciation for what we were viewing.”

David Smith, January 2020

Meet the locals



Getting to Ushuaia

The voyage arrangements begin with two nights accommodation in Ushuaia (included in the price), starting on Thursday 29th February 2024.

There are no international flights to Ushuaia, so to get to the start point of your trip you will likely need to fly into the capital Buenos Aires. From Buenos Aires, there are regular daily flights to Ushuaia, which takes approximately 3½hrs. Most depart from the domestic airport Aeroparque (AEP), which is in the city, though there are also some flights from the international airport Ezeiza (EZE). We strongly recommend having at least one night in the capital to soak up the Argentine cultural experience and to buffer any potential flight delays.

If you would like any assistance with making arrangements for your time in Buenos Aires, or adding on further adventures while you're in South America, the Swoop Customer Experience team will be on hand to help book these.

From the UK

British Airways fly from Heathrow via São Paulo, Brazil, to Buenos Aires (approx 16hrs). It is also possible to fly via Madrid, Amsterdam and Paris with other European airlines, with some regional airport departure options such as Bristol, Manchester and Edinburgh.

From the USA

Daily direct flights to Buenos Aires operate from New York, Miami, Dallas and Atlanta (approx 9-11hrs)

*"Go! You will not regret it.
It's a magnificent place -
unique in its beauty and
majesty. Everything I hoped
for and so much more."*

Glenda Durano, February 2020



Pricing

Prices

Prices are based on two people sharing and include a donation to Friends of SPRI.

Window Stateroom
\$ 14,455 per person

Dates

29th February - 14th March 2024

Duration 15 days

Veranda Stateroom
\$ 16,580 per person



What's included?

- Two nights pre-embarkation in luxury hotel accommodation in Ushuaia
- Complimentary keepsake waterproof shell expedition jacket and loan of rubber boots for the trip
- Voyage aboard the vessel as indicated in the itinerary
- Accommodation during the voyage on a full-board basis
- All alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (some premium brands excluded)
- All shore excursions and zodiac activities
- Participation in the Citizen Science programme
- Educational lectures by expert onboard polar guides and Friends of SPRI guest speakers
- Access to an onboard doctor and basic medical services
- Comprehensive pre-departure information
- Port taxes and any entry fees to historic landing sites
- Transfer from airport to the group hotel on Day 1 and from the ship to the airport on Day 15

What's not?

- Any flights to/from voyage start and end points
- Any additional services before and after your voyage
- Transfers not specific to the itinerary
- Travel insurance or emergency evacuation charges
- Any visa, passport and vaccination expenses
- Airport arrival or departure taxes
- Items of a personal nature e.g. laundry and additional onboard purchases (i.e. gift shop)
- Staff gratuities

"The best expedition team ever. They were so enthusiastic about what they did. They were very informed about their areas of expertise and had incredibly entertaining presentations. They were truly the gold standard for expedition guides."

Marmie Schuster-Walker, February 2020

FAQs

Is this trip right for me?

This expedition is a great fit for anyone who is keen to experience the historic right of passage that is crossing the Drake from South America to Antarctica. Fantastic birdlife is often seen en route and sailing provides additional time for educational lectures. This specially designed voyage is ideal for those wanting to boost opportunities to explore beyond the Antarctic Circle. Equally, if you are keen to maximise your time exploring off the ship (with early morning starts and full-on days), but want to have an extremely comfortable base to return to, this trip is for you.

How fit do I need to be?

A high fitness level is not required but you do need to be comfortable navigating uneven terrain, walking through snow and on ice. A degree of flexibility is required for swinging your legs into and out of the zodiacs. A can-do attitude and a spirit of adventure are the most important attributes for would-be polar explorers!

What will the weather be like?

The weather in Antarctica is highly variable and unpredictable across the entire season. In March the average daily temperature is approximately 30°F (0°C), often fluctuating significantly with wind chill. See our information on [travelling in March](#).

What do I need to pack?

Having the right clothing and kit is important on any trip, but doubly so for Antarctica. We will, therefore, provide you with a comprehensive kit list to help you get it right. In the meantime, see our great tips and advice on [what to pack and wear](#). The ship will provide you with a complimentary expedition jacket (a waterproof outer shell) on board and loan the necessary rubber boots for landings.

How do the excursions work?

The local weather and ice conditions along with impromptu wildlife opportunities will dictate the final itinerary, both in terms of locations visited and timings. Wherever possible, the team will be trying to get you off the ship and exploring on foot or via zodiac twice a day.

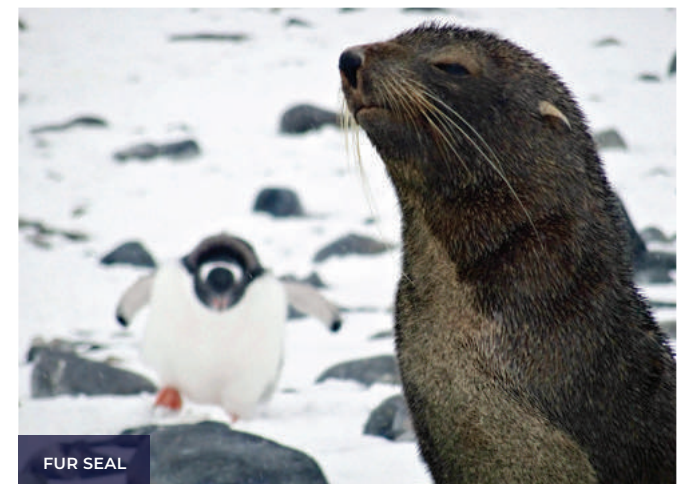
What wildlife can I see?

By early March, whale sightings are hitting their peak as cetaceans continue feasting on krill. Humpbacks are the most commonly sighted - look out for their distinctive flukes as they dive.

Penguin chicks will be rapidly growing both in size and curiosity. Many will be starting to grow in their adult waterproof feathers, pushing out their fluffy down. Look out for gentoos, adelies and chinstraps. Seals are also plentiful, with leopard seals on the prowl for an easy meal while fur, Weddell and crabeater seals may all be spotted hauled out on the beach or on ice.



LEOPARD SEAL



FUR SEAL

Meet the Swoop team

Together we have over 50 years of accumulated polar experience!



Lizzie is happiest in her thermals and waterproofs, out on deck or exploring on shore. On her first trip to Antarctica in 2012 she became instantly addicted to polar adventures, returning multiple times since. There is nothing she loves more than cruising amongst the icebergs, watching penguins switch seamlessly from comical waddling on land to streamlined aquatic acrobatics.



Alex is Head of Swoop Antarctica. He returned from his first trip to the 7th continent sixteen years ago firmly bitten by 'polar fever' and obsessed with icebergs. Since then, in between further forays to the polar regions, he's been evangelising about the joys of expeditionary cruising and doing all he can to regularly return to the White Continent.



Tennessee has had a passion for exploration and the polar regions since childhood. A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and keen history enthusiast, he's currently writing a book about James Clark Ross, one of the most under-appreciated polar explorers.



Brandon has been hooked on the polar regions since his first trip to Antarctica in 2015, returning multiple times as well as heading to the Arctic to indulge his passion for photography. He has sailed on a huge variety of ships and loves to match fellow polar enthusiasts up with the right ship for their adventure.



Cassia has had the good fortune of specialising in the Russian Arctic and Antarctica's Ross Sea for over ten years, working for a ship operator. Her familiarity with the operational logistics of expedition voyages complements her deep knowledge for these little-travelled polar regions.



Molly has crossed the Polar Circle and has camped out on the Antarctic continent. An avid traveller, she has spent over a decade exploring on five continents. She has extensive ship knowledge and loves sharing her experiences to help ensure customers get the best possible Antarctic experience.



GET IN TOUCH AND SECURE YOUR PLACE

For a comprehensive trip brochure and full itinerary,
or to secure your place, please get in touch with Celene,
email: friends@spri.cam.ac.uk or call +44 7976 939 656.

