

Spitsbergen

Triplog



s/v Antigua

Chartered out to:

Arctic Circle

October 1 - 14. 2011

The SV Antigua was built in 1957 in Thorne (UK) and served for many years as a fishing vessels, until it was completely re-built in the early 1990s in the Netherlands as a barkentine and equipped as a passenger ship. A barkentine has three masts with square sails on the foremast.

with

Captain – Joachim Schiel

First Mate – Bram Oudhuis

Second Mate – Philip Grözinger

Chef – Mario Schulze

Chief Service – Katrin Völker

Service – Nicole Petresic

Service – Inga Kirsch

Expedition leader – Michelle van Dijk

Bear watch – Daniels Karin Amby

Project leader – Aaron o'Connor

October 1.

Longyearbyen

Position at 14 o'clock: 78°14' N 15°36' E

Temperature: 0 °C

Shortly before 2 pm most of the passengers arrive at s/v Antigua, a blue sailing vessel that was going to be our home for the upcoming ten days. We all had to visit our captain Joachim at the wheel house. After that we were welcomed inside with coffee or tea and cake. Joachim gave a brief introduction, then our expedition leader Michelle took over to tell about the do's and don'ts on land. By the time she was finished, Captain Joachim gave us a board-safety briefing, telling us that we are not allowed to fall overboard or make bonfires on the ship. At around 5 pm we left the quay to sail to Coraholmen in Ekmanfjorden. As we entered Nordfjorden the wind dropped and it started snowing, which created a very arctic atmosphere onboard.

October 2.

Coraholmen & Longyearbyen

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°40' N 14°42' E

Temperature: 1 °C – overcast – no wind

After an cozy evening and a short sleep where we got to know each other a little better, it was time for our first landing. While Aaron, Karin & Michelle went out for a scout, captain Joachim gave us an introduction to getting ashore by dinghy. At ten o'clock we all had set foot on a little island called Coraholmen. Coraholmen is named after *Productus Cora*, the most common



fossil from the Carboniferus. A few million years older are the red rocks at the beach of Coraholmen, because that is Old red sandstone and created in the Devonian when Spitsbergen was situated near the equator. Besides these red rocks there was something very interesting to see the beach. It looked like coral, but it is not, it is made by algae. The island itself is much younger. The North-east side came above sea level because of the isostatic re-bounce, South-west are pushed moraines and was created by a glacier surge of Sefströmbreen in 1896.

The island was covered by virgin snow. Very beautiful and inspiring, but it was not easy to estimate distances and depths. Once the clouds lifted a little bit we could see the impressive mountains that surround the Ekmanfjord. Also in the past people must have been impressed because they are named: Kapitol & Koloseum.



At noon it was time to get back to the ship, because we had to go to Longyearbyen to pick up David who was still missing, and continue towards Trygghamna.

October 3.

Trygghamna: Harrietbreen & sailing

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°15' N 13°45' E

Temperature: 1 °C – snowing – windforce 4, North-east

After breakfast the "Scout boat" with Michelle, Aaron and Karin left the ship and went a shore to make sure no white furry friends were hiding there. When the area was safe the rest of the group was shuttled a shore with the dinghy. The area of today was situated in front of Harrietbreen. The glacier is named after Harriet Wedel Jarlsberg. Who contributed to the Norwegian Spitsbergen expeditions in 1911, 1912 and 1913. Harrietbreen has retreated and does calve in a small lagoon formed by the moraine. This gave the possibility to come close up to the glacier front. Some even put their hands on the glacier.



After a few hours of work on land in wind and snow. We went back to the boat and had a delicious lunch. The boat headed for the opening of Isfjorden and as we rounded Alkhorneret we set sails for the first time on the trip. A nice and exciting experience for us new beginners in the sailing world. As we reached Forlandsundet the sails went down again and we could notice the boat moving much more in the waves again. This is because of when sailing, the wind pressure on the sails press the boat into the waves, while when running on engine power we "bounce around on the top". We traveled through the night in Forlandsundet, and most of us woke up from rolling from one side to the other of our beds as we left the sheltered sound and traveling in open water in direction of Magdalenefjorden.



October 4.

Magdalenefjorden: Gravneset

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°33' N 11°02' E

Temperature: 3 °C – snowing – no wind



We woke up in Trinityhamna, around 130 whalers are buried here since 400 years ago. According to historical sources, Magdalenefjorden was first used by the English in the early days of the whaling era. They erected a land station on the headland and named the area Trinity Harbour. The station was closed in 1623, but the cemetery remained in use. It is known that the first tourists visit it in 1838, the cemetery must have been a gloomy scenery, strewn with whale and walrus bones, like eerie, white remains of enormous extinct species in a far away land. Several of the coffins had made their way through the snow, heaved up to the surface by the permafrost, half open and empty on account of polar bears. Other coffins remain untouched, covered in rocks. In 1979 Gravneset was said to look more like a campsite than a cemetery. The graves have been opened by curious tourists and remains of bones have been taken home as souvenirs. So in 2002 a fence was put around the graves.



We had a whole day to spend and work here. Snow flurries covered the headland with a blanket of snow. When Karin went to her look out point to watch out for furry animals, she came across a fox and polar bear track. In the fresh snow it looked pretty recent, so we all stayed in one group and took a look ourselves. In the meantime Karin followed the track to see if the polar bear was not still in the vicinity. She was quite happy to see that the tracks went in a one way direction towards Gullygreen round the corner. So Bram went there by dinghy to check that area out, but the only animals that he could find were seals. Michelle declared the area to be safe, so we all could stick to 'plan A', which gave everyone some space to work. After lunch

Philip took a few out on the dinghy to make sound recordings while the others went back ashore. Shortly before dinner time only Renhui, Saeed, Kevin & Paul were still onshore when a blue fox appeared. We all felt very lucky because it is a very rare sighting at Spitsbergen. Kevin wanted to experiment with some emergency lights, so had set up his camera while Paul assisted the lighting.

After dinner Michelle gave a lecture on polar bears and showed us that these animals are pretty fast and that it is hard to tell a male from a female.

Then it was Yva's turn. She wanted to film her yellow suitcase lowered from the ship.

As the icing on the cake, we got a clear sky with bright stars and northern lights.



October 5.

Magdalenefjorden: Gravneset & Waggonwaybreen

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°33' N 11°02' E

Temperature: -3 °C – clear sky – hardly any wind

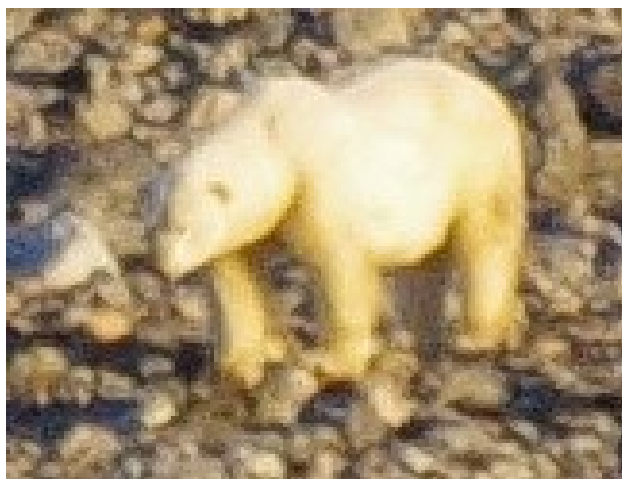


Waking up in Magdalenefjorden, getting out on deck we were meeting a complete different Magdalenefjorden then what we experienced yesterday. The clouds were gone, the sky was pretty in pink and the mountains covered in a thin layer of new snow. A true beauty. After breakfast there was some more photo shots of the yellow suitcase over board.



Then we traveled in direction of Waggonwaybreen to have a close up look on the glacier, David and Bram were climbing at the front of the boat and installed some cameras. While the rest of us enjoyed the view of the blue ice.

When leaving the glacier Michelle spotted a bear on the beach, so we took a closer look at it. Some had difficulties with seeing it but in the end all of us got some glimpses of the bear, and a group of reindeer. When the bear decided to take a rest we left. With a new experience.



Our few-pixel Polar Bear

October 6.

Raudfjorden: Alicehamna & Bruceneset

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°44' N 12°12' E

Temperature: -8 °C – clear sky – hardly any wind



Waking up with a ray of pink light kissing the high mountain peaks while the rest of the landscape is covered with a blanket of snow contrasting blue glacier ice, is like waking up in a dream. And is there any better way of starting a working day, than knowing that you can spend the rest of the day in a dreamworld? Inspired by the beautiful sunset we all found our way to do some work at our projects. Cheryl & Oona recorded the sound of ice, Kevin continued his pink project by letting up a balloon,

Dawn helped Paul with his helium-filled fish with special effects, while Benjamin used the cabin. This cabin, named Raudfjordhytta was build in 1927 by Stockholm-Sven who chose to live as a trapper after an accident.

Around teatime Michelle asked the Antigua if it was possible to bring tea, coffee & cake ashore. Captain Joachim organized it and brought the hot beverages and the fresh baked, still warm cake himself. We all gathered in the cabin, and just when we wondered if the whole group would fit in, Karin said that there is a Swedish saying: "When there is room for a heart, there is room for an ass." Another group went with Aaron to the lake Richardvatnet and came back right after teatime, but of course there was still enough left when they came back on board Antigua.



A little later a group of around 15 harp seals swum in northerly direction between the ship and the shore. At the shore we held an international soccer competition with a round ice-block used as ball. Again it was proved that Brazil earns their title as world champion. Then it was time for everybody to get back to the ship and enjoy Mario's good food.



October 7.

Moffen & sailing

Position at 8 o'clock: 80°01' N 14°27' E

Temperature: -4 °C – light snow – wind force 4

We woke up anchored next to Moffen, a small sandbank island in the middle of the ocean. This island has only a few inhabitants, Walruses. The weather made us realize why its nice to have a massive fat- layer living at this very special place. The wind and the swell stopped us from going ashore. But it did not stop the Walruses from taking a swim and visit us. Most of us got a good view of these fascinating animals.



Leaving Moffen heading for Liefdefjorden the wind that stopped us from going ashore gave us the possibility to set sails again. On the way south Michelle held a lecture about The Discovery of Spitsbergen and Geopolitics of Spitsbergen. After coffee and cake time, we landed in Hornbækpollen for the first time. A windy and cold stop at a beautiful place. Helge Hornbæk was a hydrographer with Norwegian Polar Institute since 1948, and every year from 1948 to 1962 he undertook sounding in the waters around Spitsbergen. Pollen means the bay, fjord or cove.

Back on the warm boat we had yet another delicate dinner and after that Kati started the popcorn pot going and Michelle introduced the Spitsbergen cult film “When the light comes”, which is based on the story of Heleen van der Laan. In the early eighties at the age of 19, she had a summer job on one of the first expedition-cruise ships and decide to stay over winter as well.



Captain navigating the Antigua through the narrow entrance to Hornbækpollen

October 8.

Hornbækpollen

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°36' N 12°39' E

Temperature: -4 °C – light snow – wind force 3



Today we had a full working-day at Hornbækpollen. Aaron, Karin and Michelle took their position as parameters which allowed us to find our own working space. Cheryl tried to record the sound of ice, Marcelo searched for the best pieces of driftwood, Paul set up a camp while Saeed filmed Leticia. Bram took some of us with the dinghy a bit further out to do sound recordings. Also Kevin needed the dinghy for a while for his 'pink ribbon' project.

Two curious walrus came to check us out, but apparently walrus are not really into art.



Because of the wind and snow flurries it was pretty cold, but Karin and Michelle found a way to keep themselves warm. All kind of dances, old and new where danced on top of the hill. Michelle all of a sudden realized why the Russians dance the polka, most likely because it is a good way of keeping you warm. Something else she realized.... Working as a guide you are told (read: warned) that if you stay on Spitsbergen to long, at some stage you will suffer 'Arctic craziness'. At the end of the day, when all dances were done, she and Karin ended up playing rifle-guitar. Then she knew...



In the evening Ed and Kevin gave a presentation about their works. Ed works a lot with sound and he showed some of his exhibitions in Germany. Nowadays he mixes sound and video. Kevin likes to work with contradictions. An icicle melting by and into a little fire, or fire slowly killed by the incoming tide. At Spitsbergen he likes to complement his project with pink popping out of the landscape.

October 9.

Hornbækpollen & Monacobreen

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°36' N 12°39' E

Temperature: -10 °C – partly clouded – wind force 1



Before lunch some of us went ashore on Hornbækpollen. The already legendary fish-wrestling-scene was recorded and icebergs got wrapped up in pink ribbons. Only two examples of creative activities that happened in these few hours on land. There was also several tours with the zodiac to film and take photos. After lunch we left our sheltered bay and set course to Monacobreen.



Monacobreen is named after Prince Albert I of Monaco. A very impressive glacier that also showed us some nice calving events. Here again there was possibilities to go out with the zodiac for project work. We stayed at Monacobreen for some hours and in the evening we set course towards Ny-Ålesund.



October 10.

Sailing & Ny Ålesund

Position at 8 o'clock: 79°31' N 10°36' E

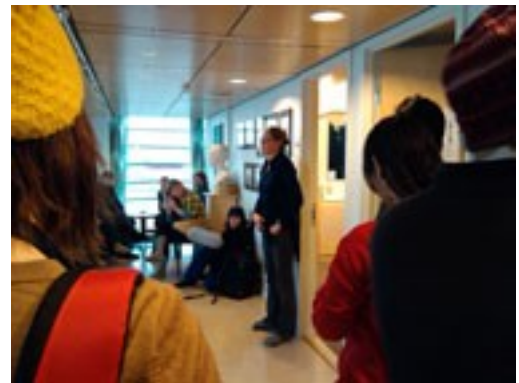
Temperature: -6 °C – partly clouded – no wind



After a late breakfast and an easy going start of the day, just before lunch, Karin gave a talk about daily life as a local. She showed a picture of every month and told something about what is going on then. While answering questions she had a slide show running. It was very nice to hear her local experiences. After lunch time Karin gave us the official briefing which is obligatory for everyone who wants to visit Ny Ålesund. Very important is to stay on the roads and turn off all radio-transmitting equipment.

Ny Ålesund is a former mining community, the coal was already discovered by British whalers 300 years ago, but the settlement was established in 1917 by Kingsbay Kul Company A/S, which had their headquarters in Ålesund in Norway. Mining was discontinued in 1929 due to several minor accidents, but resumed in 1945. The following years the community had up to 200 inhabitants. Coal mining was closed down in 1963, after a major accident. From 1967 research activities took over, and Ny Ålesund developed into an unique research village.

We arrived around 3pm, so right after coffee we got to see the town. At 4.30 we were welcome at the Norwegian Polar Institute, where station-leader Fiona explained about the station. Until dinner time we had time to look around in the village, do shopping or stamp anything at the previous post office. Our captain invited all locals to visit the Antigua for a drink. About 25 % of the population came so three more nationalities were adding to the thirteen that we already had on board.



Fiona had even brought two guitars and we found out that Saeed, Jessica & Aaron knew how to play & sing. We even had a 'dancing-queen'.... Paul proved that the tables are pretty stable, while captain Joachim proved his skills as a bartender.

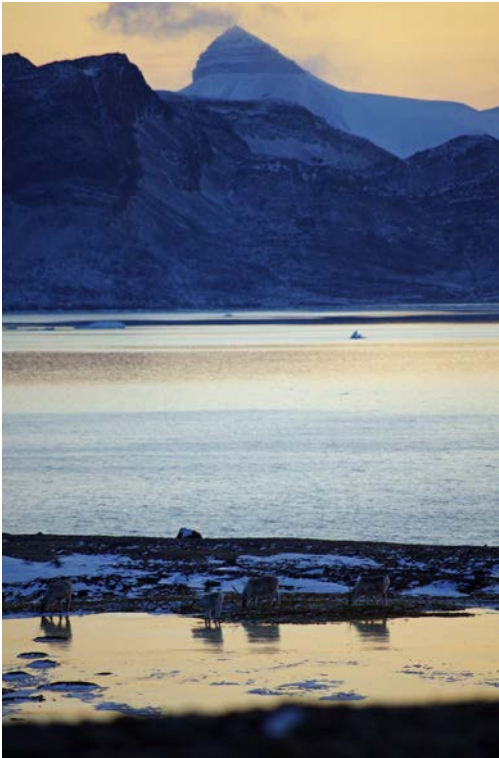


October 11.

Blomstrand(halv)øya

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°56' N 11°56' E

Temperature: -4 °C – clear sky – no wind



Wakening up at the pier in Ny-Ålesund the abandoned guitars had to find their way home, and it had to be made sure that everybody was on board, and no extra people had stayed from last night. When that was settled the landlines were let loose and we set course towards Blomstrandhalvøya and New London. Here Michelle made a short guided tour among the remains of Ernest Mansfield's big marble adventure. Ernest Mansfield was a charismatic Englishman who did several failing expeditions and mining attempts. Still he managed over and over again to raise money for new adventurous projects. At New London he found what he thought to be a very special marble with a shimmering finish not seen on other places. Blomstrandhalvøya does indeed consist of marble, but it is due to frost rupture of a very poor quality. The small frost cracks are filled with ice and therefore the marble gets a very beautiful finish when cut, but as soon as the ice in the frost cracks melts it falls apart. After the tour we divided in groups "Nature" and "Ruins" the nature group followed Michelle to the eastern

side of the Island while the "ruins" group stayed in New London close to the old steam machine. Coming back to the shore we met Saeed in a very impressive dry-suite with cameras mounted. The admiration from the group was big when it turned out that he was going to swim. While watching Saeed carefully lowering himself into the cold water, suddenly Michelle shouted behind the group and those who turned around could see two naked polarbear-guards running into the water for a refreshing swim after some hours of work. After the swimming we went to the boat for lunch. After lunch there was a second round ashore with the nature and ruins groups. Some steam machine music was created next to some very advanced snow sculpturing. At five we returned to the ship for Brownies. The anchor was pulled up and with the last daylight we left Kongsfjorden setting course for Pyramiden.



October 12.

Skansbukta

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°20' N 14°57' E

Temperature: -2 °C – overcast – no wind



Because of some good winds and speed we entered Billefjorden around 11 am, which gave us the opportunity to do an extra landing. Therefor we anchored in Skansbukta, an old gypsum mine of the Dalen Portland Cement Works in 1918. As many other mining attempts also this one failed, because it is mainly anhydrite instead of gypsum. Anhydrite is chemically very similar, but contains less water and is therefor without commercial value. But not for us... The boat, cabin, mine, rocks, mountains and space

were parts of the right setting to shoot some video, pictures and flairs. Ian & Nam went for a swim. Highlight of the day were created by six red flairs that were shot towards a weather balloon high up in the air.



When the evening fell we went back for dinner and the boat headed for Pyramiden. As soon as we moored up the complete population showed up to welcome us. Yuri, the boss in Pyramiden had a drink with us so Michelle asked him for permission to visit the cultural center.

On board we celebrated everybodies birthday.

October 13.

Pyramiden

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°39' N 16°23' E

Temperature: -5 °C – clear sky – no wind

Waking up in Pyramiden we had breakfast before we went ashore for a guided tour through town. Michelle showed us heated and lighted walking paths, London – where the single men lived. Paris – where the single women lived and The crazy house – where the families lived. We walked up “The Street of the 60th anniversary of the October-revolution” and got the opportunity to go inside the cultural house. Here we stayed until lunchtime playing old pianos and



admiring the decorations and facilities of the place. When we left the building Michelle sang 'When the Crowds are Gone' (originally by Savatage).



Pyramiden was a Swedish mining community owned by Svenska Stenkolsaktiebolaget Spitsbergen until the 1920's when economical problems made them sell Pyramiden to the Russian state owned mining company Trust Arktikugol. The coal was of good quality and the mine well managed. People thrived in this settlement that was a soviet model town, but still gave people the freedom of being far away from the central authorities. In 1997 the story of Pyramiden changed. A passenger plane with 300 passengers, workers and their families from Pyramiden crashed into Operafjellet during the approach at Longyearbyen airport. There were no survivors. In 1998 Russia did not afford to supply two settlements on Spitsbergen anymore. Barentsburg was chosen as the settlement to keep alive and the people of Pyramiden had to leave their homes and lives here behind.

After lunch Karin, Michelle and Aaron got to their posts to secure town. Then everybody had their chance to roam freely around the buildings to work with their own projects. At tea time we all gathered on “The Street of the 60th anniversary of the October-revolution” again. To have cupcake, cookies and tea. Jo was successful in getting rid of the last cupcakes but had trouble with the tea, that he had to carry back to the ship. At six the daylight faded away and we went back to the ship for dinner and artist talks. Eva, Jessica and Oona showed some of their works.



October 14.

Pyramiden

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°39' N 16°23' E

Temperature: -1 °C – overcast – windforce 1, North-east

After a final, good Antigua-style brunch it was finally time to say goodbye at noon. Hard to believe that the trip had come to an end and that so much inspiring arctic experience could fit into a mere 14 days!

All of us had another night or two in town. Many of us knew already now that this was not our last visit to the arctic.



Triplog is written by Michelle and Karin.

Photographs by Michelle & Karin.

This triplog can be found on <http://www.spitsbergen-svalbard.info>

The SV *Antigua* will continue to sail in Spitsbergen's waters in the years to come; the other sailing ships of the Tallship Company fleet, *Mare Frisium*, *Artemis*, *Elisabeth* and *Atlantis*, sail the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Ijsselmeer and the Canary Islands.

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Arctic Circle Participants

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Daniel Blinkhorn

David Bowen

Benjamin Bray

Kevin Cooley

Rebecca Hunt

Dawn Johnston

Yva Jung

Nam Le

Cheryl Leonard

Marcelo Moscheta

Ed Osborn

Ian Page

Jessica Segall

Paul Segers

Oona Stern

Wyn-Lyn Tan

Renhui Zhao

Saeed Taji Farouky

Leticia Ramos

Aaron O'Connor