

Spitsbergen

Triplog - September 25 - October 04, 2015

SV Antigua



The SV *Antigua* was built in 1957 in Thorne (UK) and served for many years as a fishing vessel, 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 – Moritz
Second Mate/Engineer – Uta
Service management – Nadine
Chef – Sascha
Service – Silvi
Service – Christl

and

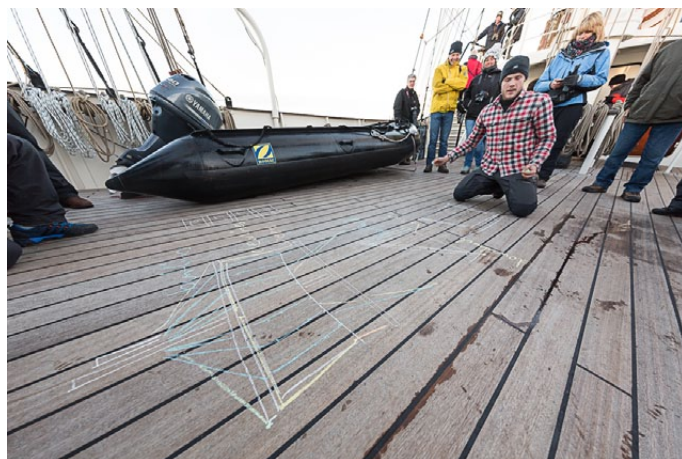
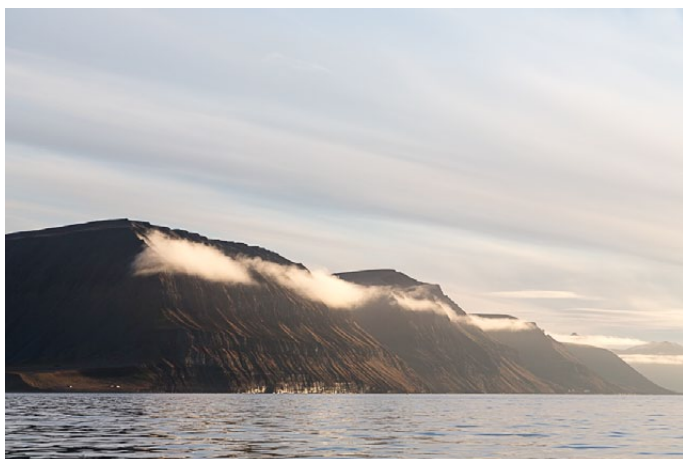
Expedition Leader – Rolf Stange
Fotography guide – Alexander Lembke
Guide & naturalist – Calle Schönning

Saturday, September 26 – Longyearbyen, Isfjord

14.00 hours (ship time = UTC+4 as opposed to local land time = UTC+2): 78°14'N/015°36'E, port of Longyearbyen.

Day of departure! First of all we lost 2 hours when we embarked the SV *Antigua* – we turn our clocks 2 hours forward, to make more use of the daylight. At this time of the year, the day becomes 20 minutes shorter for every day. In a months time, there will actually be no more sun on Svalbard for the rest of the year – even until middle of February.

We left the industrial coal mining town of Longyearbyen in the evening and got to experience a rarity on Svalbard – a sunset, which we have here only 4 months per year. Towards the sun setting in the sea we crossed Isfjorden and went into Forlandssundet. Beautiful evening and a good calm start of an exciting journey.



Sunday, September 27 – Forlandsund: Eidembukta, Dahlbreen.

08.00 hours: 78°31'N/012°51'E, at anchor in Eidembukta. Low clouds, no wind, light swell, 1°C, 1027 hPa.

Woke up to a calm winter day with a slow snow fall in Eidembukta. Impressive views of the rugged west coast mountains and enormous Eidembreen and Vetternbreen.





The first landing of the trip was welcomed by a seal popping up next to the zodiac just when the first of us went ashore. The photography group had a workshop with Alex, and the hikers went on a round trip higher up and back towards the coast. The Svalbard landscape was too sleepy to show itself completely through the fog and clouds, but it was a great setting for a first landing in the high Arctic and of course for photography.

After lunch clouds lifted a bit and we could get a glimpse of the white Prins Karls Forland, where we hoped for some walrus resting on the beach at Poolepynten. The walrus had hoped for somewhere else and were not to be found, so we crossed the sound again back to Spitsbergen and the glacier Dahlbreen with its impressive calving front. We had the whole panorama for ourselves and a stunning afternoon watching (and hearing) the glacier drop pieces of ice into the fjord.

Continuing north we caught southerly wind – up with sails! 6 knots!



Monday, September 28 – Danskøya: Virgohamna.

08.00 hours: 79°43.4'N/010°54.5'E, at anchor in Virgohamna. Mostly cloudy, strong southerly wind, 8°C, 1018 hPa.

Some of us had a fresh start at 6 in the morning, woken up by the crew to take down sails. The rest of us woke up to a dramatic scenery in the northwestern corner of Svalbard – in Virgohamna on Danskøya. And there has certainly been a lot of dramatic events there earlier in history! Before going ashore Rolf gave a lecture about the ventures of Andrée and Wellman towards the north pole more than hundred years ago. There was other things to see as well, in this “open air museum”. Remains from the 17th century whaling, early tourism (Lord Arnold Pike’s hut) as well as modern tourism



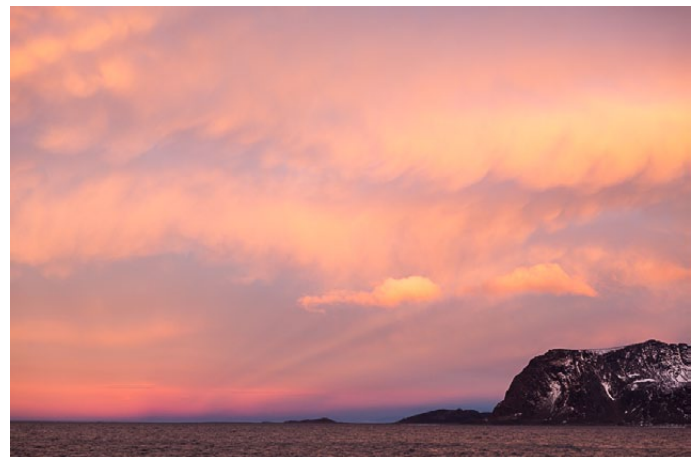
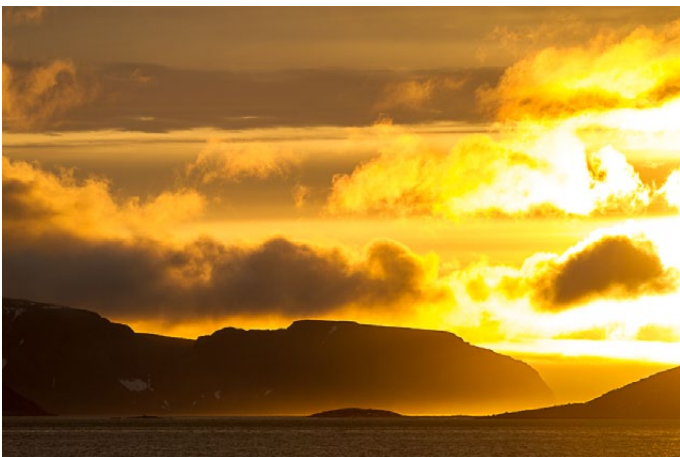
(graffiti on higher slopes = vandalism!) were discovered ashore. Again we were visited by a seal when in the zodiac, and welcomed to visit it's friends at the nearby harbour seal colony.

Leaving Virgohamna we immediately went on to Smeerenburg (Amsterdamøya) where we were lucky to spot some walrus on the beach. Too much wind for landing, but anyway safe to watch the walrus from the distance of the ship. We went on to Fuglefjorden and got almost surrounded by massive Svitjodreen and the alpine mountain peaks around it.



Still windy, but beautiful. Can you ask for more? No. Can you have more? Well leaving Svitjodreen we stumbled upon a polar bear! Fantastic encounter, we followed it for hours and saw it feeding on grass, being chased away by a walrus, swimming, surprising a sleeping fox, and disappear in the shadows after sunset.

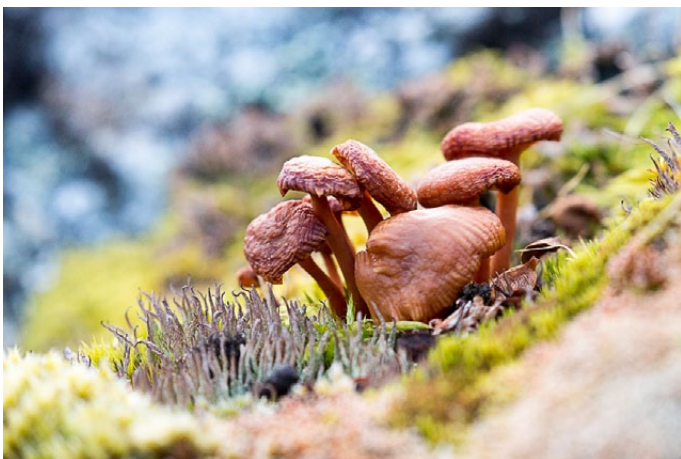
Again, amazing colours in Hamiltonbukta that made some of us forget dinner completely.



Tuesday, September 29 – Raudfjord: Hamiltonbukta.

08.00 hours: 79°48.2'N/011°51'E, at anchor in Hamiltonbukta. Partly cloudy, strong southerly wind, 5°C, 999 hPa

We woke up in Hamiltonbukta but we were not alone. A polar bear was sleeping next to the ship and all we saw of it was changing sides a few times during the morning. Anyway we had a beautiful landing on one of Hamiltonøyane which could just as well have been called Goose Island judging from all goose droppings. The rest of the morning we cruised around in the bay among all glaciers and icebergs and bergy bits, and watched the sun come up above the mountains in Raudfjorden.



We awaited strong winds from north, so strong that we decided to use them in our favour to travel southwards. So we sailed west passing by Ytre Norskøya, Indre Norskøya, Fuglesangen, Klovningen, Fugleøya, Smeerenburgfjord (again) and along the way we had curious walrus following us from the sea. Alex timed in a photography workshop just in time before we came out on the open sea where the swell made some of us seek shelter in the cabins. Now the wind could come! We set sail and passed by “De syv isfjella” (“The seven icemountains” – seven glaciers on the stretch from the northwestern corner to Krossfjorden named: Fyrstebreen (First glacier), Andrebreen (Second glacier), Tredjebreen (Third glacier) and so on...) in ten knots! Safe and sound we steered into Krossfjorden awaiting the storm.

Wednesday, September 30 – Krossfjord: Ebeltoftthamna, Mayerbukta.

08.00 hours: 79°09.3'N/011°38.1'E, at anchor in Ebeltoftthamna. Cloudy, strong northerly wind, 3°C, 974 (!) hPa





The air pressure had dropped by 54 hPa! Anyway wind in the morning was less than we had feared, so we could do a landing in Ebeltoftthamna in the northern side of outer Krossfjorden. We split up into groups and discovered the site of a german observation station from before the first world war, reindeer, fox and a lot of patterned ground. (And wind...)

Back on the ship after lunch we steered deeper into Krossfjorden with its spectacular scenery with alpine mountains right from the fjord and lots of steep glaciers. In Möllerfjorden wind picked up so no landing but insted a cruise in front of Mayerbreen and a polar bear lecture by Rolf. And a bit of sailing. During the afternoon snow started falling, and we anchored next to a white wintery Blomstrandhalvøya in Kongsfjorden.



Thursday, October 01 – Kongsfjord: Blomstrandhalvøya.

08.00 hours: 78°58.8'N/012°09.6'E, at anchor near Blomstrandhalvøya. Cloudy, strong westerly wind, -4°C, 997 hPa

We were anchored in a bay protected from the wind east of Ny-London, which was the goal for the landing in the morning. Some of us hiked over land, some took a boat ride to Ny-London and we all got a beautiful sunrise, snowfall and at the same time better and better visibility during the day. Interesting history over a klondyke-era mining attempt in the beginning of the 20th century.



Afternoon took us to Ny-Ålesund, where some of the houses from Ny-London has been moved. There we had the chance to stay at the harbour, and freely (with some restrictions) walk around on our own in the town. Calle had a guided tour around the town, shop opened for us, Rolf and Calle gave us a history background to the Amundsen/Nobile airship mast and Alex took everyone who wanted to a photo hike with a good view over the town. Altogether an interesting little town that gave us a good perspective of the history. Sailing out of Kongsfjorden we had fantastic light – great visibility, calm evening and moonrise on top of that.



Friday, October 02 – Isfjord: Alkhornet, Skansbukta

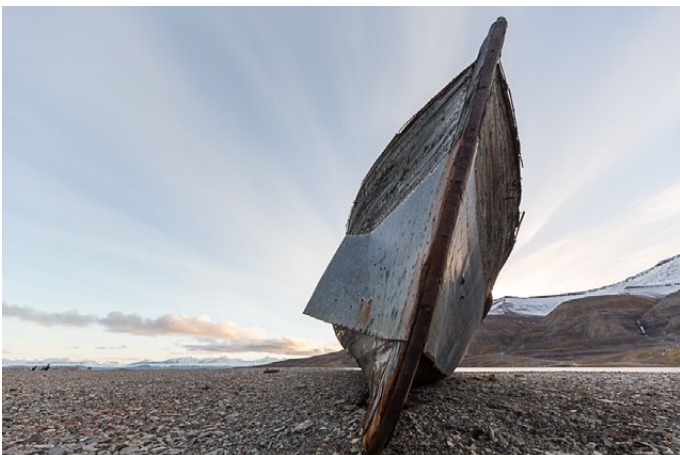
08.00 hours: 78°10.8'N/013°20.4'E, entering Isfjord. Mostly clear sky, light swell, -3°C, 998 hPa

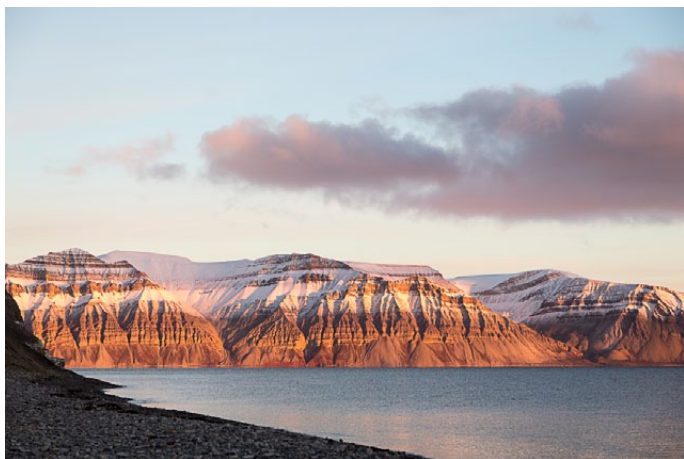
We woke up to the most incredible light and landscape in Trygghamna, first bay in Isfjorden, the biggest fjord in Svalbard. Sea was calm, there was no wind, and a crispy -3 in the air. Moonrise again! One of the most impressive mountains in Isfjorden, Alkhornet, was the foreground for the moon and also the background for our hike to the extremely lush tundra underneath. We saw fantastic ice wedges and as we hoped for, we met a quite a few reindeer that was happy to be photographed. Some of the teenagers (1 year old) even showed us their fighting skills!



Back onboard we had a cruise along Isfjorden to our destination for the day Pyramiden, in great low sunlight. Anyway, weather was nice and we decided to make a short after-cake-landing at Skansbukta at the mouth of Billefjorden. Fascinating geology resulting in majestic mountains on all sides of us. Skansbukta is beautiful in itself, and also has historical remains of trial mining of gypsum at two stages in the beginning of the 20th century. We also found a tree species growing here on Svalbard! Polar Willow (*Salix Polaris*), crawling along the ground.

Back onboard awaited Captains dinner with good food and good company, on the way to Pyramiden. The night sky was clear and we waited for northern lights...





Friday, September 28 – Isfjord, Billefjord: Pyramiden, Nordenskiöldbreen

08.00: 78°39.3'N/016°23'E, alongside in Pyramiden. Overcast, calm, -5°C, 1003 hPa.

Most of the day was spent in Pyramiden, exploring the abandoned Russian mining settlement that is still in relatively good shape as a ghost town. Rolf guided us around and gave us the historical background, before we met the local guide Sasha who locked up the culture house for us. Incredible place! We had a walk to the bottle house and back through the town to the hotel where there was souvenirs and drinks. No one noticed that lunch was a bit later than usual because there was so much to see in this town.



After lunch we cruised to Adolfbukta on the other (eastern) side of inner Billefjorden, where the huge glacier Norden-skiöldbreen flows out to the sea. Good day with little wind and calm conditions for cruising close the the glacier front. After coffee and cake Calle had a picture show with his favourite photos from his life on Svalbard.

End of the journey, and the last bit back to civilization in Adventfjorden and Longyearbyen was sailed towards the setting sun. Dinner at 19.30 – then turn back the watches 2 hours back to land time!



Sunday, October 04 – Longyearbyen.

08.00: 78°14'N/15°36'E, alongside in Longyearbyen. Mostly overcast. Easterly breeze, -2°C, 1011 hPa.

After a final *Antigua*-breakfast, it was time to get ready for disembarkation. It was hard to believe that our arctic adventure was over. Most of us went to Longyearbyen for a couple of hours to explore this high arctic metropolis and then took the bus to the airport, some spent another night or stayed even longer to have time for more activities.

Many of us knew already now that this was not to be our last visit to the arctic.

Total distance sailed (from Longyearbyen to Longyearbyen): 451 nautical miles = 835 kilometres

**The crew of *SV Antigua* thank you for joining us during an exciting week in Spitsbergen!
We wish you all the best and hope to see you again, somewhere between the poles!**

Triplog written by Calle. Layout, map, photos & final mistakes by Rolf.

This triplog and the 360 degree panorama Rolf took at Svitjodbreen in Fuglefjord can be found on www.spitsbergen-svalbard.com (English) and on www.spitzbergen.de (German; the triplog itself is in English on both sites).

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 *Artemis*, *Elisabeth* and *Atlantis*, sail the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Ijsselmeer and the Canary Islands.

More information:

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| 1 | Longyearbyen | 10 | Krossfjord: Ebeltoftamna |
| 2 | Forlandsund: Eidembukta | 11 | Krossfjord: Mayerbukta (glacier) |
| 3 | Prins Karls Forland: Poolepynten (no walruses) | 12 | Kongsfjord: Blomstrandhalvøya |
| 4 | Dahlbreen (glacier) | 13 | Kongsfjord: Ny Ålesund |
| 5 | Danskøya: Virgohamna (Andrée & Wellman north pole expeditions, harbour seals) | 14 | Isfjord: Trygghamna/Alkhornet |
| 6 | Amsterdamøya: Smeerenburg (walruses, passage) | 15 | Billefjord: Skansbukta |
| 7 | Fuglefjord: Svitjodbreen (glacier) | 16 | Billefjord: Pyramiden |
| 8 | Flathuken (polar bear) | 17 | Billefjord: Nordenskiöldbreen |
| 9 | Raudfjord: Hamiltonbukta | | |



Lectures and presentations:

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|----------------|--|------------------------|
| 27th September | Photo workshop: Introduction | Alex (on land) |
| 27th September | Glaciers: colour, age, movement | Rolf (on deck) |
| 28th September | Virgohamna: Andrée and Wellman | Rolf |
| 29th September | Photo workshop: exposure, histogram, colour space, Q & A | Alex |
| 30th September | Polar bears | Rolf |
| 30th September | Human perception and image composition | Alex |
| 01st October | Ny Ålesund: mining, science and north pole expeditions | Calle & Rolf (on land) |
| 02nd October | Northern light photography | Alex |
| 03rd October | Pyramiden | Rolf (on land) |
| 03rd October | Arctic seasons and life in Longyearbyen | Calle |