Here is the report of our skiing exporation done in October 2011 . We thank you everybody to allow us to discover this island, and especially the extra permit to do the trip from Larssen Harbour to Trollhul Bay, with the ascent of Mount Senderens wich has been the highlight of our trip.

Thank you also to Dion Poncet and his crew, who have been fantastically helpful and competent. Dion’s experience and knowledge have been an indispensable part of our successful journey in South Georgia.

And not least, a special and huge thanks to Marie-Paul and Hugues Delignieres with who we prepared our trip a long time in advance, exchanging heaps of mails and calls !

All the GPS points and heights are the ones calculated on our map, with a slight errors. We registered our routes and have the accurate ones if required. Some unnamed peaks reached may be ascended for the first time, but we don’t know ! What is most important for us is sharing our discoveries with the next explorers, to complete the lack of precision when you try to interprete the map !

**Saturday 10/01 :**

We leave Port Stanley around 10pm, after a friendly meal on board with Marie Paul, Hughes, Jérôme and all the crew of the « Hans Hansson ».

**Wednesday 10/05 :**

After four days of sailing we arrive late in the night in South Georgia at Elsehul Bay. The journey has been difficult for the first 24 hours even though the sea hasn’t been really rough. Afterwards everybody got « accclimatized » quite fast.

**Thursday 10/06 :**

First contact with the island ! We arrive onshore for our first steps, first meeting with elephants sees, fur seals and penguins. The weather is cold and grey but light very bright. We walk to Undine Harbour, fantastic bay with turquoise water, and an icy shore all the way… Then we follow the river of Hope valley before to come back to the boat.

Night in Elsehul bay.

**Friday 10/07 :**

Sailing to Possession Bay but watching the big cloud rolling on the main chain, we decide to visit Rosita Harbour, where the weather is cold, quieter and sunny ! easy landing and first skinning to a nice little peak above the bay (around 550m high. GPS 24F/ 598900/ 4011250). Nice view on the sea, Sunset bay, and Warbuton Peak. Good powder snow on the way down, slighty compacted by the wind.

NB : it’s perfectly possible to to do a ski tour from ? Bay, touring to this peak and skiing down to Rosita Harbour, or Camp Bay, or Sunset Fjord.

Night in Rosita Harbour.

**Saturday 10/08 :**

Foggy, windy, and it’s raining ! We maintain our target as planned yesterday (east ridge of Warbuton peak, 850m high. GPS 24F/ 595600/ 4005250). The bad weather obliged us to short cut on Brunonia Glacier. Then from left side of it, we traverse to the right side : roped and using the GPS. The bottom of the right side is steep but offered a good way to leave the glacier (left shore). Flat light very tiring !

On our way to Possession bay, Dion showed us Saliesbury Plain, and her huge penguins colony.

Night in Prince Olaf Harbour.

**Sunday 10/09 :**

The weather promised for the following days doesn’t allow us to start the Shackleton route in good conditions. Instead of waiting for hypothetically better weather, and taking off free time to keep for visiting the extreme south of the island, we decide to do Shackleton route or variants of it, as day trips, sleeping on the boat.

In Possession Bay, we get on shore at Glaciar Point and join Murray Snowfield after an initial exposed climb under a big serac… It’s windy and milky, but visibility is still OK.

We pass the col just under The Trident, on the original way of Shackleton drawn on BAS map 2004 (650m high. GPS 24F/ 625000/ 3997000).

Bad flat light on the other side, steep glacier with huge crevasses ! We had hoped for easier ground and getting to Crean glacier is quite tricky! The poor visibility makes route finding difficult, because of the steep gradient and the feeling of crevassed terrain (we couldn’t see them obviously !)

Violent gusts on Crean glacier, it’s raining but the visibility is better. We ski down on the left side of Antartic Bay, where, helped by Dion on the radio, we find our way to join the shore : there was just enough snow to ski in a fantastic ambiance !

Night in Antartic Bay, facing the Blue Whale Mountain.

**Monday 10/10 :**

Magnificent weather this morning, but we still can see the big cloud rolling on Wilckens Peaks.

We land on a small rocky peninsula in the middle of the glaciar : short and steep climb carrying skis, to join the flat part of Crean Glaciar. Long and easy traverse of Fortuna Glaciar (on this way, ascents possible to two peaks of Cornwall peaks), and arrival at the pass on Breakwind ridge (650m high. GPS 24F/ 641000/ 3996100).

On the top of it we choose a different valley (left comb at the top of the little hill above the pass) to ski down to Fortuna Bay.

Fantastic and steep couloir just above the shore ! Can be tricky if there is a lack of snow, as in the low section of the descent you need to traverse right, to escape of a rocky cliff.

Night in Fortuna Bay.

**Tuesday 10/11 :**

Bad weather ! Rain and slightly windy. We are already wet on the shore but we maintain our target, despite the poor conditions. Steep skinning up to an obvious pass pointed the day before, left of Shackleton route (650m high. GPS 24F/ 646500/ 3998500).

On the way down, first 100 meters are steep.

Still raining, windy at the top but quiter afterwards. We join the large valley offering good skiing. Following the icy parts on the plain, we nearly arrive to Stromness Harbour on skis. I’ve never been so wet in the mountains !!!

Night in Husvik Harbour.

**Wednesday 10/12 :**

Sailing to Maiviken where we land to skin up to Mount Hodges.

Possibility to do a longer day, ascending another peak further north, before heading Mount Hodges.

As the other days, all the little moutains range north of Allardyce Range stay well protected of the strong wind and his « rolling cloud » stuck on the high part of the island.

Nice weather then ; warm on the beach but the wind chill factor quickly drops the temperature !

Nice views from the top of Mount Hodges, easily reached by his west ridge. Tricky terrain with bad visibility, and the lack of good map !

We found a tiny easy « mouse’s hole » to traverse on the other side and join the top of this narrow and steep couloir, straight above Grytviken ! Another very good skiing day…

Late in the afternoon we visit the great museum. Strongly advised…

Overnight in Grytviken.

**Thursday 10 /13 :**

We still got a small but good skiing opportunity before a day of very strong wind the day after. We decide to try a long traverse on Barff Peninsula.

A bit of wind in the morning and slight rain… We land in ? first skinning to a large pass (300m high. GPS 24F/ 676300/ 3974100). Very wet snow, and we are worried to take off the skins. We keep them all the way down to Ocean Harbour to avoid problems with glue…

Second skinning up in direction of an obvious steep couloir, right of a peak (807m, on the BAS map). The ascent on the little glacier is easy until the last 200m where we carried our skis. No need of crampons, the snow is crap and doing the footsteps in this slushy snow is knackering !

Very violent wind at the pass (720m high. GPS 24F/ 675700/ 3976500) but the sun is coming back ! We decided not to do the peak and ski the easy glacier on the other side. Wind increasing, massive cloud very impressive on Allardyce range.

After a third pass (380m high. GPS 24F/ 672600/ 3981300) above a big lake in reindeer valley we ski down to ?.

Night in Grytviken.

**Friday 10/14 :**

Day off ! We stay quiet because of the strong wind and focus ourself on the next target : Mount Spaaman (1941m). The book written by Alec Trendall, (« putting South Georgia on the map ») has been very useful to know this peak was accessible. We plan to follow Neumayer glaciar to Kohl plateau where we will pitch our tents.

Preparation of the sledges, test of stoves, and lazy time ! On the afternoon we meet Pat who give us some advice but doesn’t know how is the Neumayer glacier. Same goes for Herz glaciar from Iris Bay. On the other hand, we speak about the possibility to land or finish a day trip on South coast, in Trollhul Bay, and we start to dream of it ! Pat will give us the final decision beginning of next week…

Night in Grytviken.

**Saturday 10/15 :**

Sunny weather this morning and calm !

We sail to Cumberland Bay to land but a big deception discovering Neumayer glacier : it’s completely dry of snow and hugelly crevassed !!!... It would take us too much time to reach Kohl plateau, with the sledges…

Plan B is to try to ascent Admiralty Peak in one day, to avoid to faff with too much heavy gear (sledges).

We land easily on the left shore of the glacier and start to walk up and down with crampons on the left shore. Passing the lake is already tricky, and after 2 and a half hours travelling on the glacier, we realize that we have only covered a short distance to the bottom of the peak ! We would still need 2-3 hours before starting the proper ascent and the return would involve the same time !

We didn’t feel comfortable enough to attempt the peak and decided to come back to the boat…

Good target but wrong approach ! This peak has to be done from Fortuna Bay (possible in one day, perhaps on our way back ?)

We cruise to Ocean Harbour (lovely spot), overnight there.

**Sunday 10/16 :**

Early in the morning we keep cruising to St Andew Bay. Some of us get sick during this transfer and we will do a round trip in this area with a smaller team, while the others will come on shore to watch this fantastic bay with plenty of animals.

Weather is ok but cold and windy again (orographic cloud on the high moutains).

Easy and long climb on Heaney glacier until a small pass (850m high. GPS 24F/ 677400/ 3959700) facing Mount King. We find a way to walk down with crampons (snow was too icy to ski down) to reach Buxton glacier in front of a massive serac fall.

We ski down to St Andrew bay but on the wrong side of the beach !! Two deep rivers to cross (helped by Dion and some very useful waders !) before joining the good side of this huge beach, where the crew can pick us up with the dinghy.

Sailing and overnight in Iris Bay.

**Monday 10/17 :**

Reconnaissance’s day ! We leave everybody exploring the little beach in front us, while Jean-Claude, Jean-Marc and myself (all mountain guides) went for an exploration of Herz Glacier.

The target is a peak at 1672m (GPS 24F/ 689080/ 3940225) at the top of this glacier. But the question mark is always the same : is the glacier a good way to skin up or to walk up ?

Landed just on the right shore of the glacier we climb half on the rock, half on the ice and join an easier and safe area. Quickly after we used rope and crampons and tried to find a safe itinerary in this field of huge crevasses. After one hour, here was only 250 meters left to go, to join a safe snow area. From there the ascent looked straight forward and fairly possible… But these 250 meters to go looked unsane to all of us… The mild temperatures would make the big snowbridges very fragile, especially on the way back !

For the second time we sadly decided to abandon to this ascent…

Plan B is on for tomorrow… Night in Iris Bay.

**Tuesday 10/18 :**

Another brillant day, sunny and cold wind.

We land on the beach, on the north coast of Iris Bay. After one hour of walking in Tussoc and moraines, we join the snow for a steep ascent to a sharp peak (850m high. GPS 25F/ 308650/ 3938600) .

Last part of the ascent carrying skis, with crampons, esthetic itinerary offering great views. Nice skiing on the way down.

NB : from the pass belong our peak, easy connection possible with Gold Harbour, following a valley just on her west side.

Overnight in Iris Bay.

**Wednesday 10/19 :**

Beautiful weather and hot temperatures ! There is more snow in this south part than everywhere else we’ve been to.

Sailing to Wirik Bay where we skin up quickly to a pass (400m high. GPS 25F/ 314300/ 3927100). Good turns on our way down to Salomon Glacier.

We choose the obvious peak standing in the middle of it, surrounded by an extraordinary environment ! (900m high. GPS 25F/ 309800/ 3926100).

Steep climb and wondeful run on the way back, after a little snooze at the top !

We choose the wrong side of Salomon glacier to get the shore (right shore) and are obliged to cross (roped) to the left side, last turn straight on the shore !

Glorious cruising into Drygalski Fjord, meeting some beautiful icebergs. Overnight in Larsen Harbour.

**Thursday 10/20 :**

Rainy and very windy…

We decide to take fresh air and climb to the pass at the end of the fjord (400m high. GPS 24F/ 689200/ 3919600).

45 mn of skinning, we couldn’t stand up at the pass ! Quick ski down and back to the boat. We cross fingers for the sunny window of tomorrow…

Overnight in Larsen Harbour.

**Friday 10/21 :**

Glorious day ! Awesome…

Early start to skin up again to the pass. There, we change our target : instead of Mount Normann, we will ascent Mount Senderens (1280m), who’s glacier seems more snowy than Normann’s one.

The glacier is still crevassed and it is necessary to be roped. We change our skis for crampons and ice axe. The bergschrund is easy to climb and the following ridge very esthetic ! Wonderfull views everywhere ! Impressive high peaks on island’s side, turquoise water regarding South…

Few turns on the way down because we stayed roped on the glacier.

Arriving on Philippi glacier we cross to the East, arriving on Graee glacier. Advised by Dion, we choose the right side of it to arrive on the shore of Trollhul, a truly magnificent bay.

Challenging pick up with the dinguy due to the strong swell ! This day has been particularly spectacular and we all are aware to have done today, « something quite special » in South Georgia…

Overnight in Larsen Harbour.

**Saturday 10/22 :**

We are playing hide and seek with rain and wind !... And for the moment we don’t have the feeling to loose the game !

Anyway this day will be a lazy day, doing nothing on board, except watching all the beautiful photos and movies we’ve done so far…

In the afternoon, we went on shore to watch the last Wedell seals of the island ; wonderful singers you could hear during our nights, through the hull. There was a new pup on the beach !

Overnight in Larsen Harbour.

**Sunday 10/23 :**

In french we would say we ate our white bread ! Still strong rain and very windy. We decide to cancel our journey back along the south coast and cruise to Golden Bay.

On the afternoon we spend a couple of hours with elephant seals, petrels and penguins…

Overnight in Gold Harbour.

**Monday 10/24 :**

We were surprised by the good weather again of this morning. We land on the rocky shore at the bottom of the valley spotted few days ago, west of Gold Harbour.

After a short and steep climb in the tussoc, we ascend straight to a peak finishing this obvious and safe glacier (1030m high, GPS 25F/ 306928/ 3937986).

Last 100 meters steep ; ascent with crampons and ice axe.

Great views on Iris Bay, Salvesen Range, Herz glacier. This peak has been the determining factor in finalising the reconnaissance of this area (Gold harbour , Iris Bay).

1- from this peak, access direct possible to the peak (About 1360-1400m high GPS24F/ 691800/ 3938800) above Bertrab glacier. Ascent possible in one day, steep finish, but certainly a wonderful target !

2- from this peak, straight and easy access to the top part of Herz glaciar (at 800m high). One section is exposed to seracs, but the way under it is easy and open (I would compare it with one section you’ve got on the way down of Pelvoux traverse, in Oisans).

3- from this peak you could see the SW ridge of Mount Paterson, which looks like an obvious and not very difficult climb. Could be reached by this peak, or straight from Iris Bay, with a camp on Herz glacier or under the peak 1672m.

4- from this peak we could see potential safe access to Herz glacier, starting from Iris Bay !!... In other words, we could try to do the planned peak 1672m (GPS 24F/ 689080/ 3940225). That means we’ll come back to Iris Bay again !

Nice descent by the same way but in very wet snow. Difficulties encountered getting into the dinghy because of the rough sea !

Overnight in Gold Harbour.

**Tuesday 10/25 :**

We decide to camp on the right shore of Herz glacier. Impossible to use sledges by this way, so we had to take three extra duffle bags and minimize our gear !

We found an easier way to joint the right shore of the glacier, following the moraine.

The sunny weather disappears quickly and the wind gets very strong with hail. It takes us a long time to put up the tents, because of exceptionally random violent gusts ! Fortunately it’s not cold… The wind howls all night long, with a mixture of rain and snow !

**Wednesday 10/26 :**

Same weather in the morning, we decide to finalize the reconnaissance of the glacier, despite the storm. Jean-Claude, Jean-Marc and myself are roped again, to check if the glacier has an « open door » on safe snow fields…

In the rain and strong wind (we got soaked in one hour…), we find our route for our summit attempt, but it will not be today. We return to the camp, & given the current conditions, we take down the tents and come back to the boat to dry everything. The plan is to ascend the summit tomorrow. We feel the group strong and fit enough to do it in one day !

Night in Iris Bay.

**Thursday 10/27 :**

Early wake up and we land at 5am on shore. We couldn’t imagine better weather ; bright sun, no wind, and it has frozen with the clear night…

One hour to walk back to our campsite, we put on our crampons a little further for a short section on the blue ice of the right shore of the glacier. Then we change for skis, and follow the right shore of the glacier going down from the peak we are focusing on. 5 hours (fairly fast rythm…) of safe ascent following the right shore of it, and the easy ridge to the peak with crampons !

Wonderful views on Royal Bay, Gold Harbour, Iris Bay on one side. On the other side we could see all fantastic peaks of Salvesen Range, and Mount Paget in the background.

We can also confirm the access by this side, to Mount Paterson SW ridge. For experienced mountaineers, two days should be enough to ascend this side of this mountain… Good luck to the next explorers… Maybe us if we come back ??? Who knows….

Superb descent on the way down ! This itineray could get classical if the access by Iris Bay stays possible every year.

Overnight in Iris Bay.

**Friday 10/28 :**

Early cruising to Ocean Harbour, we leave the sun for low clouds and rain. In Ocean Harbour snow has nearly all disapeared in the valleys above the shore…

Walking on the shore and for a friend of us, who is also mountain guide, we built a « joli » inukshuk with whales’ bones !.

We cruise all night long to Prion island.

**Saturday 10/29 :**

Poor weather still !! visit of Prion island. We saw some huge baby giant Albatros.

On the afternoon we keep going our cruise to Right Whale Bay.

Overnight there.

**Sunday 10/30 :**

Storm and gusts ! It is not possible to land on shore to spend our last day with the animals… We stay stuck all day long on board, until Dion decided to start the trip back to Falklands, during the night.

**Monday 10/31 to Friday 11/4 :**

Travel back to Port Stanley, arrival at ?

**Saturday 11/5 :**

Flight back to Santiago del Chile , then France.