

## Expedition from Porto to Bremerhaven

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# In the kingdom of contrasts

From Porto to Bremerhaven

April 30 - May 13, 2024



Written and illustrated by Thomas  
Spengler to commemorate your journey

**Tuesday, 30.04.2024**  
**Leixoes, Portugal**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
41° 11'	N08° 41' W	1016	12	15	89	WSW 4
Sunrise: 06:33				Sunset: 20:31		



Spring in Porto can be a bit of a mixed bag in terms of weather. Those who arrived the day before had a wonderful sunny day and were able to see the city and its surroundings. On the day of departure, it was a bit rainy in the morning, but by the time most of the passengers arrived in Porto in the afternoon, the clouds had mostly cleared and we were able to embark in bright to sunny weather.

Upon spotted the *HANSEATIC* facilities, we were all allowed on board and could move into our suites. However, there wasn't much time to get to know the ship in all its details, because as soon as all the guests had boarded



Once we were ready, we had the obligatory sea rescue exercise at 18:30 under the direction of our safety officer. Immediately afterwards, at 7 pm, we left the port of Leixoes in the direction of the Atlantic and sailed 212 nautical miles north and east along the coast of Portugal to our first destination. As we reached the Atlantic, we could still see the odd shower in the distance and as we got closer to the coast, the swell increased, as the captain had announced.

As we look out over the vastness of the ocean, our anticipation grows for the adventures, experiences and discoveries that await us on this journey. The Celts must have traveled our route in the past, as we will encounter cultural influences from this population group again and again throughout the journey. Their influence can be found as far away as Galicia in Spain. The British Isles were strongly influenced by the various Celtic tribes. The typical bagpipe has even made it into traditional music in Galicia.

On this first night, the swell is a little kind to us. While some of us are lulled to sleep by the rocking, others are perhaps still a little unaccustomed to the movement of the ship at the beginning of the journey.

### **Welcome to the *HANSEATIC inspiration!***

**Wednesday,  
01.05.2024 La  
Coruña, Spain**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
43° 24'	N08° 38' W	1014	14	14	79	W 3
Sunrise: 07:26				Sunset: 21:35		

For some, the first night was perhaps a little busier than expected or hoped for. The captain had informed us of a swell of around 3 m when we set sail. What was a welcome change for some to be rocked to sleep was perhaps a little too restless for others to find their way to the land of dreams. If the movement of the ship during the night didn't provide enough exercise, the morning was clearly dedicated to sport. After breakfast for early risers, fitness coach Tizian invited us to a morning workout at 8 a.m. and then gave a detailed introduction to the fitness area of the *HANSEATIC inspiration* at 8:30.

At 10:00 on the dot, our staff captain invited all guests into the HanseAtrium for the Zodiac briefing. This included important information on boarding and disembarking as well as the rules on board



of our rubber fleet. Immediately afterwards, our General Expedition Manager Wilma Rehberg introduced the entire expedition team, including spa, fitness, store, experts and photo & video. And it continued in quick succession with the first pre-cap for La Coruña from our expert Robert Ostermayr.

At 11:30 a.m., our Guest Relation Manager invited us to a get-together for solo travelers so that we could get to know each other and perhaps do one or two things together. We then sailed into the port of A Coruña at around 2 p.m. and after a short time the ship was released.



With around 250,000 inhabitants, La Coruña is the capital of the autonomous community of Galicia. The naturally protected port of A Coruña was used by the Phoenicians, Celts and later the Romans. Around 110 AD, the Romans built the Tower of Hercules in what was then Ardobicum Corunium, a lighthouse located to the north of the city, which is still a reminder of this time and has been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since June 2009. The city was first mentioned in documents in the 13th century under the Spanish name La Coruña. The city's heyday was in the 14th and 15th centuries, when it became the port of destination for English pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. A Coruña was attacked in 1589 by an English fleet under the leadership of Sir Francis Drake. The successful defense of the city is associated with the citizen María Pita, after whom the city was named.



today still the main square of the town is named after María Pita, a butcher's wife, stood out in the fight against the English the English privateers led by the pirate Sir Francis Drake in 1589. During the Spanish War of Independence (1808-1814) on January 16 The Battle of A Coruña took place in 1809.

One of the most famous sights is the Hercules Tower, which is considered the oldest operating lighthouse in the world and was declared a World Heritage Site in 2009.

Our first shore excursions then took us to the different corners of Galicia. The destinations included Santiago de Compostela and highlights of the Galicia region. The region is also known for the Way of St. James (Spanish: Camino de Santiago, Galician: Camiño de Santiago), a pilgrimage route that leads to the alleged tomb of St. James the Apostle in Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. Following the revival of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela around 50 years ago, the Camino de Santiago was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993. It was therefore not surprising that various stops on our shore excursions crossed parts of this pilgrimage route.

After these excursions, during which we had stretched our legs extensively, the Stretch&Relax with our fitness coach Tizian came just in time to return from the excursions. At 8 p.m., the gangway was hauled in again and we continued on towards the Scilly Islands, Great Britain, a distance of 402 nautical miles. After dinner, the eventful day was rounded off with music. Either in the Observation Lounge with our pianist Wolfgang Kick or with our guitarist Andreas Thust in the HanseAtrium.

#### Thursday, 02.05.2024

#### At sea heading for the British Isles west of Cornwall

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
46° 37'	N07° 19' W	1011	11	14	88	SW 3
Sunrise: 06:12				Sunset: 20:42		

During the night, we made good time heading north through the Bay of Biscay. Fortunately, the bay, which is notorious for its weather, was kind to us and the sea remained relatively calm throughout the day. Our day at sea began with a sun salutation with our fitness coach and for those who hadn't had enough exercise, we continued with the Sports Club and Cross Fit at 9am.



From 9 a.m., we also opened our rubber boots and Parker Boutique on the pool deck, where all guests were equipped for any wet landings with the Zodiacs and foul weather.

Immediately afterwards, our Shore Excursion Manager Sandra Griffel presented the various shore excursions for the entire trip and gave valuable tips on how to get the most out of the trip.



the wide range of possibilities. At 11:30, our expert Robert Ostermayr gave a talk about the part of Galicia that we had left behind the day before.

The official name of Great Britain is the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland". The United Kingdom is made up of four constituent parts: England (36 districts, 25 counties and London), Scotland (32 unitary councils), Wales (22 unitary councils) and Northern Ireland (26 districts). In addition to English, the languages of the country are Welsh, Gaelic and Cornish. In the afternoon, there was another chance for more sport before our expert Dr. Wolfgang Wenzel invited us to a lecture on seabirds in the HanseAtrium. He presented the seabirds of the cruising area, from alcids to gannets. The highlight of the day was, of course, the captain's welcome cocktail at 18:30 on our guitarist Andreas Thust.

Our captain, Andreas Thust, welcomed us on board and introduced his senior officers and other key personnel on board. His right hand man, the staff captain, as well as the chief engineer, without whom the ship would not be able to move forward. The manager of the expedition team, as well as the director of the hotel with housekeeper and maître. Of course, the doctor in our hospital and the purser should not be missing.



But the most important thing for all of us on board is and remains the chef, who was the last to enter the stage.

Throughout the day, we made our way purposefully towards Great Britain, crossing some of the main European shipping routes. We even passed the largest container ship in the Hapag Lloyd fleet, which was on its way around the Cape of Good Hope towards Singapore.

Great Britain is the main island of the kingdom. However, there are also many small island groups around it. The best known of these are the Shetland Islands and the Orkney Islands in the far north. To the northwest are the Outer and Inner Hebrides. In the far southwest are the Isles of Scilly. The Isle of Wight lies in the English Channel. The Isle of Man in the Irish Sea and the Channel Islands (e.g. Jersey and Guernsey) in the English Channel off the north coast of France are not part of the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, they are subject to the British Crown. The United Kingdom has only one national border, namely from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland. This is why people in the UK also like to talk about the "continent" when referring to the rest of Europe. A train tunnel has connected the island with France since 1993.

**Friday, 03.04.2024**

**Tresco & St. Mary, Isles of Scilly Great Britain**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
49° 55'	N06° 19' W	1013	14	13	84	WSW 3
Sunrise: 05:57				Sunset: 20:47		

We all had to get up early on Friday, as the official passport control for entry into the UK was due at 7am. All passengers had to present themselves in person to the border officials before the ship was cleared for shore leave, which then took place on local ferries.

The Isles of Scilly are a group of more than 140 islands and over 90 cliffs, located about 45 kilometers off the southwestern tip of England. The Scillies form a Unitary Authority and belong to the ceremonial county of Cornwall. Due to the Gulf Stream, the islands have a very mild, almost subtropical climate with many sunny days, which is why subtropical trees and plants such as rhododendrons and azaleas grow on the islands. As the sea level after the last ice age was 80 to 100 meters lower than today, the islands formed a large contiguous island, which was settled in the Mesolithic period from nearby Cornwall.



Due to the many cliffs and underwater rocks, the Isles of Scilly have always been difficult waters to navigate and have therefore been the undoing of some ships. On the night of October 22, 1707, the islands were the scene of one of the biggest shipping disasters in England's history. A fleet of 21 Royal Navy ships under the command of Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell ran aground on cliffs off the Isles of Scilly. Among the wrecks of the Isles of Scilly is that of the Thomas W. Lawson. She was one of the largest sailing ships in the world

the only seven-masted schooner. In 1975, the islands were declared an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and thus placed under special protection.



The first landing on the plan was the island of Tresco, with the incredibly impressive Abbey Garden, which had very Mediterranean characteristics despite its northern location. The island also invited us to take wonderful walks through the small villages and even offered a sandy beach with a Caribbean feel. In the glorious sunshine



You could be forgiven for thinking that you were in much more tropical climes than the southwest corner of Great Britain. The Abbey Garden offered an unbelievable variety of flowers and plants, and the wonderfully fragrant flowers really transported you to spring. flowers really transported you to spring. The Abbey Garden also has the Val- halla Gallion



Figures Museum in  
which these  
figureheads



of the ships that wrecked around the Scilly Isles are on display. The sight of these impressive wooden carvings leaves you in awe at the memory of the tragedies they witnessed.

At lunchtime, the shuttle service was briefly suspended for a well-deserved break on board to enjoy some culinary delights. Shortly after 2 p.m. we set off again on the first ferry, this time to the island of St. Mary's. There was a big spectacle here today with the World Pilot Gig Championship. Cornish pilot gigs are classic rowing boats with six oars. In gig rowing boats, the rowers sit one behind the other facing in the opposite direction, with the exception of the cox, who sits at the back of the boat. On the day of our visit, there were the qualifying battles for the final, which was held the following day. In the morning, the teams had to complete a

distance of 7.5 kilometers and rowing a distance of 5 kilometers in the afternoon. The origin of this competition with the gigs dates back to the time when these boats were used by the pilots for the ships. The gig that made it to the ship first was given the job and thus the payment to pilot the boat into the harbor or along the coast. At 6 pm, the *HANSEATIC inspiration* left the Scilly Islands and set course for the island of Lundy at a distance of 113 nautical miles. After dinner, our expert Prof. Dr. Thomas Spengler gave a lecture on global climate at 21:30. Late in the evening, he explained the basics of climate on planets with a special focus on our home, planet Earth. Not only does a planet need an atmosphere with a suitable mass, but the composition of the gas components of this atmosphere are also decisive for the planet's climate and therefore also its habitability.

**Saturday, 04.05.2024**  
**Lundy and Hartland Point, Great Britain**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
51° 10'	N04° 38' W	1012	15	12	86	NE 1
Sunrise: 05:45				Sunset: 20:46		



The *HANSEATIC inspiration* reaches the island of Lundy punctually at 8 a.m. after the morning gymnastics. Lundy lies about 18 kilometers off the coast of North Devon, England, where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Bristol Channel. Lundy consists of a huge granite rock that is almost 5 kilometers long and just over a kilometer wide. The contrasting landscape of high cliffs to the west and sheltered, grassy coastline to the east provides a rich diversity of wildlife and plants, giving Lundy a unique flora and fauna. At just 4.5 km<sup>2</sup>, it is only slightly larger than Heligoland (4.2 km<sup>2</sup>). However, the island is much less populated with only around 30 inhabitants. However, the buildings are very diverse and range from the remains of Bronze Age settlements to early Christian tombs and medieval monuments.



Castles and a  
 Gregorian  
 Lighthouse.  
 As early as the Middle Ages, pirates recognized the strategic value of the island and moved into the Bristol Channel. One of the most notorious crooks to take advantage of Lundy took advantage of Lundy was Thomas Benson. His trick was to hide convicts he should have deported to the United States on the

island after being paid  
to do so.



Lundy's location, with the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Bristol Channel to the east, creates a unique combination of environmental conditions that have produced a considerable range of habitats. These are now home to rare and spectacular species, both on land and underwater, such as puffins and other interesting seabirds. However, many animal species are at home not only above but also under water, such as the gray sea seal or some whales and dolphins.

We were ready for our first Zodiac excursion at 8 o'clock on the dot. For some of us, it was the first trip in a zodiac and, above all, the first time getting on board a cruise ship from the side gate.

get on board. Fortunately, the rubber boots were handed out on the day at sea, as they came in very handy today with the wet landing. After a climb of just over 100 meters to the island's plateau, we arrived in the island's small village, which also has a pub where we could enjoy a cool drink in the sun in the beer garden. Many went on extensive hikes to explore the island and its wildlife. In addition to the sheep and highland deer, there were also roe deer to be seen. But most of us were actually on the lookout for the pa- pageita divers. Some of us found them along the rugged and steeply sloping coastline, but sometimes you had to look closely or take a descent to Battery Point.





For fans of historic ships, there was another treat to see in the port of Lundy, the Oldenburg, which operates the ferry service to Lundy via the Bristol Channel. The ship was named after the Grand Duke of Oldenburg and was launched in Bremen on March 29, 1958. She was subsequently operated by the

Deutsche Bundesbahn in the ferry service to the East Frisian island of Wangerooge. In 1985, she was sold to the Lundy Co. Ltd. and began her journeys for passengers and catering for Lundy.

At 4 p.m. we weighed anchor off Lundy and sailed south again to visit Hartland Point, the most north-westerly point in the Devon region, as seen from the island of Lundy. Built in 1874, the white lighthouse marks the boundary where the Bristol Channel meets the Atlantic Ocean. It was manually operated by four keepers who lived in the lighthouse with their families. The lighthouse warns sailors of this headland and is a waypoint for ships on their way through the Bristol Channel. Today, the lighthouse is only accessible by off-road vehicle and helicopter, but is not open to the public. To complete the spectacle in the beautiful weather, we were even joined by dolphins on this coastal trip.

At 18:30 Hapag Lloyd hosted a Club Cocktail in the HanseAtrium and Heike Plura presented the advantages of collecting bonus miles. After dinner, the guests were invited back to the HanseAtrium for a hotel talk. Chief Purser Sarah Heiser and Hotel Inventory Controller Miguel Schott presented life and work on an expedition ship under the moderation of our General Expedition Manager Wilma Rehberg.

**Sunday, 05.05.2024**  
**Skomer Island, Great Britain**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
51° 44'	N05° 16' W	1007	12	12	84	SE 4
Sunrise: 05:44				Sunset: 20:52		



We had already anchored off Skomer Island late in the evening and woke up to an impressive view of the island. Skomer Island is one of several small islands in the southwest of Wales, off the coast of Pembrokeshire. The name, documented in 1324 as Skalmey, is of Scandinavian origin and means split island (from skálm and ey). The 3 km<sup>2</sup> island consists of a fairly large

and bridge. The island was purchased by the Nature Conservancy as a bird sanctuary in the late 1950s. The climate is very mild and the island is one of the areas with the least rainfall in Wales. Skomer is known for its large bird population. Atlantic Petrels, guillemots, cormorants, gulls, puffins, sandpipers and several species of birds of prey breed and live here. The island is also home to many gray seals and a variety of wildflowers. In 2000, the island's rats were killed off as they were damaging the bird population, especially the puffins.



The island's soil is riddled with holes like a Swiss cheese, and between May and July you can assume that almost every hole in the ground is inhabited. Not only by puffin nestlings and rabbits, but also by the secret masters of Skomer: the Atlantic shearwaters with around 350,000 breeding pairs. They only ever commute back and forth between their nesting burrows and the sea at night as they are incredibly clumsy on land. The puffins on Skomer are doing better than at any time since the middle of the 20th century. Almost 39,000 birds were counted there this year. The trend has been steadily increasing for around 15 years. Around Skomer, puffins find enough sand eels to eat and feed their chicks.

Right on time at 8:30 a.m. after breakfast, the call came for our first Zodiac cruise. After just a few meters towards the coast, we were surrounded by puffins sitting on the water and flying low over our heads. Due to the island's nature conservation status, we were unfortunately not allowed to get closer than 50 meters, but the variety of birds was impressive even from this distance. As far as the eye could see, all the cliffs were full of breeding pairs of auks and guillemots. On the steep grass-covered areas, countless caves were visible, inhabited by puffins and shearwaters. There was even a group of grey seals to be seen on the beach. On the way along the coast of the island there was a very strong tidal current, which washed us around the island. On the way back to the ship, we had to sail against this current before we brought the last guests on board at 12:30.

This was immediately followed by lunch on the pool deck with various delicacies and a barbecue buffet. Our outdoor lunch was accompanied by music from our pianist Wolfgang Kick. At 2 p.m., the *HANSEATIC inspiration* left Skomer Island and set course for Liverpool at a distance of 157 nautical miles.





In the afternoon, expert Dr. Wolfgang Wenzel invited guests to the Ocean Academy for microscopy. Here, visitors could see what exciting things were in the water samples he had taken from Lundy. There was also the opportunity to explore the extensive selection of exhibits from all over the world.

At 16:30 there was a talk about Liverpool: Beatlemania, soccer, art and modern coolness by our expert Robert Ostermayr. He explained the eventful history of the city and its constant ups and downs through the various industrial developments. Various private investors have permanently changed the cityscape and character of Liverpool in recent years and you can clearly sense a spirit of change. Similar to Hamburg

Many of the old warehouse buildings have been converted into museums, offices or residential buildings. The history of the Beatles is of course a must when talking about Liverpool. Almost immediately afterwards, there was the PreCap for Liverpool and Douglas on the Isle of Man, also presented by expert Robert Ostermayr, who pointed out the highlights in Liverpool as well as various points in the city that you can use to get your bearings if you want to explore the city on your own. For the Isle of



He was given a brief historical introduction and referred to the Celtic origins, which is why the national language on the island is Manx alongside English.

After dinner, Heike Pura from Cruise Sales and our expert Dr. Wolfgang Wenzel hosted a discussion about expeditions in the Hapag Lloyd fleet. The focus was on the various Antarctic voyages, from the classic round trip from Ushuaia via the Falkland Islands and South Georgia to the Antarctic Peninsula. At the end of the Antarctic season, some of the voyages head even further south with the aim of crossing the Antarctic Circle. Some voyages also include a landing at Cape Horn if the weather conditions are right. There is also the option of continuing east towards Cape Town or the King's Tour with a half circumnavigation of Antarctica to New Zealand.

**Monday, 06.05.2024**  
**Liverpool, Great Britain**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
53° 24'	N03° 00' W	1011	12	11	78	NW 3
Sunrise: 05:27				Sunset: 20:51		



"Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo...". The weather gods were really kind to us for our visit to the home city of the legendary band "The Beatles". We arrived in the port of Liverpool right on time at 8 o'clock in the morning. Liverpool is located in the north-west of England in the county of Lancashire and on the River Mersey, which flows into the sea a little further north. With a population of around 500,000

Liverpool is one of the largest cities in England and was the largest port in the world during the British Empire. Liverpool has a fascinating and eventful history as a major world maritime center. Around 1900, Liverpool was the largest city in Britain after London. However, from 1945 onwards, Liverpool struggled like no other northern English city with ailing industry, unemployment and strikes. During this time, the city only shone through its soccer club Liverpool FC, which also attracted international attention. In the years after 1960, the economy in Liver-

pool got worse and worse. The port and many factories had to close. The city's tentative rise began in the 90s. The city also used the Beatle factor to attract tourists from all over the world. The tough years are now behind Liverpool and the city is showing a more modern and self-confident side and is known for its music, sport and nightlife. The "Royal Albert Docks" at the old port, where goods were once stored, are now home to many restaurants, galleries and museums. There are numerous music clubs on Matthew Street in the city center. Among others the "Cavern Club", where the Beatles once played at the beginning of their career. The impressive Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool is considered one of the most





of the most beautiful in England and is the fifth largest cathedral in the world. There are also large parks throughout the city that invite you to relax.

In the morning, there were various excursions focusing on the highlights of the city or into the surrounding area to historic Chester or even as far as North Wales to explore Conwy Castle. After lunch, there was a four-hour excursion in the footsteps of the Beatles. With shore leave at 22:30, there was plenty of time to explore the city on our own and try a beer in one of the local pubs, perhaps even with live music. We were also entertained with music in the evening in the HanseAtrium with our guitarist Andreas Thust, who played an atmospheric potpourri of the Beatles' most beautiful songs from 21:15.

The fact that we were in the harbor all day made us aware of the enormous tidal range. While it was possible to walk ashore from the pier almost at ground level in the morning, the ramp between the quay and our floating pier was extremely steep at low tide in the afternoon.

The tidal range of the Mersey in Liverpool is up to 10 meters. This is a considerable figure, which is why only 1% of the total flow in the Mersey is attributed to the actual river, the rest of the inflow and outflow of water is due to the tide. At 11 p.m. we cast off and sailed downstream on the River Mersey, heading for the Isle of Man, 56 nautical miles away.



**Tuesday, 07.05.2024**  
**Douglas, Isle of Man**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
54° 08'	N04° 28' W	1023	16	11	80	SE 2
Sunrise: 05:28				Sunset: 21:01		



We entered the port of Douglas on the Isle of Man at around 8 o'clock in the morning. The Isle of Man is an autonomous Crown Estate that is directly subordinate to the British Crown. In addition to the main island, the territory also consists of smaller islands, such as the Calf of Man and St Michael's Isle. The Isle of Man (Ellan Vannin in the local language) lies in the Irish Sea

and has a special legal status in relation to the United Kingdom, which is why the establishment of bogus companies for tax avoidance is a significant economic sector. The Isle of Man's flag features a triskele, a three-legged symbol which means that if you fall, you will always



can stand on at least two legs. Sicily also has such a symbol.

The agricultural use of the largely forest-free island is mainly sheep farming, although different types of grain are also increasingly being cultivated in order to become less dependent on imports. The special thing about the local breed of Loughtan sheep is that they have 4-6 horns and their meat tastes relatively intense. The originally spoken language Manx, a form of Gaelic, has practically died out as a native language. However, it is taught as an optional subject in schools.



Douglas is the capital of the Isle of Man and takes its name from the rivers Dhoo and Glass River, which flow into the sea in Douglas. The town has just under 30,000 inhabitants, which corresponds to a third of the population of the Isle of Man. Douglas has been the capital of the island and its most important port since 1869. Until the 18th century, Douglas was a small fishing village. The town flourished somewhat due to smuggling. Smuggling was often based on different customs duties between the English main island and the Isle of Man. There was a lively export-import trade to play off the different tax systems against each other. After the Dukes of Atholl, who used to own the whole island, sold their sovereign rights to the British Crown, they acted as Governors of Man and built the former Mona Castle as their residence in 1804. During the First and Second World Wars, the Isle of Man housed internment camps for "enemy aliens". During the Second World War, there were a total of ten camps, mostly in Douglas. In the mornings, we had the opportunity to take part in various excursions. These included a trip



by train to the highest mountain on the island, Snaefell (Scandinavian for snow mountain), which at 620 meters high meets the definition of a mountain (at least 600 meters). The rail network on the Isle of Man also offered another highlight: you could take a round trip on the steam train and visit Castle Rushen. Others went on an interesting hike along the coast with interesting details about the Viking Age on the island and its geology, which was shaped by early volcanism. Many also took the opportunity to explore the island and the town of Douglas on their own. The decision to set off on exploratory walks was an easy one, as the weather was gloriously sunny. While most of us were out exploring the island, the crew carried out a safety drill. This training is part of daily life on board in order to be well prepared in the event of an emergency situation.



As this was the first time that the HANSE-ATIC had called at Inspiration Douglas on the Isle of Man, there was also the traditional exchange of the plaque. Captain Jörn Gottschalk and our Guest Relation Manager Gitti Hoffmann met with representatives of the port for the ceremonial exchange.

In the afternoon there were two lectures. First, expert Robert Ostermayr introduced us to the history of Scotland. From the beginnings with the Celts in the Scottish Highlands and the Germanic origins in the flatter parts of Scotland to the families known here as clans. In this respect, Scotland long looked like a patchwork quilt with the countless lands of the various clans often at war with each other. Scotland still retains an independent government today and it United Kingdom, most recently in the Brexit debate, as Scotland would have preferred to remain in the European Union.



The tour then continued with myths of seafaring and the topic of sea monsters. Our expert Dr. Wolfgang Wenzel gave an introduction to the long history of mankind and its various superstitions about the most unusual creatures of the deep sea. According to old nautical charts, the northern seas were teeming with incredible and terrifying creatures beyond imagination. For some sea monsters, there were even halfway explainable hypotheses. The first encounters with whales were certainly terrifying. The depths of our planet's oceans still offer a fascinating world that we have yet to fully understand. For example, we have long been aware that there must be giant squid and even giant octopuses in the depths, but these have not yet been fully recognized.

have never been sighted alive and some have only been seen dead once in the last few decades. At 18:30, Dr. Wolfgang Wenzel presented the PreCap for the following day with the islands of Iona and Lunga. While the first has a cultural history of more than a thousand years with one of the oldest Christian settlements in the region, the island of Lunga is a true destination of experience.

To top off this eventful day, there was something special for dinner. All the chefs on board the *HANSEATIC inspiration* immortalized themselves on the menu tonight with their special dish. Each dish was created by one of the 22 chefs on board. In the evening, head chef Björn Seidel introduced his entire kitchen team and asked all the chefs and 6 kitchen assistants, including our baker and his helpers, to take to the stage in person.

**Wednesday, 08.05.2024**  
**Iona and Lunga, Scotland, Great Britain**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
56° 21'	N06° 21' W	1024	12	11	80	SW 4
Sunrise: 05:21				Sunset: 21:21		



The Hebrides are a group of islands off the northwest coast of Scotland with the special feature that many of the inhabitants still speak Gaelic. The Inner Hebrides off the west coast of Scotland comprise more than 500 islands, each with its own unique charm. Only 80 of the Hebridean islands are inhabited by a still dwindling number of people. During the Highland Clearances in the 18th century, most of their islanders were evicted to make way for sheep farming and the eccentric leisure pursuits of their aristocratic landowners.

Our first stop was the island of Iona. This tiny island, part of the Inner Hebrides, is less than five kilometers long. Nevertheless, Iona is of great importance, as the island embodies the cliché of Scottish beauty: rugged mountains and rolling hills, blooming heaths and a beautiful landscape.

and mystical moorland landscapes, secluded beaches and marshy meadows where sheep graze. Iona was the spiritual center of Scotland for hundreds of years. The famous Iona Abbey, the Hill of Angels and the ruins of an abbey still bear witness to this today.



of an Augustinian nunnery. In 1980, the Hugh Fraser Foundation transferred large parts of the main island and some of the side islands to the National Trust for Scotland, which has managed these areas ever since.



The island was the starting point for the large-scale Christianization of northern Europe by the Irish monk and saint St. Columba, who came to Iona in 563, founded the abbey with Iona Abbey and from there spread the Christian faith throughout Scotland and northern England. The famous Book of Kells, a richly illustrated and elaborately inscribed Christian manuscript from the 9th century, is said to have been written here. More than 40 lords are buried in St Oran's Cemetery, including Kenneth MacAlpine, who is regarded as the founder of a united Scotland. King Duncan I and Macbeth also found their final resting place here. A visit to Iona and the abbey is always a journey into the past and an opportunity to come to rest. Some of our guests began their retreat on this day with a festive service in the abbey.

The sporty ones had the opportunity to climb Ben I. Here there was not

It not only offers a magnificent view of the surrounding area, but is also home to the Jungbrunnen, a small watering hole with supposedly magical powers.

At 12 noon, the last tender boat returned to the *HANSEATIC inspiration* and we set off for Lunga. Lunga is the main island of the Treshnish Isles, which in turn are part of the Inner Hebrides. Lunga is a protected landscape due to its rich flora and fauna. Today, the volcanic island is part of the Scottish Nature Reserve



"Loch na Keal National Scenic Area" and is listed are





the huge colonies of seabirds that reside there during the breeding season: Black-legged kittiwakes, storm petrels, Atlantic shearwaters, guillemots, puffins, shearwaters, shags and razorbills. The main attraction are the lovely puffins with their colorful beaks during the breeding season, which show little shyness towards visitors. Many plants, some of which are rare, can also be found on Lunga: Stemless cowslips, common horned clover, orchid species, cliff cinquefoil, beach grass carnations, marsh irises, coastal blue lily and

Cinquefoil.

The landing on Lunga was in keeping with the expedition spirit of the Hapag Lloyd Expedition fleet. The Zodiacs took us to the beach with large stones, some of which were covered with very slippery algae and other plants, making it a little more challenging to get ashore. However, the effort on the beach was rewarded with an incredible natural spectacle. A multitude of birds, especially the always popular puffins, could be seen in abundance. They were not deterred by us and we were able to approach the breeding pairs in front of their nesting caves relatively undisturbed up to 5-10 meters.

After the shore leave, expert Robert Ostermayr presented our destination for the next day: Ullapool, with direct

Access to the Scottish Highlands. And as if this day wasn't already filled with enough highlights, our officers invited guests to a cocktail evening in the HanseAtrium after dinner. Here, officers from various departments could be seen behind the bar counter mixing their liquid favorites for the digestif.



**Thursday, 09.05.2024**  
**Ullapool, Scotland, Great Britain**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
57° 53'	N05° 09' W	1023	13	10	86	N 2
Sunrise: 05:08				Sunset: 21:26		



After several days with almost no wind and no swell, the last night reminded us a little that we were actually on a ship. However, the swell was short-lived as the captain opted for the inland passage along the Scottish coast. Unfortunately, we passed through these spectacular straits in the middle of the night before our punctual arrival in Ullapool, the gateway to the Scottish Highlands.

The Highlands stretch through the north of Scotland and, with their rugged mountain and coastal landscape, are the symbol of Scotland par excellence. The vast country with its green valleys, clear lochs and endless moors holds many a secret and only reveals its full fascination to those who set out to discover the wild, original soul of Scotland with their own eyes. The first "Highlanders" are believed to have lived here as early as the Stone Age. As hunter-gatherers, they explored





the rough country. Large stone graves near Wick and Inverness can be found on

3,000 BC. The Highlands were originally occupied by Celts and Scandinavians. The Romans were left out of the history of the Highlands, as they never succeeded in penetrating the inaccessible mountain world.

The Highlands are influenced by the Gaelic language. In fact, the name for Highlands is "A' Ghàid-

healtachd" and roughly means "area where Gaelic is spoken". The further west, the more widespread Gaelic is - it is still spoken the most in the Outer Hebrides today.



Ullapool (Scottish Gaelic Ulapul) is the northernmost major coastal settlement in the administrative district of Highland in Scotland with a population of around 1,500. Ullapool is primarily important as a ferry port to the Outer Hebrides and as a fishing port. Ullapool was not created by natural settlement, but was founded in 1788 as a fishing port by the "British Society for Extending the Fisheries and Improving the Sea Coasts of This Kingdom of Great Britain".

association) was founded. Herring and mackerel were the main fish caught there until well into the 20th century. Herring fishing declined over time, so there were several fishing bans and the fishermen now focused more on crab fishing.

For the early risers, there was the option of walking on deck with fitness coach Tizian at 7am. A fresh breeze around the nose with a little drizzle and a brisk pace make this course a unique experience.

We arrived in Ullapool at 8 a.m. and dropped anchor there to get our tender service ready in time for our excursions. The excursions took us to the Highlands, to a whiskey distillery and even to the capital of Scotland, Iverness. The latter excursion also included a trip to the infamous Loch Ness. Some even managed to see the monster from this body of water. In the afternoon, there was also the option of a scenic drive to the Western Highlands. As on the previous days, the weather again played along well in the Highlands. While it was still a little overcast with a light drizzle in the morning, it cleared up more and more over the course of the day and the sun even made an appearance.

Due to the long layover time, there was also plenty of time to enjoy self-organized leisure time in Ullapool and marvel at the impressive tidal range in the harbour. At low tide, it was possible to see the entire substructure of the pier. At 17:45, the last tender returned to the ship and the *HANSEATIC inspiration* left her anchorage punctually at 18:00.

After the extensive hikes, perhaps the fascia meeting point with fitness coach Tizian was a good idea. This training promises to loosen and release large areas of tension in the muscles and joints. With targeted pressure applied using small balls or



a roller on tense areas stimulates the metabolism and helps to achieve more freedom of movement.

After dinner, there was another high-light on the program. At 21:30, General Expedition Manager Wilma Rehberg hosted a Captain's Talk in the HanseAtrium with Captain Jörn Gottschalk. Here the guests were able to find answers to all their questions.

**Friday, 10.05.2024**  
**Copinsay, Orkney Islands, Great Britain**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
58° 54'	N02° 40' W	1021	12	10	89	S 3
Sunrise: 04:51				Sunset: 21:26		

After another quiet night, during which you more or less didn't really notice that you were at sea, we arrived at the Orkney Islands early in the morning. Looking out of the window at breakfast, some of us were perhaps still a little unsure whether the Zodiac cruise would work out, as the fog was a little thick and it probably wouldn't have worked in such visibility. However, it then cleared up as ordered for the first disembarkation in the zodiacs and we were able to carry out our two tours with great bird sightings and impressive views of Copinsay Island and the "horse".



Copinsay (from Old Norse "Kolbeinsey" = "Kolbein Hrógas Island") is a small, three-partitioned, uninhabited island in Orkney. The island was inhabited until 1958, when the last residents moved to Mainland. Today, a school building, two farms and stables as well as a road are still visible. The "Horse of Copinsay" is a steep rock in the sea off the north-eastern side of the island. The approximately 28-metre-high rock has a blowhole at the northern end, which is conspicuous in rough weather when the spray becomes visible. Due to the strong swell, the "horse" is difficult to reach. In 1972, Copinsay Island and the associated small spars were made part of a nature reserve. The Copinsay nature reserve is home to a large seabird colony with 20,000 guillemots, 1,000 kittiwakes, 700 puffins and 600 razorbills. More than 1,000 pairs of fulmars nest on Copinsay. Cormorants



come to the island, and there are large colonies of great black-backed gulls. In the fall, a colony of around 2,000 gray seals comes ashore.

After our zodiac tours through the islands, some of which were subject to strong tidal currents, we then set course for Kirkwall. The romantic town of Kirkwall with just over 7,000 inhabitants is the main town on Scotland's largest Orkney island, Mainland. The island's old Norse architecture is reminiscent of a place somewhere in Scandinavia. The name Kirkwall is also of Norse origin and is mentioned in the Orkneyinga Saga. The name was originally "Kirkjuvágr", which means "church bay". Later it became "Kirkvoe".



A church dedicated to Olav II Haraldsson stood here as early as the 11th century. Earl Rognvald Brusason (Rögnvaldr Brúsason) shared the earldom for eight years with Thorfinn Sigurdsson (the Mighty), who had his seat on the Brough of Birsay and took it in 1046 AD.

on Papa Stronsay. In the same year, Kirkwall was first mentioned as a market town. In 1137, at the instigation of Earl Rognvald Koli Kolsson (Rögnvaldrjarl), work began on the construction of St. Magnus Cathedral, which today dominates the townscape. Kirkwall did not become Scottish until 1468, when James III acquired the Orkneys.

Nowadays, Kirkwall is an energetic town full of stores, pubs, restaurants and much more. Architecture and historical artifacts abound in this lively port town. At the turn of the year, pagan Ba'Games are played in Kirkwall and Stromness. Two opposing teams try to get a ball across the town and into the opponent's goal. Kirkwall is also the home of the world-famous Highland Park whiskey. There is also another distillery just outside the town called Scapa.

Once everyone was back on board at 18:30, the *HANSEATIC inspiration* set course for Aberdeen, 131 nautical miles away. In keeping with this destination, expert Robert Ostermayr introduced us to the history of the UK's northernmost city. The city surprises with its stark contrasts, such as the historic and protected town center on the one hand and the very dynamic and hip harbor district of Footie on the other.



**Saturday, 11.05.2024**  
**Aberdeen, Scotland, Great Britain**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
57° 08'	N02° 03' W	1021	12	10	86	S 4
Sunrise: 04:56				Sunset: 21:14		

In the early hours of the morning, we entered the port of Aberdeen, which is located just outside and south of the city. Aberdeen is one of the 32 council areas in Scotland and has two universities, of which the University of Aberdeen was founded in 1495 as the third university in Scotland. The city has been important since the 12th century. Typical of the cityscape is the silver-grey granite from the former surrounding quarries. When the sun shines, the mica in the granite begins to glisten, which is why Aberdeen is often referred to as Silver City, or Flower City, as the city has repeatedly won the "Britain in Bloom" competition thanks to its flower gardens. Since the first oil fields in the North Sea were opened up in the early 1970s, the port metropolis quickly developed into the main supply center for the offshore platforms. When visibility was good, the oil drilling platforms off the coast could be seen with the naked eye.



The excursions started straight after breakfast. There was also a regular shuttle bus from the port to the city for those who wanted to see Aberdeen on their own. The excursions included Balmoral Castle, the Scottish country residence of the British royal family. Queen Elizabeth II in particular always felt very much at home here. She regularly came here in the summer.

Balmoral Castle is also the place where she died two years ago. Since then, her son King Charles the Third has reigned, continuing his mother's tradition of summer stays at Balmoral Castle.

After the excursions, we cast off punctually at 2 p.m. and set course for the island of Helgoland, 379 nautical miles away. On the way, at 4 p.m., our expert Prof. Dr. Thomas Spengler gave us the opportunity to learn more about the causes and effects of the Gulf Stream. He explained how the global ocean current is driven by wind, temperature and salinity, what factors have changed this current in the past and what effects climate change could have.

After dinner, Captain Jörn Gottschalk invited guests to the Captain's Farewell Cocktail in the HanseAtrium at 9:30 pm. At this traditional event, the captain reviews the voyage





and thanks his entire crew. Fittingly, the *HANSEATIC inspiration's* shanty crew choir performed well-known and lesser-known sea shanties, encouraging guests to sing along. Between the various songs, there was a raffle for the souvenir sea chart of this voyage. The guests diligently bought raffle tickets and the proceeds are traditionally divided up. This trip, 30% of the proceeds will go to The Ocean Cleanup. This organization collects plastic waste floating on the surface of the sea and in rivers and then transports it for recycling. The other 70% goes into the community coffers

of the great HANSEATIC inspiration crew. We use this money to organize excursions, parties, shuttle buses and gifts for the benefit of the entire crew. So this penultimate evening on board ended in a very good mood. After seeing very strong auroras far into the south of Germany last night, one or two of us will go stalking tonight. The hope is that, unlike last night, it might not be so cloudy so that we can see this natural spectacle.



**Sunday, 12.05.2024**  
**Heligoland, Germany**

Midday position		Air pressure hPa	Temperature (°C)		Humidity %	Wind Beaufort
Width	Length		Air	Water		
54° 48'	N06° 12' E	1024	11	12	88	SE 4
Sunrise: 05:29				Sunset: 21:21		



After the exuberant evening, many guests took it a little easier this morning and it took a while for the ship to come to life. At 11 a.m., the expedition team hosted a recap of the voyage in the HanseAtrium and their experts Dr. Wolfgang Wenzel and Prof. Dr. Thomas Spengler reviewed the voyage. Our on-board meteorologist once again discussed the unusually beautiful weather. An area of high pressure had accompanied us over Great Britain for almost the entire trip, giving us this stable weather. For the biologist, there was also plenty to see, both in terms of flora and fauna. From the north coast of Spain across the Isles of Scilly through the Irish Sea around Scotland, the flora had adapted to the environment. While it still seemed subtropical on the Isles of Scilly, the landscape on the west coast of Scotland was much more barren. Puffins and many other bird sightings were certainly the biggest highlights of the trip, although there was also plenty to explore culturally, from the beginnings of Christianity on the islands to the Beatles.

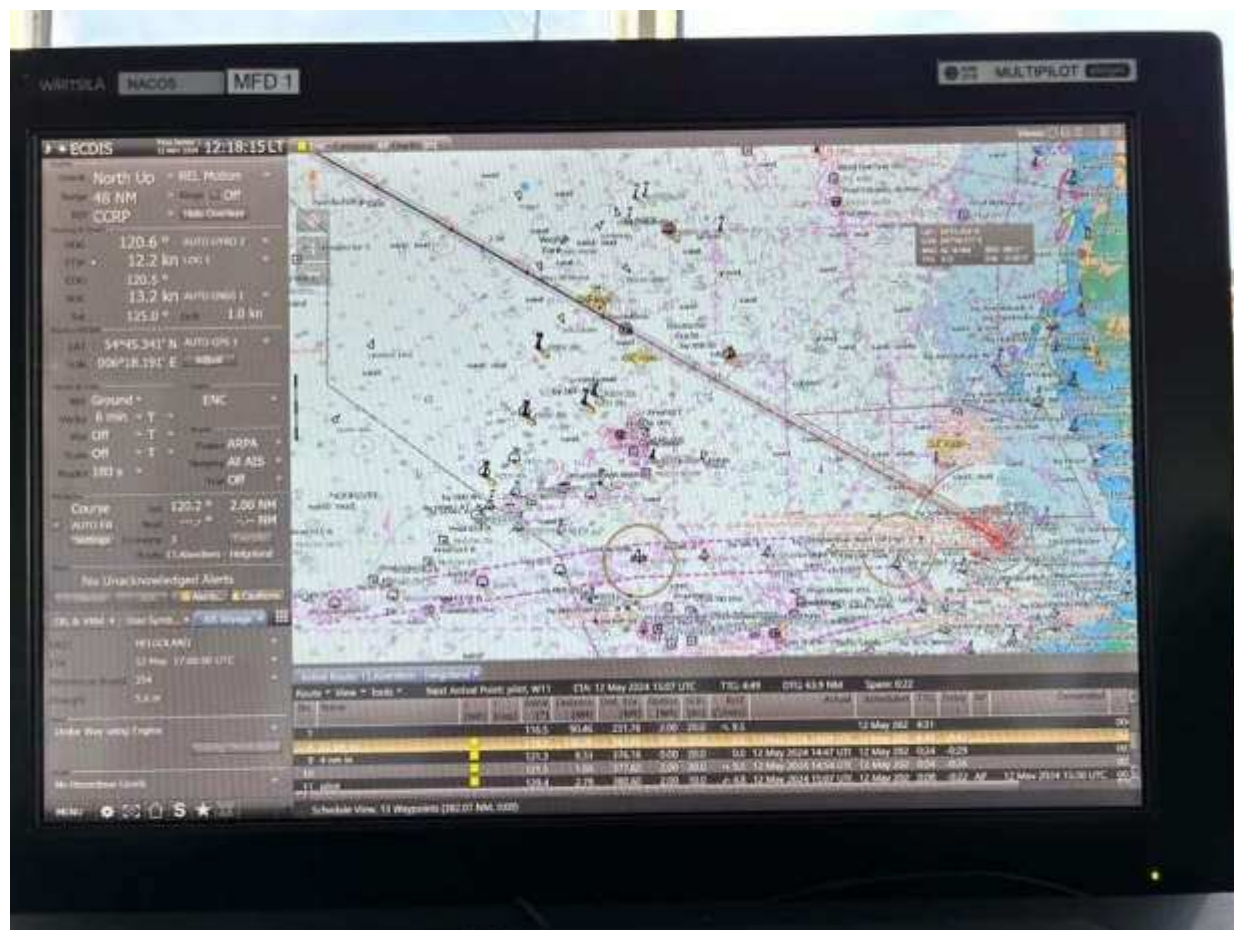
At 2 p.m., expert Robert Ostermayr invited us to the HanseAtrium for a lecture on Heligoland, our last stop before Bremerhaven. Only around 1,400 people live on the "red rock", which is only one square kilometer in size, belongs to the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein and lies around 70 kilometers off the German coast. The main island is divided into Unterland, Mittelland and Oberland. To the

Oberland can be reached either on foot via 184 steps or by elevator. The magnificent view makes a walk along the 2.8-kilometre cliff path particularly worthwhile. It also leads past what is probably Heligoland's most famous sight - the "Long Anna", a narrow red sandstone block. While the main island is made up of rocks, the neighboring island "Düne" is a small beach and bathing paradise with grey seals. The animals live here in a large colony and have no fear of contact, as they have been banned from hunting since the 1970s.

During the so-called guillemot leap in June, the few-week-old chicks of the common guillemot leave their nests and jump from the "red rock" up to 40 meters into the depths. At this age, the birds are still unable to fly and land in the waves of the North Sea or in the rocky mudflats. The parents provide the offspring at sea with food. In addition to guillemots, bird enthusiasts can also observe kittiwakes, fulmars and gannets on Heligoland.

Heligoland also has a culinary specialty to offer: In addition to freshly caught sea fish and lobster, the specialties include the Helgoländer Knieper. The claws of the crab are a delicacy that you should definitely try. The island is also a shopping paradise, as it is a duty-free zone and exempt from VAT.

The island was bombed during the Second World War and in 1947 the British blew up a large part of it to destroy the military installations. The island museum, which is located just behind the seawater swimming pool, provides information about these events through pictures and objects. The museum also includes a series of colorful replica lobster shacks. Fishermen once stored their equipment there. Today, a maritime mile with small exhibitions, art and bistros invites visitors to stroll and browse. There are various exhibitions, for example on the history of the post office or the seaside resort.



At 4 p.m. there was one last expert lecture. This time, Prof. Dr. Thomas Spengler explained the phenomenon of tides. The gravitational pull of the moon and sun causes these regular fluctuations in the sea level, which can sometimes reach extremes of up to 15 meters. On this trip, we passed through regions that already have a considerable tidal range. Liverpool, for example, can boast a tidal range of up to 10 meters. It was probably clear to everyone that we don't live on a disc, but it was perhaps surprising for some that our planet is not a sphere. The technical term for this is a geoid.

We arrived on the island of Helgoland at 18:30 and our tender boats started their regular shuttle service between the ship and the island. Many had taken the opportunity to explore the island on their own before everyone had to go back on board at 10 pm. As the shore leave was over dinner time, our hotel offered a late snack buffet in the HanseAtrium so that we didn't have to go to bed hungry on the last evening.

At 22:30 the anchor was weighed and we sailed the remaining 41 nautical miles towards Bremerhaven.

**Monday, 13.05.2024**  
**Bremerhaven, Germany**

We arrive in Bremerhaven early in the morning and disembark after breakfast.

As there is also an editorial deadline for this travel diary, the daily schedule of the last day presented here is based on speculation. If there have been any last-minute changes, please add them yourself, dear guests, in handwriting in the "Personal notes" section. Stay healthy and see you next time!

Yours sincerely,  
Thomas Spengler