

GRY01 – Grytviken

54° 15' S, 36° 45' W

Grytviken has the only accessible whaling station on South Georgia.

Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands Visitor Site Guide



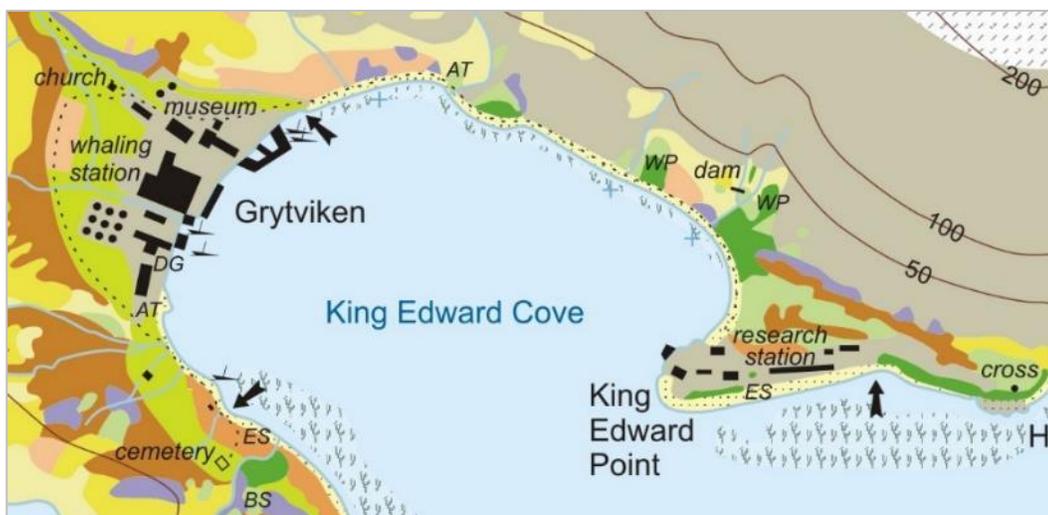
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Key Features

- Grytviken whaling station
- Museum & gift shop
- Post Office
- Historic seat of Government
- Church and cemetery
- Shackleton's grave and memorial cross



Description



TOPOGRAPHY

King Edward Cove is a sheltered cove within Cumberland East Bay. Grytviken lies at the head of the cove with the promontory of King Edward Point to the east. The cove is surrounded by steep walled mountains of Mt Duse (510m), Mt Hodges (605m) and Brown Mountain (330m).

FAUNA

King Edward Cove is a haul out and breeding area for fur seals and elephant seals. South Georgia pintails, pipits, King penguins may be observed as well as kelp gulls and Antarctic terns.

FLORA

A number of species of non-native flora are established around King Edward Cove, which are subject to an ongoing control programme. Biosecurity is particularly important when leaving Grytviken, to prevent non-native species being spread to other parts of South Georgia.

HERITAGE

After a project to remove asbestos and other harmful materials from the site in 2003/4 Grytviken is now safely accessible and is the only such accessible whaling station on South Georgia.

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Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

Track erosion.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Spread of non-native species. Disturbance of wildlife. Accelerated erosion. Littering.

Landing Requirements

VESSELS*

Max pax on board: 850

Vessels at a time: 1

Comments: Maximum of 2 ship visits per day.

*A vessel is defined as having a load line length of more than 24 metres.

VISITORS

CEMETERY: Maximum 100 people inside the cemetery. Larger groups can gather outside the fence for ceremonies etc.

CHURCH: Maximum 100 people at a time, or 206 for an organised service, in which case two fire marshals should be appointed and be familiar with the fire exits and extinguishers. Maximum 20 people upstairs on the balcony.

MUSEUM & GIFT SHOP: Maximum 100 people at a time inside. The Museum at Grytviken has displays depicting the whaling history, natural history and exploration of South Georgia. It will be opened for visiting ships. Other visitors can arrange a time for it to be opened.

POST OFFICE: The Post Office will be opened at Grytviken or KEP for sales of postcards, stamps, first day covers and Government merchandise. The Post Office located behind the Museum at Grytviken will generally be opened for cruise ships. Contact the Deputy Postmaster via the Government Officer to arrange a time. It is sometimes possible to arrange for the Post Office to be brought on board larger ships.

CURRENCY: The Museum gift shop and Post Office both accept US Dollars, Sterling cash / cheques (drawn on UK Bank), Euros cash, Credit and Debit Cards.

HOPE POINT (Site of the original Shackleton Memorial Cross): The cross on Hope Point, erected by Shackleton's men shortly after he died, can be accessed by zodiac landing at the shingle beach at King Edward Point after consultation with the Government Officers. The cross is now a replica, but the original is on display in the museum.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

The landing beaches are situated next to the sealing ship Dias in front of the Museum. At the Cemetery, and at the Eastern end of the shingle beach at King Edward Point for access to Hope Point (denoted by arrows on map).

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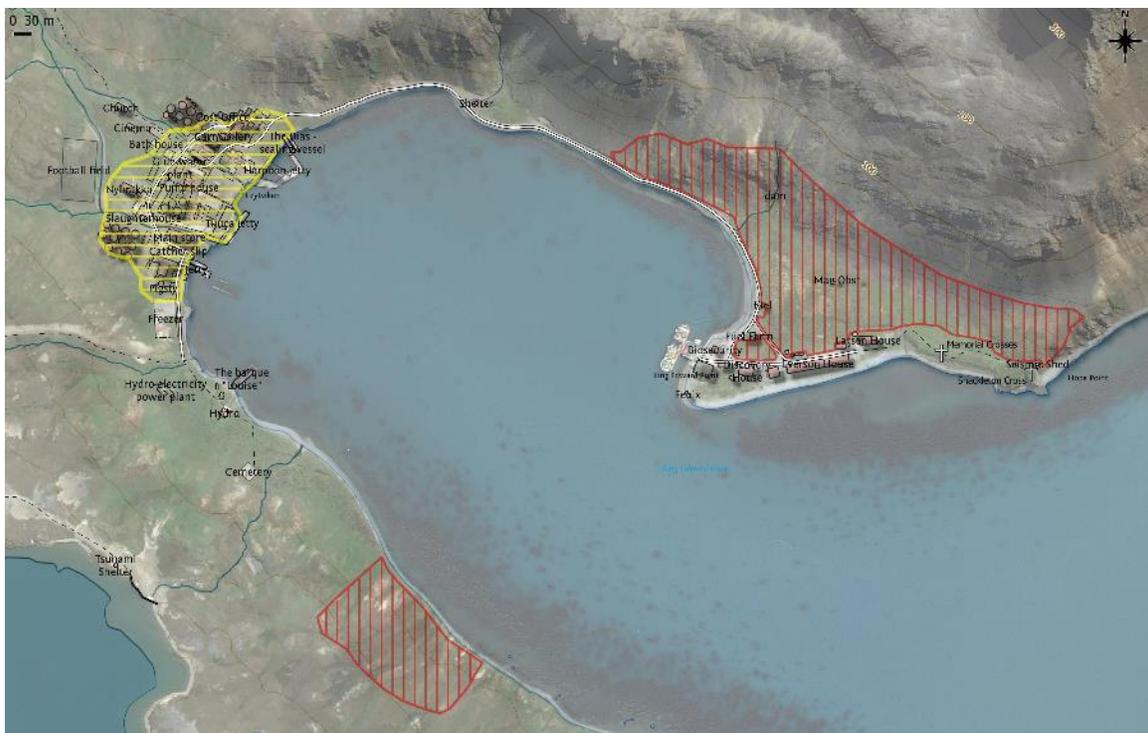
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The Harpon jetty (in front of the Museum) is dangerous and not to be used. The Tijuca jetty in the centre of the station may be used with care by larger launches and tenders at the discretion of the Master.

CLOSED AREA

INTRODUCED PLANT SPECIES: We are controlling the invasive plant bittercress which is found across King Edward Point and is also present in an area to the SE of the cemetery. Also under control is procumbent pearlwort in Grytviken. To help us stop non-native plants spreading to other parts of the island:

- Stick to the tracks when visiting KEP.
- Stay out of the bittercress area to the SE of the cemetery which is clearly marked with orange painted wooden posts and the marked area at King Edward Point.
- Don't sit or place backpacks on the ground at Grytviken.



Bittercress areas marked in red (no access), and procumbent pearlwort in yellow (access permitted but please don't sit or place backpacks on the ground).

GUIDED WALKING AREA

There is an extended walking route between Maiviken and Grytviken. Please see specific guidelines for details.

FREE ROAMING AREA

Visitors may roam freely within Grytviken and around to the cemetery taking care to the likely presence of fur seals.

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Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE*

WILDLIFE: Do not harass wildlife. Keep a respectful distance from penguins, seals and birds. If you make them change their behaviour, you are too close. Move slowly and stay in small groups. Do not feed birds or animals.

GRYTVIKEN WHALING STATION: is open to visitors, however please note:

- You may enter the Church, Post Office and Museum buildings, and visit the Cemetery.
- Do not enter any other buildings; they are in use as workshops, stores and accommodation.
- Stay at ground level and do not climb on any structures.
- Do not board the wrecked historic sealing ships that have been buried at the water's edge.
- Avoid whale oil tanks in high winds as they are liable to move.

VISITING KING EDWARD POINT: Please consult the Government Officer before visiting King Edward Point, which is a working scientific station. On some occasions, particularly if there is a ship working cargo or construction work ongoing, it is not safe or convenient for you to visit and you will be advised of a better time.

When you do visit, please do not enter any buildings unless specifically invited and accompanied by a resident. All the buildings are used for accommodation, offices, workshops and stores.

* GSGSSI Code of Conduct and Wildlife Protection Guidelines must be followed at all times.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

BIOSECURITY: The Biosecurity measures explained in the BIOSECURITY HANDBOOK are to be observed at Grytviken as much as the rest of the island. Indeed, the prevalence of non-native plant species in Grytviken and KEP make biosecurity measures even more critical to prevent their spread to other more pristine parts of South Georgia.

UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE: If you find anything that may be unexploded ordnance left from the 1982 war and subsequent military training exercises: DO NOT TOUCH IT. Make a note of its position, ideally with GPS and describe the object, take a photo. Mark its position with a nearby pile of stones, a stick, etc. without touching the item itself. Inform the Government Officer, who will arrange for its proper and safe disposal.

ARTEFACTS: All natural and man-made artefacts on South Georgia are protected by law. Take no souvenirs – this includes whalebone, reindeer antlers, harpoon heads, plants, or animal remains.

TOILETS / WC: There are limited lavatory facilities at Grytviken Museum. There are no public conveniences at King Edward Point.

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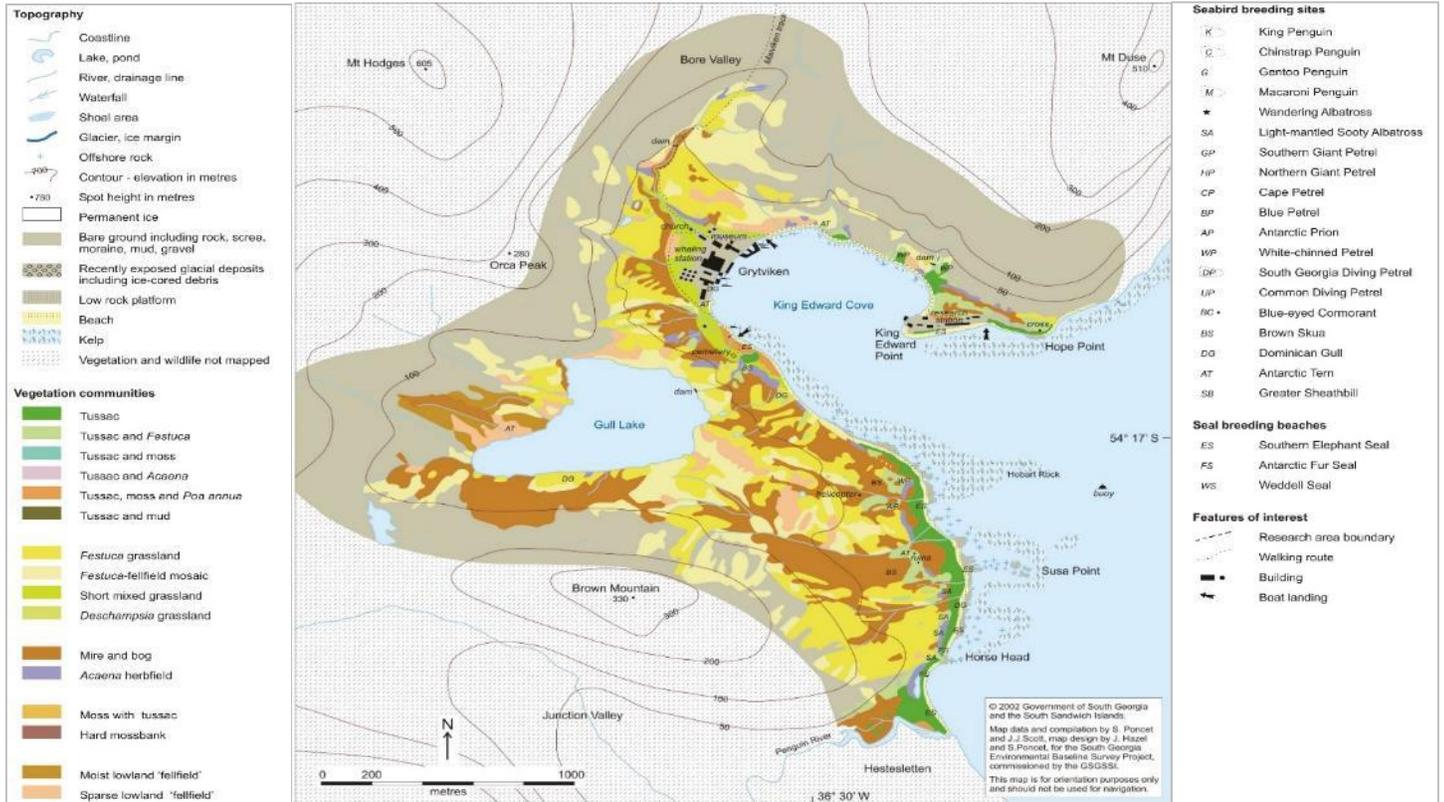
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