

East Greenland Summer 2013 – Steffan Danino, Theo Borgvin Weiss, Nick Seccombe, Fraser Davies.

Our expedition left for Greenland on the 8th August, flying via Reykjavik with our personal kit, mountaineering equipment and over two hundred dehydrated meals. The main aim of our four week expedition was to complete the first crossing between Tuno and Sermilik Fjord. We arrived in Kulusuk, East Greenland to collect our tents, stoves, rifles, fuel and the rest of our food, and set out the following morning to Tuno. We set up a cache with our excess food and equipment and set out from “Basecamp” towards Sermilik Fjord. The journey took us nine days in total, covering around 120 kilometres, carrying all our food, fuel and equipment, taking shifts to stay awake each night to keep watch for polar bears. It included crossing two lengthy valleys carpeted with brutal moraine, a gently sloping glacier, mossy tundra and a glassy fjord.

We arrived at ice choked Sermilik Fjord with barely enough food to complete our return journey, and returned to our Basecamp as quickly as we could to preserve our food, reaching it just as the good weather descended into rain. We decided we would strike out for the nearby Inuit town of Kuummiut, via a close-by hunting hut, but were prevented by high tides, so we reached Kuummiut a few days earlier than planned. For the first time in weeks, we slept the night through, safe from polar bears among the people and huskies of the town. We spent four wonderful days in Kuummiut, enjoying the company of the friendly local people and exploring the town and its surroundings. The first night out of Kuummiut was spent around a fire (a luxury in the treeless tundra) as the northern lights blazed across the star-strewn sky.

Of course such excellent conditions couldn't last, and as poor weather moved in over the next two days, bringing wind, rain and snow, with more forecast, we resolved to return to the safety of Kulusuk three days earlier than planned. We slept in a borrowed hut in Kulusuk the following night, and spent the next morning drying our gear. The next day, we tagged along with our friend, boatman, and local hunter Georg Utuaq as he drove his boat to Sermilik Fjord to hunt seals. The following day we trapped inside by a violent storm, feeling the walls of our hut shake around us, until we were invited by Georg to share dinner with his family in his comfortable house where his wife served us the stewed seal we had caught the previous day. We spent the next day walking up a mountain towering over Kulusuk, looking over the town and out across the icy North Atlantic, followed the next day by packing our gear. Georg kindly invited us to his granddaughter's 1st birthday party, where we enjoyed a few Greenlandic delicacies (including killer whale and dried seal). The next day saw us fly out of Kulusuk to Reykjavik., after the most challenging, hardest, and best trip any of us had yet experienced.

This expedition was the culmination of over a years hard work and planning. We would like to thank the Gino Watkins Fund, The Arctic Club, the Andrew Croft Memorial Fund, the Sandy and Zorica Glenn Charitable Trust, and the AC Irvine Fund for their generous support, as well as Matt Spenceley, Helen Russell, and Georg Utuaq, for all their help and advice. The expedition couldn't have gone ahead without them!

