
CAMBRIDGE GREENLAND
GLACIOLOGY EXPEDITION
2002

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A scientific, mountaineering and ski-trekking expedition to Louise Boyd Land, Northeast Greenland, 4th July – 28th August 2002.



PATRONS: Prof. Mike Hambrey, University of Aberystwyth, Glaciologist
Prof. Peter Friend, University of Cambridge, Geologist
Mr David Hempleman-Adams OBE, Explorer

The Cambridge Greenland Glaciology Expedition 2002 visited a previously untouched area of Louise Boyd Land in Northeast Greenland. The expedition involved glaciological and geological work, alongside mountaineering and skiing objectives. The expedition's aims, once in location, were to carry out a programme of field work into the glaciology and geology of the area; to attempt first ascents on four 2000m summits close to the base camp; and to trek 200km south to the fjords, for a boat journey back to civilisation. All these aims were ultimately carried out successfully. The team overcame initial problems on arriving in Greenland, when it became apparent that some of the most essential freight (fuel containers, tents, and some food) had gone missing in transit. Replacement of these with borrowed items, thanks to Clive Johnson and CASP, luckily meant that the expedition could still go ahead.

We saw nobody outside of the team for nearly two months. We were entirely self-sufficient, and when we skied south, we hauled all our equipment, food and fuel in pulks behind us - sledges that weighed up to one and a half times our own body weight. The weather varied from blue skies and sunshine, to white-out conditions with temperatures of -15°C and winds of 25 knots.

The first part of the expedition was relatively civilised, with a fixed base camp and spectacular views down to the Hamberg Gletscher to the north. We took regular measurements for the glaciological research project that we had devised – an

investigation into ice mechanics around glacier confluence areas – as well as producing a detailed geological map of the area. We also completed six new mountaineering and rock-climbing routes, including four previously unclimbed summits. The climbing was undertaken in the evenings in order to take advantage of better snow conditions in the colder temperatures.



In the second half of the expedition we skied south for over 8 hours per day, dragging our pulks, heading for Dickson Fjord for a pre-arranged pick-up by boat. At the end of each day, we put up the tents, cooked and ate, marking progress using GPS and aerial photographs. The conditions were very bad in places – there was substantial meltwater on the surface of the glaciers, and at times we had to wade knee-deep in glacial rivers, our sledges floating after us. Often we fell into puddles of melt water disguised by thin ice covers and a dusting of snow. At one really wide, deep river, we lashed pulks and empty fuel cans together to make a raft, and paddled across using snow shovels, then set up a belay system to haul the equipment across in same way. The icecap was at times dreary, so grey that it merged into the sky; and at others magnificent, a brilliant, glistening white. Towards the end of August, the 24hr daylight began to turn into dusk/ dawn, and the sky, the mountains, and the vast expanse of the icecap turned pink and red. We crossed through huge crevasse fields, with vertical, blue walls of ice plunging downwards, and the crash of falling icicles disturbed by our skis.

The final part of the expedition – getting from the icecap down into the fjords – involved ferrying all equipment (including pulks) on our backs over the hills at the margins of the icecap and down to the sea. A fortuitous meeting with the Arctic Club's John Thorogood and Ian Steen (who initially thought we were muskox!) saved us having to spend too long finding the route down. We were met at Dickson Fjord by Clive Johnson and enjoyed a bumpy journey over two days back along the fjords to Mesters Vig by Zodiac, where we bargained hard labour (painting the mess room exterior) for space to pitch our tents.



We are very grateful to the Arctic Club, along with our other sponsors, for helping us to experience this amazing adventure.

Chris Lockyear
Madeleine Humphreys
Natalie Clegg
Derek Marshall
Sam Harrison