



THE
GLASGOW ACADEMY

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East Greenland Expedition 2009



EXPEDITION LEADER: NEAL GWYNNE FRGS

The Glasgow Academy East Greenland Expedition

26th June to 24th July 2009

Leaders Neal Gwynne
 Alan Halewood
 Sally Ozanne
 Nigel Williams

Pupils Phillip Clarke
 Allen Farrington
 Craig Henry
 Olivia Mason
 Sam Reilly
 Kenny Robertson
 Jane Rutherford
 Robbie Scott-Larsen
 Fraser Stark
 Jamie Swanson
 Rachel Turner
 Adam Watson



Nimis est numquam satis

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FOREWORD



I have only seen Greenland from 30,000 feet, staring down out of an aeroplane window en route for America, marvelling at the fjords, glaciers and immense ice cap covering the world's largest island. One day, I hope, I will get to Greenland and see the place properly for myself. This report has certainly whetted my appetite, man-eating mosquitoes notwithstanding. The Glasgow Academy team clearly had a wonderful time and I feel honoured to have been patron to such a successful expedition.

Last winter I had the pleasure of meeting most of the team in Glasgow. It was obvious already then that they were a delightful, energetic bunch of individuals. What shines out from their report is a sense of fun – not mindless fun, but the pleasure of working together in a very beautiful, remote landscape, enjoying new experiences, coping with inevitable moments of frustration and boredom, suffering cheerfully through ‘the bivvy from hell’, thrilling to the incomparable reward of climbing peaks never trodden before.

Another impressive aspect of the report is its detailed account of very thorough organisation. I wish I could say that my own expeditions were run so efficiently. Glasgow Academy is very lucky to have Neal Gwynne on the staff, organising, inspiring and roping in other highly experienced leaders such as my old friend Nigel Williams, from Glenmore Lodge.

As well as climbing peaks, the expedition did some fine scientific research and was only the third team ever to carry out a botanical survey of the Faxe Sø valley, in the process finding two species never recorded in the area before. I wonder how many school expeditions can boast that kind of research? Whether it is recording the minutiae of marginal arctic plant life, or finding a route up an unexplored valley, or standing on a previously untouched summit, the experience can only enhance young people's sense of wonder and – as one expedition member puts it towards the end of this report, leave them full of enthusiasm for limitless future possibilities.

Stephen Venables

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim

To explore a remote Arctic area.

Objectives:

To climb mountains in the area including some first ascents

The coastal fringes of Gåseland have been visited by a small number of scientists and an even smaller number have walked up the valley to Faxe Sø. This expedition plans to set up a base camp at Faxe Sø in order that the area beyond this lake can be explored; all the peaks surrounding this area are unclimbed. Both single and multi-day expeditions will be undertaken to attempt ascents of these glaciated peaks. It is hoped that through the extensive pre-expedition preparation programme, as well as the expedition itself, pupils will become independent mountaineers who will have gained necessary mountaineering and risk management skills in order that they can go on to organise and lead their own expeditions in the UK and overseas.

To collect botanical samples

Due to the unexplored nature of the region that this expedition plans to visit, it is important that information on the botany of this area can be gathered. The expedition will collect a range of herbarium specimens for Dr Geoffrey Halliday at Lancaster University with two specific objectives. Currently, the only montane record (over 700m) for the whole of Scoresby Sund is of *Papaver radicum* from central Renland. Therefore the expedition will be aiming to gather collections from this altitude or higher. Secondly, *Salix glauca* and *S. arctica* meet in Scoresby Sund and hybridise; however, reliable records of the hybrid are few. This expedition will be collecting herbarium specimens of tall (more than 40cm high) willows.

To collect entomological samples

Anecdotal reports and preliminary data suggest that some populations of the Greenlandic Seed Bug (*Nysius groenlandicus*) are composed of a very high proportion of females. This expedition plans to collect specimens of this species using pooters to investigate whether this is the case. Samples will be brought back to the UK for Dr Matthew Tinsley at the University of Stirling. This project seeks to investigate the extent of these female biases in Greenlandic populations.

To experience Inuit culture

Two days will be spent in the Inuit town of Iltoqqortoormiit interacting with the local people. The population, of around 600, rely on hunting and fishing for their livelihood and this will be the only opportunity for pupils to meet Greenlandics as Gåseland is not inhabited.

EXPEDITION MEMBERS

The profiles below were written by the expedition members about each other prior to the expedition.

Phillip Clarke



Phillip is infamous for his raucous laughter and eccentric sense of humour, but will attempt to tone these down for the expedition! His prior mountain walking experience includes several Munros, back-tracking the West Highland Way and navigating for his Duke of Edinburgh's Award expedition group, for better or for worse. In his spare time remaining after school, homework, expedition meetings, etc, he enjoys listening to music and playing guitar and singing (and also playing ukulele - now will that fit in the rucksack?), especially in an amateur band comprising of several members of

his local scout troop - screeched harmonies a speciality. Phillip is also an avid reader and enjoys playing chess.

Allen Farrington

Allen is one of the many strange people in the world who enjoys running more than eating. He is a skinny, tall, fun guy who enjoys exposing other people's faults for comedic purpose. Always making everyone else laugh, he will be the centre point of humour on the trip. He aspires to be a film director because he was off sick the day the rest of us got careers advice.



Neal Gwynne



Neal will be the point man of the expedition... ironic considering he is about 0.5 of the height of most other members on the trip. The first man to convert the 'Waggle Dance' into human form, he has many and varied achievements including abseiling into the school assembly hall. Despite his unfortunate education at Robert Gordon's College, he has been accepted into The Glasgow Academy's community but not without considerable reservation. Known to be a sadist ('feel the pain and learn to love it'), he is undoubtedly the best dressed teacher at The Glasgow Academy.

Mr Gwynne only dresses in the finest silk waistcoats, Italian shoes, and shiniest pair of hiking boots on the market. He holds the *Mountain Instructor Award* and *International Mountain Leader* qualifications and has led youth expeditions to Greenland, Iceland, Spitsbergen, Kenya, Peru and Thailand.

Alan Halewood

Alan is a mountaineering instructor and was, until recently, manager of The Ice Factor mountaineering centre. Now, as well as acting as technical advisor to the climbing walls in Glasgow, Aberdeen and The Ice Factor, he works freelance for organisations such as Glenmore Lodge. He holds the *Mountain Instructor Certificate* and the *International Mountain Leader Award*. A former Naval Officer, Alan has been instructing full time for twelve years. A self-confessed expedition junkie (23 since 1990) he has climbed on all seven continents and made the first ascent of ten previously unclimbed peaks. In addition to the last Glasgow Academy



expedition to Greenland, his experience of working in the mountains with young people includes three months working for Raleigh International in Chile; six weeks in Greenland for the British Schools Exploring Society; three months in Antarctica, South Georgia, The Falklands and Patagonia, also for BSES and shorter expeditions with young people to Bolivia, Kenya, Tanzania, Morocco, India and Pakistan.

Craig Henry

Although Craig may be verging on ginger, his unique sense of humour, and very genuine and enthusiastic character, will make up for this slight flaw in his appearance. Also likely to be stylish at all times during the expedition, due to his keen belief that 'You can breathe new life into an old outfit with the use of accessories'. This sense of style has previously caught the Rector's attention.



Olivia Mason



Olivia loves the outdoors: some might say a little too much! Whether it be trekking up a mountain or negotiating her way through the rapids, she's done it all. Always on the go with that shaky leg of hers, she seems to live on nervous energy. She's a geek with a thing for Geography and rucksacks. Strangely, she also likes fashion and her lifelong aim is to emulate a certain TV presenter. Her only weakness is time-keeping and, despite owning a watch, she seems oblivious to its existence. Let's just hope that she makes it in time for Greenland.

Sally Ozanne

Sally has been working in the outdoors for the last eight years and holds the *Mountain Instructor Award* and *Winter Mountain leader* qualifications. Sally has led a number of expeditions with young people to a variety of places including Patagonia, Bolivia, Nepal and Northern India: another expedition junkie. She was on the night watch scheme at Glenmore Lodge, Scotland's National Outdoor Activities Centre in 2005 and is now an associate for the centre. Sally is currently living and working as a freelance outdoor instructor based in the Lake District.



Sam Reilly



Sam is a retired old man trapped in a 16 year-old's body. He whiles away his Sundays drinking hot cups of coffee and reading the Sunday paper in his comfy rocking chair. His Saturdays, however, are a totally different story - he hits the town and uses his talent for shredding on the guitar to seduce beautiful women. Sam is an organised and intelligent chap and has nine '1s' at Standard Grade to prove it; he thinks that he is 'all that.' It is not hard to pull him back down to earth though - just remind him that his hundreds of CDs are arranged in alphabetical order.

Kenny Robertson

Kenny will be the navigator of the group. He has a natural sense of direction, shown by the Garmin SatNav that can be found in his car. Due to having a tendency of forgetting where he parked his car, he has also been known to take photographs of the route back to it when he goes into town. Kenny is a hard-working, enthusiastic individual with a love for guitar and music, especially Metallica. He also has a close, although not so loveable, relationship with hospitals, having paid many a visit to A&E. Currently working in Tiso, he has suddenly become very popular amongst the group...nothing to do with the 40% discount he has of course.



Jane Rutherford



Jane (aka G.I.Jane) is a determined and energetic person: whether it's rock-climbing or trekking around Iceland she manages to keep people going with her singing and constant bizarre chat - pearls anyone? Don't let her ditzy demeanour fool you: she has many other sides. As well as being mad about the outdoors, she is a car fanatic and dreams one day of having an Aston Martin DB9 and a TVR Tuscan S among her collection. She never stops eating, albeit slightly slower than everyone else. In Iceland all she ate was boil in the bag, slightly crunchy, spaghetti bolognese...delicious! In the future she aspires to become a doctor and dreams of being a doctor on expeditions.

Robbie Scott-Larsen

Robbie thinks himself to be somewhat the joker of the pack, and will doubtless be the perpetrator of many offensive jokes, becoming more graphic as the month progresses. He participates in hockey, cricket and tennis, and having completed the West Highland Way relatively unscathed, he reckons that he is equal to the challenges of Greenland. Robbie hopes to add to his list of achievements by outgrowing Mr Gwynne before next summer, and it is shaping up to be a close contest.



Fraser Stark



Fraser is one of the most courteous characters on the expedition, always willing to help or make time for anyone. He has always had a great love for the outdoors, seizing every opportunity he can to get out and have fun. He recently tamed the West Highland Way with friends and has completed Silver D of E. He plays hockey for the Academy's 1st XI and wastes his summer term shooting. He also sails and is a black belt in karate. This hot shot may be useful in the unlikely event we are faced with a polar bear. Whether in the classroom or trekking across a glacier, Fraz will always be lending a hand and keeping spirits up.



Jamie Swanson

Jamie is a big loveable guy who is far too cool for rock-climbing equipment. He enjoys picking up rugby injuries and eating other people's food. While he is known for spontaneous bench-pressing, his real passion is drama. He is a regular in school productions, in which he participates so that he can spend time with girls who are much more attractive than he is. He aspires to play professional rugby because he was also off sick the day the rest of us got career advice.

Rachel Turner

Rachel can be described as intelligent, hard-working, sunny, outdoorsy, a coffee-addict and a general all-rounder; she is also a valued member of the RAF, yet has her heart set on being a vet. Rachel loves dogs: the fact she is prepared to tear herself away from her beloved retrievers for an entire month shows just how determined she is to go to Greenland. Thanks to Rachel's dedication to her fitness programme, her aim to participate in all the outdoor activities on offer and her optimistic and down-to-earth attitude, Rachel will be an invaluable team member to have with us in Greenland as someone to keep up the morale, whilst teaching us about the formation of each glacial feature. Just watch out for her and those vicious sled dogs...



Adam Watson



Adam is sure to keep the team spirit up as he is quite a comedian. As well as playing hockey for the 1st XI, Adam is a keen walker and climber, scampering around the mountains with the finesse of a young gazelle. He can, when the occasion arises, get his head down and get on with the job in hand, whatever it may be. Adam has already featured twice in Glasgow newspapers due to his fundraising attempts for the expedition.

Nigel Williams

Nigel is the Head of Training at Glenmore Lodge, Scotland's National Outdoor Activities Centre, and holds the *Mountain Instructor Certificate*, *International Mountain Leader* and *BASI Grade 2 Nordic* qualifications. He has been teaching in the outdoors for thirty years in the military and civilian fields. His experience of working with young people has ranged from being an outdoor instructor at a Local Education Authority centre specialising in primary age children, to being the training consultant to World Challenge and leading two youth trips to the Himalayas for them. He was also the climbing leader with a Scottish Scout expedition to Mount McKinley, Alaska. Other expeditions include climbing trips to the Himalayas (including two to the west ridge of Everest), South Georgia, Alps, Norway, Turkey and Morocco. Nigel was a leader on The Academy's expedition to Greenland in 2006 and completed an ice-cap crossing of Greenland in the summer of 2008.



ITINERARY

Date	From	To	Notes
Fri 26 th June	Glasgow	Reykjavik	1400 Departure from TGA to Manchester Airport 2205 Icelandair flight FI441 Manchester to 2335 Keflavik, Iceland Bus from Keflavik Airport to campsite Night on Reykjavik campsite
Sat 27 th June	Reykjavik	Gåseland Base Camp	1000 Air Iceland flight NY297 Reykjavik to 1155 Constable Pynt, Greenland 1600 onwards: Twin Otter flights to Gåseland
Sun 28 th June	Base Camp	Base Camp	Training: glacier travel, firearms, communications equipment
Mon 29 th June	Base Camp	Base Camp	Recees: valleys B and C
Tue 30 th June	Base Camp	Base Camp	Load carry up valley A to Advanced Base Camp
Wed 1 st July	Base Camp	Camp 1	Move to Camp 1
Thu 2 nd July	Camp 1	Camp 1	Tent bound in poor weather
Fri 3 rd July	Camp 1	Base Camp	Return to Base Camp
Sat 4 th July	Base Camp	Base Camp	Load carry up valley A to Advanced Base Camp
Sun 5 th July	Base Camp	Advanced Base Camp	Move to Advanced Base Camp
Mon 6 th July	Advanced Base Camp	Advanced Base Camp	Ascent of <i>Mount Glasgow</i>
Tue 7 th July	Advanced Base Camp	Advanced Base Camp	AM: Rest day PM: load carry up valley/failed to cross river
Wed 8 th July	Advanced Base Camp	Advanced Base Camp	Rest day
Thu 9 th July	Advanced Base Camp	Camp 2	Move to Camp 2
Fri 10 th July	Camp 2	Camp 2	Ascent of <i>Tiraluin</i>
Sat 11 th July	Camp 2	Advanced Base Camp	Return to Advanced Base Camp
Sun 12 th July	Advanced Base Camp	Base Camp	Return to Base Camp
Mon 13 th July	Base Camp	Base Camp	Rest day
Tue 14 th July	Base Camp	Camp 1	Move to Camp 1
Wed 15 th July	Camp 1	Camp 1	Ascent of <i>Academy Peak</i>
Thu 16 th July	Camp 1	Camp 1	Training: crampons, glacier travel, Moulin lowering
Fri 17 th July	Camp 1	Base Camp	Return to Base Camp and rest
Sat 18 th July	Base Camp	Base Camp	AM: Yoga, games, review session PM: Walk, rest
Sun 19 th July	Base Camp	Base Camp	AM: Yoga, navigation training PM: Rest
Mon 20 th July	Base Camp	Ittoqqortoormiit	Two Twin Otter flights from Gåseland to Milne Land One flight from Milne Land to Constablepynt Three boats from Constable Pynt to Ittoqqortoormiit Night in hostel accommodation
Tue 21 st July	Ittoqqortoormiit	Ittoqqortoormiit	Sightseeing Evening: football match against local side
Wed 22 nd July	Ittoqqortoormiit	Reykjavik	Three boats from Ittoqqortoormiit to Constable Pynt 2000 Air Iceland flight NY294 Constable Pynt to 2150 Reykjavik Night on Reykjavik campsite
Thu 23 rd July	Reykjavik	Reykjavik	AM: Sightseeing PM: Blue Lagoon Evening: Expedition Meal at Laekjarbrekka
Fri 24 th July	Reykjavik	Glasgow	AM: Sightseeing 1730 Icelandair flight FI440 Keflavik to 2105 Manchester 0200 Arrive at TGA

OVERVIEW

As we stood outside the school eagerly awaiting our departure we couldn't believe this moment had finally come. We had endured gruelling running sessions, weekly 8am meetings, weekends away in the far north hiking through the marshes of Knoydart, and all this before we'd even got on the plane. As the parental paparazzi saw us off, we could not have imagined the challenges that awaited us: exhausting load carries, wading through knee-deep snow, balancing across narrow ridges, and living off dehydrated rations for a month.

Getting to our expedition destination, the remote peninsula of Gåseland, involved a four-hour minibus journey to Manchester, a flight to Reykjavik, another flight to Constable Pynt in East Greenland before the most relaxed flight of all in a Twin Otter. Over the background hum of the Otter's engine, we got our first glimpse of our home for a month and its breathtaking beauty.

While watching the plane fade away into the ever-lit sky, it hit many of the group that, for the first time, we were alone. We were completely isolated from any form of civilisation. It was scary; it was amazing. We set about exploring our environment: up hills, down valleys. Unfavourable weather forced us into less glamorous mountaineering feats than we had anticipated, initially struggling to move base camp up the valley, through mist and rain, was a personal low. However, with the foundations laid, a mere 'wander' on day ten resulted in a first ascent, *Mount Glasgow*, at 1820 metres. The glory of our achievement, the toil leading to it and the magnificent panorama we encountered combined to make a truly unforgettable moment.

This most incredible day put a spark back into the group. The sun just carried on shining as we lounged around camp resting the following day. The leaders were hopeful of a further ascent further up the valley. Tents were abandoned along with any other unnecessary equipment and we trudged up the valley. That night did not provide much sleep: the mosquitoes were awful and the ground unbearably uncomfortable. With next to no sleep and a 2am rise, we found it difficult to motivate ourselves. However, a second, first ascent was looking promising as we scrambled up the steep, boulder-strewn slopes. The pupils led the way until confronted by a treacherous looking, narrow ridge, the sides of which plummeted hundreds of metres to the glaciers below. After carefully negotiating this section we summited with feelings of completeness and appreciation of this beautiful land. The second peak was named *Tiraluin* which, in its Gaelic form *Tir Àlainn*, means 'beautiful land'. The views cannot be put into words satisfactorily and the thought of retreating to a mosquito-ridden bivvy site was far from appealing.

The third mountain conquered on the expedition was *Academy Peak* near base camp and had spectacular views up Scoresbysund, the largest fjord system in the world, littered with thousands of majestic icebergs. As we approached its summit, the team linked arms and walked in a horizontal line onto the top which was a tribute to how close the group had become. Due to the unexplored nature of the mountains of Gåseland, we had not given much consideration to goals on the expedition, but our achievements outshone anything we could have hoped for.

A welcome rest was had during our last days on Gåseland, a football match was organised against the locals in Ittoqqortoormiit, and a luxurious visit to Iceland's Blue Lagoon rounded off our expedition. The four weeks pushed us close to our mental and physical limits; however, the rewards made this a wonderful experience, the memories of which will be cherished forever.

AF, OM, JR, RT

MOUNTAINEERING



Satellite photograph courtesy of *Dundee Satellite Receiving Station*.

Tuesday 7th July 2009



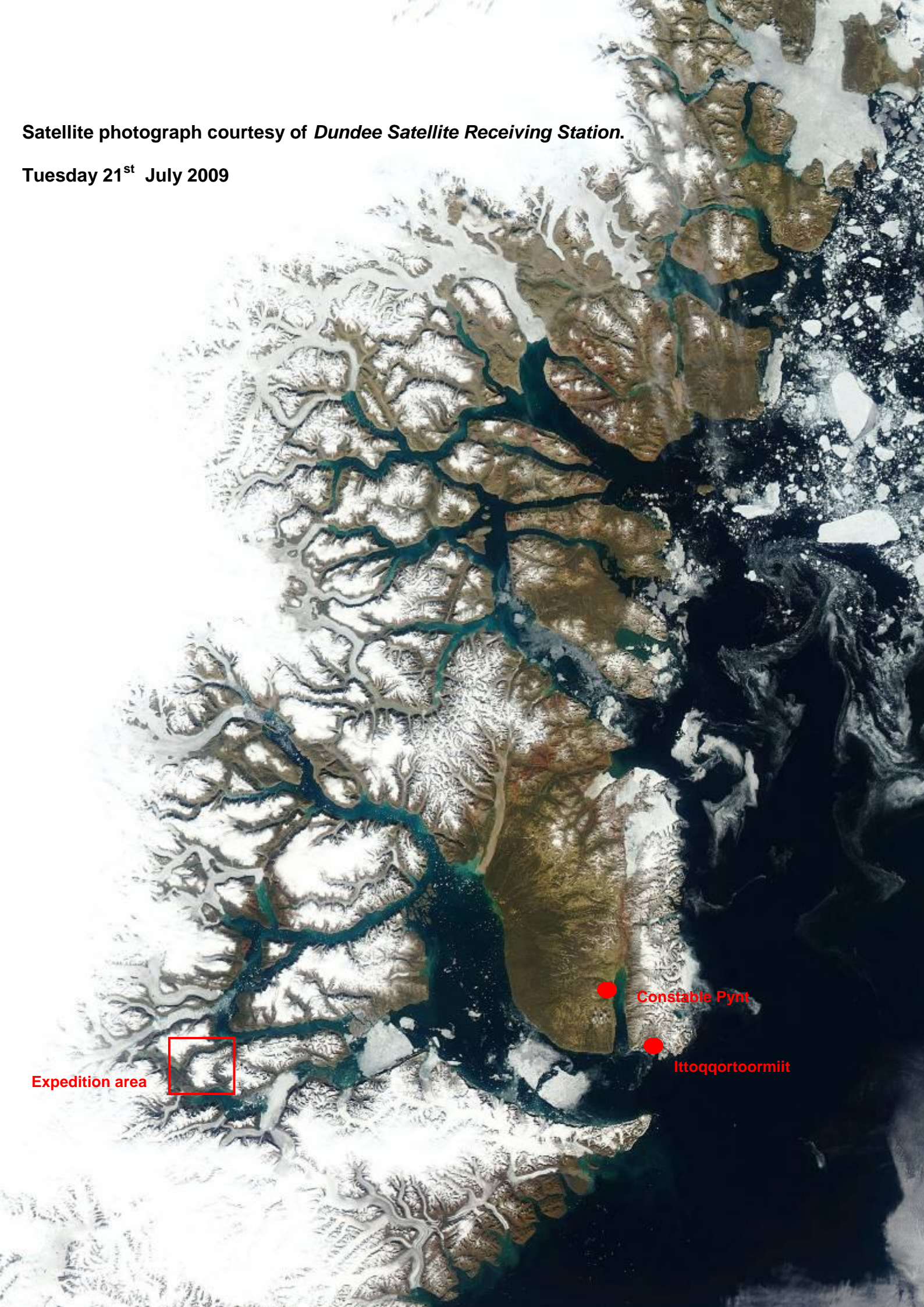
Expedition area

Constable Pynt

Ittoqqortoormiit

Satellite photograph courtesy of *Dundee Satellite Receiving Station*.

Tuesday 21st July 2009

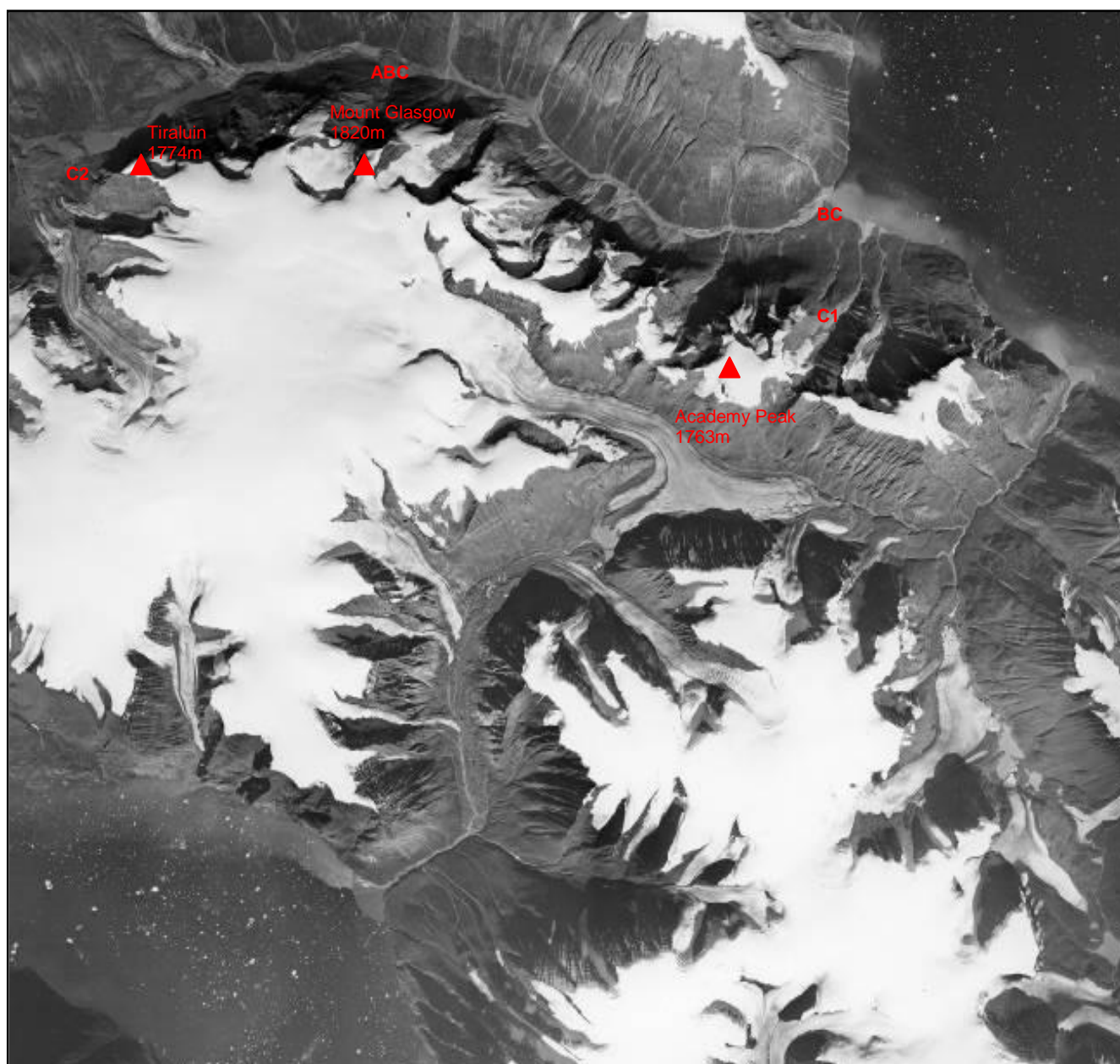


Expedition area

Constable Pynt

Ittoqqortoormiit

PEAKS CLIMBED



LAT/LONG REFERENCES

Location	Lat/Long	Altitude (metres)
Base Camp	N70°20'56.0" W028°09'15.3"	35
Advanced Base Camp	N70°18'18.0" W027°27'05.6"	145
Camp 1	N70°19'54.3" W028°06'21.6"	704
Camp 2	N70°13'49.5" W028°34'38.1"	360
Mount Glasgow	N70°16'39.6" W028°23'47.9"	1820
Academy Peak	N70°17'56.4" W028°07'14.5"	1764
Tiraluin	N70°14'18.6" W028°30'26.5"	1774

EXPEDITION DIARY



Saturday 27th June

In the past two days we have been on a minibus, two public buses, three airplanes and covered three countries – pretty impressive, but that's what it takes to get to Greenland. Our journey started this morning in an Icelandic campsite which was lovely, for the brief four hours sleep we got there. Then it was off to the small city



airport in Reykjavik. Our plane to Constable Pynt, in Greenland, was a smallish fifty-seater which looked very exciting. In the short time spent in Iceland the egg tinge in the air and water was all I really took in so leaving didn't seem too bad! Our flight was one of the most relaxed I'd been on with the cockpit opened up allowing us to see the approaching Greenland even better. On first sighting, it was like nothing I'd ever seen before – the ocean was dotted with huge

icebergs like a sprinkling of confetti. The fjords and sky were clear blue and the snow-covered mountains were monstrous and formidable. Landing at Constable Pynt, we got our first breath of Greenland air. Under a clear blue sky and blazing sun the air remained surprisingly cold allowing everyone to try out their down jackets, hats and other winter mountaineering collections leaving us looking like a Tiso photo shoot! At Constable Pynt, the waiting game began as the Twin Otter had to first deliver another group to Milne Land (where The Academy's 2006 expedition went). For a few brief moments our trip looked perilous as the group going to Milne Land returned as the Twin Otter could not land on the flooded beach. The pilots fortunately decided to try taking us to Gåseland and eight guinea pigs (myself included) were sent off. This third and final flight of our journey was undoubtedly the

most exciting. When first taking off my doubts about the reliability of the Twin Otter were increasing as it shuddered and noisily propelled along. However, the scenery soon distracted me – the fjords were frozen and the snow-covered mountains created an unspoilt wonderland. Cameras were held up to windows in an attempt to capture this beauty. The landing was most exciting, perhaps due to the three attempts! Firstly, the pilot surveyed the area; next the pilot



swooped down and landed but, as we were heading for the sea, took off again, finally executing a third, successful landing. This whole time the plane was flying very low to the ground and near the mountains, creating a few nervous faces! Camp was established. Our home from home was just as good, except with a slightly better view! OM

Bergs

Carved from a glacier
With a deep distant thunder
Trekking down fjords in packs
Past islands they blunder

Pillars, tables and towers
Floes that are rounded
Leaving trails in silty sea
Or quietly grounded

Bright light makes them white
But closer they are blue
And hidden bulk in the sea
Is a deeper green hue

Water worn travelling the seas
Down long channels shrinking they slip
From our sight they soon fade
A final glimpse of blue glass tip

'Til somewhere at sea
Past land's southern tips
They fade melting away
Short lived sinking white ships

AH



Sunday 28th June

Today has been a fairly relaxed introduction to Greenland, as we practised the many essential skills we will need in the weeks to come: rifle-shooting, rope work, and Frisbee. We rose at around 9am and began our ration pack diet in earnest, starting off with a tasty porridge with sultanas. The weather was, as it had been throughout the day, fairly overcast, yet it was warm nonetheless. Al and Neal's groups wandered away from the camp with Herbert and Bettina – our two sleek companions who have been drafted in to protect us from polar bear attacks. We each had a couple of shots with one of these rifles, aiming at a pint-sized polar bear target a few metres from us. Meanwhile, Nigel and Sally's groups wandered off (in the opposite direction from the rifles) to reacquaint themselves with the rope work we learned in Glen Coe, from tying-in to crevasse rescue.



After a relatively quick lunch, we swapped over, and so by around 3pm we had acquired all the necessary techniques. We had also learned not to trust me with the gun. Rather, pass it to 'sharp-shot' Fraser, who hit the same spot on the bear twice in a row. Or alternatively, we could hand it to one of the trained leaders in the event of a bear attack. The rest of the afternoon passed quickly and enjoyably, with long games of Frisbee, and card games, the names of which will not be mentioned. The sound of the ukulele drifted across the camp from time to time, punctuating the ever-



present gargle of the melt-water streams, which pour down from the great mountains surrounding us. Our first sniff of the adventure arrived in the form of a musk ox sighting, and an evening reconnaissance resulted in further sightings, dead and alive, along with some ox hair. The only use for this we have found so far, despite its softness and warmth, is as a beard extension for Nigel. All in all, today has been a great way to ease ourselves into the Greenland experience. Tomorrow the true adventure begins as we tackle the monsters rising into the sky, imposing themselves upon us. A sense of nervous excitement has descended upon the camp, as we anticipate the trials, the tribulations, but also the rewards that Greenland can send our way. SR

Monday 29th June

Today was slightly more hardcore. We got up at 7.30am ready for a 9am departure. When putting the stove on for breakfast, Rachel seriously singed her hair which was very amusing. Nigel and Neal's groups went reeking up one valley and Al and Sally's went up another. Rachel then fell in a raging torrent of a stream which was a shame as it was obviously very cold. Getting up into the valley we were exploring was quite tough, or at least I found it so, but walking in the deep snow was actually

pretty good fun, albeit very challenging. We eventually got back down with great relief and had a relaxing evening in Base Camp. (The vegetable soup is rather good, old chap). FS

Tuesday 30th June

Today we woke at seven for an 8 o'clock start and were presented with beautiful deep blue skies all around. Again, the job for the day was to try to find potential access points to glaciers and mountains in preparation for later in the expedition. We also took some food and fuel to dump at some point so that when we return we have less to carry. Our reeve took us up the valley, following the river, over fairly mixed terrain. The worst of which was the fields of loose rock and boulders left by



glaciers which was hard on everyone's ankles and especially bad for those with blisters. The only person who didn't seem to mind the rocks was Nigel who Al eventually dubbed the 'stretched out version of Yoda' due to his Jedi-like skills and ability to almost glide across the tricky terrain. After around six hours of walking we stumbled across a tributary valley that seemed suitable for an Advanced Base Camp so we dumped the food and fuel and had an extended rest before the trek back to Base Camp. Despite the long walk in baking heat, everyone's spirits were still high with lots of singing while we walked: the policy of trying to casually hug every other member of the team once a day seems to work a treat. Overall, it has been another fabulous day. A really nice walk with stunning weather and incredible views that have never been seen before. A great day for Neal, too, as there was one musk ox carcass from which he managed to take an intact lower jaw to add to the rest of the skull he found on the 2006 expedition and keeps in his laboratory. RS-L

Wednesday 1st July

We woke up today rather later, at 9 o'clock. Today was to be a special day for, not only was it our first movement of camp with the intention of climbing our first peak tomorrow, but it was also Jamie's birthday. As we were leaving, we all packed our tents away as well as taking additional food and fuel for the excursion. Unfortunately, Craig was forced to remain at Base Camp due to his very severe blisters; Sally stayed with him. For the rest of the us, after a couple of ukulele-led



renditions of Happy Birthday and numerous hugs for both Jamie and Craig, we were off, up the slope which Nigel and Neal's groups had explored two days earlier. We were glad of overcast skies and relative cool at this point just after midday, as the

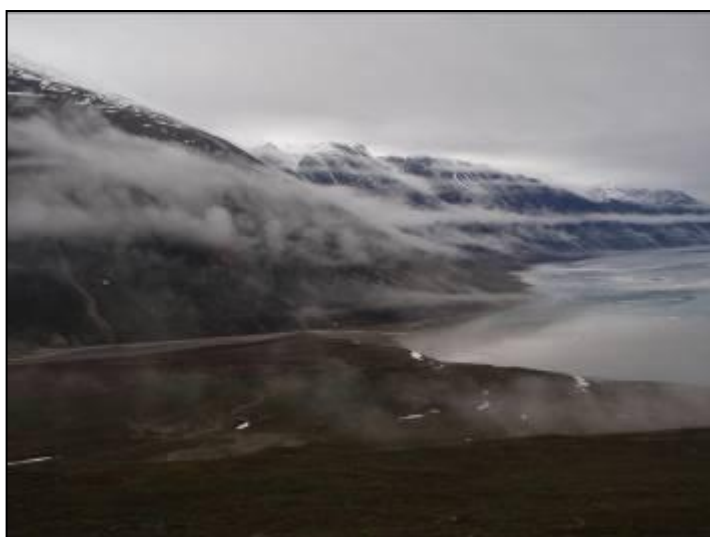


climb was sufficiently hard work as to cause everyone to perspire (or, in a few cases, merely 'glow') most profusely. Having said that, some people did not seem to be struggling; it is a rumour increasingly held as true that all of Nigel's nerve endings died when he was seventeen, and he feels no pain! Regardless of this, we were all on top of the hill come three, and some set up camp here. Our dinner soon followed and we were all in our tents by six, with the exceptions of Adam and Jamie who elected to sleep without such protection, and Big Al, whose tent was down at Base Camp sleeping Sally and Craig so he had no choice but to sleep in the open! The early bed was to prepare for the 'Alpine start' tomorrow, at 2am, to ensure optimum snow conditions for (hopefully) climbing an unclimbed peak. PC

Thursday 2nd July

In contrast to the blue skies of the previous two days, today we were snowed in. A fairly uneventful day was made more enjoyable by good chat, silly antics and a make-shift beauty parlour. Adam and I battled the elements last night, but had given up by the time the snow started. After a slow start to the day, we practised using the snow shoes. Not hugely exciting, but more preparation for when the weather picks up. The only incident of note today was Big Al battling through the blizzards with howling winds. He struggled heroically down to Base Camp to pick up supplies and will return later today. Punching polar bears out of the way, and wading through nose-high snow, he will battle down and up this mountain just for us. Al, you are a hero. JS

Friday 3rd July



The weather did not improve. Therefore at 7am we were forced to retreat back down the mountain (leaving some food behind ready for a return later in the expedition) to Base Camp. Our retreat down certainly seemed necessary as we were shrouded in mist, giving the mountain a mysterious and enchanting air but, with such poor maps, not a mountaineering air! This did, however, mean we had a day at Base Camp, which now seems luxurious compared to the

harsh mountain winds and rocky sleeping surfaces previously endured. We were reunited with Craig and Sally so had our team complete and people to tell our tales to. We were introduced to our new latrine and well-organised Base Camp tent (more Sally's doing than Craig's, I suspect). After eating and sorting out tents, the most important thing to sort out was washing! OM

Saturday 4th July

Well, today was unbelievably fun! We walked all the way up the exact same valley that we had previously trudged along, although we managed it in better time, to dump food and fuel. We managed our morning's elevenses at about half 9. Al kept spirits as high as they could be with his rendition of some song about a bog. I don't remember the ridiculous words so I shan't write them down. Jane demonstrated the splits perfectly at one point when the ground fell beneath her: very amusing. The highlight of the day was definitely seeing five musk oxen and a young one about fifty metres away: truly spectacular in my opinion. Tomorrow we do the same trek back up the valley - oh, how we are all looking forward to it; especially since we are lugging all our stuff up - including Craig! He was, again, left behind because of his blisters. So whilst we were acting like donkeys today, Neal kindly stayed behind to look after him. Not sure who had the better deal to be honest. So we've been here a week (to celebrate I scrounged an Earl Grey tea bag from Neal) and we haven't really conquered much. However, spirits are still high and the weather should start improving soon. Hopefully next week will live up to expectations. RT

Sunday 5th July



Today we packed up Base Camp and moved up the valley to where we dumped food the previous day and five days ago. We were carrying heavy loads over what we knew was tricky terrain so no-one was looking forward to it and when we woke it was still raining. However, as we were packing, Neal called for a forecast on the sat phone which informed us of a bad day today, but improving greatly as next week begins so we knew that we would be

climbing in the next few days. We set off half an hour late at an easy pace; we had all day. The packs with equipment for a week were taking their toll on morale, but at five we arrived at the glorious, flat campsite. There was a nearby stream for drinking water and soft ground to sleep on. It seemed perfect and Allen and Fraz set to work straight away on building the best ever expedition toilet. With walls, signs and comfort, even Neal said it was the best he had ever experienced. It was a relaxed night and the few mosquitoes and little rain was nice. The promise of improving weather and climbing ahead is now leaving is very excited about the next few days. AW

Monday 6th July



Today was absolutely sensational; everyone agrees it was the best day we have had so far. Despite Neal telling us that the weather would improve for today, when we woke at 8am there was still reasonably thick cloud hanging over camp. However, the low mist that had followed us for the past few days had all but completely dispersed and this gave us all hope that the weather would soon improve and we could, at last, start climbing. The anticipation and excitement for this improvement in weather was so great that Neal devised a competition in which the first person to spot blue sky would win his Mars bar. Sadly Jamie won and I was left Mars bar-less. The plan for the day was to do a recee up the southern side of the valley in which our camp is situated. However, Neal suggested going for a 'wander' up the slopes behind camp to see what we could see. Almost immediately after leaving camp the clouds began to break up. At a similar time, we bumped into the herd of musk oxen which seemed to follow us everywhere. We continued to see them periodically as we walked up the first 800m or so of never-ending hill. However, the last time we saw them, at around 1000m, they were as high as they seemed prepared to go. Instead of running away up the hill like they had done previously, they ran straight back down past Adam and I, around 15m away from us, which was pretty scary. Seeing the hundreds of grunting kilograms of horn, muscle and shaggy fur hurtling towards us reminded us quickly of the stories of people killed by these furry beasts.

Soon after this we reached the top of ridge and, although it was nowhere near the top of anything, it almost felt like a summit to us due to the fact that we still hadn't done much actual climbing and we now had beautiful views across the valley, with huge glaciers all around and the edge of the Greenland ice-cap in the distance. Looking further up our side of the valley, we could see two large peaks which gave us hope that we might climb them despite today being only a recee. However, on asking the leaders they all said it was probably just a ridge and not to get too excited. But of course, nothing they could have said would have stopped us getting excited as we trudged through the snow in our snowshoes. As we gained height and came closer to the peak of what we could see, the slope became quite a lot steeper and we had to make huge sweeping zig-zags when walking. This section was made more interesting by the snow on the slope being very loose which meant that many of the steps we took caused mini-avalanches. This also made the work very tiring as when we took a step we would slide half a step down the slope. After what seemed like miles of zig-zags we completed the last section of the ascent and finally got to the top of this peak to be completely stunned by the incredibly beautiful views that surrounded us.

As it turned out, we had climbed to the top of a sort-of second, false summit of a mountain with the real summit around 20m higher and along a 100m ridge. The ridge was very thin, with long drops on either side, but this only added to the excitement of being only a few metres away from not only our first peak of the expedition, but also a first ascent. Reaching the top brought everyone an amazing and indescribable feeling of achievement and made the very hard, seven-hour slog so, so worth it. We were on one of the highest peaks around. As we sat on the thin ridge that made the summit, morale

was the highest that it had ever been as the obligatory photos were taken. Celebratory cigars were passed around as we argued about the name for this newly climbed peak. And then the long journey back to camp... RS-L



Tuesday 7th July

After the long and tiring day before, we had earned a rest day. As we all woke, we found it stifling inside the tents so everyone moved their campmats and sleeping bags outside into the sun and fresh breeze. The rest of the day was spent eating, sleeping, reading and washing. The place where we wash is so nice. I jumped in one of the pools and almost gave myself a heart attack due to how cold the water was. We then all had dinner and at 7pm we packed three days worth of food and all our mountaineering kit and headed further down the valley. We were hoping that there would be a good place to cross the river where the flow wasn't too fast.



Unfortunately, it became apparent that there was nowhere to cross at the head of the valley. We set off back to camp hoping that we could find a crossing point on the way back. Nigel, Al and Neal had a look at a few bits, Neal even stripping off once, but sadly had to admit defeat. We got back to camp at around 1.30am and I was covered in bruises as I had managed to fling myself onto the moraine a few times... what a cluts! JR

Wednesday 8th July

A very similar day to yesterday was started by a lazy 1130 get-up. A late night walk last night had drained the legs and some rest today was well received. It was an eventful day in the sense that we have finally decided that the river is not crossable. This has changed our plans considerably. We now plan to leave camp at 4am tomorrow to walk up the left-hand side of the valley as far as we can. These plans were decided today and so some excitement is found in the group because of a change of scene, hopefully another peak and a step forward in the expedition expected in the next few days. The team spirit is still very good, everyone having been lifted by the climbing of the first peak. But load carries, mosquitoes and the food should be dictating otherwise. I feel this is an indication of how strong the group is: we are all very close and all in the same boat, so everyone is cheerful. Hopefully this optimism will be repaid in time with some opportunities to climb some more incredible mountains. Can't wait for the next three days. JS

Thursday 9th July

With the good weather comes good sunbathing, but bad walking conditions. Therefore this morning we reverted to Alpine starts: waking at 3am and 5pm bed. This morning was always going to be difficult, but as soon as we were walking we were grateful for the cold. And as Sam puts it, he sleep-walks the first hour and doesn't notice he's walking – handy I guess. This morning we were walking much further up the valley to where the river turned into a series of lakes and we were hopefully able to secure another first ascent. The tents were deemed, though

certainly not by me, unnecessary weight and, with the weather looking good, we are just sleeping out in the open. So off we set over the moraine fields, lumpy deer grass, and boulders following the musk ox trails to explore some more. The musk oxen had made reasonable trails so they were followed along the water edge. Round each new corner more of Greenland was uncovered; ahead we began to see the Greenland ice-cap and a skyline full of unclimbed peaks. Our eventual campsite was sited a little way up a grassy slope beside the lake. The sun was high and the wind was strong so we were warm and mosquito-free as we tucked into an early dinner. On my way back from brushing my teeth, post-dinner, I was greeted by a gun-wielding Mr Gwynne; apparently a musk ox was lurking! Even in



Glasgow, you rarely return from the toilet to be greeted by a man with a gun. Mr Gwynne also decided that he would change our tent groups. This was a most welcome change and it will be interesting to see how routines cope! So we settled into our sleeping bags atop magnificent scenery for what seemed a pleasant night ahead. I, however, can assure you that sleeping on a rock is never comfy: you are either too hot or too cold depending on the sun and mosquitoes are savage beasts that do bite through socks, merino wool and mosquito nets – I have the bites to prove it! OM

Friday 10th July

Despite the incredible glacial views from our perch on the hillside, last night we all experienced the horrors of bivvying – mosquitoes, lumpy ground, and Arctic winds that chill to the bone. We began to trudge up the mountain side at 4.15am, with a combined total of 15 hours sleep between us, in a dreary fashion that wouldn't have seemed out of place in 'Night of the Living Dead.' Before we had truly awoken we had climbed an extra 300m, it was 5.15am, and we had an absolutely stunning glacier just 100m to our right as we headed left up a steep ridge. We could also see the Vestijord glacier directly behind us, glowing with the early morning sun and extending all the way out to the sea. We caught a few glimpses of Arctic hare – large and lean with powerful legs and snow-white fur. They are far less timid than you would think, as they have probably never encountered humans before and thus have never developed a natural fear of them. They hopped about, sniffing and munching grass, just a few metres from us. As we steadily gained height, the terrain underfoot deteriorated into uneven rubble, yet the views behind us became majestic. By around 6.30am, I had finally woken fully, with the sun now poking its head above the peaks and the realisation dawning on me that today we were attempting our next 'first ascent,' a thought which in itself was enough to brush away the final few

lingering cobwebs. With few, short stops we made progress up the slope, with the odd scramble up rocky bands. On one of the last of the slopes, Nigel spotted some bright yellow flowers poking through the rock; Arctic poppies, which had never been found above 700m in this area, were blooming at 1400m. Moments like these serve



as a reminder that Greenland holds mysteries and rewards which can be found nowhere else, and so it was with renewed vigour that we walked closer to our second peak. However, walking soon became a luxury, as when we reached a thin ridge with massive canyons on either side slow, scared shuffling was all we could manage. Aptly dubbed 'Crap Yourself Canyon,' the ridge nevertheless provided some stunning

views, some unforgettable moments, and a large adrenaline rush which enabled us to storm up to the summit. Today, at 9.30am, the group stood upon a never-before-climbed peak for the second time, having conquered a mountain standing at 1774m, and the giddy high we experienced on Monday was in no way diminished by repetition. The same ethereal sense of weightlessness swept over us, as we surveyed the unbelievable panorama below. To the west, the Greenland ice-cap stretched several hundred miles; straight ahead the glaciers and peaks of Gåseland, our home, and directly below the great stone canyon dropped straight down to the floor. We could not help feeling like Kings and Queens, overseeing our great kingdom of rock and ice. It was with a just sense of satisfaction that we turned for home, and we were soon on the other side of the knife-edge ridge, breathing a huge sigh of relief. It was then a fairly straightforward climb down to loose rocks towards the camp, although I'm sure our knees would disagree. Barring the odd shout of 'below' as dislodged rocks hurtled down the slope, the descent passed fairly uneventfully and before we knew it we were back at the bivvy site. We now lie gloriously situated on the hillside, in bright sunshine and with a sense of tired achievement and anticipating the week to come. SR





Saturday 11th July

We were once again awoken by the voice of the mountain Jedi and so we arose from the depths of slumber to the cold of the twilight 'morning' (2.30am). Today, we were to use the force to guide us back to the sanctuary of our tents so we bid farewell to our second peak and set forth to comfort. We had all slept painfully little that night and so the short walk back to the tents was rather tedious, but we made it back for a wash, some food and 'The Mafia,' an awesome group game shown to us by Craig. FS

Sunday 12th July

Today we completed our journey from Advanced Base Camp to Base Camp. Again, we had a 2 o'clock alarm set, but slept through it so eventually got up at three before wrestling down the hot cereal start which has been voted 'worst menu choice' due to its ability to induce the gag reflex with most mouthfuls. The day was long and hard due to the heavy bags we were carrying, but we still got to Base Camp in good time and had the rest of the day to relax, play Mafia and wash. We also had the first night of our new tent groups so there was a lot of new banter flowing as we are in tents with different people which is good fun. RS-L

Monday 13th July

Say what you will, but I would not normally feel that sleeping until 4.30am was a lie in. But these are strange times, and so our day of rest and recuperation after three hard days began at this time. We have worked out that if you add 5 or 6 hours onto the actual time it becomes much easier to work out sensible times for things, rather than using this crazy timescale straight. First thing today, after breakfast (porridge and not hot cereal start, fortunately), was a yoga session led by Sally. Then there were two tasks to be done – a new toilet pit had to be constructed, which was carried out most efficiently by Stark-Farrington Industries, a partnership formed between Fraser and Allen who now construct all such objects. In addition, our rubbish had to be burned and all ash collected so that it could be shipped back to the UK. The burning part is quite enjoyable, the removal of hot metal from the pit less so. We were later introduced to a few games/exercises by Sally, including one where one person stands rigid and blindfolded in the centre of a circle of people, who then let themselves fall, trusting the rest of the group to keep them off the ground. Tomorrow, we return to our camp on the slope immediately above Base Camp where the weather thwarted us last time. This time we go up with the backing of a good weather forecast to help us on our way. PC





Tuesday 14th July

Today we climbed half way up the very first mountain that we attempted, some two weeks previous. The trek was at once difficult, but our improved fitness was evident. Once at camp we had little to do, mountaineering-wise, and so Liar Dice (newly learned) and reading borrowed books were taken up by most. The mountain which had once seemed destined to elude us now appears a certainty. AF

Wednesday 15th July

We woke around 2.30am and had breakfast whilst the sun still sat low in the sky, basting the bay in a magical light. A magnificent view to begin a magnificent day. After assembling our usual mountaineering kit of ice axe, crampons, snowshoes, ropes and harnesses, we set off over the rocks to begin what we hoped would be the ascent of our third mountain. After reaching the snowline, we strapped on our snowshoes to ascend the unusually hard snow. Clearly, the leaders' decision to change from day to night walks was paying dividends. We began our gentle climb of the snow slopes, taking turns to carve a path as we meandered up the mountainside. After reaching the steep, rocky ridge which touched the side of our snow slope we were greeted with an incredible view out across the water, scattered with icebergs to Milne Land. From this point the route to the summit could be seen and, as a group, we began the final, gentle ascent to the peak of our third and most probably final mountain of the trip. The final slope was wide enough to accommodate the entire group stretched out in a line and we took this opportunity to reach the summit together. Pausing for lunch on the summit, we admired the stunning views which surrounded us on all sides. Later we would snowshoe back down the mountain before reaching a patch of particularly loose snow at which point Neal decided that the best means of descent was sliding. For those in the group with less balance this involved much falling over and the start of our own mini-avalanches. We returned to camp feeling both happy and accomplished at the completion of our third, first ascent of the expedition. KR

Snow Shoe Shuffle

Step kick, step flick
 Strictly come shoeing
Snow on your toe weighted down
 Tired thighs brewing
Step slide, step glide
 Downhill on top of the snow
Soft patches plunging down
 Up to your thigh you go
Step scritch, step scratch
 Onto the rocks oh blow!
Off again, on again, buckles tight
 Heading from rock back onto snow
Essential kit for snowy climbing with ease
 Our snow shoes made walking simply a breeze!
AH



The Midnight Queen

Here is the sun who never dies;
Darkness dares not show its face.
Her glory circles through the skies,
Eternal circuits, full of grace.

She dips her head down to the sea,
Light strewn across the perfect blue.
The icebergs glow with their proud glee;
The Queen now greets these lucky few.

Yet soon she has to leave the crowd;
She never seems to linger long.
Arching up elated, proud,
Admired by the distant throng.

'Til bursting forth with stream of light,
She takes her place upon the throne.
Her majesty, who banishes night,
Soars high above the peaks alone.

SR

Thursday 16th July

Our last day in the mountains of Gåseland. Al and Sally's groups roped up first and wandered out onto the glacier near the camp. We learnt about how to approach crevasses, where to step etc. After a bite to eat, we moved to the snout of the glacier where the other half of the group had been. There, we looked at the different ways of using crampons on the ice. I found that you really had to trust them if you wanted to go anywhere on the really hard stuff. Al spotted an old moulin at the side of the glacier and it was group consensus that we wanted to explore it. We had all hoped, from the moment we stepped onto the ice, that we would be able to do this, and here was our chance. The



group (well, Al and Sal mainly) rigged up a pulley system to which we attached Sal to check out the moulin. After she had sussed it out, we were each lowered, one by one, into the moulin – a massive hollowed out abyss. The sides were shelved and, far below, we could see the powerful sub-glacial stream. I was in awe of the power it had. It was so far below us, but we could still hear it from the surface. After the exploration, we headed back to camp for a warming hot chocolate and sleeping bag for the last time before the luxuries of Base Camp 700 metres below. RT



Friday 17th July



After 2am starts over the last week or so it was a relief when we were told that we were adjusting our clocks back to a more 'normal' time of a 7am rise. As we woke and had a leisurely rise, packing began and everyone burst into action. However, it wasn't until almost two hours later that we were ready to go. With heavy packs and a 700m descent, some people decided to go for the quick, but more painful and risky method of running, whereas some sauntered down at their own pace. Some were down in just over half an hour; some were double that, but it was nice to take it as you wished. Al and Nigel had left when we were packing to search for a new site, closer to the sea for our Base Camp. This was in the hope that there would be fewer mosquitos, but how silly that was! It seems there is no escape from mosquitoes. At about lunchtime, however, most chores were done so some went to wash, some made a new toilet, some slept and some read a book. But mostly it was a relaxing day. However, after dinner we were informed that there were some problems with the flight schedule on our pick-up day so who knows when we will get out of here?!
AW

Nibbled

White lumps and red lumps
Hot itchy swollen face bumps
Ears and wrists and neck and hands
Ankles and trouser waist bands
Scratch and tickle – itch in your sleep
Or stand still, hands clenched in pockets deep
Once you've got one there is no respite
From your awful mozzie bite. AH

Saturday 18th July

Today we had a rather relaxing day during which we could do what we pleased. After a 7am rise for yoga, we enjoyed the second, very competitive installment of 'Sally's Games.' Most of the rest of the day was spent lounging around and enjoying a midday wash. We also spent time on a group review, reflecting on the expedition, which allowed us to see how much we'd changed and developed over the course of the last few weeks. This was really good as we suddenly all realised what we'd achieved and how close we had all become. CH





Sunday 19th July



We woke at 7am to find the sun shining over the icebergs and lots of mosquitoes in our tent. We dressed and headed outside with our camp-mats for yoga class with Sally. I have to say I think that Robbie and Adam have become slightly better since the start. After breakfast, Nigel took

us away for some fun navigation activities which included walking in a straight line with a bag over our head, and running between helmets. After that we collected our last ever three ratio packs. We did the usual chocolate bar trade and started organizing our kit in preparation for our departure tomorrow. We also packed away the big tent, cleaning all the blood stains off the inside from the various mosquito massacres. At 1230 people who wanted to competed in a shooting competition to dispose of the excess ammunition: Fraser won, of course. In the afternoon, some headed to the beach; it was lovely to get away from the mosquitoes. At one point a seal came quite close to shore where we were sitting. Neal received news that the plane was scheduled to arrive tomorrow afternoon at some point to pick us up. I headed off for a wash in the stream, going full Hungarian in my favourite pools and took in the fantastic view of the icebergs and Milne Land. Olivia and I spent the rest of the day writing the quiz which is an activity for tomorrow whilst we wait for the plane. Meanwhile, the boys had a piggyback jousting competition. It seems strange that we're already leaving. In one respect it feels like we only arrived yesterday and, in another, it feels like we've been here a while and that I'm ready to go home. Either



way, I'm really going to miss Gåseland and the time we've spent together as a team. It has been the greatest experience and I've reinforced and made many friendships. JR



Monday 20th July

I woke up today with a mixture of excitement and sadness, for it was today that we were to leave Gâseland behind for the relative civilisation of Ittoqqortoormiit. The plane was expected between 2pm and 2.30pm, and eventually arrived at the back of 4pm – all airlines are the same, it seems. We flew over Milne Land, seeing many of the peaks and campsites of the previous expedition, before landing at the same beach where the 2006 expedition started. We were greeted by another expedition that had just arrived on Milne Land and their leader actually knew Sally as they had both previously worked for the same company – it is a small world. We stayed here for a time while the plane picked up the other half of our group from Gâseland. We decided to cook supper on the edge of the ‘runway,’ but a combination of my ineptitude in water container filling and a lot of trying to make up for lost time meant that we were still cooking when the plane returned. Rapid movement and packing of stoves completed, we then all jumped on the plane to fly to Constable Pynt. The equipment that was to return to the UK as sea freight was left on the beach and was to be flown out with another expedition in a couple of week’s time. On arrival at Constable Pynt, three boats were waiting to take us to Ittoqqortoormiit. One of the boats had added excitement in the form of a polar bear swimming past. Upon arrival we walked up to the guesthouses which contained not only showers, but also, luxury of luxuries, beds! PC



Tuesday 21st July

This morning I awoke to find myself in a warm room, sleeping on a bed, with the smell of coffee wafting through. So naturally I thought I was dreaming – luckily not, this was just what being back in civilisation is like. Not all was quite normal yet, however, as Rachel and I brought out our porridge and Jane produced mushroom soup in a bag for breakfast. We're getting there though! After some long, luxurious showering in which we were all turned into lively blondes with my blonde shampoo, a brief group meeting allowed us to be let loose on the streets of Ittoqqortoormiit. The first port of call was naturally the supermarket. The supply ship sadly hadn't arrived yet due to the pack ice not breaking up for the summer, so we were warned the shelves may be bare. However, we needn't have worried as, to a group of teenagers living on a diet of dehydrated food for a month, a mouldy loaf of bread is a luxury. Luckily the bread wasn't mouldy and along with some butter and apple juice we were set. We rushed back to our house like little piggies to devour our second breakfast! Our tummies



much fuller we went for a walk round the town. Here I must point out just how small the 'town' is; you can walk round the whole place in about ten minutes and it mainly comprises coloured wooden houses. No-one seems to care about rubbish here and the streets are lined with rubbish and it is all round quite a dirty place. No one seems to have much to do either. The children are all very happy and clearly used to tourists as they are eager to pose for pictures. At the museum, which had some rather dashing polar bear trousers that Neal has his eye on, we met two young boys who were very playful and able to work cameras. They tried to pull out Al's eyebrows! At the museum we also saw an entry in the visitor book from Louise Duncan and Sophie Fabien from the last expedition which was pretty cool! In the afternoon Kenny managed to organise a football match with some of the local boys. Amazingly, Ittoqqortoormiit has a FIFA referee so it turned into a proper match. Our boys turned out in thermal leggings and swimming shorts so looked quite the formidable opponents! A lot of the town turned out too and put our five-person cheerleading team, led by a very supportive Sal, to shame somewhat. All in all it was fun to watch and the Ittoqqortoormiits were funny booing us and heckling the team! While the boys got beaten on the pitch the girls made dinner. With Rachel leading the way, and Al whipping up some amazing garlic croutons, pasta with a tomato sauce and everything the supermarket had to offer was made. To have food that has not been dehydrated was amazing and the eerie silence showed the success of Rachel's cooking. After dinner we all watched *Vertical Limit*, but now, being hardy mountaineers, we were not impressed. After the line "there'll not just be snow, but rock and ice too" when describing K2's summit, most of us lost the will to live and slowly but surely made our way to bed. OM



Wednesday 22nd July

Today was what I would call a 'lazy day' – a lazy morning in Ittoqqortoormiit, a short boat trip followed by a lazy afternoon in Constable Pynt, and now we're settling in to our Reykjavik campsite to sleep. It must be said, therefore, that the climax of the day was the flight from Constable Pynt to Reykjavik – specifically the dinner. Chicken salad, coffee (with refills), orange juice, dark chocolate biscuits, cheese, butter biscuits and Coke! For a group just weaning our way off a dehydrated ration pack diet, this was heaven, and as the snow-capped Greenlandic peaks disappeared behind us, shrouded in mist once more, you couldn't help but feel a sense of finality. This was even more pronounced upon arrival in Iceland – the streets littered with shops, cars and restaurants. It was certainly difficult; we had well and truly left our simple, uncluttered lives in Greenland behind. Yet it was also the next stepping stone to home, and so, after reintegrating ourselves into civilised society tomorrow, we will be ready for Glasgow. SR



Thursday 23rd July

After the penultimate night's sleep in our tents, we were woken by Sally for the first time on the expedition and how she savoured it; waking the especially lazy by pulling them out of tents. We woke quickly and headed to the bank for money and to a small café that served us a buffet breakfast which was a real delight and our first greasy food. We then had to head to the bus station for a much anticipated trip to the Blue Lagoon. We were soon bathing in the toasty, milky water with mud masks on and drink in hand. It was very relaxing and sad as we all knew that this was the signal of the end of the expedition. We all emerged glowing and wrinkled like prunes after our much deserved cleanse. We then headed back to Reykjavik and some of us shopped for gifts for the leaders before returning to the campsite for a final chat.



Neal had kindly organised funny prizes for each member of the group including the other leaders which was a good laugh. And afterwards it was the turn of the pupils who all presented funny prizes to the four instructors and by then it was time to head to our meal. We had a splendid feast of langoustine starter, steak main course and chocolate pudding to finish off: it was a nice end to a wonderful expedition as all reflected on our achievements and great time together. AW



Adam	The Best Mimicry of Leaders Award
Al	The Stove Maintenance Award
Allen	The Digging Award
Craig	The Medical Mishap Award
Fraser	The Best Toilet Architect Award
Jane	The Least Use of Hair Products Award
Jamie	The Best Use of Male Grooming Products Award
Kenny	The Gear Geek Award
Nigel	The Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award (following re-assessment for rucksack packing)
Olivia	The Toileting Misadventure Award
Phillip	The Cold Feet Avoiding Washing Award
Rachel	The Shewee Award
Robbie	The Expedition Jester Award
Sally	The Water Baby Award
Sam	The Mysterious Missing Pants Award





Friday 24th July

A lot can change in a month. Between the dates of 26th June and 25th July, a lot has changed throughout the world. Two world-renowned figures have died; there has been much political change in a number of countries and swine flu has continued to spread. All of these events are undeniably significant and will have great effects on the lives of millions of people across the globe. However, for sixteen people one expedition has had such a life-changing effect that the repercussions of it will, for those sixteen people, utterly eclipse those of whatever has occurred throughout the world over the past four weeks. Leaving the safety of home a month ago, I don't think any one of us could have imagined what we would experience during our time away. There have been many highs and many lows, but I can truly say that we have come out of each one stronger as individuals as well as more bonded as a team. Indeed, for the last month we have been each other's family. This was altogether apparent as, after our arrival at Manchester from Reykjavik, the premature departure of two of our team caused emotions to run high and even tears to be shed. As I write on our minibus drive back to Glasgow yet more painful goodbyes draw closer as we come towards the end of what has been an out-of-this-world experience. This ending, though it will be hard to bear, does also signal a new beginning for each and every one of us: a new beginning which holds an endless number of possibilities. And so, armed with new-found knowledge and experiences we step out into the future, not knowing what it will bring, but filled with hope and a firm confidence in ourselves, ready to face whatever the world throws our way. CH



SCIENCE



FLORA

The area visited by the Expedition had been visited previously by two botanical expeditions. A Danish one in 1958 landed by Catalina seaplane on Faxe Sø and thoroughly investigated the area immediately around the lake. Later, in 1994 the Swiss botanist Fritz Schwarzenbach and the Scottish doctor Hugh Lang spent some time botanising the length of Hjørnedal.

By the coast in Hjørnedal, just inland of Milne Land, the snow line at the start of July was at around 700m and by the end of July it was around 900m. Inevitably, due to the snow melt and generally fine weather, the main Hjørnedal river was impossible to cross, so getting samples from a south facing aspect at low altitudes was not really possible. Higher up on mountain ridges a variety of aspects was available, although the flora was inevitably sparse. In the bottom of Hjørnedal a number of species were past their best when we arrived, although others flourished as the month passed.

The richest area was undoubtedly the lower part of the valley where the major habitats were heath, mires, braided river gravels, herb-rich slope and scree. The Academy's expedition, which included no professional botanists, noted or collected fifty-one. Prior to the Academy's 2009 expedition, a great number more species of flowering plants and ferns had been recorded. Although there was, therefore, little expectation of new finds there were two new ones: the sedge *Carex parallela*, previously recorded from the middle and upper valley, and the dandelion *Taraxacum brachyceras*. The latter was quite surprising as it was not previously known west of Falkepynt (just west of Danmarks Ø). It is one of a number of species, including the heath *Phyllodoce caerulea*, more characteristic of the outer and middle parts of the fjords, which reach the south-western corner of Scoresby Sund. The pressed specimens included a 35cm high drooping saxifrage (*Saxifraga cernua*), 15cm higher than the upper limit given in the *Flora of Greenland*! This saxifrage occurs in Britain only around Glencoe, Ben Nevis and Ben Lawers. Also collected were the heath *Phyllodoce coerulea* (Ben Alder and Sow of Atholl) and *Primula stricta*, known in Scoresby Sund from only two other inner fjord sites.

Specimens were collected from four other sites (shown on map page 16) and lists for all five are given below.

There were two main botanical objectives of the expedition. One was to add to the very few montane records from Scoresby Sund. The other was to investigate the local willows.

There were three montane collections, one (Site 1) on the south side of the middle valley at 1260m at the edge of a gently sloping north west facing snow field; this provided a wet environment with enough subsoil to sustain around a dozen different saxifrages and other plants. Site 2 was at 1100m in the upper valley, and Site 4, at 1537m above the south side of the valley mouth. Not surprisingly, only a limited number of species were found, all typical of those found at high altitudes. A number of these were close to the maximum altitude previously observed in the whole central fjord region, although lying at the extreme southern end of the region this was not surprising. The Arctic poppy (*Papaver radicum*) occurred at all three sites and, as is usually the case, ascended highest, being found at 1650m. This sample had a south-west aspect.

The second objective centred on the willows. Two species occur: *Salix glauca*, a shrubby willow occurring over the southern half of Greenland and reaching its northern limit on the east coast at 72°N, and the low-growing *S. arctica*, restricted to the north. The distribution of the former in Scoresby Sund is somewhat sketchy and there have recently been authenticated reports of the hybrid. A number of willow collections were made. Apparently pure *S. glauca* was found in the upper valley and near Faxe Sø, where some specimens were found 1.5m tall although generally the willow 'copses' were heavily grazed by musk oxen. There were two collections, yet to be confirmed, of the putative hybrid.

Site 1 Mid-Hjørnedal

1260m 11 species

Poa glauca
Salix arctica
Saxifraga oppositifolia
Papaver radicatum
Luzula confusa
Cassiope tetragona
Poa arctica
Hierochloa alpina
Carex nardina
Polytrichum (a moss)
Potentilla hyperborea

Site 2 Upper Hjørnedal

220m 4 species

Salix cf. *glauca* x *arctica*
Rhododendron lapponicum
Salix glauca
Pedicularis flammea

1100m 2 species

Papaver radicatum
Pedicularis hirsuta

Site 3 Mid Hjørnedal

140m 11 species

Poa arctica
Calamagrostis purpurascens
Draba glabella
Saxifraga nivalis
Minuartia biflora
Cystopteris fragilis
Equisetum arvense
Erigeron eriophorum
Saxifraga cernua
Polygonum viviparum
Salix cf. *arctica* x *glauca*

Site 4 above Lower Hjørnedal

1537m 7 species

Papaver radicatum
Poa glauca
Salix arctica
Draba nivalis
Saxifraga cespitosa
Chamerion latifolium
Cerastium arcticum

Site 5 Lower Hjørnedal

24 species

Calamagrostis purpurascens
Carex bigelowiic. parallela
Campanula gieseckiana
Draba glabella
Erigeron humilis
Harrimanella hypnoides
Honkenya peploides
Luzula multiflora
Melandrium affine
Minuartia biflora
Phyllodoce caerulea
Poa alpina
P. arctica
Potentilla crantzii
P. hookeriana subsp. chamissonis
P. nivea
Primula stricta
Rumex acetosella
Salix arctica
Saxifraga nivalis
Sedum rosea
Silene acaulis
Taraxacum brachyceras
Trisetum spicatum



Our highest recorded plant Arctic Poppy at 1649m



Dwarf Willow approx 1.2m high (the tops are often eaten off by Musk Oxen)

NW/Dr G Halliday

FAUNA

One of the reasons that the Scoresbysund area was chosen as the site for the colony of Ittoqqortoormiit was because it was known that there was a profusion of animal life for the Inuit settlers to hunt. This is at least in part due to the fact that there is always year round open water in some areas of the fjord. This means that marine life is available as a year round food source to birds and mammals that are in turn predated by larger birds and mammals. On our 2009 trip we spent a good deal of time below the snow line as well as above it giving us the opportunity to encounter some of the local wildlife.

Arthropods

We saw a number of flies, crane flies and even a few butterflies: the Northern Clouded Yellow (*Colias hecla*) and Polar Fritillary (*Clossiana polaris*).



Gynaephora groenlandica

Up to 1000m we also saw numerous large Siberian Wolfspiders (*Pardosa groenlandica*). Finally, I can't omit to mention the plague of mosquitoes that welcomed us all to Greenland as best they could. The bivvy from hell will remain an unforgettable memory for most of the team!



Sally enduring mosquitoes at the 'bivvy from hell'



These flies were spotted on the north-east facing side of a large boulder at 700 metres near Camp 1. They appeared to have crashed into the boulder and become stuck there by their heads! Some investigation back in the UK by Dr Matt Tinsley may have come up with the answer. Some parasites and pathogens have been shown to affect host behaviour in bizarre and stereotyped ways. Infected insects have been shown to adopt unique and conspicuous postures prior to death (Roffey, 1968 cited in Krasnoff *et al*, 1995) and it has been suggested that these are due to control of the host's behaviour by fungal parasites. The flies we saw had adopted a very unusual posture, their legs were splayed widely, the abdomen and wings were raised and their proboscis was extended and pushed into the surface of the boulder. One species of fungus, *Entomophthora muscae*, is known to induce very similar behaviour in a variety of different types of fly in temperate latitudes and it seems likely that the same, or a closely related fungus has infected these flies. Why the flies do this is not entirely clear, the elevated position of the flies on the boulder could be due to attempts by the flies to cure themselves of infection by inducing behavioural fever (Watson *et al*, 1993 cited in Krasnoff *et al*, 1995) through a thermoregulatory response. However, it seems more probable that this behaviour is due to manipulation by the fungus. Once the fly has died, the fungus' conidia (spores) emerge from the fly's abdomens. The bizarre posture that these flies were found in maximises the effective area that can be covered by the emerging conidia. It has also been observed that the attempted mating of dead female flies infects males with the fungus (Møller, 1993 cited in Krasnoff *et al*, 1995). A further truly remarkable feature of the fungus' control of the host is that, somehow, the fungus controls a biological clock in the host such that death occurs in the late afternoon, allowing a greater chance of the conidia germinating after dark when it is more likely to be damp.

Greenlandic Seed Bugs

Background. There is only one seed bug (member of the family Lygaeidae) in Greenland: that is *Nysius groenlandicus*. *N. groenlandicus* primarily inhabits dry heathland and steppe grassland communities on Greenland's un-glaciated coastal fringe, where it feeds and lays eggs on the seeds of a variety of plant species. Male and female *N. groenlandicus* are clearly sexually dimorphic. Females are larger, abdomen shape differs (the female abdomen is broader relative to body size), abdominal segmentation differs and the genital opening is distinct. In cases of ambiguity, internal genital morphology is completely diagnostic, therefore sexing can be carried out by dissection (this is made especially easy because female *N. groenlandicus* abdomens are packed with eggs during late July).

Sex Ratios. There is a baseline prediction that all organisms will produce equal numbers of males and females. The theoretical and empirical basis of the stability of this equitable male-female sex ratio is well established and dates back to Darwin's writing. However, two anecdotal reports comment that *N. groenlandicus* populations at northern latitudes are predominantly, or solely, female (Böcher, 1978). Mechanisms generating population sex ratio biases are numerous, for example, geographic parthenogenesis and the presence of a male-killing bacteria.

This expedition sought to collect specimens of *N. groenlandicus* for research into the sex ratio biases; however, despite extensive searches, no specimens were found in Gåseland.

Birds

Among the birds seen near base camp were the Arctic Tern, Sanderling and Ringed Plover. Glaucous gulls were quite aggressive at the camp half way up the valley. An Arctic Skua was also seen. Several large flights of Barnacle Geese (fittingly given the name of the area we were in) were seen in the valley and on the lake (up to 20 in one flock). We saw numerous Snow Buntings, common, friendly and talkative, and Ptarmigan droppings, but no birds.

Mammals

Arctic Hare

Up at the bivvy site a number of Arctic hare were seen – very obvious with their white coats against the tundra.



Musk Oxen (Gr. Ummimak – the bearded one)

At up to 400kg, musk oxen are the largest mammal in Greenland. We saw single animals, small groups of two or three and at least one large family group of seven oxen, including a young calf. Musk Oxen were encountered from base camp to our furthest point from the landing site and at altitudes of up to 850m. They are usually only dangerous if cornered or if their young are threatened. We witnessed the herd obviously manoeuvring to shelter a calf on more than one occasion. It is important not to startle these creatures in summer; their hairy coats are so warm they can suffer from heat exhaustion if they have to run. We saw obvious 'bucket seats' in snowdrifts where they had been sitting to cool off on several occasions.

**Polar Bear**

On this trip students on one of the boats heading from Constable Pynt to



Ittoqqortoormiit did see a polar bear exiting the ocean. Fortunately we had no land based encounters with these fantastic hunters. We did practise with the rifles that were carried everywhere to familiarise everyone with what to do in the event of a meeting. And Neal Gwynne does a very good impression of a 'friendly polar bear'. There was also a skin in Ittoqqortoormiit and reports of several bears in the neighbourhood which the locals were keen to scare off.

Caribou

Whilst Western Greenland has a healthy population, the small native Caribou of NE Greenland is believed to have died out in a harsh winter approximately 100 years ago. Recently, fourteen carcasses came to light as a small ice field near Ittoqqortoormiit melted. Either they starved together, unable to dig through ice to feed after a thaw and a late season freeze, or they may have been avalanched.

Greenlandic Sled Dogs

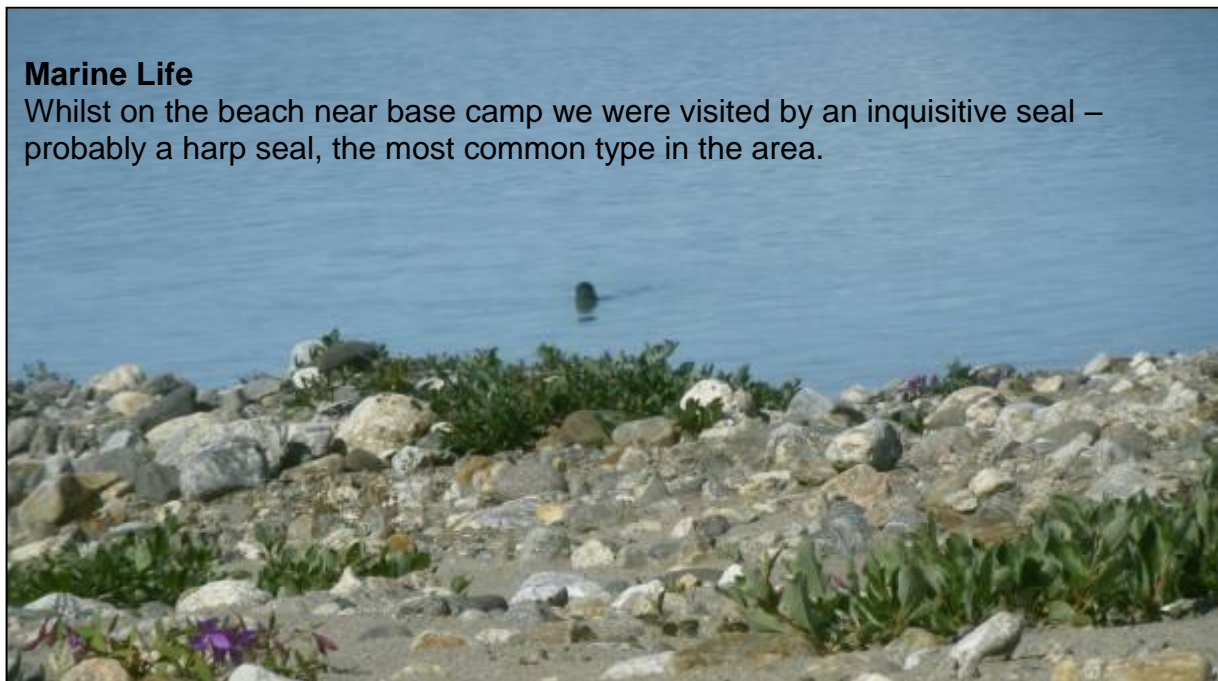
These large hounds form part of one of the few voice controlled transport systems in the world and are very efficient draft animals. Besides the friendly Tuuk at Constable Pynt Airport several dozen dogs were chained along long lines besides houses in Ittoqqortoormiit. The best behaved seemed to be left to wander free to smell smells, cock a leg to anything and investigate TGA pupils. A number of puppies were seen around town and we were often serenaded by 'pack howls'.



Vicious Greenlandic sled dog

Marine Life

Whilst on the beach near base camp we were visited by an inquisitive seal – probably a harp seal, the most common type in the area.



AH/NG



LOGISTICS



RATIONS

	Menu A	Menu B	Menu C	Menu D
Breakfast	Porridge with sultanas	Hot breakfast cereal start	Porridge with sultanas	Hot breakfast cereal start
Brew kit	1x hot chocolate	1x hot chocolate	1x hot chocolate	1x hot chocolate
	1x creamer	1x creamer	1x creamer	1x creamer
	1x sugar	1x sugar	1x sugar	1x sugar
	1x tea bag	1x tea bag	1x tea bag	1x tea bag
	1x bfuel	1x bfuel	1x bfuel	1x bfuel
	1x coffee	1x coffee	1x coffee	1x coffee
Lunch	2x crackers	2x crackers	2x crackers	2x crackers
	2x jam	2x jam	2x jam	2x jam
	1x salted nuts	1x dry roasted nuts	1x salted nuts	1x dry roasted nuts
	1x raisins	1x raisins	1x raisins	1x raisins
	1x choc chip flapjack	1x apricot flapjack	1x plain flapjack	1x banana flapjack
	1x Mars	1x Snicker	1x Dairy Milk	1x Twix
	1x Chunky Kitkat	1x Twix	1x Snicker	1x Dairy Milk
Soup	Potato and leek soup 100g	Mushroom soup 100g	Potato and leek soup 100g	Vegetable soup 100g
Main meal	Shepherd's pie	Chilli con carne	Veg Thai rice	Lamb pilaf
Pudding	Custard with apple	Crème choc chip desert	Mixed fruit and custard	Peach 'n pineapple
Number	64	64	64	64

	Menu E	Menu F	Menu G
Breakfast	Porridge with sultanas	Hot breakfast cereal start	Porridge with sultanas
Brew kit	1x hot chocolate	1x hot chocolate	1x hot chocolate
	1x creamer	1x creamer	1x creamer
	1x sugar	1x sugar	1x sugar
	1x tea bag	1x tea bag	1x tea bag
	1x bfuel	1x bfuel	1x bfuel
	1x coffee	1x coffee	1x coffee
Lunch	2x crackers	2x crackers	2x crackers
	2x jam	2x jam	2x jam
	1x salted nuts	1x dry roasted nuts	1x salted nuts
	1x raisins	1x raisins	1x raisins
	1x choc chip flapjack	1x apricot flapjack	1x plain flapjack
	1x Mars	1x Chunky Kitkat	1x Dairy Milk
	1x Chunky Kitkat	1x Twix	1x Mars
Soup	Potato and leek soup 100g	Vegetable soup 100g	Mushroom soup 100g
Main meal	Chicken and veg pasta	Vegetable pasta bolognaise	Chicken Thai rice
Pudding	Custard with apple	Peach 'n pineapple	Crème choc chip desert
Number	64	64	64

Rations were purchased from Bewell at £10 each + p&p.

TRANSPORT

Manchester, UK – Keflavik, Iceland

Scheduled flight with Icelandair from Manchester due to the airline cancelling flights into Glasgow. Flybus from outside Keflavik Airport to Reykjavik city centre. This bus drops passengers off at selected hotels and the youth hostel/campsite for no charge. Flybus approx £11 pp.

Reykjavik, Iceland – Constable Pynt, Greenland

Scheduled flight with Air Iceland. The airport staff are extremely accommodating and very helpful.

Constable Pynt, Greenland – Gåseland, Greenland

Chartered Twin Otter flight with Air Iceland.

Constable Pynt, Greenland – Ittoqqortoormiit, Greenland

Boat charter.

MEDICAL

Thankfully, there was very little use made of the expedition's comprehensive medical kits. A few nasty blisters, (involving enforced rest in Base Camp), a suspected eye infection, and some mild sprains were all that was experienced by the expedition members. All, that is, apart from the ridiculously large number of mosquito bites which used up vast quantities of antihistamines and hydrocortisone cream.



ACCOMMODATION

Iceland

The expedition camped in the public campsite at the start and end of the expedition. The four instructors/leaders camp free of charge and a group discount is also available. Cost approx £4.50 pppn. It is approximately twenty-five minutes walk to the city centre.

Ittoqqortoormiit

Four shipping containers have been joined together and made into a bunkhouse-style accommodation unit. Facilities are toilet, shower, kitchen with oven, fridge, freezer, dining room and it sleeps ten in single rooms although there is space for a number of others to sleep on floor space. There is also a guesthouse next door which offers more comfortable accommodation, also in single or twin rooms. Both buildings were used to accommodate the expedition.

EQUIPMENT

Camping

Number	Item	Notes
1	Trango Stronghold	Base camp tent
4	Trango 3.1	Fitted with snow valances
2	Trango 2	Fitted with snow valances
6	Primus Omnifuel stoves	
6	Pans	
6	Stove boards	
36	Snow pegs	6 per tent
16	0.66 litre fuel bottles	
16	1.5 litre fuel bottles	
4	Spare poles	1 of each type

Mountaineering (excluding leaders' individual kit)

Number	Item	Notes
4	Ropes - Beal Stinger	
12	DMM Alpine harnesses	
12	Helmets	
12	Crampons	Assorted
12	Ice axes	
12	Ice screws	Mixture of screw-in and drive-in
24	Screwgate krabs	
1	Climbing rack	Small
6	Slings	Assorted sizes
16	Snow shoes	
2	Shovels	
12	Crampon bags	
	Prussik cords	
16	Map/aerial photos	Laminated

Science

Number	Item	Notes
150	Specimen tubes	
0.5 litre	Ethanol	
4	Petri dishes	
2	Forceps	
2	Paint brushes	
6	Pooters	
1	Identification guide	
2	Flower press	

Other

Number	Item	Notes
1	Repair kit	Stove, tent, crampon
2	Rifles	One from UK, one hired in country
20	Ammunition – soft nose	
40	Ammunition – hard nose	Training
16	Targets	
1	Rifle cleaning kit	
1	Satellite phone	
1	VHF radio	
1	Box flares	
4	Pen flare sets	
1	Medical kit	Inc drugs, fluids, manual
1	First aid kit	In case group is split
4	TGA Cups	
4	TGA Saucers	
1	GPS	
10	Bamboo canes	
Roll	Thin cord	
Roll	Fluorescent duck tape	
1	Scottish Saltire	
1	EPIRB	
1	Solar panel	



FINANCE

INCOME

Pupil contributions 12@ £3800	45600
Grants	11650
Fundraising	2164
	£59414

EXPENDITURE

Tangent Expeditions	44730
Flights Reykjavik – Constable Pynt	
Twin Otter charter	
Sea freight	
Boat transfers to/from Ittoqqortoormiit	
Ittoqqortoormiit accommodation	
Rifle hire	
Ammunition	
VHF radio hire	
Travel	
Flights Manchester – Reykjavik	3219
Iceland buses	393
Food	
Rations	4540
Other	1045
Accommodation	
Reykjavik campsite fees	161
Equipment	
Medical supplies	285
Insurance (BMC)	1793
Administration	
Expedition report	891
Lectures, presentations, publicity	316
Miscellaneous	
Gifts, postcards	107
Blue Lagoon	425
Other	270
Carried over to next expedition	1239
	£59414

The Greenland Expedition Team

Here are some words for those to whom we owe a special debt,
For making Greenland 2009 a trip we won't forget.

Phil'll have a song for you at any time of day,
And Jane is always cheerful no matter what may come our way.
Olivia will laugh her way through bad times and through good,
Allen will gladly deal with anyone's leftover food.
Fraser goes about his day with a presidential air,
Adam, for all the jokes, will make sure everything's fair.
Jamie: nobody could eat four days' of rations faster,
And Robbie keeps us laughing, even when *c'est quel désastre!*
Kenny: with regards to kit, it's him you need to see,
And Rachel's always happy if she gets a cup of tea.
Craig will entertain with all his crazy games and stories,
And I will try to amuse you all with Phillip's ukulele.

And then we have the leaders who, in their own special way,
Have brought good cheer and expertise to brighten up our stay.
There's Nigel, who finds the quickest way with mountain Jedi powers,
And Al, who sets a storming pace to whittle down the hours.
Sally never fails to have a kind word and a grin,
And last but not least, the cheeky imp we know as our own Neal Gwynne.

Through thick and thin we trundle on: a merry band of sixteen.
There's no way you can ever stop the mighty Greenland team.

SR



EXPEDITION LEADER'S CONCLUSIONS

It is said that there exists a magical lure of the polar lands. A lure that will draw an explorer back time after time. There is not, as far as I am aware, an English word to describe this magnetism. In Norwegian it is *polarhüller* and it has been suggested that Shackleton, and at least some of his men, were not impervious to its draw. The Glasgow Academy has a strong history of mountaineering and polar exploration and I would like to think that Academicals, such as WH (Bill) Murray and Sir James Wordie, would be proud of what the pupils of their *alma mater* have achieved in 2009.

Twelve aspiring explorers spent over a year preparing for this expedition. Early morning technical training; evening runs through the dark, wet, Glasgow winter; risk analysis of expedition hazards; short but arduous expeditions in the wastes of Knoydart; and snowy weekends in the Cairngorms and Glen Coe.

Their preparation was rewarded with first ascents of three beautiful Arctic peaks in a spectacular and almost completely unexplored area of East Greenland. It seems that the lure of the Arctic is so strong that it matters not what trials and suffering has been endured. For James Wordie it was, not least, months of starvation and harsh living conditions, uncertain of rescue, on Elephant Island. For the pupils on The Academy's expedition in 2009 it was gruelling load carries and mosquito-ridden bivvies which prevented sleep.

Sir James became one of the most influential explorers of the twentieth century. Having had the privilege to work closely with these twelve young gentlemen and ladies in the Arctic, and having seen them engage with it in all its splendour, I have little doubt that at least some of them will be drawn back to the Arctic in the future. Who knows what they may accomplish? I believe that *polarhüller* may be responsible for some incredible journeys and marvellous exploration.

It is rare for a school to launch expeditions to unexplored destinations such as Gåseland. The Academy's ability to do this, in safety, is due to the exceptional leader team that trained and accompanied the pupils. It is also due to them that the pupils gained so much from their month in the Arctic. And it is to them that I am immeasurably grateful for their kindness, generosity and enthusiasm.

NG

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Dr Geoffrey Halliday (Botany)

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Mr Stephen Venables

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Home Contact

Dr Bill Kerr

Proof Reading

Mrs Arlene Watters

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FEELING ON TOP

By DEBORAH ANDERSON

STANDING at the top of Academy Peak, these 12 youngsters have certainly put their mark on the world after entering into uncharted territory.

They were the latest pupils to take part in Glasgow Academy's summer Arctic expedition to Greenland and for many it was a life-changing experience.

And now a piece of this remote peninsula will be forever linked with the pupils and Glasgow.

Three previously unscathed mountains were climbed by the youngsters.

The map of the Gaseland peninsula has three new names on it - Academy Peak, Mount Glasgow and Tiraluin.

During the four-week

Pupils put Glasgow on the Greenland map

expedition 12 pupils and four instructors made successful first ascents of the three mountains.

Despite mosquitoes, difficult ground, and Arctic winds, they were in awe of the incredible glacial views and rare sights.

They even caught a glimpse of Arctic poppies, which had never been found above 700m in the area, but which were blooming at 1400m.

Months of preparation included gruelling running sessions, weekly 8am meetings, and weekends hiking through the wilds of Knoydart.

The group of fifth and sixth year pupils spent around four weeks in the remote area of Greenland.

They had already gone through an intense 18-month training programme after being selected for the trip, but nothing could quite prepare them for the experience which was to lie ahead.

The expedition was led by Neal Gwynne, the school's head of Outdoor Education, and three voluntary instructors Alan Halewood, Sally Ozanne and Nigel Williams.

Sixth year pupil Rachel Turner, 16, said: "We could

not have believed the challenges that awaited us - wading through knee-deep snow, balancing across narrow ridges, and living off dehydrated rations for a month."

ON day 10 they ascended their first mountain, an 1820m peak named by the pupils Mount Glasgow.

After their first successful ascent, the group were eager to continue on to the second and third.

Rachel added: "The second peak was named Tiraluin which, in Gaelic, means 'beautiful land'. The

views cannot be put into words.

"The third mountain conquered was Academy Peak, near base camp, which had spectacular views up Scoresbysund, the largest fjord system in the world, littered with thousands of majestic icebergs."

Expedition leader Neal said he was extremely proud of what the group had achieved.

He said: "This was a challenging expedition which the group had worked very hard for. They were all significant peaks which they challenged, in particular the first one, Mount Glasgow at 1820 metres."

"They became a very close unit which was important for the success of the expedition and I am very proud of what they achieved."



The 12-strong Glasgow Academy Arctic expedition team pose for a group snap with their expedition leader and voluntary instructors



OF THE WORLD

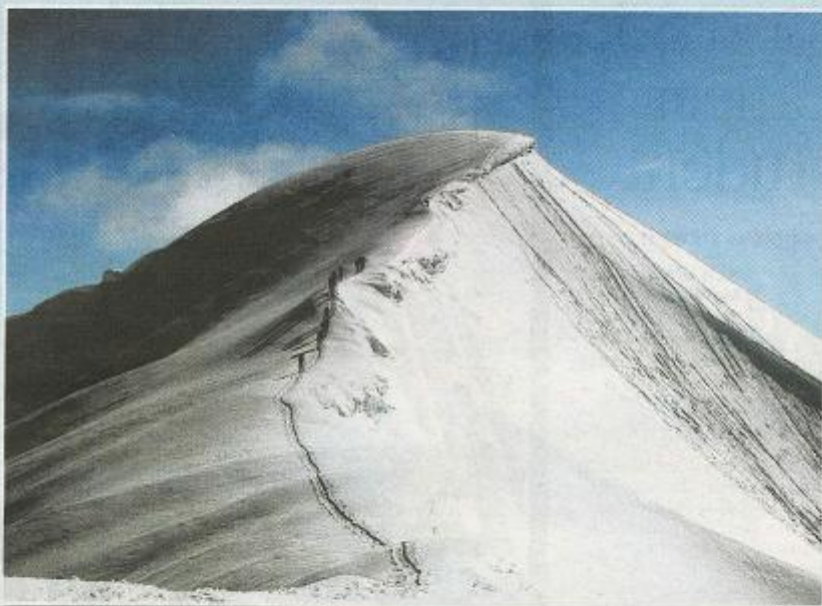
On a previous school expedition in 2006, pupils succeeded in being the first to scale another remote Greenland peak – and they decided to name it Bearsden.

Peter Brodie, rector of Glasgow Academy, said: "We are proud of our pupils' achievements and delighted by their making the most of the very special opportunities here."

"It is great to see their growing confidence as they rise to challenges, learn teamworking skills and take responsibility."

"The unforgettable experience of climbing – and naming – mountain peaks in Greenland is one they will long treasure, but it is just one of the many rich experiences in sport, the arts, outdoor education and working with others that our children enjoy."

deborah.anderson@
eveningtimes.co.uk



■ The pupils had to walk up a narrow ridge to reach the top of this magnificent peak



■ Crampons kept their footing sure but, phew, just take a look at that view

SAM'S DIARY

PUPIL Sam Reilly kept a diary during his Greenland expedition.

Here he describes one of the highlights of the trip as the ascended their second mountain.

"We began to trudge up the mountain at 4.15am, with a combined total of 15 hours' sleep between us."

"Before we had truly awoken we had climbed 300m, it was 5.15am, and we had an absolutely stunning glacier not 100m to our right as we headed left up a steep ridge. We could also see the Vestfjord glacier directly behind us, glowing with the early morning sun."

"We caught glimpses of Arctic hare – large and lean with snow-white fur. They are far less timid than you would think, as they have probably never encountered humans before and thus have never developed a fear of them."

"They hopped about, sniffing and munching grass, just a few metres from us."

"As we gained height, the terrain underfoot deteriorated into uneven rubble, yet the views behind us became majestic."

"After reaching the peak we surveyed the unbelievable panorama below. To the west, the Greenland ice-cap stretched several hundred miles; straight ahead the glaciers and peaks of Gâseland, our home, and directly below the great stone canyon dropped straight down to the valley floor."

"It was with a just sense of satisfaction that we turned for home. It was then a fairly straightforward climb down to loose rocks towards the camp, although I'm sure our knees would disagree!"

APPENDIX A: EXPEDITION ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The expedition plans to adopt a minimum impact approach throughout its time in Greenland. Furthermore, it is the intention that the pupils will develop sound environmental conservation habits on the expedition and return to the UK with a very clear understanding of why such precautions are necessary. Pupils will be encouraged to apply best practice on all future wilderness trips and to educate their peers accordingly. The purpose of this policy is to preserve a virtually pristine environment in Greenland.

Base camp

- If possible, base camp will be located on rocky ground and not on tundra to avoid damage to the vegetation.
- Rubbish – the minimum amount of packaging will be shipped to Greenland. All rubbish that can be, will be burnt. Where possible this will be on a rocky area and will not damage any vegetation.
- Any metal rubbish, including batteries, will be shipped back to the UK for disposal.
- Human waste will be disposed of in a pit.
- Toilet paper will be burnt immediately after use.
- Stove. Avoid fuel spillage and efficient use of pans/cooking time encouraged to conserve limited fuel supply and minimise environmental damage. Any excess fuel will not be disposed of in the ground.
- Minimal use of detergent will be used for the necessary cleaning of pans and for personal hygiene.
- A designated soak away area will be established.

Satellite camps

Following guidelines above except:

- All rubbish will be carried to base camp for burning.
- Human waste will be buried to approx 15-20cm depth if in soil/rock, or minimum 30cm if in snow/ice.
- If possible, satellite camps will be located on/near a rocky area at the edge of the glacier to ease waste disposal.

Field work

- Samples of the Greenlandic Seed Bug will be collected as late in the expedition as possible.
- A permit will be obtained from the Danish Polar Centre.
- The only opportunity for fauna to breed and bring up their young is during the short summer months. Many do not create specific nests, so as not to attract predators, so expedition members will tread carefully (particularly in areas of apparently lifeless tundra, scree or loose rock) to avoid disturbing birds, their nests and other animal life.

APPENDIX B: PREPARATION PROGRAMME

September

Thu	11 th	0800	Overview of expedition
Thu	18 th	0800	Presentation by Graeme Cornwallis, author of the Lonely Planet guide to Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands
Thu	25 th	0800	Tents

October

Thu	2 nd	0800	Tents
Fri	10 th to Mon	13 th	Gold DoE Practice Expedition
Thu	23 rd	0800	Ittoqqortootmiit
Thu	30 th	0800	First Aid

November

Thu	6 th	0800	First Aid
Thu	13 th	0800	No meeting
Wed	19 th	0930	Open Morning
Thu	20 th	0800	Personal equipment
Thu	27 th	0800	Risk Management

December

Thu	4 th	0800	History of exploration in East Greenland
Thu	11 th	0800	Risk Management
Thu	18 th		No meeting

January

Thu	8 th	0800	Grant applications
Thu	15 th	0800	Risk management
Thu	22 nd	0800	Winter navigation
Thu	29 th		No meeting

February

Thu	5 th		No meeting
Thu	5 th	1930	Lecture: Stephen Venables
Fri	6 th to Sun	8 th	Mountaineering: Winter Skills Weekend (Cairngorms)

March

Thu	5 th	0800	Stoves: use
Thu	12 th	0800	Stoves: maintenance
Thu	19 th	0800	Knots
Thu	26 th	0800	Briefing and kit issue for weekend
Fri	27 th to Sun	29 th	Glacier Travel and Crevasse Rescue Training (Glen Coe)

April

Thu	2 nd		No meeting
Thu	23 rd	0800	Polar bears
Thu	30 th		No meeting

May

Thu	7 th		No meeting
Mon	11 th		Collection of rations from Wellington College
Tue	12 th		Delivery of sea freight
Thu	14 th		No meeting
Thu	21 st		No meeting
Thu	28 th		No meeting

June

Thu	4 th	0800	Boys and Girls
Thu	11 th		Kit issue
Sat	13 th to Mon	16 th	Gold DoE Practice Expedition
Thu	18 th	0800	Medical briefing
Thu	25 th	1400	Pre-departure kit check

**The Glasgow Academy
Colebrooke Street
Glasgow
G12 8HE
United Kingdom**

**+44 (0)141 3348558
enquiries@tga.org.uk**