



West Lancashire County Scout Council MOUNTAINEERING GROUP

REGISTERED CHARITY Number 521712

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

MEMBER OF THE YOUNG EXPLORERS TRUST



EAST GREENLAND EXPEDITION 2007

<http://greenland.westlancashirescouts.org.uk>

*"But who are ye in rags and rotten shoes
You dirty bearded, blocking up the way?"*

*"We are the Pilgrims, master; we shall go always a little further;
It may be beyond that last blue mountain barred with snow,
Across that angry or that glimmering sea"*

The Golden Journey to Samarkand - James Elroy Flecker 1884-1915)

Please reply to :-

EXPEDITION SCREENED & APPROVED BY: -

Dick Griffiths (as below)



Tuesday, 11 September 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EXPEDITION

Following a very successful expedition to Milne Land, East Greenland, in 2004, 50 members of West Lancashire County Scouts again left the UK in July 2007 en route for the Arctic. Our final destination this year was to be a region that has been rarely visited: Ren Land - a mountainous, glaciated, area attached to the mainland of East Greenland in the innermost depths of Scoresbysund.

The Team consisted of 7 Explorer Scouts (aged 15 to 17), 19 members of the Scout Network (aged 18 to 25), and 24 Mountaineering and Support Leaders (over 25).

Travel was by commercial Icelandair flight to Keflavik for an overnight stop in Iceland. The Expedition Kayak Group and an advance party travelled from Glasgow on Tuesday 17th July and on to Constablepynt in East Greenland by scheduled flights on Wednesday 18th. They were followed by the main party on Friday 20th July from Manchester, arriving at Constablepynt by chartered Dash 8 of Flugfélag Islands (Air Iceland) on the Saturday 21st.

Over the following two days, the main party travelled via Milne Land and on into Ren Land using Twin Otter aircraft, a helicopter, and six local speedboats. After a four day delay due to pack ice in Hurry Fjord, the Expedition Kayak Group finally set out from Constablepynt on Monday 23rd July and over a seven day period paddled the 210kms west along the predominantly mirror-calm seas of Scoresbysund into Renland.

During the 22 days in the field the team achieved the following objectives:-

1 **Personal Development** All members, young and old, cannot fail but to have been affected by the Expedition: the relationships, the challenges and the experiences. In addition, anybody venturing North into such remote, uninhabited areas cannot fail but to have been touched and permanently affected by the Arctic. The expedition has built the capacity for more Leaders to give more young people similar experiences.

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2 **Exploration** Existing maps are as a result of aerial photography, with very little ground exploration. As a body, the Expedition has explored almost 1,000 square miles of glaciated mountainous terrain in the centre of Ren Land that will improve the knowledge and detail on the 1:50,000 maps prepared by a Network member of the Expedition. Eight Members completed their Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award Expedition during their time in Ren Land.

3 **Mountaineering** The area was a milieu of 'spires and minarets' - far harsher than experienced in Milne Land in 2004. Despite this, thirty two separate mountains were climbed by members of the expedition - all of which were first mountaineering ascents and have been named, subject to confirmation. Most of these involved 2 to 4 days away from Base.

Some very challenging gully and mixed route climbs were put up by several members of the expedition.

The expedition identified some major climbing objectives, particularly for those into big wall climbing - some of which were approaching 4/5,000 ft in height.

4 **Scientific** During our time in East Greenland, the Expedition established Neutron Sensing equipment for Cosmic Ray analysis on behalf of the University of Central Lancashire, caught Seed Bugs for the University of Stirling, and collected Glacial Rafted Debris for the University of Lancaster. In addition a record was maintained on behalf of several other institutions of birds and other wildlife observed. Very few mammals were seen although tracks of Arctic Fox and Polar Bear were seen. From comparison of the available aerial photographs (1987) we will be able to provide an indication of the rate of recession of the glaciers within the area.

5 **Promotion of Scouting** Solar energy was used to power two laptops, Iridium satellite phones, VHF radios, and a 100w HF amateur band configuration! Using an Inmarsat transmitter, daily blogs and emails were uploaded to the Expedition's website. This received over 11,000 hits during our time in the field. Various press releases were made before, during, and after the expedition. All members, at 4 different locations, celebrated the dawning of the new centenary of Scouting on 1st August..... this being shared real-time with colleagues in the UK via satellite phone and Inmarsat transmitter. The message is that Scouting in the 21st Century encompasses many challenging activities, at all levels: the Movement really has come a long way in its first 100 years.

The weather was fairly typical of the Arctic. Of the 32 days in East Greenland we experienced only two days of low mist/light rain..... predominantly sunny for 16 days..... with 100% wall to wall blue skies, 24hrs a day for the remaining 14 days!!!!!! Because of the cooler conditions during the night-time period, many activities took place then to take advantage of slightly firmer snow conditions with less meltwater.

On Thursday 9th August a new kayak group left Base Camp for the coast with a view to paddling out through the Bear Islands to arrive on Milne Land by Wednesday 15th. After a helicopter shuffle from Base Camp to the Ren Land coast, the helicopter took the remaining Base Camp equipment back to Constablepynt on Monday 13th August and all members walked out to the Ren Land coast strip by the evening of Tuesday 14th August, ready for collection by local speed boats for transfer back to Milne Land and onward extraction by Twin Otter back to Constablepynt on the Thursday. Friday was spent repacking the freight for shipment back to the UK.

The Expedition returned to Iceland on Saturday 18th August and stayed at a Scout Hostel in Hafnafjordur until the flight back to Manchester on Monday 20th August - exactly one month from departure of the main party. In Iceland, other than very welcome showers, members visited the sights of Reykjavik, Gulfoss, Geysir and Þingvellir (the birthplace of Parliaments) and enjoyed soaking up the thermal waters of the "Blue Lagoon".

.Dick Griffiths
Expedition Leader
Sunday 26th August 2007