



AAC Publications

Eggers Island, Dance with Seals; Igdlukasip Tunua fjord, Keeping the Faith

Greenland, South Greenland, Cape Farewell Region

Our idea was to kayak from Nanortalik around Cape Farewell, as a two-man autonomous team, and then return, attempting rock routes on any suitable peaks we came across. Cape Farewell is the southernmost tip of Greenland, and one of the windiest places on earth. It is a committing coastline, with high cliffs, no easy landing, and totally exposed to the ocean swell. We knew rounding it would be the crux of the trip.

Liam Fleming and I left the U.K. on August 12, a little later than I normally leave for Greenland. (This was my sixth visit.) Two days and four flights later we collected two kayaks in Nanortalik and began the process of loading them with 23 days of food, camping equipment, two 50m ropes, and full climbing gear. We left at lunchtime on the 14th, the combination of two disciplines making for a tight fit, with a substantial amount of gear having to be strapped to the decks. Paddling east for several days, we passed a 1,000-year-old Viking settlement and an inquisitive minke whale before reaching the fjord of Narssap Sarqa. Opposite the settlement of Frederiksdal, we stopped to climb the 900m Ikigaitqaot. This gave a fine mountaineering day—a lovely ridge scramble with a rope and small rack, and stunning views in the good weather.

With Frederiksdal in view, we managed to get a mobile phone signal and a promising weather forecast. We therefore decided to go for a big day, paddling around both Cape Christian and Cape Farewell. There was much fog, and as we came around Cape Christian the wind increased. We were forced to land on a rocky shore, where we waited a day through stormy weather before continuing around Cape Farewell in a big swell and fog but easing wind, eventually finding a small, sheltered landing site on the eastern tip of Eggers Island. The following day we climbed a new rock route on a slabby, south-facing wall on the flanks of Quvperitqaqa (681m), which we named Dance with Seals (eight pitches, HVS 5a).

We now began our return journey, paddling up the broad Ikaq channel north of Eggers Island and then east of Pamiagdruk Island to the settlement of Augpilagtuk, the only town in which we stopped during three weeks of travel.

From here we headed south along Torssukatak Fjord, then west to an old hut in Igdlukasip Tunua Fjord, where we had cached food on the way out. After waiting out a day of bad weather, we paddled north up the fjord and camped for three days. The first we spent sheltering from rain, but on the second we decided to try a large mountain face we had spotted on the west flank of the south ridge of Natsingnat (1,080m).

It was misty to start, and upon climbing out of the cloud we realized the face was rather bigger than we'd thought. After 12 pitches we reached the top, completing Keeping the Faith (E1 5b). There was some good climbing, but also the usual loose rock one would expect on a big mountain face.

As we began the last section of the journey back to Nanortalik, the weather was now bitterly cold, with snow on the tops. There was still time to explore another area we had seen closer to Nanortalik, but on receiving a forecast that more bad weather was due in two days, we decided to head back rather than be stormbound yet again. We arrived in Nanortalik content that we had succeeded in all our objectives and survived challenging conditions. Over a 21-day period we had covered 270km. Fourteen days had involved paddling, on another four we had been stormbound, and on three we

climbed. The trip was supported with grants from the BMC, Welsh Sports Association, and the Gino Watkins Memorial Fund.

Olly Sanders, U.K.

Images



Keeping the Faith on the west flank of Natsingnat's south ridge.



Pitch seven of Keeping the Faith.



Dance with Seals on Eggers Island.



Pitch two of Dance with Seals on Eggers Island.



East of the settlement of Augpilatoq, looking south across the fjord and into a valley on Pamiagdhluk.

The British team was stormbound here for a few days and camped behind the only boulder visible in this picture.

Article Details

Author	Olly Sanders, U.K
Publication	AAJ
Volume	57
Issue	89
Page	0
Copyright Date	2015
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions