

The expedition was successful in both of its main aims. A number of first ascents of new rock climbs were made as we progressed south down the west coast of Greenland, and the boat was then successfully sailed back across the Atlantic after four years in the Arctic.

The final report will give a much more detailed account of the sailing down the west coast, and of the climbing in different areas. In general terms there was some personal disappointment on the climbing side, for two main reasons. The first was that winter stayed late in west Greenland this year, and we had only brought rock climbing gear. This curtailed what we were able to reach and do; we were not equipped for glacier travel. The other was that my climbing team liked to stay well within their comfort zone! I knew of course that this was not the Wild Bunch, those talented professional climbers I had with me in 2010 and 2014, but I did expect the Mild Bunch to stretch themselves more fully, having the opportunity to make first ascents for their first time now, and so to take on some of the longer climbs and big walls waiting to be done in Greenland, rather than sticking to the comparatively short climbs they were used to in Europe. But having said that it did show that there are still a number of not too long new routes to be done in Greenland in the moderate extreme grades by ‘holiday’, or non-professional, climbers. And they certainly did stretch themselves on the Kin of Sal near Manitsoq to produce two high class longer and dramatic routes.

The Atlantic passage proved once again that this usually really is ‘the meanest of all the Atlantic crossings’. A huge Depression established itself south of Iceland stretching isobars right across the Atlantic from Greenland to Scotland and beyond. We went south to get round the bottom of this and so hoping for westerly winds which did pay off on the whole, but it was by no means calm and we had our adventures. Fortunately the breeze did remain long enough to push us up the Firth of Lorne through the night on our final approach in spite of what the forecast had said.

Added to this was the fact that we were able to do quite a lot of pilotage as we progressed down the west coast of Greenland from Sisimiut southwards, recording anchorages and up-dating some of the references for the harbours visited, for a supplement to ‘The Arctic and Northern Waters’ Pilot, which will be submitted to the Royal Cruising Club Pilotage Foundation and printed by Imrays.

So all in all it was another successful expedition, and we are very grateful for the invaluable support of the Gino Watkins Memorial Fund once again.