

Report on Cape. Farewell Expedition 2014

The idea of the trip was to try and paddle around Cape Farewell from Nanortilak and return ,also on the way attempt some alpine ascents of any suitable peaks we came across
Cape Farewell is the southern tip of Greenland and exposed to all the ocean swell and is the windiest region in the world, it is also a committing coast with high cliffs and no easy landings, we knew this would be the crux of the trip

We shipped two barrels out to Nieils Jepson at the Nanortilak tourism Service a month before we left and these contained all the food packed into day bags for 2 people and the climbing equipment

We left on the 12 th august , a little later than I usually go , but the reason was we could not get the kayaks till then , we hired them through Doug Copper of Glenmore Lodge who had a fleet of P&H Capellas stored with Nieils

Two days later and 4 flights including 2 with helicopters we arrived and met by Nieils.he was very helpful and we picked up the boats and barrels that day ,this meant we were able to leave the next day.

The Capellas had skegs and I was worried we wouldn't get all the kit in.we had 23 days food all the camping kit and two 50 m ropes and climbing gear.It was a tight fit with the cockpit rammed and quite a bit of gear strapped to bag decks, but it all was in and we left around lunchtime on the 14 th

The boats were very heavy and because of the gear on the back meant they weather cocked badly even with the skeg down and we headed of into a side wind!The first headland we encountered was exposed to swell and no easy landings and we realised this could be a awkward on our return in bigger conditions

At our first campsite we stashed 3 food bags for our return as there looked like some possible climbing in the area on our return , this also got rid of some kit from back decks

The next few days we were in the shelter of an island system , then we had another exposed headland to a campsite at ink gait the site of an old Viking settlement over 1000 years ago and we camped in the ruins of Arnold church.we also had our first encounter with a Minke whale who came very close

The following day we had a mountaineering day with a rope and small rack and climbed Ikiagtqaqot 900 m a lovely ridge scramble with small pitches of scrambling and stunning views in good weather

We managed too get a mobile signal as we had a view of the settlement of Frederksdal and the forecast seemed ok. We did work out on the trip that the weather changes very fast and the difference between a report from Nanortilak and out on the coast could be vastly different.

We did decide to go for the crux of the trip and attempt Cape Christian and Cape Farewell,this would be a big day in distance and the we had a lot of fog to deal with at the start

Cape Christian eventually appeared out of the fog ,as we came around the headland .the wind suddenly increased and we were faced with the sight of a large area of braking waves over some low islands in front . the wind was now blowing hard from behind and we struggled to get the heavy boats around into swell and wind , but we decided we had to land,on a very rocky shore

Although it was a difficult landing on a boulder beach we were glad to be safe as the wind steadily increased

We were storm bound here all day , but next day the wind had eased , but the swell was still big, we crossed the bay and as we came around the Cape the fog came in and the wind increased, luckily after struggling around the wind eased, there were no easy landings so we had to stay in our boats till we found a little shelter

we landed at the west tip of Eggers island and the following day did a new climb of 8 pitches on the Slabby side of Quvperitqaqa grade HVS 5a called Dance with Seals

The next few days we had good weather paddling down Ikaq fjord. we again got caught out crossing Anordliutssup ima when the wind and waves picked up to a force 5 and we were committed to cross. We stop briefly in the village of Augpilagtoq, where we were told us they had shot a polar bear a few weeks ago, this was our only stop in 3 weeks

We were storm bound for a day close to here, but the weather improved again and we headed south down Torssukatak fjord, again we hit bad windy weather at the end of the fjord and had to turn and run to find shelter

The weather was definitely changing and following a pattern of calm in the morning and windy in the afternoon, so we got early starts and got back into the shelter of Igdlukasip Tunua fjord where we knew there was an old hut where we left some food, we had a day here stormbound, and headed down the fjord and camped

We spent 3 days here one day again sheltering from rain, but second day although it was foggy, we went to try and climb a big mountain face we had seen on the side of Natsingnat 1080 m. As we climbed we came out of the cloud and the face was bigger than we thought, 12 pitches later we reached the top some good climbing and the usual loose rock on a big mountain face We called the Climb Keeping The Faith E1 5b

We now had a week left to explore another area we had see closer to Nanortilak, but we had to negotiate another headland we had passed it was windy again the day before, but when we woke up from camp it was flat calm in the bay we were in.

we set of and as soon as we headed onto the open sea we got the swell and wind, the next hour we battled around the tide the swell and wind created some of the biggest seas i have ever been in and any rescue was out of question. We made it into bay and landed, once again the wind got stronger as the afternoon wore on, so we found a sheltered spot for the tent, it was now bitterly cold with snow on the tops

As we were now in sight of Nanortilak, i managed to get a phone signal and got a weather forecast. More bad weather was coming in 2 days, so we decided the following to head back in rather than be stormbound again. The following day was calm and we headed back in around mid afternoon for showers and beers. We had finished a few days early, but we had succeeded in all our objectives and felt happy that we had survived some very Challenging conditions

Distance Paddled 270km over 21 day period approx 15 paddle days, 4 days stormbound and 3 climbing days

Kayaks

Plastic Cappellas 166 with skegs

2 Werner Paddles and 1 set of spare paddles

Paddling kit

Palm Aluetian Drysuits and Buoyancy aids, Nova Wellies and Palm spraydecks

Tent

Terra Nova Heavy duty Hyperspace

Sleeping bags Mountain Equipment titan 850 down bags

Stove MSR, Whisperlite combo

Climbing kit

2x DMM Alpine harness

2x 9.8 m DMM 50M ropes

Rack

12 quickdraws

5 slings and krabs

double set of wires 1-10

9 assorted cams

Helmets and rock boots
Tat 30m

EPIRB and VHF RADIO and mobiles. although only a few places had phone coverage

Various camera kit

The team would like to thank the following

Gino watkins funding and Artic club

Welsh sports Association

BMC

Kit

Palm

Mountain Equipment

Werner Paddles

DMM

Cotswold camping

Wild West Beef Jerky

A to Z Expeditions

Bromsgrove school