

Greenland cruising 2015

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Whilst all the prep was commencing this spring for our Greenland trip, I had no idea what was to await us and indeed what a thrilling and adventurous journey it would be.

Sailing, motoring, cruising....what a way to travel! Combined with rock climbing exploration and everyday magical scenery made this one of the most memorable adventures I've ever had. From the very first step aboard the Dodo with Bob Shepton I felt at ease and knew I was in experienced company. Never having sailed before I was in for a treat!

Myself and my good friend Patrick were first out to meet Bob in Sisimiut and after a few days preparing we set sail and were soon to find ourselves in a force 7. A little apprehensive as the pair of us had no idea what we were doing, Bob was always extremely patient with us....even after asking him for the 100th time which line we should be pulling. Although that first day's sailing gave me a taste of sea sickness, I was ecstatic with excitement!

We then started motoring around and first explored a long fjord named Evighensfjord, as soon as entering the fjord we were met by Whales. Hump back or Minke....we weren't too sure at the time, none the less it was amazing. This was only the start of our trip but we were soon to discover that cruising down the west coast of Greenland was to be a magical journey of outstanding scenery and landscapes, fun and often scary rock climbs, and awe inspiring marine life, sea birds and land mammals!

Later on in the trip we met Rob and Mark who were to join us on the small 33ft Westery Discus, now we knew the meaning of a shared space! Much fun was had climbing with these guys, especially our first ascent of the "sharks fin" in which we climbed a route of 280m in height and graded E4 6a – our hardest trad lead to date! Made all the more special because of its access - only possible to reach by the means of a boat!

Rob later left us and Martin joined (he was to be first mate). Martin had some sailing experience and was reasonably handy with fixing all the electronics on the boat....of which we had numerous problems!

Almost 3 months passed by before we were due to set sail for Scotland. A different experience to the most often peaceful means of exploring the west coast with the Dodo's delight. The trip had been just incredible and we were all starting to feel confident with the boat – I now knew what all the lines did, how to manage the boat in different winds, and felt like I was ready for the crossing! Not long before our departure date we were given the most spectacular show by the northern lights, anchored in a sheltered spot with breath taking mountains all around spilling right down to the water's edge we watched what was probably one of the most magnificent natural shows of all time!

15 days and 4 hours later we were moored up in Appin. An almost surreal experience, of continuous watches, sea birds, strong winds, no wind, and dolphins! I must admit it was a little gruelling at times but was also one of the best things I've ever done, it was an adventure within an adventure!

The trip allowed a lot of time to reflect as well, and I discovered new attributes about myself. Self doubt always niggles away at me in many situations, but I really feel from the experiences I've had aboard the boat has given me a new found confidence within myself.

It is also true to say that without the help of the Noel Marshall grant from the royal cruising club, none of these memories and experiences would have been possible. I would most definitely not have been able to provide the funds needed for the trip and in that way a dream adventure was born for me. So it is with my upmost sincere gratitude that I thank the royal cruising club for making this possible and providing me with an extremely unique experience. Thank you so much!

