

Lumina through the North West Passage

Up the inside passage to Manitsoq

Post 5

Leaving the bay sheltered by the massive sand dunes at Marraq we had a day motoring up the marked passage inside the islands and rocks. The tortuous route has now become the norm but at least the navigation gives you plenty to do as often the direction changes several times an hour and sometimes the channel might only be a few times the width of the boat. Certainly not suitable for any sizeable vessel but good enough for us and the locals in their speedboats.



Another 3 cylinder thumper of unknown make

Our anchorage for the night was off another abandoned Faroese fishing settlement of Kangerluarsruseq. A fascinating place which must have been truly bustling not that long ago. There were many houses and dormitories for the fishermen to live in, an impressive power plant which provided electricity to the whole settlement. It was sad to walk around and into houses with all the modern conveniences like central heating and electric lights, this was much more modern than the previous settlement we had looked at and on further investigation with good old Google it seems that it is all to do with Brussels and the EEC and Grexit. When Denmark joined the EEC in 1973 Greenland was part of Denmark and therefore became part of the EEC. In 1979 Greenland gained its independence from Denmark and had some special considerations from the EEC over business and fishing rights. Then in 1982 they had their own Brexit and with a 53% majority voted to leave (deja vu or what!) In 1985 they left the EEC or was it the EU by then and around that time the Faroese lost their rights to fish there and moved out. Let me know if anyone already knew we were not the first to leave!

After looking around the power plant I spotted something unusual in a nearby creek, we walked over and sure enough it was the carcass of a whale and a big one at that. All the flesh had long gone but there was still some soft tissue between the vertebrae. However compared to the single jaw bone we had found in Svalbard last year this was still a minnow.

Leaving the whale bones we returned to the

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When Denmark joined the EEC in 1973 Greenland





boat and lifted the anchor, I noticed on the chart a wreck marked just a short way further up the fjord and realised that what I had been looking at in the distance was not just another shed but was the hull of a ship. We motored up towards it, re anchored and got back in the dinghy. Round the back of a small island that had been partly obscuring the wreck was an almost intact ship, although the closer

you looked the less intact it was... It is frustrating not to be able to find out more about these places and their history, maybe I should learn Danish and then Google might be more help!



In the evening we reached Nuuk, the capital of Greenland and shelter from the rising wind that had been forecast. Unfortunately all the berths in the harbour were taken so the harbourmaster told us to go on a buoy in the middle of the harbour, he said it was good for 20 tons but I think possibly that it weighed 20 tons itself. We had to drop Ben onto it to put a line on. Later as the wind increased a second line was added



Boy on a buoy

ed with a round turn to prevent chafe as you don't really want to suddenly be let free in 30kn of wind in the middle of the night!

The wind howled all night and the next day. The boat tugged on its lines to the big buoy twisting from side to side and at one point a tug towing a big flat barge across the harbour drifted to within about 10m of us. I think the problem was that the tug could not see the buoy and us as the barge was blocking its view but in the nick of time a puff of smoke came from its chimneys as they gave the engine some more beans and they cleared in front of us. During the second night the wind eventually died and we had another problem. The sailors amongst us will know that buoys and yachts have some sort of magnetism so that when it is very still the two will always come together. Normally it is not an issue as the buoy just taps on the bow, however this one weighs maybe 20tons and whats more the big chain it is attached to does not seem to want to twist. So in the middle of the "night" I

had to get up and start the engine and motor the yacht round the buoy to get some slack in the lines again. We survived with a few rusty scratches on the side.

After a number of phone calls the harbour master eventually found us a space on the dock but a bit of a misunderstanding meant that we went to the wrong place and had to move again. Water was arranged and various fire hoses joined together to get it to us. With tanks full I was then taken the mile or so to the harbour masters office. It seemed really strange to be in a van driving on the wrong side of the road after 6 weeks on board. For some reason the harbour master has relocated from the dock to a fancy office suite in an estate in town and relies on the biggest television screen I have ever seen showing the cameras watching over the place, and of course his van which does many miles up and down.

It was here that I got the call that we were not really expecting for a week or so— I had become a grandad! Back in Ulverston daughter Amy had given birth to young Charlie and both them and father James were doing well. I unexpectedly felt quite emotional as they seemed such a long way away but soon the photographs started to be shared and then the photo album on an app came to my inbox and I was in the system. Later I did some calculations and had to remind James that if he carried on at the same rate Charlie would have about 189,000 shots on his album by the time he was 21.



Amy and Charlie



Pastor, Texan girls and old sailor

Nuuk, being the biggest town we are likely to see was really the last place we could probably get our last stocks of food at half sensible prices. A cash and carry was helpfully located only a couple of hundred yards away and we made good use of it stocking up on staples like porridge, rice and pasta, and 60 eggs. Then at one of the supermarkets in town we continued with packs of mince for the freezer, Ryebread and fruit.

Later in the afternoon we got a call from the dock, it was the local Marine Chaplain greeting us and I had an interesting conversation with him about his work looking after the pastoral needs of visiting sailors. He also invited us to have a meal at what used to be called the Seaman's Mission but is now really a non for profit hotel offering reasonably priced meals and accommodation. He had a couple of girls with him and they were very keen to talk as they were from Texas on secondment and had not had a chance to talk to native English speakers since they arrived in Greenland. In the evening we went out to the Seaman's Hotel to celebrate our

final victualling session and had their set meal of pork and a Greenland beer.

Next morning in a chill drizzle we left Nuuk and continued our way north, after another lovely anchorage surrounded by cliffs the following day saw us reaching Manisoq another small settlement similar to Paamiut with many modern houses and apartments, and the main employment obviously the large fish factory of Royal Greenland.



It was here that we said goodbye to the climbers Ben and Indie who decided that they would rather continue their adventure by more conventional means of transport, so they will probably overtake us in a few days when the coastal ferry heads North to where they are meeting up with the third climber for the big wall.

Manitsoq family off for a day out



Humpback whale performance