

11th June 2024 - Paamiut

A slightly long blog this week folks!

Sunshine and blue sky... could it be true? The unseasonable heavy rain had finally abated and we had clear skies to sail north.

First off a re-fill of water at the local Royal Greenland fish processing factory was in order. Tim went inside and managed to barter a refill of our 2x 320 litre tanks of water for 250 Danish Krone (around £30) with the manager. It was clear that they did not get many yachts requesting water as their water pipe was somewhat bodedged with a lot of gaffa tape but needs must.

There was a large trawler moored next door. We asked the man onboard through a combination of broken english and sign language what sort of catches they took but it turned out he was in fact a trawler inspector...

However 5 minutes later some small boats turned up with local fisherman offloading their huge halibut catches as we waited. A fish which sadly is out for us as we were told you often have to catch them at a depth of almost 300m...

That day we sailed on to Avigatt. Another abandoned settlement now only used by the odd local in the summer. Tim and Carol went ashore to have a look around whilst me and Indie walked up the nearest hill for a spot of bouldering. Most of the rock was wet but the combination of a stiff breeze and a tea towel just about dried enough rock for a good hour of messing about. Pretty much the first climbing we had done really on the trip since Oban.

At Avigatt we were also graced by our first sighting of a pair of white tailed eagles circling the boat as we ate dinner. We also saw a couple of reindeer again, a nice change from Paamiut where the local population had certainly over hunted the landscape.



Indie pulling hard above our 'bouldering mat'

12th June 2024 - Avigatt - Teisten Havn

From Avigatt we sailed up the coast north. On this area of the coast there are numerous inside passages between small islands which are great for avoiding the ocean swell and wind. Most of these passages are well marked with navigation sticks and used by the small local fishing boats however once you get off the marked passages most of the area is completely

uncharted. A fact we quickly discovered when Tim decided to make a quick shortcut between two islands and nearly grounded the boat. Lumina is very well equipped for shallow waters however with both a lifting keel and a flat bottom which allows her to dry out without tipping over.

The sail north from Avigatt was one of these such passages. However unique to our trip so far as instead of a passage between islands we were carving a passage between huge banks of sandy moraine left behind by the glaciers of the ice cap. At some points the passage was only 100m wide however it seemed like you were in open ocean as the banks were still under the water. The only real indication of where the passage went to the eye was the grounded icebergs marooned on the sand bars.

At times though on the right was huge expanses of sand and silt miles long stretching up to the exposed ice cap which painted a really quite spectacular vista. This area of ice cap and the surrounding delta was a Ramsar site. (A site of wetlands deemed by Unesco as an internationally significant area of environmental interest.) To set foot on the land here you would need a permit that could cost up to \$4000 however me and Tim who were at the helm both noted that it would be extremely difficult to land here even in a boat with the shallowest draft.



The Ice cap from satellite and the view from Ravn Støro

That evening we aimed to anchor at the Island of Ravn Støro however a much stronger wind than we anticipated of upwards of 25knts forced us into a small sheltered bay around 1 mile before the Island as the final mile contained some quite tricky navigation through rocks and we didn't fancy being pushed onto any.

The following day we made it to Ravn Støro. We dropped anchor in absolutely Idyllic bay all thoughts of the previous weeks wind and rain out of our minds. This Island was dominated by much bigger crags and outcrops than what we had previously seen and me and Indie were quickly packing a rack and ropes to go and check out a promising looking crag above the anchorage. Tim and Carol also went ashore with us to go and explore the old abandoned Faroese fishing village that was situated on the opposite side of the Island.

Finding a good spot to ab in was wonderfully easy with so many erratic boulders littered around the summit of the crag and we spent an enjoyable day cleaning up a really great route around 40m high on superb granite cracks which we hoped to lead later in the day. We found however that the large run out of the crux was sadly quite wet and although still just about climbable the moves and gear were a little too marginal to risk a big fall with absolutely no chance of any rescue or hospital nearby so we ended up throwing a top rope down instead. Not a huge hardship. It was brilliant to finally get out and climb some hard moves on great rock and test some of the new gear we had brought along for the trip. How often do you get to go climbing in your t-shirt on a crag overlooking a clear blue lagoon filled with Icebergs...



'Our terrible bivvy'

That evening we had a fantastic cosy bivvy high up on the crag overlooking the anchorage and the surrounding peaks. At one point we were shouted at by a Peregrin who had taken offence to us sleeping on the crag on which she had made her nest however she must have realised we were too busy marvelling at the view to worry her or her eggs and soon left us alone.

Although the sun never really sets it does get quite cold at night. Probably an air temperature of around 3 degrees disregarding windchill so we were unsure as to how comfy we might be sleeping ashore but our rather swanky new phd bags kept us amazingly warm and cosy. Indie also had the chance that evening to test out her meals that she had dehydrated herself for the big wall; lentil dhal with broccoli and butter beans. It went down a treat. With a good feed and a soft bed of reindeer moss under our mats we in-fact slept a bit later than expected (somewhat of a rarity for me on a bivvy) and had to rush our gear back into our bags to make it down in time to meet the boat as it headed off again the next morning.

14th June 2024 - Ravn Støro - Kigutalik fjord

Another bluebird day and flat calm. Quite a long passage north today of around 30 miles took us through more gorgeous scenery and we also had time to give our clothes and bedding a good wash with the promise of more water in Nuuk not too far in the future. (Our water maker on board is broken and we are expecting to only be able to use water tanks for the rest of the voyage) Round one particularly picturesque group of rocks we decided to throw a fishing line in and try our luck. Carol caught first. A huge cod weighing 1.8kgs. This was particularly exciting as we had been told in Paamiut that the cod had only just returned to the coastal waters as they need the water temperatures to get to a certain warmth before they arrive.

Quickly we all got our lines overboard and soon the reels were all being wound in. Both me and Tim had caught 2 cod each on our lines and there was probably a shoal of 20-30 more swimming round just below the surface.

One of Tims fish was the heaviest at 2.3kgs with mine a close second at 2.2kgs. Enough fish in 2 minutes to feed us for 3 or 4 days at least! Indie fried up the fillets of one and made us a fabulous pasta salad with fresh cod fillets for lunch. Not bad for our first real fish since Scotland.



'Dinner!'

'Indie very pleased with her washing line'

For that evenings anchorage we had spied an interesting Fjord on the chart. So far we had only anchored in areas which were marked as specific anchorages on the charts however this one was completely blank. A bit of a worry as you might well get there and find the depth is 100's of meters deep or the sea floor is too rocky to hold an anchor well. Thankfully we found a perfect bay with good holding glacial silt that felt incredibly remote.

The sun was still high in the sky as we ate dinner at 7pm so me, Tim and Indie went ashore to go climb the nearby snowy peak. The classic walk for an hour and a half and the top doesn't seem to be any closer than it did at the beginning moment happened about halfway but being 'intrepid' we soldiered on and around midnight we reached a small summit at the height of 530m. You really do feel small in a place like this. No real signs of any people as far as the eye can see. We still are yet to see any other yachts since leaving Scotland and have only actually really seen other boats and people at Paamiut. Tim appreciates this more than most as even in Svalbard last year he found it very hard to not find yachts and cruise ships round the coast. A small scare of seeing a large white animal along the skyline was thankfully put at rest when it turned out to be a lone white reindeer and we used their trods to great effect on the descent to return to the boat around 1:30am.



'10:30pm in Greenland'



A Ptarmigan nest we almost stepped on due to its camouflage!

15th June 2024 - Kigutilik - Marraq

The following day we went on to Marraq, an incredible area we had spotted on the charts that has huge sand dunes of glacial silt many miles long surrounded by some pretty impressive peaks. They were even used in the 2nd world war as a landing strip for refuelling American planes heading over to the fighting in western Europe.

The mountains were much larger here than any we had seen before, with many still holding a large amount snow and some visible glaciers. With the end of the good weather forecasted for around 2am. It was with some trepidation that me and Indie set out around 7pm with rack and ropes to see if we could make a first ascent up one of the nearby faces. Below the mountains was a huge glacial meadow unlike anything I had ever seen before. Herds of Reindeer were grazing on its vast expanse and we also saw Arctic foxes and White Tailed Eagles. It was somewhat strange to be walking along perfect white sand capped with snow following the prints of large hooves.

We had hoped to climb a long ridge around 800m high and descend via a snow gully but it was soon clear that we wouldn't be able to make it before the storm blew in so we looked left to the very inviting granite slabs lit by the evening sun. Happily they were much easier than we first thought and we managed a very pleasant line of 7 pitches with some added simul climbing for a route 400m in height in just three hours. Indie named the route 'Reindeer Race.



On the descent we were treated to potentially one of the best sunsets I've ever seen. If you have watched the Lord of the Rings you might see why we felt like Frodo and Sam crossing the peaks towards Mordor.

A very windy but mercifully easy scramble descent got us back to the boat for 2:30am. Looking back the whole skyline was now shrouded in a heavy cloud. We had definitely made a good decision not committing to the big line.

Tomorrow we head north again for Nuuk, the capital of Greenland. See you next week!

