

# Lumina through the North West Passage

## Upernavik and heading West

### Post 11

As we neared Upernavik we passed by Sandersons Hope. This had been one of the climbers early objectives had they not stayed down south in Manitsoq. It is difficult for our simple lenses to do justice to the thousands of feet of almost vertical clean rock—a climbers dream but I think I will stick to the sailing...

Knowing it would be tight in Upernavik and with favourable winds not for a couple of days we opted for an anchorage just outside the little town, however it was very tight and for once the anchor seemed reluctant to hold so the next morning after a night listening to the anchor chain grumbling we moved across the sound to a lovely little bay that had a fishing boat anchored in it the previous evening. What a difference, we went from having about 20kn of wind blowing us about to complete stillness. There was a handy stream ashore where we were able to fill up the water tanks in three trips in the dinghy with the cans and the afternoon was spent preparing for the forthcoming passage across to Canada.

An oil change was a little overdue so the “Ultimate Speed” oil pump was pressed into action. This little wonder is a 12v pump that will suck the oil out of the sump. It is just about the best purchase I have ever seen from the middle Isle of Lidl and has given several years of good service. Much better than the manual sucker things you can buy from chandlers at yacht prices. It should be a simple job but still took most of the afternoon, however eventually with the oil in the engine and gearbox changed without too much black mess and I was just about ready.

The following morning we took a little detour a mile away to a little bay where Bob had attempted to overwinter alone. It was a grand spot but has three wrecked fishing boats in one corner and one in another. To be fair to Bob, at the time of his wintering I think there may only have been one wreck, but nevertheless, perhaps the omens were not too good, as now together with the fishing boats above the water there is the remains of Bob’s Dodos Delight beneath them. We could clearly see the his boat a few meters below us with the white of its fibreglass and silver stainless of the rails glinting in the sunlight. We had a small tot of whisky and gave a drop to Neptune as well. Having decided to overwinter alone on his



*Sandersons Hope, clean, sheer rock for thousands of feet...*



*A tot of whisky for us and one for Neptune as we drift over the wreck of the Dodos Delight beneath us*

boat, winter had well set in, the boat was frozen solid and he was able to ski across the frozen sea to Upernavik a few miles away for provisions. However, one unlucky mistake filling a diesel tank for the heater caused a fire which burnt the boat to the waterline and it sank. As I said to folks on whatsapp, you really need to read his book! "Addicted to Adventure" - a lifetime of interesting quests - not what one might have expected from a Church of England clergyman.

On arrival in the small harbour of Upernavik we could see that Abel Tasman was already tied up on one of the docks

so we asked them if we could go along side. The fuel truck was already supplying them so I climbed across the them to catch the driver as he was just finishing up. With little negotiation necessary the fuel hose



*The crowded harbour of Upernavik*

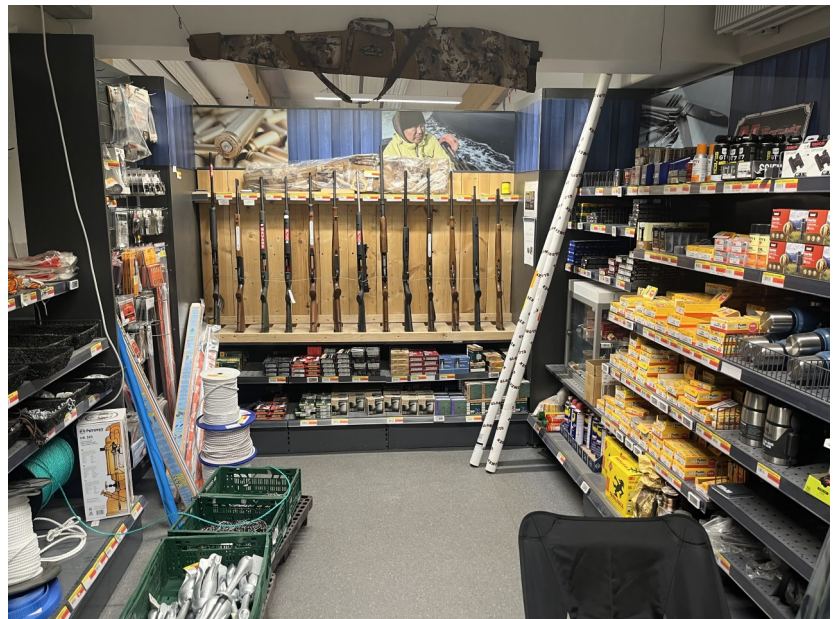
was draped across to us and we were filled up. Filming was well underway on Abel Tasman and if you are watching their film in Brazil you may see me with the fuel truck. With a quick trip to the fuel office to pay and the necessary visit to the supermarket for cakes we retired to the boat for lunch. Upernavik is a small town/village perched on the side of a fairly steep hill, every house has an uninterrupted view. Somewhere is the police station and we needed to get stamped out of Greenland. "Where is the police station?" we asked several people and they indicated up! So up we went and eventually got to the top of the town. The only thing further up is



*This is the hook from the anchor snubber, it goes through a link on the chain and takes the load on a separate rope—it should be straight but got bent in one of the windy anchorages. With the aid of a vice at the outboard repair shop I was able to straighten it.*



*Police looking for the right stamp for our passports—first time use for him*



*Most supermarkets seem to sell everything you need from the usual domestic supplies through fishing gear and boat spares to a good selection of guns*

the airport with its short runway spanning the whole of the top of the mountain - an enormous amount of rock had been moved to create the runway. Hardly Heathrow, it was manned by one lady who told us "no, Police station is down!" It did however have one other person there, one of the flyers from Abel Tasman who was trying to get permission to fly from the airport. Apparently it turned out that whilst the local official was happy those higher up and far away were not so easy going and the great photo opportunity



was missed. We took a different route down the hill and not surprisingly found that we had missed it by only a few yards. Police were very welcoming although, as at Paamuit, it was obviously not an everyday event. However, after consulting their procedure manual and eventually finding the correct stamp in the cupboard we were cleared out.

We motored out the following morning and continued all day as the wind was very light.

### ***Upernavik from half way down the hill***

In the evening we had a zoom call with the other members of the NWP group and Victor the ice pilot. There was much discussion about how the ice was performing as opposed to previous years. However, the problem this year seems to be that as the ice melts back more each year, and then freezes over winter there is more one year ice around, this tends to break up more easily which, whilst is an advantage in some places, where we are heading a lot of this broken ice heads to and gets jammed up around the islands in the middle of the passage. Currently it is impassable to small vessels. Later in the evening we were able to watch on the AIS, the vessel NG Resolution, an ice capable cruise ship. This went through the Bellot strait on our route but then tried to go across the Franklin Strait. It ended up doing a complete 360 turn over the next 12 hours and eventually made it through, so if they are having troubles its certainly a no go for us. Fortunately there is a good place to wait on our side of the Bellot Strait when we get there.



***Ice in the middle of Baffin Bay—luckily we only had to make a short detour***

Eventually the wind freshened and we sailed about 2/3 of the way across. We knew there was ice in the middle and when we got there it only needed about a couple of miles detour to the north to head around and on towards Pond Inlet. Overall the crossing took three and a half days. As we neared the entrance to Pond Inlet the wind turned to be right on the nose and freshened to about 25kn. Motoring straight into this wind proved difficult so I took us across to the south side in the hope of getting some shelter from the mountains there. This worked to some extent but it was a painful few hours. Being so close to the Magnetic North Pole now also means that the electronic compass that the autopilot uses for steering has become pretty much useless. We can tell it to steer in relation to the wind direction but that's only ok when there is some meaningful wind rather than the apparent wind that the boat feels from its movement when motoring. A third method is by directly controlling the rudder. This is ok but you have to pay attention as it is surprising how quickly a 1 degree variation in rudder position will turn



### ***First views of Baffin Island***

the boat so you need to concentrate and keep adjusting it by pressing the buttons. The last method is to tell it to steer to a GPS position but so far every time I have tried it, the autopilot slams the rudder full over which is not really desirable. The next time we are motoring in a flat sea I shall try it again as to be able to steer in this way would be a great help.

Eventually we made it across the 12 mile opening of the inlet and the wind relented a bit as we came close to the mountains and we were able to head in the direction we wanted. By mid morning a small island was ahead which promised anchorage if we decided to wait for quieter weather. However just as we steamed inside of it the wind pretty much abated and by the time we came back out an hour later it was almost calm, typical arctic weather! Of course Predict Wind, our weather app showed calm all the time!

The final leg up to Pond Inlet took just another two hours and around lunchtime we were in. There is a proper harbour now, just opened last year with a couple of stone breakwaters, a sheet-piled dock and some pontoons for local boats. We tucked in round the corner of the dock away from the swell and tied up. After the chaos in the overcrowded harbours of Greenland this was a breath of fresh air,. We had just rigged up a fender step to help us get off the boat onto the dock - no ladders, when two Border Force officers turned up with their scanners and laptop. They had watched us come in and walked down. We had sent an email with all our details a few days ago, but they didn't know about that, as soon as we confirmed the names of the people we had corresponded with, they were fine and we were given a clearance number (they did have to go back to their hotel & get the passport stamp though as they had



forgotten it). Initially we were the only vessel on the dock but a small research ship that was moored off came in later at high tide.

The friendliness of the locals was wonderful, we had not walked a few yards from the dock and someone asked us if we could do with a lift anyway and I have lost track of the number of times people have said “Welcome to Pond Inlet”. Despite being only just over three days sailing from Greenland we are 3hrs different in time zones and you really get the feeling of being far away from home. Also the Settlement

is very different to the Greenland ones, there are no paved roads, the houses are different, the electricity supplies are all overground rather than being in ducts on the surface. There is a much more North



***A very different settlement to the Greenlandic ones***

American rather than European feel to the place. All the vehicles have American pedigree and it all looks a lot more shanty town than idyllic Greenland fishing village. I am not sure if is a trick of translation but in even the smallest Greenland settlements, where there is a map it would say City map—even in the smallest place, whereas here they refer to themselves as the Hamlet of Pond Inlet with its 1500 population. They have a supermarket, much the same as the other side, but no alcohol for sale and no guns, and prices about twice that of Greenland as pretty much everything comes in by air.

It was Saturday and we had a good look around, found the Hotel and booked a meal that night. A set three course meal cost \$60, about £24 which seemed a pretty good deal compared to the supermarket where a pack of bacon, some cake and an iceberg lettuce cost \$40! So at 6pm we walked up to the hotel, as like in Greenland, it would be no good turning up at 7.30 expecting to get fed. It was a salad, followed by a seafood special with mussels, prawn and lobster in a sauce with a sort of large ravioli, followed by

gateaux. The fellow we had chatted with in the supermarket was staying there, a sort of roving manager it seems, spending time at all the outlying Coop stores in these northern settlements. Replete from our meal we retired to the boat and had a chat with the mate from the survey vessel who had come into the harbour. They were doing fish stock surveys and had come to swap some researchers over and unload some gear. He was from Newfoundland and had a really strange accent which you could almost pass off



Abel Tasman flyers taking off from the dock.

as Irish and indeed they do apparently have an accent related to 18th century Munster Irish.

We had passed the Anglican church on the way back from the Hotel and being Sunday and the church dedicated to St Timothy, and my grandfathers first parish being in Canada it would seem a shame to not go and see them, so we went along to their morning service. I hadn't bargained for it to be 95% in Inuktitut, the local language but we were given a hymn book in three languages and fortunately the hymns all seemed to have some Wesleyan influence so seemed vaguely familiar. It was interesting singing the same tune but different words to everyone else and I must admit that ours seemed to fit the tune better. The only problem was that on the first one English had 4 verses but the other languages had 5 but hey ho we can always hum. We did manage a chat with a couple of people afterwards and with no coffee and cake as at Newent most people disappeared off home pretty quickly.

By now Abel Tasman had arrived from Upernavik and Voyager had come directly from Aasiaat further south. Both doing the passage. Border force were here processing them. Unfortunately the cameraman on Abel Tasman being a Brazilian and needing a visa has only had an ESTA which is only applicable to people arriving by air or cruise ship. One might have expected that this would not be such a deal but apparently not the case. As time went by and we got further updates it transpired that the only way for them to extricate him from the situation is for him to fly out of Canada to New York and back in. Therefore on Tuesday he has to take three flights over two days to get to New York and then return the same way. A costly and time consuming mistake. Hopefully, our hassle in going to Dublin earlier on in the year to get an American visa will save us the same problem when we try and check into Alaska...

After making friends with the new arrivals on Voyager, a Garcia Exploration 45, very similar to our Boreal we helped them reduce their rum stocks and spent the evening with both skippers winding each other up comparing our different vessels. They had taken delivery just last year but had already sailed her from France to the Caribbean and up the East coast of America and Canada to cross over to Greenland this summer.

Not expecting to be able to get fuel till Monday we were surprised to see the fuel truck on the dock. Adri-

ano on Voyager had made friends with the manager of the Coop who handled the agency for fuel deliveries and he had arranged for fuel on a Sunday because unbeknown to us Monday is a Public holiday. Luckily, the manager came down to see how it was going and I was able to get some too. He even took me up to the shop in his truck to pay. We hardly needed any and only got 137 litres in but out here when the next fuel stop is probably 800 or 1000 miles away it would be crazy not to be leaving with a full tank.

So tomorrow, after visiting the Department of Conservation to see if we can get a permit to anchor further on in a national park we will leave enroute for Beachy island and the famous Franklin expedition graves

Cheers, Tim and Carol on the good ship Lumina

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*Greenland courtesy flag taken down for this trip, a little worse for wear*



I thought if we let the local kids on board it may stop them dropping stones onto our solar panels—it didn't but the panels survived unscathed!