

Adventure Canada Presents:

Epic High Arctic 2012

Story by Aaron Spitzer
Photos by Mick Langan



Adventure Canada's
Epic High Arctic 2012

From Resolute to Kangerlussuaq aboard the *Clipper Adventurer*
August 9 - 19, 2012

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ADVENTURE

CANADA



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Thursday, August 9: Resolute Bay, Nunavut

Weather: Overcast
Temperature: 5°C
Longitude: 94°52'W
Latitude: 74°41'N
Wind: Calm
Sea: Calm

Today, some of us awoke in balmy Ottawa; others in blustery Iqaluit – but after a long plane flight north and west, we all ended up in the same place: the otherworldly hub of the Canadian High Arctic, Resolute. Here, on the almost lifeless gravel-fields of Cornwallis Island, is Canada's second-northernmost village, a collection of 250 or so residents and an array of transportation and research structures. We gawked out the bus windows as we rumbled toward the beach -- and then we caught sight of our ship, the Clipper Adventurer, gleaming blue and white under the grey polar skies, anchored in the cold bay a kilometre offshore.

At the beach, we clambered off the bus and, following the presentation of our passports and an inspection of our baggage, had our first Zodiac experience, churning through the sea to the ship. Aboard, we discovered



our world for the next 11 days – our cozy cabins, the gathering place of the forward lounge, the well-stocked library, the window-encircled dining room. After we got settled in, we gathered in the forward lounge for a “welcome aboard” gathering, where Matthew Swan, Adventure Canada’s owner and minister of fun, introduced the expedition staff – a group infected by that dread disease, Arcticus feverous. Then we had our mandatory lifeboats drill, mustering on the upper decks in front of our lifeboats (“Can all of us really fit in that lifeboat?”).

Eventually, we gathered in groups of four or six or eight for our first dinner – fish or chicken? – enjoyed in the Clipper’s refined dining room as the surreal seas of the Northwest Passage washed past us. We were already underway, steaming eastward, out of Resolute Bay, along the escarpments of Cornwallis Island, and toward the rearing cliffs of Devon, the largest uninhabited island in the world. After dinner, we walked the decks or stood watch on the bridge or relaxed in the forward lounge. In time, we went to bed with dreams of polar bears dancing in our heads. Already, it all seemed so far from Ottawa and Iqaluit.



Friday, August 10: Beechey and Prince Leopold Islands

Weather:	Overcast with Rain
Temperature:	5°C
Longitude:	91°33'W
Latitude:	74°37'N
Winds:	West 3 Knots
Seas:	1 Metre
Inuktitut Word of the Day:	Tunngasugitti (Welcome!)

Today we rose already at anchor in one of the most hallowed corners of the Arctic: the sheltering harbour of Erebus and Terror Bay, just off Beechey Island. The clouds were low and grim and the rain was spitting; the sea was grey; the island appeared stony and desolate. But here, for those of us well-versed in the lore of the Northwest Passage, was a historic site of monumental importance. We were at the first wintering place of the tragic expedition of Sir John Franklin.

After breakfast, for the first time, we pulled on our cold-weather ensemble – rubber boots, splash-proof pants, windbreaker jackets, fuzzy hats and gloves. Thoroughly swaddled, we crowded the gangway, filling the Zodiacs 10 by 10. Under the brooding sky we headed to the low shale beach, where, as we approached, they came into view: the Franklin graves. Buried in the winter and spring of 1846, John Torrington, John Hartnell and William Braine were the first three of Franklin's men to die,



and were buried here with as much dignity as the survivors could muster. For the 166 years since, the headboards have stood as monuments to an expedition that all but vanished off the face of the earth.

After photographing the melancholy gravesites and learning about the history of this place – including about the exhumation of the bodies by researchers in the 1980s – some of us headed north to get views of a lonely young walrus splashing in the bay. Others of us began the hike south over the raised shale beaches to Northumberland House – a ruins that, in the 1850s, was built as a storehouse to succor Franklin, were he to return here, or to help any of the search-and-rescue crews that might also come to grief. Here, too, were an array of monuments – some dating from the same era as Northumberland; others from the modern era.

After we'd taken out fill of pictures, we returned to the ship, slipped out of our wet gear and warmed ourselves with coffee, cocoa and lunch. The afternoon then began with our first staff presentation – an Inuit cultural welcome by Aaju Peter, Romani Makkik, Jason Edmunds and Sarah Jancke. Following her was Aaron Spitzer, with a presentation about the Northwest Passage, putting together any of the missing pieces and answering questions that arose from this morning's excursion.

Meanwhile, outside, we were headed southbound across the gentle swells of Parry Channel to a great rearing monument of stone, Prince Leopold



Island. Here is one of the largest multi-species bird colonies in the Arctic: thick-billed murres, kittiwakes and fulmars nest and raise their young on the sedimentary cliffs here, far from predators but close to the fish-filled ocean. We headed out for a Zodiac cruise – odd-numbered cabins first; even ones next – motoring not far from the base of the cliffs, marvelling at the riotous life. The birds called and wheeled and flapped in the sky; the cliffs bustled with activity. All that life seemed such a dramatic change from the solemn stillness of Beechey.

As amazing as Beechey and Prince Leopold islands may have been, however, certainly the most astounding thing we witnessed today was right in the forward lounge. At the beginning of the staff’s “recap” of today’s events, Tom Kovacs walked around the room and, barely 24 hours after we’d all arrived on the Clipper, greeted all 126 of us by name. Other recap items followed – walruses, by Deanna Leonard; ice-mapping, by Jim Halfpenny – followed by dinner and finally, an evening of music with, again, Tom.



Saturday, August 11: Dundas Harbour

Weather:	Overcast
Temperature:	5°C
Longitude:	82°24'W
Latitude:	74°32'N
Wind:	West 2 Knots
Seas:	1 Metre
Inuktitut Word of the Day:	Kinauvit? (What is your name?)

Today dawned cool and foggy and grey as the Clipper Adventurer churned its way east through Lancaster Sound, past the mist-shrouded escarpments of Devon Island. Around breakfast time, we turned into a fine little shelter with a few icebergs adrift in its calm waters – Dundas Harbour.

After zodiac transfer to shore, we climbed the rocky beach and found ourselves in a very different environment than the last place we'd landed, Beechey Island. Here, vegetation was abundant: flowers and mosses and lichens and grasses coated the undulating hills. We struck out over the boggy tundra, exploring a wide array of vegetation and an even wider array of scat – muskox, goose, caribou, ptarmigan and even ... gulp ... bear. A half-hour walk brought us to a remarkable ancient campsite on a scenic rise above the ocean. Here, people of the Thule culture, at least five centuries ago, had built an array of semi-subterranean homes, sunk in the sod and covered with rafters made of bowhead whale ribs. Our expedition



archeologist, Chris Wolff, explained the details – how the entrance is lower than the floor to prevent cold from entering; how the huts are out on a point that offers great views of the sea life passing through in the bay.

After the Thule site, we marched back over the tundra (or were taken by Zodiacs) to the other end of the Dundas Harbour site, where a very different inhabitation existed. Here was the Dundas Harbour RCMP post and Hudson Bay Company trading post, occupied on and off through the 1920s to the 1950s as an outpost to assert Canadian sovereignty over the High Arctic. We explored the dwellings and storehouses – now run down, but some still containing artifacts from the era, such as an old sewing machine and magazines from the 1950s. We then climbed the hill to see the cemetery, neatly demarcated by a bright white picket fence. Buried here are the bodies of two Mounties – one of whom had shot himself on purpose, the other, by accident. Truly, Devon Island was a difficult posting.

After returning to the warm and welcoming Clipper, we hauled anchor, sailed out of Dundas Harbour and began the big swing around the east end of Devon. The skies cleared just in time to reveal a remarkable view: glaciers spilling down to the sea, pouring off a great icecap, 6,300 feet high, coating the top of the island like white icing. After a well-earned lunch, the afternoon was spent enjoying the views out on deck and taking in a series of presentations: one from Chris, about the prehistory of the

Arctic, one by Steve Smith, about the sea birds of the Far North, and then an amazing demonstration of Inuit throatsinging by Sarah and Romani.



Mica Lasswell 2017

Then, a special treat for us – the captain’s welcome reception in the forward lounge. Many of us got dressed up in our best finery and honoured our good captain, Kenth Grankvist. A range of gifts were presented to him – a Swedish tune by Aaju, a poetry reading (of the lyrics of an ABBA song) by Tom, and some “stinkafish” from Matthew. Following several toasts and lots of laughs, we then headed to the dining room for a fine captain’s dinner – followed, for those of us who chose to stay up, with a showing of the surreal Nunavut film “Diet of Souls” in the forward lounge. For the rest of us, we headed to bed to catch a few winks before what we knew would be a long day tomorrow.

Sunday, August 12: Coburg Island, Grise Fiord

Weather:	Overcast
Temperature:	4°C
Longitude:	81°35’W
Latitude:	76°07’N
Wind:	Northwest 2 Knots
Seas:	1 Metre
Inuktitut Word of the Day:	Pulaakanuaqniaqtagit (I’m coming to visit you for a while)

Today was an early one, and so worth it! We awoke with ship steaming slowly through Jones Sound – low clouds overhead, Devon Island off our portside, Ellesmere somewhere to the north, and, within view, the rearing stone and green escarpments of Coburg Island. Here, at this seabird



Photo: Lenses - 2018



sanctuary, we made a before-breakfast Zodiac cruise. Three bird species breed here in the summer, clinging to the cliffs and wheeling in the skies in a raucous collection. The kittiwakes kept to the lower cliffs, the guillemots nested in deep indentations in the cliffs, and all along the outer walls were the thick-billed murre. High above, climbing into the fog, were crenellations and spires – a truly eerie and awe-striking locale.

As we neared the cliffs, the air reeked of guano and was alive with bird calls – not to mention the occasional guano-bomb! Already our cameras were snapping away, but then we rounded a corner and got the real treat. About 50 feet above the sea, up on a steep grey shoulder of rock, we saw a polar bear. He was in bear heaven: a three- or four-year-old male, prowling among the roosting murre, calm and placid and fat, gorging on chicks. The birds showed remarkable courage, staying on the nest until the very last minute, but as the bear clambered and clawed up to their roosts, they had no option but to flee, leaving their young to their fate. As the white bruin filled its belly, we filled our memory cards – until finally, fully sated, it stretched out for a siesta. Shortly thereafter, we returned to the ship, where, much like the bear, we ate and then, in many cases, enjoyed a well-earned nap.

For those of us who didn't snooze, though, the rest of the morning was largely spent in the forward lounge. First up was Deanna Leonard, with a presentation called "Narwhals! Causing a Commotion," in which she explored the myth and science of the Arctic's most elusive whale. After that, Steve Gorman gave a presentation that also touched on the lore and



legend of the Arctic, called “The Last Imaginary Place.” Last but not least, Jon Dudley – our singing geologist, a.k.a. rock star – presented “Travelling Continents,” about the motion of the Arctic land, include continental formation, continental drift, isostatic rebound, and the like.

Then, following lunch, we dropped anchor before the skyscraping peaks (dusted with fresh snow) of Ellesmere Island. Here, at the southern end of the world’s 10th-largest island, was Canada’s northernmost community – and here, we were about to pay a visit. First, Grise Fiord came to us – about 20 residents of the community were brought to the ship by Zodiac, where they introduced themselves and their town. Then, they hosted us onshore.

We broke into long-walk and short-walk groups, and even a gang of long-hikers. Those of us in the latter category marched to the top of a stunning 1,500-foot promontory overlooking the town; those of us in the former groups got a town tour. Perhaps most notably, we stopped by the monument to the “Arctic exiles” – a larger-than-life carving of a mother and child, staring out helplessly to sea, representing one of the darkest periods in Northern history, when Inuit from Quebec in the 1950s were relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute and then denied the opportunity to return to their homeland. On a more upbeat note, we also had a rousing time at the community gym – buying arts and crafts, sampling narwhal muktuk (chewy!), listening to local girls throatsing, and then doing a bit of singing ourselves: first, our chorus of Inuktitut songs led by Aaju; then, an

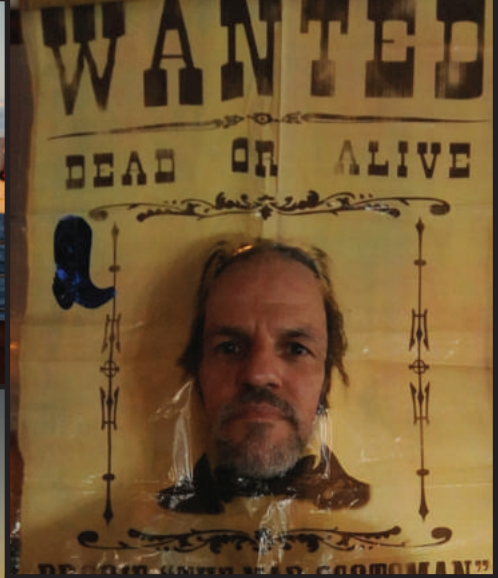


Elvis concert by Tom “the King” Kovacs. Finally, we bid adieu to beautiful Grise Fiord and headed back to the ship – to dine, to reminisce about our remarkable experiences on this day, and finally to sleep.

Monday, August 13: Pim Island

Weather:	Cloudy
Temperature:	7°C
Longitude:	75°00' W
Latitude:	77°27' N
Wind:	Southwest 3 Knots
Seas:	3 Metres
Inuktitut Word of the Day:	Qirnalugarq (Whale)

Today we awoke to all sorts of changes. For one, the sky was bright and the sea was blue – a welcome change from the melancholy fog that enwrapped us for much of the past several days. On the downside, though, we also awoke to a boat that was rocking and rolling – big, lateral swells, making the Clipper heave from side to side, and making many of us a bit wobbly and woozy. Luckily, the morning was relaxed – breakfast, then time on deck taking photos of the beautiful white bergs floating past, as well as presentations. Steve was first up, with a remarkable video about an expedition he led in 2004 retracing the tragedy of Adolphus Greely in these parts in the 1880s. Next up was Romani, talking about life in her hometown of Igloolik, Nunavut. Then, after lunch, something completely



different – the Hank Williams Memorial Dance, complete with ten-gallon hats, bandanas and Texas two-stepping. Next up was Jim, with a presentation called “The Cryosphere and Climate,” and finally Aaron, with “A Beginner’s Guide to Nunavut.”

Later in the afternoon, our entertainment came from the outdoors. As we neared the top of Baffin Bay, we finally found ourselves “among the ice.” The ship slowed and weaved, threading the floes. We crowded on the top and front decks – shooting photos of the occasional seal and the fulmars pursuing the ship, and marveling at the good weather and the forbidding barren rocks of Ellesmere Island.

Finally, we drew even with Pim Island, the headland where Smith Sound begins, and disembarked into the Zodaics to investigate one of the most unfortunate sites in the High Arctic. A quick ride took us to a steep, stony beach, at the top of which was the notorious Camp Clay, where Greely overwintered in 1883-84. Not far from the beach were the two-foot-high stone walls that framed the hut where Greely’s 25 men huddled in temperatures as cold as minus-50, slowly starving to death. Behind the hut was the lake where they drew their water, and behind that, the aptly

named “Cemetery Ridge,” where the dead men slowly accumulated, and where at least one man was shot and executed.

After trekking through this landscape, marveling at the horrors that the



men endured, we were happy to return to the ship and, unlike them, to enjoy our dinner. We also celebrated the achievement of our “furthest north” – approximately 78.73° North latitude, less than 700 nautical miles from the pole. Then, as we ate, a momentous crossing. We left Canadian waters, sailing east and south into Greenland. As many of us were preparing for bed, we dropped anchor at the mouth of Foulke Fjord. Tomorrow, we would be setting foot in a new country, and a wonderful new world.

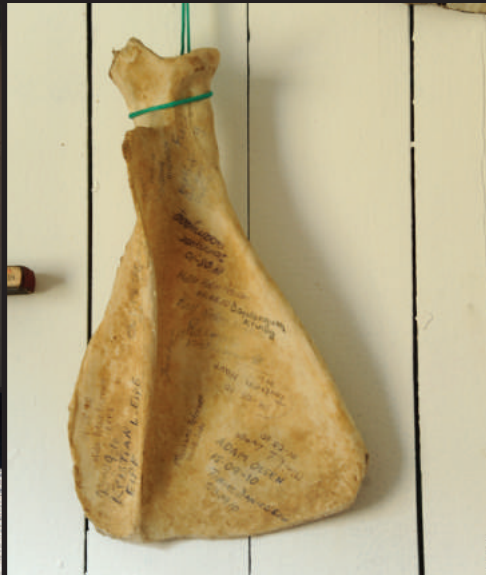
Tuesday, August 14: Etah

Weather:	Partly Sunny
Temperature:	6°C
Longitude:	72°57'W
Latitude:	78°17'N
Wind:	Southwest 3 Knots
Seas:	2 Metres
Inuktitut Word of the Day:	Ikiinaqtualuk (It's very cold)

This morning dawned bright and brilliant. Off our port side were the shimmering glaciers and rearing red mountains of Greenland. We were summoned early – a 5:45 a.m. wakeup call – and told to prepare for wind and waves. We were going to a beautiful landing spot, but we would have to endure some ugly conditions to get there.



Lucas 2012



Lucas 2012



Pouring down off the Greenland icecap were howling winds, churning the sea into a foaming chop. We boarded the Zodiacs – awkwardly, as they bucked on the waves – and set off for a long, long ride, past icebergs and a few muskox, into the steep-sided fjord, landing a legendary little place called Etah. Here was the historical epicentre of Polar Inuit culture – the northernmost indigenous peoples on earth, cut off even from their southern Greenlandic brethren, but towering large in the annals of polar exploration (the Inuit here guided Peary and numerous other Arctic pioneers on their polar journeys).

When we climbed up from the beach, we saw immediate evidence of the Polar Inuit presence – old sod house sites, sod-flanked cabins and modern hunting cabins. Littering the lush ground were the bones of scores of animals, as well as the scat of innumerable muskox. For those of keen to hike, we set off across the grassy valley floor (some of us witnessing Arctic hares), eventually reaching a glistening lake and then, the marvelous tongue of the Brother John Glacier, as white as cream and impossibly big, causing us to strain our necks as we gawked up at it. When we'd had our fill of this wonderful setting, we trekked back to the Zodiacs, scudded across the choppy waters, and climbed back aboard ship for well-earned coffee, lunch and naps.

After we'd warmed and rested ourselves, we enjoyed an afternoon of on-board programming – presentations by Chris about “Paleoeskimo” archeology, by Aaju about the consequences in the Arctic of the European



Union's seal ban, and by Jason about the culture shock he's experienced as a small-town Inuk in the big city. Finally, on the back deck, we enjoyed a taste-testing: Aaju, Sarah, Jason and Romani offered up seal meat and narwhal mattaq, which we consumed in the sunshine as the icebergs of Greenland drifted past. Afterwards, it was dinner, a show by Tom Kovacs in the forward lounge, and bedtime. Tomorrow, we were told, would be another early start.

Wednesday, August 15: Cape York

Weather:	Overcast
Temperature:	7°C
Longitude:	65°19'W
Latitude:	75°28'N
Wind:	East 4 Knots
Seas:	3 Metres
Inuktitut Word of the Day:	Arqigirq (Ptarmigan)

Today we arose early for a truly Greenlandic day. Before breakfast, we made an excursion to Cape York. Here, on this promontory at the north end of Melville Bay, was one of the crossroads of Inuit civilization – a place to which Inuit were drawn for eons by the presence of three huge iron meteorites, and a place where Robert Peary launched his polar journeys (In 1892, he removed the meteorites and transported them to New York).



As we climbed aboard the Zodiacs we could just see the monument to Peary – an obelisk on a tall hilltop, gauzy in the cold, low clouds. A quick ride took us through a bay of bobbing icebergs, glistening white. On the beach, we found a chilly landscape – a glacier in the distance, a lake in the foreground – but not one devoid of signs of life. The foundations of sod houses were visible, as was a fast Arctic hare. The wind freshened, the windchill-temperature dropped, and pretty soon we were back in the Zodiacs, doing a more extensive tour through the bergs, our cameras clicking away.

Then it was back on the ship for a substantial journey – the crossing of giant Melville Bay, which separates the Polar Inuit world of northern Greenland from the more densely inhabited and culturally distinct world of western Greenland. As we conducted this passage, sometimes sailing past icebergs and always accompanied by swelling waves, we enjoyed an array of presentations. First up was Jim, speaking about that most iconic of Arctic creatures, the polar bear. Later in the afternoon, Steve Gorman presented a slide show of his Arctic images, and then Jon Dudley spoke about sea ice, glacier ice, and the impact of ice on the Arctic landscape. Next up, Deanna gave a presentation entitled “How to be an Arctic Marine Mammal.”

Interspersed among these presentations were other entertainments: a stage play of sorts on the back deck, emceed by Matthew Swan, in which staff and passengers solved the Hans Island dispute (solution: give Hans to the Danes in exchange for Greenland), tours of the ship’s engine room, and a



sealskin-sewing workshop led by Aaju. Finally, in the evening, there was a wonderful film (complete with popcorn!): “Martha of the North,” about the unfortunate relocation of Inuit in the 1950s from Quebec to Resolute and Grise Fiord.

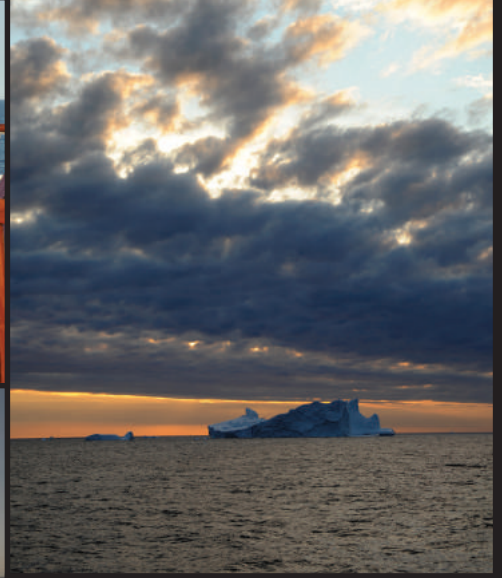
Thursday, August 16: Mitdlorfik

Weather:	Partly Cloudy
Temperature:	12°C
Longitude:	56°13’W
Latitude:	71°57’N
Wind:	South 3 Knots
Seas:	2 Metres
Inuktitut Word of the Day:	Maatiusi, taima! (Matthew, stop it!)

Today, we awoke to brilliant sun, glistening off the waters of Melville Bay. To the east, hazy in the distance, were the high ramparts of western Greenland. On the water were shimmering white bergs, some of them 100 feet high and weighing thousands of tonnes, making their way north

around Baffin Bay. And around the ship were the ever-present fulmars, surfing in the Clipper’s slipstream. Truly, a stunning High Arctic day!

This morning, as we sailed, we enjoyed not just the splendours on display outside, but also the onboard educational program. Romani kicked it off



with a talk about Arctic sovereignty (Her views on Ottawa's "use it lose it" rhetoric? Inuit have been using the Arctic for eons, and have no intentions of losing it). Then Sarah was up, with a discussion about the National Inuit Youth Council, a group with which she's been deeply involved.

After lunch, we headed out on what would be a truly expeditionary adventure: a landing that none of the Adventure Canada staff had ever conducted. We were headed for a little bay south of the town of Upernavik called Mitdlorfik -- but that's all we knew until we commenced Zodiac operations. As we dropped the boats, the wind freshened, and we got a good firsthand lesson in the famous "katabatic winds" that drop off the ice sheet, chopping the sea into frothing spray. The landing was no easy feat either -- a beach of boulders, slick with seawater and algae. But once we were ashore, we were in a place of beauty: a glacial-outwash meadow, lush with greenery, waving with Arctic cotton, and shaped by the intriguing hummocks (what scientists call "patterned ground") so common on the polar plains.

After we returned to the ship, the fun continued. For an hour, the dining room was transformed into the Adventure Canada Bazaar, during which we perused and purchased offerings laid out by the staff, including sealskin mitts and other clothing sewn by Aaju, CDs by Tom, and photography books by Steve Gorman. Then it was over to the forward lounge for the daily recap, followed by a theme dinner. Appearances were made by

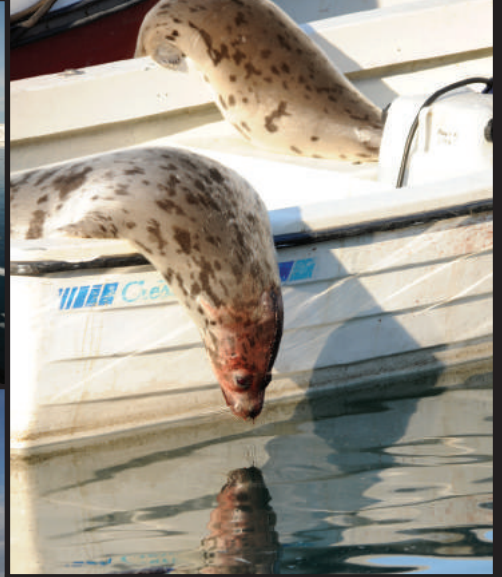


a range of polar explorers and adventurers: St. Brendan, Eric the Red, Giovanni Caboto, and of course Aaju Peter (as played by the stunning Matthew Swan). Dinner followed, with the evening capped off with a show by Tom. Outside, the icebergs sailed past, and the Ilulissat Ice Fjord got closer and closer.

Friday, August 17: Ilulissat

Weather:	Sunny
Temperature:	12°C
Longitude:	51°12'W
Latitude:	69°16'N
Wind:	Calm
Seas:	Calm
Inuktitut Word of the Day:	Arqigirq (Ptarmigan)

Today started well and got even better. As soon as we awoke we were among the ice of famous Disko Bay. There was ice everywhere, in bergy bit and growlers and great rearing castles of crystalline white, getting more and more dense as we drew near our destination. And among it, even better, were whales! Humpbacks frolicked playfully between the bergs, fluking and flipper-slapping and even breaching, putting on a show for us only a few dozen metres from the ship.



Slowly, as we wove through the bergs, the town of Ilulissat drew into view. There, perched on the hills overlooking the most dazzling bay in the world, was Greenland's third-largest town, its biggest fishing port, and its number-one tourist town – and we were about to spend the day there. At mid-morning, with sparkling bergs crowding around the Clipper, we disembarked. Some of us headed off for a cruise around the ice followed by a helicopter flightseeing tour of the Jakobshavn Glacier. Others of us headed through town and overland, toward a variety of hiking trails up to promontories that afforded stupendous views of the ice-tongue and the millions of tonnes of bergs that it disgorges. And others of us focused on the town itself – truly one of the gems of Greenland.

Indeed, Ilulissat – meaning “icebergs” -- is like no place else. It's a mashup of urban and rural, Inuit and European. Downtown there were espresso shops and high-end restaurants and sealskin fashion boutiques and the very fine Knud Rasmussen museum; on the outskirts were thousands of sled dogs waiting for their winter's work, children marching along with rifles on their way to go hunting, and racks of fish drying in the sun. We got a look, for the first time on this trip, at the modern North – the North that's working to reconcile the old and new, plucking the best of various cultures and thus forming an entirely new and very vibrant culture found nowhere else but the Arctic.

After hiking, eating, drinking and shopping, we trekked back down to the



very busy harbour, where hunters were bring back dead seals and where big fishing boats were hauling in shrimp, halibut and turbot – the main exports of Greenland. There, we reboarded the Zodiacs and headed out for our ice cruises in the bay. What we saw was a sort of dreamworld – a glassy-flat sea choked with moving ice, from ice cubes to bergs as big as an airplane hanger. Some of them were glistening white; others aquamarine; others, clear as a window; and still others, dirty with their freight of rocks and dirt carved by the glacier from the mountainsides of Greenland’s interior. Fishing boats raced through the bergs toward the fishing grounds, gulls and ravens perched and circled among them, and the townsite of Ilulissat, painted in lego-block colours, looked down on this perfect scene. We snapped countless photos, oohed and aahed and marveled, and then, finally, returned to the ship.

The activities of today would be hard to top, but the sail out of the bay was something special, the Clipper cutting through the ice all the way. Exhausted and enthralled, we headed to dinner – and afterwards, those of us with a little energy left headed to the forward lounge for a disco, held, appropriately enough, in Disko Bay.



Saturday, August 18: Ittileq

Weather:	Broken Clouds
Temperature:	11°C
Longitude:	53°31'W
Latitude:	66°35'N
Wind:	Calm
Seas:	Calm
Inuktitut Word of the Day:	Kanguq (Snow Goose)

We awoke this morning to another stellar day: Calm seas, little wind, temperatures in the double digits, and the rocky headlands of west Greenland streaming past our portside.

Morning was spent on ship, where an array of activities were underway. Many of us went below decks to tour the clanging engine room of the Clipper. Others tried their hand at sealskin sewing in the library, or throatsinging under the patient instruction of Sarah and Romani. Steve Gorman helped photographers develop their portfolios in the Clipper Club. And for those of us who'd put on a few pounds while at sea, the ever-comedic Tom led a ridiculous "dancersize" class in the forward lounge.

By afternoon we were at anchor outside the scenic little village of Itilleq – a town that, for a dozen years, has been this ship's nemesis. Each visit



here, passengers and locals have played a game of soccer. And nearly every single time, Itilleq has won. This year, we were determined to have our revenge. First we prepared our uniforms – red Adventure Canada jerseys, on which we wrote our names (with an “o” added to the end to sound more Brazilian or Italian), plus headbands with pony-tails attached. Then we headed into the village. It was an amazingly quaint place: a collection of small, brightly painted homes, all linked by footpaths, with saw-toothed, snowcapped peaks as a backdrop. A handful of homes opened their doors to serve us coffee and tea.

While many of us explored, others headed straight to the soccer pitch. Conveniently, it was in the very centre of town – but calling it a “pitch” would be a stretch. It was no more than 50 metres long and 20 wide, and was formed entirely of coarse sand and small, sharp stones. The goals were shorter than regulation size, and there were no out-of-bounds lines. Presumably, when the ball bounced into the ocean, it was out of play.

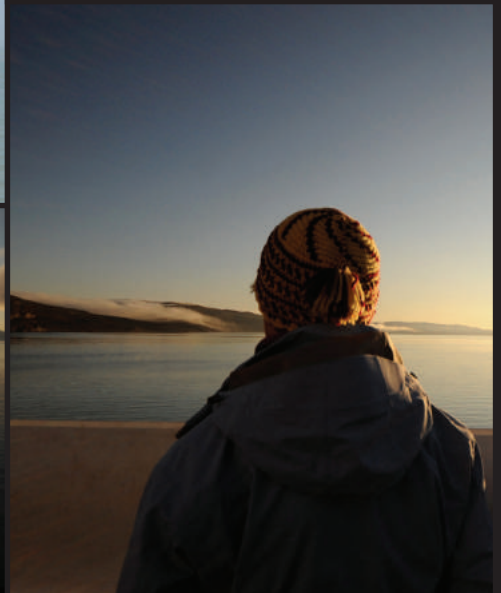
With our cheerleaders on hand (complete with pompoms and bright wigs), the game commenced. It was hard fought: the field was dense with bodies (we outnumbered them, it seems) and the ball ricocheted from end to end. Our goalie, Tom, was the true standout, making flamboyant dives into the grit. By the end, despite hustle and – OK, we admit it – unsportsmanlike behaviour by our cheerleaders, we went down to noble defeat.

We were charitable losers. We invited our opponents – and, indeed, most of



the rest of Itilleq – back to the ship for refreshments and music on the back deck. Then, something completely different: the much-anticipated polar bear swim. One by one, the very brave among us came down the gangway, like lambs to the slaughter. Some cannon-balled, some swan-dove, and some just stepped in, but they all emerged with a look of horror on their faces. Several daring soles even leapt from the wing-bridge, 11 metres up. It was all great fun, especially for those of us who stayed warm and dry.

After dinner, we enjoyed the final formal activity of the cruise: the passenger Variety Show, which displayed a range of remarkable talents – but none so stellar as the classical dance of our four-ponytailed male passengers, decked out in Greek togas, showing just a bit too much skin.



Sunday, August 19: Kangerlussuaq

Weather:	Sunny
Temperature:	7°C
Longitude:	51°14'W
Latitude:	66°52'N
Wind:	Calm
Seas:	Calm
Inuktitut Word of the Day:	Ipilirama (I'm dying of heat)

The goodbye has finally come. When we awoke, the Clipper was already at anchor at the end of placid Kangerlussuaq Fiord, the second-longest fiord in the world. Just over the hills was Greenland's major airport, built by the U.S. military back in World War II, where we would be borne southward, back to the outside world.

After enjoying Matthew Swan's tale of the history of Adventure Canada, we grabbed packed lunches and regretfully said goodbye to Captain Kenth and the ship's lovely crew, boarding the Zodiacs for one last time and pattering to land. There, in bright sunshine, we boarded buses and departed on a quick tour of Kangerlussuaq. Then, finally, we headed to the airport, where we boarded our charter plane. We took off, the stunning expanse of the Greenland ice sheet retreating beneath our wings. We jetted south to Toronto. Late that night, in Pearson Airport, we shook hands and hugged and said our goodbyes – and vowed to see one another again some day, way up in the Arctic.



ADVENTURE
CANADA



Officers, Ship and Expedition Staff

Captain:	Kenth Grankvist
Chief Officer:	Donael Soto
Chief Engineer:	Plamen Pavlov
Hotel Manager:	Vincent Chabrier
Executive Chef:	Francis Rosario
Sous Chef:	Allan Estoque
Purser:	Maria Teresa Lim
Maitre D:	Narendra Seeram
Doctor:	Liliana Amaya
Expedition Leader:	Brad Rhees
Assistant Expedition Leader:	Matthew James
Expedition Team & Culturalist:	Jason Edmunds
Culturalist:	Romani Makkik
Photolife Photographer:	Stephen Gorman
Archaeologist:	Chris Wolff
Videographer:	Julia Szucs
Naturalist:	Steve Smith
Musician:	Tomas Kovacs
Marine Mammalist:	Deanna Leonard
Rear Admiral:	Matthew Swan
Politics & Historian:	Aaron Spitzer
Author & Scientist:	Jim Halfpenny
Geologist:	Jon Dudley

