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The Journal of Canadian Wilderness Canoeing

Outfit 156



photo: Francis Courturier

Ocean coastal paddling in the Arctic looks like a pretty simple operation as Jim Gallagher stands by his boat near the mouth of the Kuujjua River on Victoria Island. But we all know looks are very deceiving as trip mate Brian Johnston details in his story on open water paddling in the Arctic beginning on Page 6.

Spring Packet



We received a number of communications after announcing the end of Che-Mun with Outfit 160 next spring. Thanks to these folks and others for their kind words and thoughts.

How can it possibly be that there is no one ready and able to pick up the torch?

I will miss this publication. It gave/gives me a certain validation of the adventuresome spirit that lives in us. I am not a professional adventurer, but I have had some adventures in my day and they mean more to me than almost anything in my life - and I have had a full life. Surely someone must want to continue Che-Mun.

Rob Gerety

What a great run Che-Mun has had under your honed editorial senses. I will relish the last issues as I always do, but spiced with the known ending now this side of the horizon. It takes a wise person to decide out while still at the top of one's game. Infinite thanks to you, Sir.

I'm working in Rollin Thurlow's shop a few days a week as I do most winters now. It has been fun to have a hand in the making of Peter Marshall's canoe. In that small way I get to be a stowaway on their trip. Check out Rollin's web-site at Northwoods Canoe Company, or spy on the shop elves via the shop web-cam.

If you can still stomach more stuff from this quarter you could also check out the Facebook Page of North Woods Ways, Borestone Mountain Audubon Sanctuary, and my page under the name River Otter.

Garrett Conover

Once again congratulations on your work. I deem it a service to society. You went the extra mile to keep the tradition going. Just in case anyone is not clear what

that is - story telling about canoe trips. That is how we learn about new horizons. You did and do it better than most.

A bit of news you may want to pass on- though still very very preliminary- Dave Brown, Ann Ingerson, Tracey Hoeger and I have begun to make inquiry among paddlers as to who would like to contribute to



a Canoe Atlas of the Labrador Peninsula. Just over 90 250 k sheets as compared to 49 sheets for the Le Petite Nord. I have been asked several times over the years - "Why not a Quebec Atlas?" Gee it only took 50 years for the Little North book.

We are trying a short cut- get as many people who know route info to mark paper maps all in one short time period and then

do the digitizing and lay out. I have offered to finance the entire effort. I will set up a foundation to handle the funds and all proceeds will go for scholarships for kids to go on canoe trips.

Attached for you a drawing of a clump of cedars next to a falls on one of the branches of the upper Montreal River. Pete and I started from just east of Shining Tree and went all the way to Camp Wabun in time for close of season ceremonies- Pete's grandson Jack (Jackson) was at the camp. The next day he and I left at first light and paddled to the Temagami village for a late breakfast. Peace and Love,

Jonathan Berger

Thanks, Mike: All good things must eventually come to an end. Still, Che-Mun was an awesome publication.

Big bear hugs,

Cliff Jacobson

This is definitely sad news. We at the Foundation love Che-Mun. It is widely read by all our Trustees and Trustees Emeriti and our hard copies are ultimately end up at the Ridley Wilderness Research Library in Quetico Park in their permanent collection. Our librarian thinks she has pretty much a full set! She will be saddened by your news!

The Quetico Foundation

Wow. 30 years. I don't blame you for wanting to pack it up. You've done an amazing job and I'd like to thank you for keeping it going for this long.

Kevin Callan

Big news about Che- Mun. It will be a sad day but we understand the reasons and it was good to read the reminiscing.

Al Pace & Lin Ward



Editor's Notebook

Having announced the end of *Che-Mun's* current publishing cycle with Outfit 160 it was interesting to see what the reaction would be from you readers.

It was most gratifying to get so many notes of thanks for doing *Che-Mun* for three decades. It is also nice to have an end in sight and one you can plan for and do properly. We hope to go out in a blaze of stories!

Just to remind everyone, *Che-Mun* was started by Nick Nickels in Lakefield, ON in 1973 to complement his small canoe tripping business which was a most helpful service in the pre-Internet era. Nick nick-named each issue an Outfit and produced 37 of them.

He ceased publication in 1983 and it was a year later when I approached him to buy his small venture. For my \$100 I got a cardboard box full of trip files and a list of 96 subscribers. And I also got some advice to not forget the "armchair travellers" as Nick called those who dreamt of paddling the north but never could. Perhaps that was him.

Nick used to rail against the post office and that was when it cost 8 cents to mail an issue in Canada. The current cost, thanks to a new and massive rate hike is \$1.80.

For the remainder of our run of four more issues, we will have a small highlight on some of our best stories. It will be just a page but all the Outfits are available to order if you feel like reading more. By the time we finish next Spring there will have been a total of 122 *Che-Mun's* produced in the current form.

And those original 37 Outfits produced by Nick Nickels will also be featured in *The Best of Che-Mun*. Once I figure out where I put them!

Enjoy your summer paddling, we have certainly earned it in this part of the world after a long and brutal winter. No plans for me or the HACC this summer. But I just got back from 10 days in Paris with Jenny and we enjoyed our elevated view of an historic river - the Seine - from the Eiffel Tower with a great meal in front of us.

Michael Peake

Canoesworthy

Tourism operators are looking to Nunavut's waters to see what kind of luxury traffic it will bring in 2014. Cruise ship spots are quickly filling, but many communities are looking more and more to smaller, private vessels to bring in their tourism dollars.

Many of Nunavut's communities hope to get a visit from the Octopus this summer, the \$200-million yacht from Seattle, Washington, owned by the co-founder of Microsoft, Paul Allen, which is planning its third visit through Nunavut.

Forbes magazine estimates Allen's net worth at \$16 billion, and ranks him at number 56 on its list of the world's top billionaires.

His luxury yacht is mapping out a voyage with about eight to 12 tourists — plus a crew of 65 — through the Northwest Passage this September. It hopes to make about a dozen stops, including Pond Inlet, Arctic Bay and Cambridge Bay.

Cambridge Baymiut know the vessel well — it stopped in the Kitikmeot community in both 2012 and 2013.

Each time, the vessel's staff contacted local tourism operator Vicki Aitaok to organize a tour of the community.

"They were fabulous," Aitaok said. "They came specifically to shop, so we were prepared for that." The group of about a dozen tourists spent \$8,000 in the span of a few hours on char, rabbit mitts, wolverine furs and other crafts.

For local artisans and businesses, Aitaok called it "the best day ever."

"It was a much more personal experience than with a cruise ship," said Aitaok, who has organized tours for hundreds of visitors to Cambridge Bay. "We usually get four or five cruise ships every season, and they might have 165 passengers, but we found the yacht tourists spent more."

"It really is a welcome addition and we'd love to see more of the smaller ships coming through," she said. "We really find the smaller ships, the people on them are 100 per cent involved in what they're learning. And the whole community gets involved."

That's the best case scenario, said Colleen Dupuis, Nunavut Tourism's chief executive officer.

"What we want to do is make sure the communities feel happy and involved with these visits," Dupuis said.

"Most of the yacht traffic we've seen come through the territory has been amazing," she said. "They often spend longer in the communities and try to work with local outfitters and businesses."

Some yachts, however, don't contact the communities in advance or avoid the regulation process and that can be a challenge for tourism operators, Dupuis said.

Other touring yachts have come under fire for not respecting local laws or wildlife, such as the Fortrus on its 2012 stop in Cambridge Bay.

That's why Nunavut Tourism, along with the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., is working towards the territory's first cruise ship management plan, which will look at how to better track, manage and boost benefits from all vessel traffic through Nunavut's waters.

Through the 1990s, no more than a handful of ships came through each year, although that number quickly picked up in the late 2000s.

But 2012, 25 ships were recorded travelling through the Canadian Arctic.

Arctic Bay saw seven yachts last year — one was the Octopus — and that's a number the community hopes to grow.

Although Arctic Bay is a small community, it's able to anchor vessels of all sizes at the nearby Nanisivik naval facility. While any ship has the right of free passage through Nunavut's waters, the Octopus is currently winding its way through a permitting process that would allow it to visit a bird sanctuary and wildlife areas.

Continued on Page 10



A Thelon Odyssey

Journal of a Barrenlander and Return to the Barrens

Edited by Sheila C. Thomson

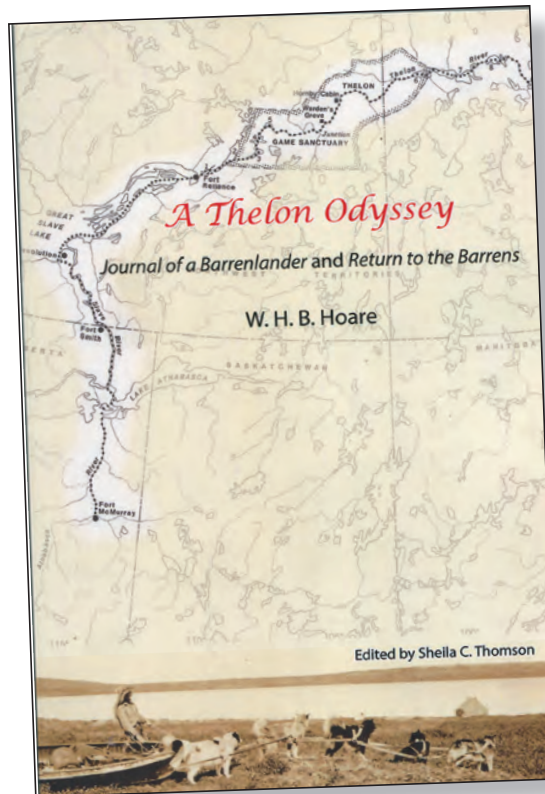
McGahern Stewart Publishing 2014 \$24.95

Reviewed by Sean Peake

In 1928, W.H.B. Hoare was the first person appointed to examine and patrol the newly created Thelon Game Sanctuary, set aside the year before to save what was left of the declining musk oxen herds. In the mid-1800s, musk oxen could be found from Alaska and Canada's Banks and Victoria islands to northeast Greenland and south to northern Manitoba along Hudson Bay. But with the demise of the bison around 1880, musk oxen hides came into vogue as replacement carriage robes. And like the bison, they were hunted with such ferocity that by around the turn of the century, none remained in Alaska, herds were increasingly rare on Arctic islands and they had all but disappeared along Hudson Bay.

Starting in 1900, came reports of a musk oxen stronghold far out in Canada's central Barrens. The first was made by David Hanbury, one of the gentlemen explorers who fanned out across Canada's north from the 1880s to early 1900s. In 1899 he travelled without guides from Baker Lake to an unexplored country called the Ark-e-leenik: the Thelon River. He ascended it for 225 miles then tracked up its western branch, now called the Hanbury River to Great Slave Lake. Of the Thelon he wrote, "There still remains, I am happy to say, one spot in this Great Barren North land—which is sacred to the musk ox—into which human beings dare not enter. Here animals remain in their primeval state, their solitude undisturbed by the hated sound and sight of man. Long may they remain so."

J.W. Tyrrell surveyed Hanbury's route the following year and reported, 'As we glided quickly and quietly down the river, one of the most interesting features we met with was the occurrence of numerous bands of musk oxen feeding upon the luxuriant grasses or sleeping on the river bank.'



He concluded, 'For the preservation of the musk oxen—which may be so easily slaughtered—and are already rapidly diminishing in numbers, I would suggest that the territory between the Thelon and Back rivers be set apart by the government as a game preserve.'

What may have finally led to the establishment of the sanctuary was a report by John Hornby and Capt. J.C. Critchell-Bullock to the Director of the Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch of their 1925 canoe trip down the Thelon. "The results of this trip show that there is a large uninhabited area where the musk oxen are plentiful, swans and geese nest, and caribou have their young undisturbed by man... If it is desired to protect the game in this part of the country it is essential to take measures to prevent traders from encouraging natives to hunt in this district... A law ought to be passed as soon as possible to prohibit the establishment of any more posts

without the consent of the Government, if it is deemed advisable to protect the wildlife.' Hornby would not survive to see the creation of the sanctuary. He and two companions died of starvation on the banks of the Thelon mere weeks before it was established by Order in Council on July 15, 1927.

A *Thelon Odyssey* combines two of W.H.B. Hoare's journals that describe his expeditions of 1928-29 and 1930-31. Following instructions to determine the state of the musk oxen and the best way to protect them and other wildlife, and to establish a government supervision of the area, he would build two cabins on the river; at Wardens' Grove in 1928-29 about ten miles below the Hanbury junction, and at Hoare's Point just above Beverley Lake in 1931.

When the 1928-29 journal was first published in limited numbers in 1990 (see *Che-Mun Outfit* 63) one reviewer lamented that the journal

was bereft of comment by Hoare, or his assistant A.J. Knox, about how they "felt about the arduous portages, cold, subsistence on near-starvation rations, and inaccurate maps that contributed to their exertions." The 1930-31 journal is no different; there is no whinging, sharing of feelings or hand-wringing.

Both journals offer an unabashed, unvarnished account of early travel on the Thelon, and are worth the read. Despite the brief descriptions of events and of the seriousness of his situation, you get a glimpse of an experienced traveller determined to overcome the elements, a petulant outboard motor, faulty maps, clouds of bugs, and more, while hauling tons of gear to his cabins. It's a volume that should be consulted whenever you complain about bad weather and bad luck.

[*Editor's Note: in Outfit 155 we didn't mention there is also a paperback version of Harold Innis and the North for \$32.95.*]



A Paddle 'round The Park

By KEVIN CALLAN

This past summer my regular canoe mate, Andy Baxter, and I took on Algonquin's Meanest Link - a full circle the park. It took 16 days, covered 350 kilometers (220

miles), 55 lakes, 6 rivers (3 that had to be paddled upstream), and 93 portages adding up to 68 kilometers (42 miles). It was one crazy trip; one I wouldn't do again but an experience I'm glad I had. I lost 10 lbs., gained muscles I've never seen on my body before and had mosquito bites all over my genitalia. Doesn't sound pleasant - and some of it wasn't. The most prominent silly portion was going up the Big East River. Never again! Four days of walking up rapids 80% of the time - sometimes up to your waist. Andy, my poor canoe partner who took some holiday time to join me, was pissed at my route choice by day two. That's way too early for a canoe partner, and good friend, to be pissed at you. His profanity was somewhat justified, however. This route around Algonquin Park is properly titled. The Meanest

Link is exactly that - *mean*. Problem was, my main focus of the trip was to promote more people to get out and paddle wilderness areas for long periods of time. I think the trip accomplished that. By the half way point Andy and I had gained over 10,000 people following our trip on line, all having the urge to be with us.

What kept us going was the sheer magnitude of Algonquin. This is one big and beautiful park. By day 12 we were more relaxed, more in shape. The area we were paddling in also didn't see many people. We were alone and truly enjoying the wilderness solitude. It reminded me so much of a quote I like from Robert Perkins film *One Man in a Boat*. Perkins looks out at a remote wilderness section and says "I feel like rolling it up in a ball and swallowing it so no one else can have it."

Ending the trip was just as consequential as starting it. We unknowingly chose the day of the big Huntsville bathtub races to finish. Helicopters buzzed overhead, speedboats and Jet-Skis churned up the water around us, and even a police boat pulled us over for a ride check. In the confusion Andy and I found ourselves in the centre of the bathtub race and had the organizer belittle us from the loudspeaker.



Kevin Callan & crew going up the Big East River and ending the trip in a crowd.

Hundreds of people lined the Huntsville docks, but only a handful were there to witness Andy and I complete our epic trip. Gord Baker from Algonquin Outfitters, and a couple of his staff, helped us unload and portage through the fans of the bathtub race. The ending was perfect for us, really. Rather than have banners hung and people cheering for us at the finish line, our accomplishments were overshadowed by a bunch of locals propelling themselves across the water with motorized bathtubs. How ironic.

You'd think of course that we would be craving the company of other people, or at least a chance to drink a beer and feast on a greasy burger and fries. The whole ordeal, however, was an absolute culture shock. Both Andy and I missed the wilderness and were having a very difficult time adjusting.

There were definitely countless times during the trip where we wanted to give up on battling the bugs and long portages. But now we had this strange desire to paddle

away from the comforts of Huntsville and do the foolish trip all over again. That was the proof I was looking for — that feeling of association with the natural world after spending a long period of time amongst it. It was the verification that the desire to immerse oneself in a wilderness setting overpowered the addiction to civilized comforts.

To quote John Muir, "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity..."

Look for the video series of Kevin's trip by going to his KCHappyCamper You Tube channel, and read the full account of the trip by going to his Explore Magazine blog at explore-mag.com Web site: kevin-callan.com



Respectfully Coasting Victoria



The coast of Victoria Island offer few good spots to land when paddling a canoe. Jim Gallagher watches the wall of rock as he and Brian Johnston head to Ulukhaktok.

Story and Photos By Brian Johnston

Normally there are good and viable egress options at the end of a canoe trip depending on your circumstances and situation. Often, it is wise to have a primary plan, as well as a backup strategy. We had both—not that it really mattered. An equipment failure (an inoperable satellite phone) made our decision for us. We were going to paddle out.

Sure, there were other options but we didn't like them. We had the original SPOT Satellite GPS Messenger so in a life threatening or emergency situation, we still had the SOS/911 button, but we weren't about to call our predicament in need of rescue—we were still in control. We were going to paddle out.

The SPOT Help button. If activated, we had left instructions to call the RCMP, inquiry about sea ice, and arrange for a motorboat pickup. Additionally, our daily Spot Check-in/OK updates (with GPS locations) were monitored. If we stayed in one place sending OK messages then the monitor was to arrange for a non-emergency pickup. Either way, we didn't like that option—too many un-

knowns, too much waiting. We were still in control. We were going to paddle out.

We were at the end of the Kuujjua River on Victoria Island looking out into Minto Inlet. From there are three common ways to get to Ulukhaktok, the nearest community: charter an airplane, hire motorboat, or paddle.

Our original plan was to paddle out to Ulukhaktok. When we left home nearly a month before, for a summer of canoeing on Victoria Island, we were prepared to paddle all the way. However, the reality of cold, wet, and snowy weather, lake ice, shallow watercourses, and delayed flights meant we were tired, and behind schedule.

If we had our choice, we would have used our backup plan—hire a motorboat pickup. One phone call could have saved us a week of paddling 120 km of exposed Arctic coastline. That call was not possible because near the end of week 1 of our 5-week trip, we figured out that our satellite phone was not working.

Flatline. To make that call our dead satellite phone would have to come back to life. Despite our efforts to charge the satellite phone



with a solar panel, it refused to come back to life. Flatline. The reality of carrying out what we set out to do set in. We were well aware of our situation, options, and schedule. Our plan remained simple. Stay the course and paddle around the cape to Ulukhaktok.

Transitioning from river to ocean paddling. We are far north river canoeists, not Arctic sea kayakers. Knowing such, we approached the cold and vast ocean water with confidence and curiosity as well as caution and trepidation.

We relied on our river tripping watercraft, a 17 foot Pakcanoe with a spray deck. Our paddles were take-a-parts Aquabound paddles, which fly in a pack.

As we ventured out onto the open water, Minto Inlet was calm and welcoming albeit impressive, initiating, and nerve-racking all at the same time.

Arctic Coastal Canoeing: Paddling from Minto Inlet (Kuujjua River mouth) to the hamlet of Ulukhaktok.

Say goodbye to the downward flow and gravitational pull of the river current and brace yourself. The ocean waves will roll and pitch. Breaking waves will roll in and out as well as thunder and crash upon the shore. The ebb and flow of the tide will not be a hindrance—just camp and secure your canoe above the high water mark.

New experiences await you. At the high water mark there is a lot of debris, cast ashore from ocean storms. A walk-about will reveal pieces of lumber, large logs, plastic, and bones. Be on the lookout for seal and whale skeletons. We rid ourselves of only thinking of land-based animals such as fox and wolf once we found a seal skull.

The ocean water, even from camp, looks different.

In some places it is green, in others bluish green. Of course, the visibility is excellent. While paddling you can watch the seabed. The vivid saltwater colours and sunlight bring to life the rocks and pebbles. Occasionally, a fish swimming, most likely an Arctic char, hurried along reflecting the sun's rays. Keep a keen watch for seals and whales.

The coastline is similar to the land along the river; humans have left signs of activity—tent rings, meat caches, shaped bones, cairns, graves, and survey markers. It is also abound with wildlife. There will be the familiar sightings and calls of sandhill cranes, loons, sea gulls, golden plovers, and owls as well as bear (grizzly and polar), musk oxen, caribou, wolf, fox, and arctic hare.

There is an abundance of fresh water in tundra ponds as well as drainage creeks with deep-water pools. Fill a pack with water

containers and seek out a water source. In our case we filled water bottles, collapsible Platypus containers, and an empty dry bag. We also filled empty rum, lemonade, and lime juice bottles as well as a peanut butter jar.

The last rapid on the Kuujjua River is the point where you have to stop speeding along and start thinking about your water source. Be forewarned, don't get caught off guard and miss this prime opportunity to stock up on fresh water.

It is good to know that finding fresh water is not something to worry about. Your mind will have enough stress, concerning canoeing a massive body of open water. The sheer expanse of Minto Inlet and Amundsen Gulf is overwhelming. Plus, there is the tension of steep shorelines where landing and camping is not desirable.

Have a plan and know your options but let the conditions and situation dictate your schedule. Situational awareness is paramount.

Conditions can change very quickly. Still waters morph into an ocean that makes a canoe feel like a bobbing cork. The big sky is helpful when looking for stable weather patterns. If you want someone else to predict the weather pack a weather radio.

The weather and ocean conditions along with many other factors

will determine your pace along the coastline. Regardless of your rate, it is a 120 km paddle. That said, there are three ideal stopping locations in the first 40 km.

From the river mouth, just shy of 20 km there is a bay that allows a boat to seek shelter. The next protected opportunity is 8 km away. It is a little nook with old cabin and inukshuk. From there it is 15 km to a small river mouth (and nearby waterfall), which is just large enough to afford a small craft to enter.

The remaining 75 km of coastline provides only points and beaches but no

harbour like access. Seven kilometres beyond the next named feature, Cape Wollaston, there is an excellent fresh water access point where a sand delta extends into the ocean. It is another good place to camp and approximately the halfway point to Ulukhaktok.

After another dozen kilometres there are three cabins followed by an arcing beach. The next 5 km passes Cape Ptarmigan. There is a cabin at the next unnamed point, which marks approximately two thirds of the way or 40 km to the end.

There is at least one cabin in the 15 km section of non-descriptive shoreline to Coast Point, where there is another cabin. A distance of 25 km remains. Leaving Coast Point, it is approximately 3 km to a cluster of four cabins. After less than 15 km, cabins become frequent as you approach Ulukhaktok. By entering Jack's Bay, the



The barren expanses of Arctic Island canoeing offer unique campsites.

backside of community, there is a savings of 5 km from paddling around the point to Queens Bay, which Ulukhaktok faces.

Other tiny nooks or protected areas exist, if you have keen situational awareness as you travel—boulders that break the waves or swells, small gravel points that provide a lee. So much depends on the wind direction and strength.

Expect the unexpected. One night while paddling, when the wind came up it hit us like someone opened an oven door—the warm blast was uncomfortably hot. One could say it was like paddling into a sauna. Strange and surprising, the least amount of clothing worn on this trip was while ocean paddling, where one would expect it to be the coldest.

In the distance the shoreline continued to confuse us as it appeared to be moving. It took us a bit to figure out what was happening. The intermixing of open and vast expanses: sky, shoreline, sea, and sunrays combined with long sightlines, far off horizons, and curvature. All of it overwhelmed our tired minds. The light was interesting and playing with the visualization and interpretation of our retina images. At one point, we wondered if there was ice ahead. Our conclusion, it was all a mirage.

Once out on the sea, without harbours that yield safe and easy landing, long paddling intervals were the reality. Keep clothing, food, and drinking water at the ready. A bailer may serve for urinating. Without a break to stretch, feet fall asleep and become cold. Butts sit motionlessly. Arms tire.

Even if the beach looks easy and welcoming it is not always the case. Tired and cold bodies are slow to react when jumping out of a canoe crashing onto a pebbled beach. In the lateness of the day, depth perception is difficult to judge and beach landings are steeper than expected. Furthermore, the loose pebbles roll like ball bearings under foot providing problematic traction on the steep beaches. And of course, quickness is important to avoid

a disaster when pulling a canoe out of the surf. The flex of a Pakcanoe is beneficial as the bow bends upwards while keeping the stern afloat in the water.

On the other hand, launching into the waves is easier as the canoe will roll down the steep pebbled beach and slide into the sea with momentum that is sustained by quick paddling.

Treat familiarity with caution. Being



The calm mouth of the Kuujua River where it meets the Arctic Ocean

weather bound is a common enough occurrence in the far north. As with any far north trip, it is vital to account for weather bound days. Simple enough. With the ocean section at the end of the trip, there is no opportunity to make up time. It's one-sided. It tips the scale against making up time. Furthermore, because it's coastal paddling, count on more than the normal amount of delays.

An abundance of non paddling activities await you: collect drinking water, nap, rest, sleep, read, write, wash clothes, wash yourself, repair gear, play games, bake and cook, eat, stay still, meditate, soak up the land and the experience, explore the land, hike, watch wildlife, photograph flora, and so on.

Be mindful of your situational awareness on and off the water because when the wind direction or speed changes, so does your vulnerability. We were encamped and weather bound for days on a crescent beach. All the short vegetation pitched out to sea,

as an offshore wind carried on relentlessly and without bounds. Days passed. Days occupied by various non-paddling activities. Unbeknown to us, the tent stakes had loosened by the constant pull and rattle of the wind loaded tent.

I've heard stories and seen tents tumble and roll freely across the tundra mimicking tumbleweed. Eventually they come to rest or someone rescues them. The familiarity of

that situation changes with the thought and realization that your shelter is airborne and heading out to sea. Refocus. Situational awareness is imperative.

The two most common maps for navigation in the far north are the 1:50 000 and 1:250 000 topographic maps. Not so, the coastline coverage is by 1:50 000 photomaps, which show a darker image than topographic maps and thus are more difficult to navigate by. My advice to future ocean paddlers is to use 1:250 000 topographic maps.

A VFR map provides a good overview. Other ideas are to look into nautical charts and Google Earth

or transfer information to the photomaps. I did not use a GPS

but there are two long coastal sections that lack landmarks where such a device would make determining a position easy.

There is a quad trail that follows the coastline part of the way. We saw tracks 50 km from Ulukhaktok so an ATV pickup is a possibility. Once close enough, even a walk out along the quad trail is doable. Of course, it's better to have the time to paddle all the way to the community.

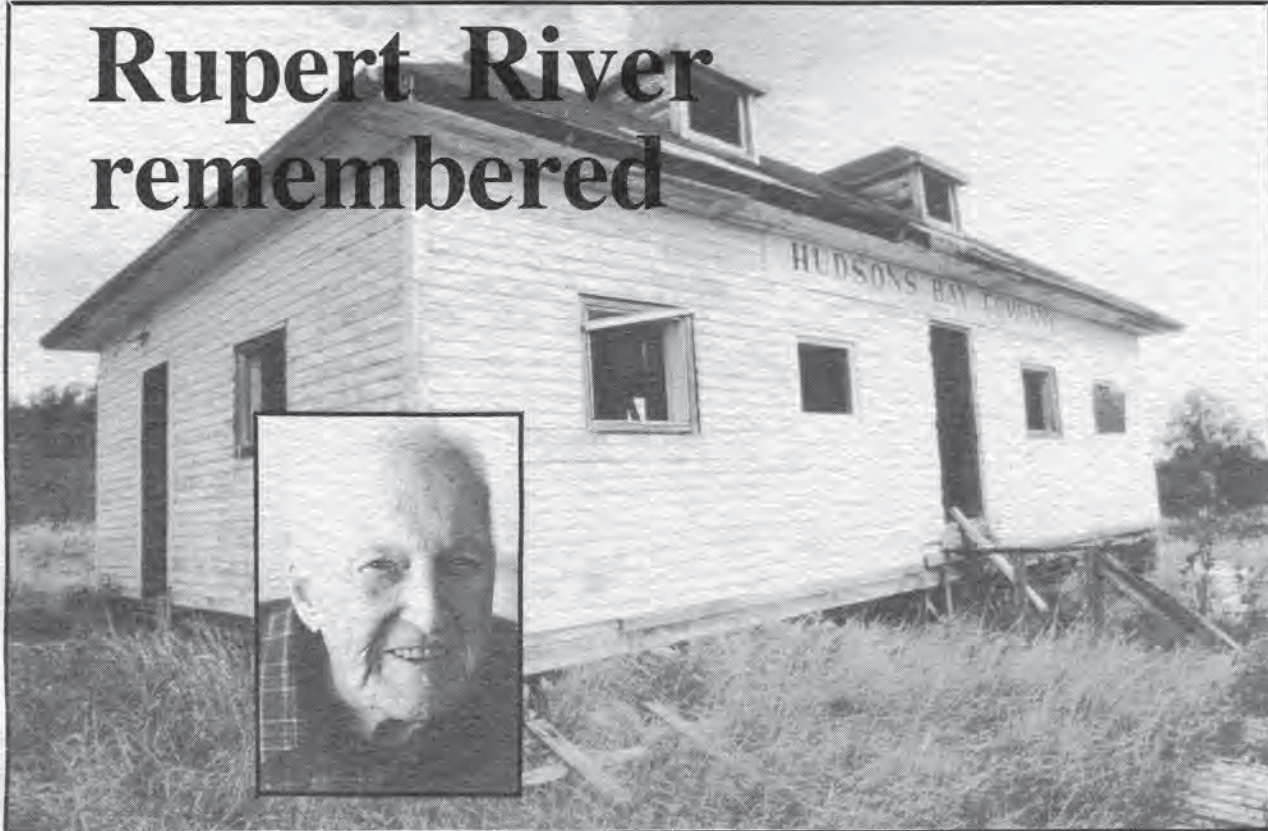
The Kuujua River has fantastic scenery and if you paddle the coast, it adds to the experience because of the historic sites as well as the different but similar environment. For instance, finding seal and polar bear skulls in addition to musk oxen. But be ready and patient for you do not have the same options as river travel, nor the current to help you make progress.

It is rewarding, beautiful, peaceful, and intimidating all at the same time. Respect its rhythms and go with the flow.

The Best of CHE-MUN

From Outfit 64, we speak to a man who knew George Elson and the Rupert River in 1917 working for Revillon Freres.

Rupert River remembered



POST OF THE PAST -- The rotting Hudson's Bay post was still standing at Nemaska in 1982 when this photo was

taken. John McDonald, 97, (inset) worked at the Revillon Freres post on the same site from 1914-17. The Rupert River still

flows awaiting a day of destiny with the engineers of Hydro-Quebec. It's past still lives in the memories of John McDonald.

By MICHAEL PEAKE
Che-Mun Editor

“I certainly remember ‘Geordie’.” John McDonald’s pair of 97-year-old eyes twinkle at the thought of the man he used to work with.

We know that man better as George, George Elson.

Elson was the guide for both Hubbard expeditions to Ungava Bay at the start of this century. He was the subject of the book *Great Heart* a couple of years ago and generally regarded as one hell of a canoe man.

To John McDonald, “Geordie” was the guy who ran the outpost for the main post that he supervised for Revillon Freres during the years of the First World War.

John McDonald, known as Mac, will be 98 in July. He recalls those years along the Rupert with remarkable clarity from his room at the Veteran’s Hospital in St. Anne-Bellevue just outside Montreal.

Young Mac, then in his early twenties, was under contract with Revillon for four years. He spent 1914-17 at their headquarters at Nemaska on the Rupert River followed by short stints at Eastmain and Akimiski.

Revillon, known as “the French firm”, was a fur trade latecomer that challenged the dominance of the Hudson’s Bay Company until the 1930s when the senior firm absorbed it.

They built many posts including 80 miles upstream from the very first HBC post at Rupert House which was founded in 1668.

Revillon’s idea was to intercept the Cree Indians each spring on their way to trade furs with the HBC. Naturally the Bay didn’t like that and soon built their own post at Nemaska, a calm expansion of the turbulent Rupert.

Mac was in charge of the new accounting system there and kept track of two outposts 100 miles from the post. He learned to speak Cree and adopted the native way of travel.

At Nemaska, Mac worked for another McDonald - one “Long Mac” from Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and no relation — who was the manager of the post. Mac says the Bay and Revillon got along pretty well though “we did get a lot of their furs.”

Elson ran the Nichigun outpost near the headwaters of the La Grande River at the height-of-land. Elson told Mac about his travels with both Hubbard expeditions.

Leonidas Hubbard and Dillon Wallace guided by Elson took the wrong turn on the way to the George River from Labrador and became lost. Hubbard eventually died despite some heroic work by Elson. Wallace’s subsequent book on the tale (*Lure of the Labrador Wild*) so incensed Hubbard’s widow, Mina, that she decided to redo the trip. She hired Elson and in 1905, finished what her husband started.

She told the story in her book *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador*.

Mac recalls Elson, who was considered by many the real hero of both Hubbard trips.

“Geordie was very quiet. Didn’t see much of him except in the summer time. Long Mac knew him better than I did because Long Mac was up on the English River. He knew him from Fort Hope. I think he must have hired him.”

“In my time, there was a lot of discussion among fellows in the north about George Elson. About whether he did the right thing. A lot of people think he should have known better than to go up the wrong river.”

Mac acknowledges there was much second guessing about Elson’s story. History has proved Elson right — and blameless.

Mac’s eyes shine as he recalls those busy but peaceful days along the Rupert while a war raged in Europe.

“Nemaska was a very nice place, a healthy community about 600 feet above sea level. The Indians were happy there. They came out of the back bush in May and June and they enjoyed themselves. The Indians from Nichigun and other outposts would all come to Nemaska because of the fishing.



CANOESWORTHY *continued*

The Nunavut Impact Review Board said June 2 that the yacht's 2014 project proposal was exempt from a re-screening process.

According to its itinerary, the Octopus will visit Pond Inlet Sept. 1, then head north to Arctic Bay with stops on Somerset and Prince Leopold Islands, and then to Radstock Bay and through to Resolute Bay.

Afterward, the vessel will head south towards King William Island en route to Cambridge Bay, where it's expected to arrive Sept. 11. – *Nunatsiaq News*

Plans for a huge iron mine near Aupaluk, the smallest community in Nunavik, are moving ahead, following the recent release of a preliminary economic assessment.

That document, prepared by Micon International Ltd., shows the mine's developers, the Vancouver-based Oceanic Iron Ore Corp., can recoup the \$3.7 billion cost of building the mine within less than two and a half years.

The iron deposits owned by Oceanic range from the Roberts Lake area north of Kangirsuk to the Morgan Lake area, about 50 kilometres from both villages, to Hopes Advance Bay in the south, which lies only 10 km from Aupaluk. Oceanic plans to mine Hopes Advance first and quickly — if possible, by 2016.

With the international iron ore price likely to remain above \$150 a tonne until 2020 — and perhaps as high as \$200 a tonne, Oceanic and Makivik Corp. — which are working towards an impact and benefits agreement — are likely to see large amounts of money flow from the mine.

Under Oceanic's preferred scenario for development for the Hopes Advance iron mine, the mine, located about 20 km from the potential deepwater port site at Ungava Bay's Pointe Breakwater, will cost \$3.7 billion to build.

The infrastructure includes a 21-km pipeline from the mine's concentrator to a pelletizer near the port.

Every year the Hopes Advance mine would produce 20 million tonnes of high-grade (66.5 per cent) iron concentrate in pellets.

Based on the price of iron per tonne at a conservative \$111 per tonne, the payback of the mine's capital costs will take place only 2.4 years into its 23.8-year-long lifespan, the preliminary economic assessment says.

"Green hydroelectric" power is expected to fuel the mine. Oceanic is working with Hydro Quebec on the "delivery of power both to the Company's project areas and to local communities in a timescale to suit the development of the Company's projects," the preliminary economic assessment says.

That power would likely come from the Brisay generating station located on the Caniapscau reservoir south of Kuujuaq.

Oceanic, with Makivik's backing, also wants Quebec to use that connection to the provincial power grid to run a high speed fibre-optic internet connection to Nunavik.

Oceanic plans to ship out its ore directly from Hopes Advance Bay to China on giant-sized carrier ships during summer and through trans-shipment during winter season. The company has also been lobbying for support from Quebec for assistance with a deepwater port.

Susan R. Eaton says she's passionate about adventure, empowering Inuit women and girls, and educating the world about the global melt now underway.

"It's not just a world record. It's not just about climate change. It's about connecting with people of the North and hearing their stories about climate change, ocean change and how it's impacting them today."

Last summer, Eaton was among a [group of adventure tourists plucked from remote north Baffin Island](#) by helicopter after the ice pan she was camping on unexpectedly broke away from land and began to drift away.

"I'm not sure that adventurers necessarily find themselves unprepared," she says. "I think what is more likely the case is that Mother Nature intervenes. And it's unpredictable when a piece of ice might break away from a shelf that's stable."

The rescue cost the Canadian Military \$2.7 million, the *National Post* later reported. That hasn't deterred Eaton.

She says the idea for this trip, which drew criticism on the Internet, has been percolating for about three years and she has the logistics all worked out.

The women have hired an expedition boat normally used for tourist cruises as their base camp. They'll take turns jumping over the side in special dry suits that have heated undergarments and mitts, powered by battery packs.

Instead of swimming, the snorkeler will use one hand to hold onto a "diver propulsion vehicle," a 1.2-metre-long scooter with a small propeller that travels between 3 to 5 km/h.

The plan is for the relay to continue non-stop as long as there's sunlight.

"We likely won't snorkel at night for safety reasons," Eaton says.

What does one see when snorkeling in Canada's High Arctic?

In the shallow water, small animals, invertebrates and seaweeds.

"But when we're doing our transit, for example in the Davis Strait where the water will be hundreds of metres deep, it will be very black, so we are not gonna see much."

Eaton has lots of extreme snorkeling experience.

She's snorkeled with belugas when they gather in the summer at the mouth of the Churchill River in Hudson Bay, and headed underwater during expeditions to Antarctica.

On Baffin Island last summer, she was snorkeling with beluga and narwhal with the adventure company Arctic Kingdom Polar Expeditions before the ice pan broke apart. (Scroll down to watch a video of that experience.)

On this trip, she plans to share that experience with local people, who tend not to snorkel or even swim in the extremely cold waters.

The ship will carry portable aquariums, so when the group arrives in Arctic communities, they can display samples of sea life to local people for four or five hours at a time, before returning them to the sea.

"We want to do a lot of education and outreach with respect to the people who live in the North. There's a really large educational component to it," Eaton says.



They'll also invite climate and ocean change researchers to join their expedition to take temperatures and salinity measurements of the waters.

This summer, the team plans to cruise from Labrador to Baffin Island and Greenland to test their skills and equipment.

The main adventure will take place in the summer of 2016.

Eaton expects it to take about 100 days. The 3,000 km expedition would be a snorkeling world record.

"Why do explorers want to do anything?" she asks. "Because it's there."

The Nunavut government and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. are at odds over the number of caribou to set as the "basic needs level" for Inuit hunting from the troubled Southampton caribou herd.

The government wants to set the number at 1,906; NTI wants 4,325.

James Eetoolook, vice-president of NTI, says the government's stance is about politics and not the environment.

"I want to put this in very stark and blunt terms: Inuit harvesters of Coral Harbour, Repulse Bay, Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet would stand to lose guaranteed access to more than 2,400 caribou annually. The government is trying to limit the Inuit right that was negotiated and is protected by the [Nunavut land claims agreement]," said Eetoolook.

"Inuit do not have to seek permission from the government to harvest caribou."

The dispute comes two years after the Nunavut government set an interim quota of 1,000 animals after government studies showed a drastic decline in the Southampton herd, from 30,000 animals in 1997 to fewer than 8,000 in 2011.

It was the first caribou quota ever imposed for Inuit in Nunavut. It was set at the request of the Aiviit Hunters and Trappers Organization in Coral Harbour.

Last summer, the interim quota was extended for another year. In December, the government proposed cutting that quota further to 800 animals.

Next fall, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board will hold public meetings before setting a total allowable harvest for the animals.

Under the land claim, that process requires government to also set a "basic needs level" for Inuit.

The number is supposed to consider the number of animals required by Inuit for subsistence.

If the quota for caribou is higher than that number, Inuit will get first access to the animals before any commercial harvest is considered.

Unlike the total allowable harvest numbers, there is no mechanism in place for changing the basic needs level once it is set.

Eetoolook says NTI will consider legal action if the board accepts the government's recommendation.

Caribou have been wiped out on Southampton Island before — in the 1950s. Animals were later moved from nearby Coats Island to re-populate Southampton.

For a younger generation of Nunavimmiut, the black and white images of shaggy-haired Inuit negotiators sitting around a table are only a brief glimpse into a major turning point in Nunavik's history.

The Inuit and Cree who sat down alongside the provincial and federal governments in the early 1970s produced the country's first modern land claims agreement for the regions of James Bay and Northern Quebec.

But young people in the region have told their birthright organization they want to better understand that historic process.

"A lot of these negotiators were only in their 20s," said William Tagoona, who works in communications for Makivik Corporation. "Youth want to know what drove them so hard; they want to know what inspired them to take on the federal government."

Those inquiries led Makivik to launch a documentary project to capture the perspectives of the Inuit signatories of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, which will be the first made-in-Nunavik film about the negotiations, with a focus on Inuit involvement.

The timing is right to gather the memories of the nine surviving signatories from the original group of 11, which includes Johnny Williams, Sarollie Weetaluktuk, Peter Inukpuk, Tommy Cain, Charlie Watt, Zebedee Nungak, Putilik Papigatuk, Charlie Arngak and Robbie Tooklook.

Signatories George Koneak and Mark Annanack have since passed away.

"We know the youth are really hungry for information about why land claims came to be, and why the agreement came out as it is," Tagoona said. "This will help them understand where they are today."

Tagoona, who at the time worked in communications for Makivik's predecessor, the Northern Quebec Inuit Association, sat in on many of the negotiating sessions and the visits Inuit negotiators made to Nunavik communities in 1973 and 1974.

"[Nunavik] had so little funding then, no telephones, and we'd fly into these communities on single-engine airplanes," he said. "We slept in schools, sometimes on the floor."

"When we tell these stories to young people, their eyes light up," he added. "They don't realize the benefits they see in their communities weren't always there."

Negotiations began shortly after Quebec announced in 1971 its plans to build a system of hydroelectric dams in northern Quebec, along waterways historically used by Cree and Inuit.

The JBNQA was signed Nov. 11, 1975, after four years of negotiations.

It was Canada's first modern comprehensive land claims agreement. James Bay Cree and the Inuit of northern Quebec ceded territory totalling 450,000 square kilometres in exchange for \$225 million in compensation.

In Nunavik, the agreement also brought about the creation of major organizations such as the Kativik Regional Government, the Kativik School Board, and the Inuit birthright organization, Makivik Corp., which manages the compensation funds.

Makivik has contracted Montreal production company Studio Pascal Blais to shoot the film.



The Best of CHE-MUN



photo: George Luste

STIKINE TO IT – Legendary Quebec paddler Dick Irwin graced the pages of Spring 1985 Outfit 41 from a trip taken in summer of '84. Dick is standing high above Happy Lake at the headwaters of the Stikine River in northern BC. His fellow trip members included George Luste and Sandy Richardson from Toronto and Syd Kreitzman of Vancouver. The river features an impassable canyon in the middle and the group took a trail ride around that formidable 20 mile section. The lower Stikine which passes through Telegraph Creek ends up in the Alaska panhandle.

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