

CHE-MUN

(Ojibway for canoe)

THE JOURNAL OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS CANOEING

OUTFIT 92

CHE-MUN

SPRING 1998



photo: Carl Fracholt

NORTHERN COMPOSURE-- Danish paddler Claus Kjærby prepares dinner in the most fabu-

lous kitchen the world - on Firedrake Lake in the NWT wilderness. Claus was part of a six-

man Danish expedition that traversed the Barrens on a 55-day, 1200 mile trip in the sum-

Bill Mason
stamp is coming
this summer

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Danish style**

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Spring Packet



Montana writer and outdoorsman **Alan Kesselheim** has been busy with wife Marypat Zitzer raising a family of three. That has kept them away from northern Canada for a while.

“Marypat and I continue to enjoy reading *Che-Mun*, although our northern experiences are largely vicarious at this point. Soon, I hope, we will come north as a family. We are becoming quite the canoeing clan. We have now outgrown the single canoe and have the boys (six and five) paddling bow. Ruby is the wild card, and will soon be competing for her spot in the paddling team. Each summer we try a voyage north to start getting the young set used to bugs, and to introduce them to the lure of the north.

“Marypat was a little surprised to read in a recent *Che-Mun* that she is something of a heroine in the canoeing world. She doesn't quite know how to take it. She has gotten that sort of response before, and always feels slightly saddened by it. Mainly, I think, because it makes her feel as if women think you have to be some sort of Amazon to take on a big adventure. She doesn't feel like an Amazon, and she wishes other women wouldn't be so often intimidated by the idea of adventure.

“I've got another book coming out in the fall. The working title is, *Threading the Currents: Twenty-five years of Passion for Water*. *Che-Mun* will certainly get a copy to peruse and, perhaps, comment on. I must say that I feel a bit dated by the sweep of paddling history I seem to have accumulated. Has it really been that long, I keep asking myself? Anyway, keep up the good work. There is no other paddling journal like *Che-Mun*.”

Max Finkelstein will be a busy man again this summer. He wrote to tell *Che-Mun* readers about his plans and the history behind it..

“Last summer I paddled from Ottawa to Cumberland House, Saskatchewan, following the

Alexander Mackenzie Voyageur Route. This summer I'm planing to complete the venture, leaving from Vancouver in early May and paddling up the coast to Bella Coola, and then east along the route back to Cumberland House.

“On July 22, 1793, Alexander Mackenzie became the first European to cross North America. The route that he and companions, Aboriginal guides and French Canadian voyageurs, followed is now proclaimed as the Alexander Mackenzie Voyageur Route and recognized as a major achievement in exploration and establishment of Canada as a nation from sea to sea to sea, and as an important part of our heritage.

“From May 7 to July 31 1997, I paddled the Alexander Mackenzie-Voyageur route from Ottawa to Cumberland House, Saskatchewan. The purpose of the trip was to bring to the attention of the Canadian public this little-known but central part of our heritage, to raise public awareness of the historic, natural and recreational values of this route, and other water routes in Canada, to promote the Alexander Mackenzie route as an important part of Canadian heritage, to promote the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (the 1997 route included three Canadian Heritage Rivers, and next year's trip will include three more (the Churchill, Clearwater and Fraser, as well as the Mackenzie-Grease Heritage Trail), and to tell Canadians what they can do to help preserve Canada's river heritage.

“The venture attracted considerable media attention: the launch was televised nationally, provincially and locally, local radio stations carried out interviews along the route, and many newspaper articles covered the voyage. In true 1990s fashion, a web page was created carrying journal entries and photographs of the trip (www.voyageur.carleton.ca). A video of the trip is currently being produced.

“The Alexander Mackenzie Voyageur Route is a unique and important feature of Canada's heritage, and it is unique in the world. Nowhere else on this planet is a water route spanning a continent, one

that can still be followed today, and one that is, for much of its length, still in a relatively pristine condition.

“In 1998, I propose to complete the route. However, instead of starting where I finished last summer in Cumberland House, I will leave from Vancouver after the second Canada's River Heritage Conference (where I am giving a presentation on this feature of our river heritage), paddle north to Bella Coola, where I will pick up the route and travel east back to Cumberland House. Cumberland House was the first inland post of the Hudson Bay Company, established in 1779, is an important centre for native cultural centre, and the spirit of the Voyageur is still very much alive in this community.

Summer schedule:

The plan is to leave from Vancouver on May 6 or 7, as an event for the Canada's River Heritage Conference being held in Vancouver at that time. This would be an ideal opportunity for media coverage.

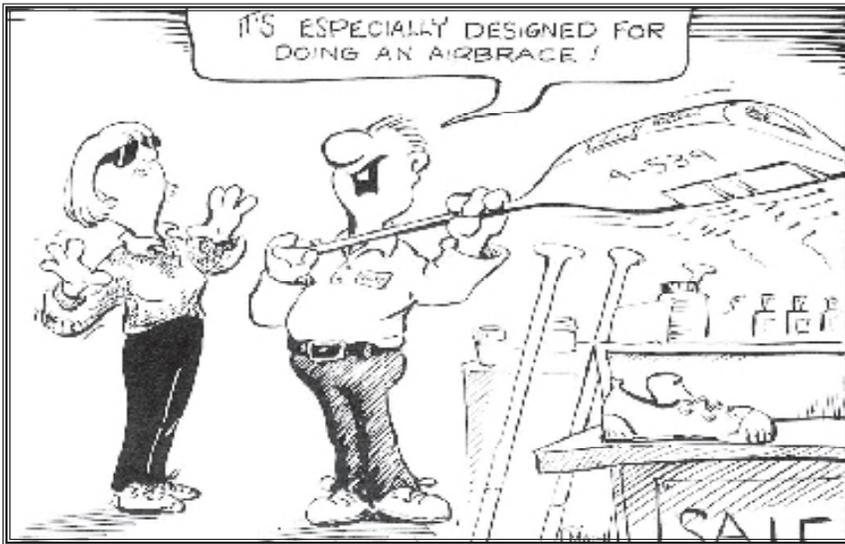
Approximately three months will be needed to reach Cumberland House, Saskatchewan. The route will be as follows:

Vancouver to Bella Coola to Prince George via the Mackenzie Grease Heritage Trail.

Williston Lake to Fort Chipewyan via the Peace River (through Wood Buffalo National Park and World Heritage Site)

Fort Chipewyan to Fort McMurray up Athabasca R. Fort McMurray to Cumberland House via the Clearwater Canadian Heritage River, Methye Portage and the Churchill River.

“As I did last year, the trip will be solo, but I welcome anyone who wants to paddle with me along the route. Also, satellite communications for a sophisticated website and video coverage may require more extensive logistical support than last year, such as meeting support/communication/video teams along the way.”



Editor's Notebook

The announcement of Phase II of the Churchill River power project was a remarkable example of the changes in northern realities over the past 30 years.

When the late Quebec premier Robert Bourassa announced the James Bay Hydro Project in 1971, no thought was given to consulting the Crees living there either before or after the announcement. It took four years of battling before the historic James Bay and Northern Quebec agreement was signed.

In March, the second phase of the Churchill River project was heralded and the Innu of Labrador blocked the Quebec and Newfoundland premiers from getting to the Labrador press conference to tell the world about it. They had to retreat by helicopter to another hastily arranged site where the world's media was also hurried to.

You would have thought the politically savvy Premier Brian Tobin of Newfoundland would have at least made some preparations to deal with native concerns. He explained later that the deal was just an announcement and that nothing was signed. But the public relations spin was in motion and now two can play that game. The Innu are still mad at former Newfoundland premier Joey Smallwood who declared at the opening of the Churchill Falls project that, "This is our land. This is our river." The natives feel the same way and it would seem as though they have the Supreme court on their side. See Page 4 for more details.

I had a nice visit to Madison, Wisconsin this March for the CanoeCopia show. It's in its 17th year and run by Rutabaga, a local outdoor store. They had a great set-up for us speakers and it was fun to get a chance to see some of the other presenters as well. I was also able to get caught up with some of my American friends including Steve Krautkremer of Old Town Canoe, John Viehman of *Anyplace Wild* and the legendary Cliff Jacobson who just packs them in down there.

Hope the planning for your summer trip is going well. The Hide-Away Canoe Club is taking a year off from our northern expeditions. We have a possible smaller trip in the works but nothing confirmed yet. After last year's big effort for our George River trip, the lack of trip preparation made this winter seem a little empty.

Michael Peake, Editor.

"It's Owl, Grey Owl"

The cameras are apparently set to roll this spring on the oft-delayed biopic of the legendary lecturer and author - Grey Owl.

We must thank "*The Spirit of Grey Owl*", Phil Chester, for keeping us up to date on this project which has languished for many years but now seems ready to proceed.

The casting is interesting. Pierce Brosnan, perhaps most well-known for his latest role as James Bond, 007, will play the title role. Daniel Day Lewis was originally thought to get the nod. Richard Attenborough will direct and shooting is scheduled to begin in England and Canada in June. Attenborough, known for his biographical movies of larger-than-life men such as Gandhi, has a deserving subject in Grey Owl.

Attenborough has also said that he's been fascinated by Grey Owl since he saw him lecture 62 years ago.

"He was an unbelievable celebrity, said Lord Attenborough. "He was as big as the Beatles later became and had massive charisma."

As most Canadians know, Grey Owl was Englishman Archibald Belaney, who, masquerading as an Ojibway, was world-renowned for his books and speeches on the Canadian wilderness and wildlife. Unfortunately, too many people think the big story about Grey Owl was that he was a fake native. That bit of truth came out shortly after his death. The real story is that he was the father of the conservation movement and instilled in a generation an awareness of the wild world.

Attenborough recently sent a message to a dedication to Grey Owl in his home town of Hastings, England; "As many of you know, I have been trying for the past four or five years to get up a feature film depicting the latter years of (Grey Owl's) life. Archibald Belaney, the Hastings schoolboy who reinvented himself as Grey Owl, was the world's first celebrity conservationist. He used his extraordinary fame to sound an early warning about our environment. He was also mainly responsible for saving the Canadian beaver, surely one of the world's endearing creatures, from extinction. For all his faults - and they were many - Grey Owl is one of my heroes."

Phil Chester also mentioned that a Grey Owl Foundation is being formed in B.C. Its mandate is for the preservation of Canada's lakes and rivers. The word is that Brosnan will front the foundation, instantly raising its profile.

There is potential for a wonderful film here - and a great deal of good to be done to the oft-tarnished reputation of

Another chunk of Churchill

Quebec and Newfoundland have agreed to go ahead with a second phase of power developments on the infamous Churchill River in Labrador. The \$12-billion hydroelectric project will be two-thirds owned by Newfoundland who has tried for years to overcome what it considers a bad contract negotiated with Quebec in the first Churchill Falls deal, signed in the 1960s.

Quebec insisted on a clause in the latest agreement saying nothing in the new deal is related to the old one.

The new power projects centre on an addition to the Churchill Falls generating station, a new generation facility downstream on Gull Island and a proposal to examine a site at Muskrat Falls for possible power generation.

The Gull Island station will generate 2,200 megawatts of power and Newfoundland will be guaranteed 1,000 MW for use in Labrador and an additional 800 MW transmission line it plans to build under the sea to Newfoundland. Quebec will get 1,200 MW of power for its domestic markets and sales to the U.S.

The estimated cost of this power generation will be 2.7¢ a kilowatt, which compares with the North American average cost of 6.3¢ a kilowatt.

Some people see getting more power out of an already dammed river making some sense. But many are worried about the fate of two undammed rivers that will be diverted to provide extra water for the new turbines. The upper Romaine and St-Jean rivers will be partially diverted into the Churchill system.



The original look of Churchill Falls, now only a trickle remains.

At Churchill Falls, two new generators will be built with that water, which will add a further 1,000 MW of power. If the feasibility study says Muskrat Island should be built, another 800 MW could be generated.

Estimates for job creation over the 10-year life of these projects include 17,000 direct jobs and 67,000 indirect jobs. The project must accommodate environmental and aboriginal concerns, a process expected to be lengthy, before work actually begins.

There is also a lot of worry about the continued mega-project mentality that H-Q is so famous for. Studies have shown that smaller power generation technologies (gas turbines) are as efficient, cheap and much less prone to the widespread collapse we saw in Quebec this last winter after the severe ice-storms crippled Quebec's electrical transmission network.

The View from the Innu

Katie Rich, the president of the Innu Nation wrote an open letter to Newfoundland Premier Brian Tobin shortly after the announcement of the new Churchill generating facilities. In part, that letter stated;

"I say that the Innu have aboriginal title to the Churchill River and that any developments require our consent. I hasten to add as the Innu have repeatedly informed you, that we will not unreasonably withhold our consent to projects that are environmentally sound and that respect our land and our rights. That is why I repeatedly insisted that the Innu be included in the discussions from the outset. That is why I asked you to cancel the signing ceremony so that we could engage in appropriate negotiations.

Step 1: Compensation for Upper Churchill [Ed. Note - the original 1960s project]

"This must be addressed immediately.

Step 2: Agreement with Respect to Lower Churchill

"When Step 1 is completed, we propose to move to full discussion of your Lower Churchill

proposal. By full discussion we mean from the beginning. Although it seems apparent from your announcement on March 9th that several agreements have already been reached, we are prepared to accept your word that nothing legal has been agreed to.

Step 3: Implementation of the Agreement with Respect to Lower Churchill

"In our view, Innu participation is a matter to be negotiated with your government in the context of an agreed upon project, and not with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Quebec Hydro (as you propose) based on project details that you have pre-determined with Quebec.

"What I am proposing is based upon the reality that the Innu have aboriginal title to the lands and river that you want to develop for the economic benefit of all the people of Newfoundland and Quebec. As I read it, the Supreme Court of Canada in its recent decision in the Delgamuukw case said that you must respect the aboriginal title of the Innu and that the Innu must respect your right to proceed with economic development for the ben-

Newfoundland is trying to get Ottawa's help in financing the \$2-billion cost of the undersea transmission line to the island. The province hopes to be able to use pollution credits for reducing greenhouse gas emissions as a way of financing the \$2-billion transmission line. While some of that power is earmarked for the Voisey's Bay smelter, that project is looking more and more likely to be delayed for some time due to economic and environmental pressures

Newfoundland estimates the switch to hydro power on the island from oil, coal and gas generated power could help Canada meet about 20% of its commitment under international treaties to reduce green-

The Ladies, the Gwich'in, and the Rat: Travels on the Athabasca, Mackenzie, Rat, Porcupine and Yukon Rivers in 1926

By Clara Vyvyan

Edited by I.S. MacLaren and Lisa N. LaFramboise.

Foreword by Pamela Morse.

Published by the University of Alberta Press 1998. \$29.95

364 pages, B&W photos, 12 colour illustrations.

ISBN: 0-88864-302-0

Reviewed by Michael Peake

Wilderness canoeists are drawn to the north for essentially two reasons - people and no-people. Most of us like to experience solitude on our northern journeys - yet it's a solitude that is accompanied by the history of people from the past. This combination of wild, solitary northern scenery and a vibrant understanding of the history of the people who lived and travelled there has an unbeatable allure.

These are precisely the characteristics of the book *Arctic Adventure* written in 1961 by Clara Vyvyan and based on a trip she did in 1926! It now appears under the new title *The Ladies, the Gwich'in and the Rat*. It tells the stories of two English women, Clara Rogers who later became Clara Vyvyan and Gwendolen Smith who travelled the breadth of the north purely for recreational excitement.

Her story takes the reader down the Athabasca and Mackenzie rivers but the crux of it is the ascent of the Rat River and McDougall Pass, the lowest pass in the entire Western Cordillera. In doing so, her book encompasses a sweep of the north in 1926 a time of great activity and change. The people they met, towns they visited capture a splendid snapshot of the north in that time. Her stay in Aklavik, at the mouth of the Mackenzie and long-since abandoned for Inuvik, is particularly interesting and enlightening.

But this is more than a reprinting of the original book, which has been out of print for some time. Editors Ian MacLaren and Lise

LaFramboise have brought the entire thing to life by presenting, for the first time, an error-free (we think) presentation of Vyvyan's story and now filled with all kinds of supporting material; the field notes, photographs, watercolours and full list of plants and a rich and lengthy introduction which sets the table beautifully.

This is a bang-up job of superb research, delicately applied to a wonderful story that while not "earthshaking" is a very real look at an early modern era canoe trip in the north. MacLaren, a professor at the University of Alberta, is well known for this sort of work. His earlier collaborations with Stuart Houston on a trilogy of northern journals by Back, Richardson and Hood are outstanding. One minor note, the title is a bit of a mouthful and seems to have been put together by a committee.

Of interest to *Che-Mun* readers, the ladies with their Gwich'in (Loucheux) guides were heading up the Rat just three weeks before Sherwood Platt's group arrived there. (See Outfit 90).

Their two guides took them as far as LaPierre House on the Bell River and they returned to Aklavik. The ladies continued downstream in their 18-foot Peterborough canoe to Old Crow where they obtained more guides to take them downstream to Fort Yukon

As one who has made the hard haul up the Rat, I was interested to read her account. Of course, their guides, Lazarus and Joe did all the hauling and the ladies walked alongside—still not an easy task along that rocky stream. Clara's description of finally reaching Summit, or Loon, Lake as she called it then is a beauty;

"There are some feelings too deep for tears, some thoughts that may not endure the captivity of words, some memories that are set apart among life's enduring treasures. I can shut my eyes now, dismiss all that has happened in 35 years and recapture the silence of Loon Lake. We were two middle-aged women travelling for pleasure, dishevelled and unwashed, with tired feet and tired bodies but I think, as we stood on the shores of that lake, gazing down at the reflected mountains, listening to the silence that was almost audible, we must have experienced what the saints described as ecstasy. Gwen never said a word. Nor did I."

Clara Vyvyan has provided the meat for a

wonderful meal. Ian MacLaren and Lisa LaFramboise have turned it into a feast.

A Wilderness Within The Life of Sigurd F. Olson.

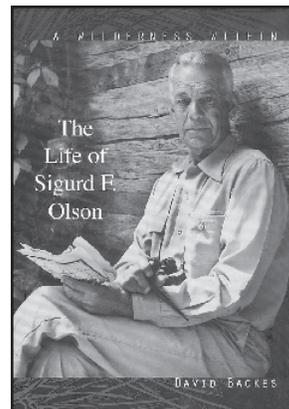
By David Backes

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1997 387 pp with Illustrations.

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Sigurd Olson, remains an icon of wilderness conservation nearly two decades after his death.

David Backes, an associate professor at the University of Milwaukee-Wisconsin, provides us with a detailed look at the rich and interesting life of Sig. Backes had the co-operation of the Olson family and was provided access to many private journals and correspondence. He was also able to speak with family members and friends.



Canadian canoeists know Sig Olson as the leader, or Bourgeois, of the famed canoeing group *The Voyageurs*, about whom we have written much in *Che-Mun* over the years. Sig was also widely known for his beautiful writing

in such books as *The Lonely Land* and *The Singing Wilderness*.

It was very surprising to read about the long battle that Sig had to get published and the great amount of work he put into his writing – it seemed so effortless. Was it ironic or perhaps fateful that he began his serious writing career in 1953, the same year he started canoeing regularly with *The Voyageurs*. I do not think it is a coincidence. As someone who has studied the group closely, I believe they had an incredible bond and great sense of oneness with themselves and the land. This was no doubt the catalyst for Sig to put on paper what he felt and experienced.

Backes also details the tremendous amount of pioneering work done by Sig, and others, to get a

Danes across the Barrenlands

sea happy that we cut short McTavish Point. We camped at a point on the eastern granite shores of Ogden Bay ready to make a move across when the wind permitted it. Seals came and visited us, and even a muskox came close to camp. I wonder what on earth they eat in these places. We had lots of dried fish and gathered plenty of driftwood and had a feast of considerable dimensions.

The following afternoon, the wind resided again and we set off across Ogden Bay. We paddled until it started to get dark and we could hardly differentiate between the islands anymore. At the same time fog surrounded us and rain started to come down on us. We found a little rugged windswept campsite and spent the following day windbound. Then luck smiled upon us and at 3 am the wind had changed and we set off for the final stretch under a clear blue sky. We headed towards Pelly River and the Canadian wildlife Service cabin. In early afternoon we went upstream on the Pelly and arrived at the cabin which was sealed up for the season. The place looked messy, there were caribou carcasses everywhere and geese and fish lay scattered around to rot in the sun. Later, in Cambridge Bay, we were informed that the elders of the Inuit society in Nunavut had met there with all their Indian counterparts and had a very big potlatch just three days before we arrived. Had we known about that before hand, we would certainly have sped up our paddling in order to have joined such a unique feast.

But in the end, we were more than happy about our trip. We had spent 55 days paddling 1800 km and made 45 portages. We had so many splendid encounters with wildlife, there were lots of fish and I can think of no better way to spend my summer holiday. And it didn't really matter that the people in Cambridge Bay informed us that, the summer never arrived in the north this year.

TRIP MEMBERS:

Joakim Groth; is an "ol' fox" in the game (like myself). He has made many trips to the NWT His first was on the Taltson in 1987, and since then he has paddled the Churchill, Mountain, Anderson, Hood and Horton (3 times). He is actually a M.Sc in zoology like myself but is working as the editor



Author Traeholt, in foreground, and his party hitch a ride on some passing ice floes in Ogden Bay.

of an Adventure Magazine in Denmark.

Henrik Lamber; only took up this sport a few years ago when he went along with Joakim on a trip the latter he guided in the NWT. He then went on to do a few trips in Sweden and took one year leave from his job to follow a course in outdoor recreation on the university of Copenhagen. It was his first "major" trip.

Anders Kjølter; started paddling 8-10 years ago when he too, went on a guided trip with Joakim. They went to Mountain River which was a shorter but more intensive whitewater trip. Anders is more a whitewater kayaker and came to Malaysia to work for me as a ww rafting and kayaking guide in 1996. Anders has got his own computer software company that mainly develops software for the music industry. The trip was also Anders' first "real" expedition.

Mikkel Jungersen; was our group's youngest participant. He is studying at Copenhagen University to become a biologist. He is particularly interested in fish biology. He made a trip to Anderson river with a friend three years ago, but the Nunavut Expedition was also his first true expedition.

Claus Kjærby; is an ol' fox too. He has canoed the Churchill and Horton in Canada, and we have done several expeditions together in Venezuela (3

months), Malaysia and Irian Jaya (Indonesia). He has sailed around the world and visited a lot of countries, and made his first canoe trip in 1987 in Venezuela and Brazil. He founded Seven C's Adventure group in the beginning of the 90's and basically managed to start making canoe trips to Canada's NWT with Danish guides.

Carl Traeholt; a Ph.D in behavioral Ecology, worked as a scientist for 6 years with Copenhagen University but with wildlife projects here in Malaysia. I started canoeing in 1982 and have done a lot of the northern Sweden/Norway rivers. The first trip to the NWT was a two month trip in 1985, then I did a bit in BC in 1992-93 when I stayed for 3 months in Vancouver. I have been living in Malaysia since 1991 and have started my own company in 1996 – ww rafting, kayaking, climbing, mountain biking – a kind of Malaysian "Nanthahala". We are the first here in the country that offers these facilities.

THE FILM: Well...what can I say. our proposed film didn't work out since our digital video recorder "died" on us while on the Thelon. When we took it back for service, they said it was full with thousands of blackflies and they wouldn't repair it under warranty! So much for that. It was pretty sad, since we had a lot of great encounters

Expeditions

Story and photos by
CARL TRAEHOLT

We set out from the southern end of Ivanhoe Lake and followed the upper Dubawnt River for a few days. It is a nice area with lots of good campsites and many birds. We caught a lot of pike during our time on Dubawnt, and managed to get a good deal of grayling where there were rapids.

At Smalltree Lake the river narrows and there are a 10 km stretch with few sets of rapids in class II & III+. They can all be run with scouting from the boats although there are some big waves in some of them. After this section, we followed the Dubawnt for another three miles and put up in a little bay on the northern shore. We soon left the Dubawnt and portaged across an esker. This was the beginning of a series of portages that took us up to Veira Lake, then onto Jost Lake and Firedrake Lake. The first week we were bothered by strong northern winds and already spent a day windbound.

However, on Firedrake we were blessed with brilliant weather and made good progress, caught some nice 6-8 lb. lake trout and found the most wonderful campsites. On one of these we found the inscriptions with small stones from 1975 (I wonder who made it but later on we met a party on the Thelon River which included retired archeologist, Frank Metcalf who had been in the area during the 1970s where a lot of work was done in the Firedrake area. It is highly likely some of the people from that time made it). We seemed to be following an old route probably used by the areas many trappers, as we kept on finding 40 to 60 year old campsites.

At the northern end of Firedrake Lake we ran into a very old trapper's cabin. It was situated at a beautiful spot overlooking the northern bay of Firedrake. A little stream emptied into the lake and I caught a 12 pound pike. A relatively easy portage took us over a ridge and into another little lake. However, the next portage was thick bush literally a stream of basketball size rocks, which made walking with 110 pounds on our backs pretty risky. Instead, we cut across to a forest ridge and followed this to another small lake. We still seemed to be following old trapper routes since a couple of portages

were in fact made easier by following small streams. On several of these, logs had been put out as if someone else had dragged boats across shallow parts of the riverbed many years ago. These logs were still there and saved our canoes from a lot of scratches from dragging.

Our final portage for many days took us into Jarvis Lake. The weather was cold and rainy. Sleet came over us and a strong northern wind kept us windbound for a while on an island in the southeastern end of Jarvis Lake. Although the wind did

weather and came to Granite Falls just above the confluence with the Thelon River. Granite Falls was not really a waterfall but a very steep major rapid which left us with no other choice but to portage. It was a 2 km long portage on the southern bank but fairly easy since the terrain was flat and on solid ground. We chose to spend an extra day at the falls since the area was very scenic and the place was full of berries.

After almost 3 weeks on the "road" we finally we made it onto the Thelon River. Here we had our longest spell of good weather on the whole trip – that is, the following three days were bright and sunny with little or no wind disturbing us. After Jim Lake, the Thelon turns north and picks up speed and except for a eight mile stretch through esker terrain the river was amazingly fast flowing, yet with no rapids at all. We put on a lot of mileage as we paddled 50 miles a day. However, at Eyeberry Lake the bad weather hit us again and we had to pull into the western shore and sit it out for half a day before we continued in the evening. We had a great experience with a moose cow and a calf cross-



Mikkel Jurgensen ponders at the graves of the Hornby party on the Thelon River.

ing the river right in front of us. Just above the Clarke River confluence the river enters into Thelon Canyon with some considerable rapids. We met the first other canoeists on our trip. They had canoed the Thelon 20 years ago and came back to do it again. Last time they ran the rapids but this time around they claimed the water level was extremely low and some of the ledges suddenly became a sharp drop instead of a standing wave. They had decided to portage the whole stretch until the corner of the canyon. We ran most of it. In fact we could run it in the middle and jam onto the flat rocks in the middle of the river and then drag it over the ledges. We portaged a small section where we couldn't judge whether or not some of the waves were too big for us to go through. We continued down the Thelon and encountered a small herd of caribou at Grove's Point and met another group of canoeists at the end of the Gap. Among this group was Frank Metcalf, who told us a lot of interesting archeological stories from

not drop much, we made a move in late afternoon and decided to paddle the whole night in order to put Damant Lake behind us. We had to make about 27 miles per day and were delayed somewhat because of the many portages and days of bad weather. However, Damant Lake was like a mirror the whole night and after a marathon paddle of 33 miles we pulled into camp at the northern end of Damant Lake. At this point we had already entered the Elk River system and we knew that we would have a chance to clock some extra mileage on this river as well as on the Thelon.

Elk River was for most of the way, one of the most scenic and idyllic rivers I have seen. It meanders through the landscape. There are lots of eskers, a few exciting rapids and a pleasant combination of barren land and scattered forest. We saw our first caribou at the end of Damant Lake and trout and grayling became more abundant than pike.

Elk River was a pleasant mix of small lakes and river sections with rapids. We had relatively good

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Expeditions

the area. We met up with this party a few more times since we were trying to contact our pilot regarding our food drop. At Grassy Island we encountered the first of many muskoxen. It was a large bull that was quite undisturbed by our presence, so much so that we could approach to within 10 meters without the bull making any signs of taking notice of us. As we were about to enter Thelon Oasis we were windbound again and lay up for the rest of the day. We saw a white wolf and another moose while waiting for the weather to improve.

In late afternoon we continued and came just in time to experience the magnificent wonder of 2000 caribou crossing the river. We were caught among the animals, their grunts, sound of hoofs against the rocky river bank, the smell of wet fur,

the sight, the piles and piles of hair floating downstream and settling in on the river bank as a nice white layer was simply fantastic. In the evening, the wind subsided and we continued and arrived at Hornby's Cabin just as David Thompson and his group were about to leave.

Hornby's cabin was really not a cabin anymore. But the history lives on, and it is strange to imagine that three people shared this little place through feast and famine and perished there. There are three new crosses placed on the ground in front of the old graves. We left a bit of coffee and salt for Metcalf's group on the doorway since they were running short of it and we had plenty. We caught a few pike the same night and a muskox came down on a grassy riverbank 200 yards from the cabin. The irony wasn't lost on us, we were literally feasting next to a place where three people died of starvation.

The weather changed a bit to the better again for two days and we exploited this by putting distance behind us and the others. We did meet up with David Thompson again for a short while and tried to get his satellite phone to work, since one of our group members happened to work for the company that produced them. But unfortunately, he could only inform David that the coverage of

his phone was not yet complete. The satellite should start transmission on the 1st of August. We were in the middle of July!

The Thelon has certainly become a highway in more than one aspect. We overtook three other groups of canoeists on the remaining part of the Thelon – an Austrian couple



went down with kayaks and we passed Alex Hall with 13 other canoeists. An American group of 6 paddlers asked us if we had any success with angling on the Thelon. They were frustrated since they had only caught one pike during their 2 week trip. I thought it was a joke since we had been blessed with all the pike and grayling we could eat and occasionally a good sized trout. When I saw their equipment consisted of something that reminded me of my own big game tackle back home in Malaysia, I realized why they only had little success!

We pulled out at a straight section of the river a few miles above Beverly Lake. This was where we had agreed to meet our pilot with the food drop. The following afternoon he touched down on the river, took our canoes and me for a pleasant air trip to an unnamed lake in the Arkilnik Hills 12 miles north of Beverly Lake. Here we dropped our boats and continued onwards to the lake at the beginning of the Morse River where we put our food drop.

Upon my return we packed the remaining part of our stuff and started our walk across the hills. We camped at Arkilnik River and crossed it the following morning. In the afternoon we arrived to the lake where our boats were dropped off and

camped for the night. The following day we continued our journey in canoes and several short and relatively easy portages took us into the lake where the Morse River began. We camped at a flat spot in the southern end of the lake where our food drop was.

After spending most of the day re-packing our boats with the new supplies we set out in late afternoon and soon came to

the cairn built by the Hide-Away Canoe Club during their epic 1985 journey when they named this river after Eric Morse. We had expected to find a note there from the second time the HACC passed by this place in 1995 but it was empty. We left a small note with a packet of coffee and a few suckers for paddlers who happen to pass by in the future.

Morse River turned out to be very shallow right from the beginning. We had to drag our boats for long stretches, at certain places we even had to portage. We had a short spell of nice weather, sunny and without wind. Little did we know that this should be the last such days for the remaining part of our journey. We had a great encounter with a white wolf that came into camp and sat 80 feet away staring at us. There were plenty of muskox, a few caribous and lots of geese and cranes.

At the end of the Morse River we saw a small herd of seven muskox and caught as many large graylings as we wanted. It was biting cold and the wind turned from bad into worse. When we left the sheltered hills of Morse River and faced the southern arm of Garry Lake, the wind blew undisturbed. We got caught for three consecutive days on the western shore of Garry Lake.

One thing that had attracted our attention more than anything else on the Morse River was the abundance of old Inuit settlements. We passed by several old campsites with nicely laid stone circles, with a fireplace and sometimes even an entrance. While we lay windbound at Garry Lake, we went for hikes in the surrounding terrain. It was sandy and windswept, but apparently a large number of

Continued on Page 11 ➡

NUNAVUT

Newsline

Countdown to April 1, 1999

DANISH MUSH . . .Two Greenlanders are invoking the spirit of Knud Rasmussen toured through Nunavik and Nunavut (Ungava and NWT) this winter by dog team in a gesture of Inuit solidarity.

Ono Fleischer, 49, and Mathias Ingemann, 36, left Kuujuaq on January 10. They're using 28 Greenlandic dogs to pull two sledges that First Air flew to Canada for them. The outfitters plan to end their Nunavik visit in Puvirnituq. They'll then fly across Hudson Bay to Arviat (Eskimo Point) and continue by dog team through communities in the Keewatin and South Baffin.

Their 4800-kilometre trek ended in Iqaluit in April.

This trip, called the "Great Sledge Journey III" or "Qimusseq," is inspired by the travels of Greenlandic explorer Knud Rasmussen (1879-1933). Unlike most Arctic explorers, whose work was aimed at serving the economic and political interests of colonizing Europeans, Rasmussen used his journeys to gain knowledge about Inuit culture and language.

The collections of stories and legends that Rasmussen gathered on his journeys are now classics of written Inuit culture. When the two Greenlanders pulled into Salluit on February 6, across the sea ice, one younger resident said it was like "a dream" to see the teams and their drivers dressed in traditional Greenlandic polar bear fur outfits. Elders were thrilled.

In each community they have visited so far, people have turned out to witness the now-rare arrival of dog teams. Visit the Great Sledge Journey III website: <http://www.greenet.gl/~qimusseq>

NEONATAL NUNAVUT . . .Is Nunavut's population "explosion" just an alarmist myth?

Demographers and economists say that Nunavut's rapid population growth is natural and beneficial - and that they have nothing to fear in the long run. When Baffin leaders meet later this year, the so-called baby boom is expected to be high on their agenda.

Still, it seems no reference to Nunavut today would be complete without at least some mention of the territory's distinct demographic profile - usually in grave tones. Health and social workers worry about being able to meet future demand for their services. Municipal planners wring their hands over housing needs of the next millennium.

In southern populations, for instance, the so-called baby-boomers born during a period of unusual fecundity between the 1940s and the mid-1960s, have been a powerful economic force.

One hundred years ago, in a deliberate process of nation-building, massive flows of European immigrants settled the western provinces, driving population growth in Canada to rates that have rarely since been matched in any jurisdic-

tion of the country.

According to the latest figures from the NWT Bureau of Statistics, Nunavut had an annual birth rate of just under three per cent in 1996. That's more than double the national average of 1.2 per cent.

Based on conservative estimates of birth and rates, at least one researcher in the North has projected that Nunavut's population will reach more than 30,000 within two decades. That's still smaller than many Toronto apartment complexes.

FLAHERTY FLATTENED . . .The head of Canada's national Inuit women's organization has been abruptly removed from office amid claims of misconduct and financial impropriety.

Nine Pauktuutit directors voted unanimously to fire president and executive director Martha Flaherty at an emergency board members' teleconference last Friday. She is a descendant of Robert Flaherty, the noted filmmaker and northern Quebec traveller of 80 years ago.

Lawyer Tom Curran, who is acting as legal counsel for Pauktuutit, confirmed that Flaherty was removed because of concerns the board have had with her performance as the leader of the publicly funded national women's group.

NORTHERN TRAGEDY . . .Residents in the small Kitikmeot hamlet of Kugluktuk (formerly Coppermine) are still coming to grips with a triple murder-suicide that took the lives of three children in March.

After an all-night drinking binge, Steven Ayalik, 31, arrived home at 7:40 a.m. Thursday, March 26, picked up a 12-gauge shotgun, then shot and killed three of his children before turning the gun on himself.

Michelle, 13, Allison, 7, and Alexander, 4, were found dead, along with their father, when RCMP arrived shortly after the shooting.

Eight-year-old Mark Ayalik, who was asleep in his room when the shooting began, was awakened and escaped uninjured from the family home.

A nurse and two social workers were flown into the community from nearby Cambridge Bay to help people cope.

MORE FEES PLEASE . . .The head of First Air, NWT's only full service scheduled air carrier said new navigation fees place an excessive burden on First Air and its customers, and will hurt the northern economy by restricting travel and driving up the cost of doing business here.

A spokesman for Nav Canada, the new not-for-profit group running northern airports, responded that the new fees were in keeping with the intent of the legislation, and added that Nav Canada has already gone to great lengths to accommodate the special circumstances facing the North.

Nav Canada said that a form of preferential rate for northern carriers would be out of the question, given that Nav Canada would have to make up the difference by charging higher fees to other larger airlines.

The first phase of the new rate structure went into place March 1. The cost of providing flight information, weather briefings, airport advisory services and various electronic navigation aids was traditionally recovered through an air transportation tax imposed by Transport Canada.

But the tax only applied to passenger travel, and was incorporated into the ticket price. As of this year, the tax is being phased out and replaced by Nav Canada with user fees that apply to cargo as well as passenger travel. Since

News & Notes

FIRST CLASS MALE. . . The long wait to honour Canada's canoeing legend Bill Mason with his own stamp is over. Canada Post has announced that they will release a Bill Mason stamp in August. Let's hear about it from the man who lead the campaign for so long, Wayne Bagley, of Windsor, Ont.

"I submitted the name of "Bill Mason" to the members of the stamp advisory committee of Canada Post on January 4, 1994 and the process began. I knew beforehand that Canada Post would not commemorate anyone on a postage stamp before they were deceased for 10 years.

"My choice of promotion was that of a letter writing campaign. Support was overwhelming. As you know Canada Post has made the decision to go ahead with the stamp and it's date of issue will be August 19, 1998 (10 years after his death).

"Opening Day Celebrations and promotions are presently underway with many decisions to be made. The tentative launch is scheduled for August 16 at the headquarters of the Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association near Ottawa in conjunction with their first Canadian Canoe Symposium. Combining the Bill Mason's stamp event with the Canadian Canoe Symposium is an excellent way to promote both the 'Mason Stamp' and the 'Home For Canoeing.' All and all it sounds like a wonderful way to spend an

afternoon."

Wayne is to be congratulated for all his great work. We'll have more on this story later in the year. And regarding the Canadian Canoe Symposium, you can get more info from the CRCA. This new event, modeled on the successful, long-running Maine Canoe Symposium will feature Becky Mason and Cliff Jacobson among many others, including *Che-Mun*.

SINKO . . . Inco is considering the sale of the company's generating stations west of Sudbury—four on the Spanish River and one on the Vermilion River. No offers have been made on the plants, which generate 20 per cent of electricity requirements for Inco's Sudbury operations.

Inco denied it wants to sell the generating stations simply to raise badly needed cash to finance the development of the Voisey's Bay deposit in Labrador. When Inco paid \$4.3 billion for Voisey's Bay, it expected to be able to start generating revenue from the huge deposit by 1999. But that has been pushed back at least one year, leaving the company in a cash crunch.

SPARE A CANOE FOR GREY OWL, TOO . . . A replica cabin of Grey Owl, based on his famous one in Saskatchewan's Prince Albert National Park, has been a big hit near the birthplace of the famed conservationist in Hastings, England.

Since it's opening in June 1996, thousands of children have visited the woodsy cabin in the Drusillas Zoo Park near Grey Owl's birthplace. The Grey Owl Society, who organized the display, are looking for someone to donate a cedar/canvas canoe to be part of the exhibit. While Grey Owl would have used a 16-foot model, the fact that the replica cabin is only 14-x 11 feet dictates a 12-14 footer would be needed.

If any *Che-Mun* readers are able to help, please contact Henrietta Smyth: 28 The Drive, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire England WD3 4EB. Phone and fax

Our Back Pages

The following back issues of Che-Mun are available at \$5 each which includes postage.

Outfit 44 - Bill Mason & the Dog R., Athabasca letter
Outfit 45 - Pipe River by Eric Morse, River flow chart
Outfit 46 - Hudson Bay to Ungava, Stew Coffin report
Outfit 47 - Heritage Rivers, Trans Canada Expedition
Outfit 48 - Freshwater Saga - Morse R. memoirs, slide fest
Outfit 49 - Queen Charlottes kayaking, HBC sell-off
Outfit 50 - Royal couple canoe the Hanbury/Thelon*
Outfit 51 - Traditional canoeing through Quetico Park
Outfit 52 - Lands Forlorn review, Atomic Arctic proposal
Outfit 53 - Chubb Crater in Ungava, Hubbard & Wallace
Outfit 54 - Povungnituk 88 - Ungava, Sleeping Island rev.
Outfit 55 - Memories of Bill Mason, Twin Otter gone
Outfit 56 - Canoeing stamps, Hanbury review, WCA slidefest
Outfit 57 - North American Canoe Symposium, book reviews
Outfit 58 - Churchill River trip, The Lonely Land rev.
Outfit 59 - Tyrrell brothers, Water & Sky, Alberta Pulp wars
Outfit 60 - Via Rail, Missinaibi River, James Bay, HBC exit
Outfit 61 - Inside LG2, Aki on the Barrens, Grey Owl
Outfit 63 - Canoeing in the 1930s, Hydro-Quebec chairman
Outfit 64 - Rupert R. 1914, Keewaydin Guide, Fur Trade Canoe Routes
Outfit 65 - Churchill River hydro, Robert Perkins, James Bay
Outfit 66 - Lands Forlorn, HACC in Japan, Needle to the North
Outfit 67 - NWT division, Canoe Museum, James Bay

Outfit 68 - Charles Camsell, Barrens Wedding, Book reviews
Outfit 69 - Sig Olson Remembered, Historic riverflows
Outfit 70 - Great Bear to Coppermine, Ungava photos
Outfit 71 - Coppermine planning, Land of Feast & Famine
Outfit 72 - Eric Morse River List, Ungava Journey, J.B. Tyrrell
Outfit 73 - Petawawa River, David Thompson map, NWT regs
Outfit 74 - Pukaskwa River, Helen Falls cairn, Quetico trip
Outfit 75 - Tyrrell pictures, Hearne's route, Heritage Rivers
Outfit 76 - HBC money, MacDougall Pass, Sig Olson, Tyrrell
Outfit 77 - River stamps, Exploration of N. Canada, Book reviews
Outfit 78 - Across the Arctic Mts, LaVase Portage, Food drying
Outfit 79 - Book reviews, Thompson journal, Great Whale stopped
Outfit 80 - Warburton Pike, Wabakimi Park, Merrick's True North
Outfit 81 - Arctic Land Exped, David Hanbury, Diamond development
Outfit 83 - Jacobson's Caribou River, *Canoescapes* rev, Franklin's journal
Outfit 84 - 1955 Moffatt Exped., Winisk R., John Rae's effigy & Cloak-boat
Outfit 85 - Rocky Defiled, Grey Owl movie, Bill Mason bio, Canoe Museum
Outfit 86 - PBS's Backcountry, E. Merrick's Labrador photos, Summerwrap
Outfit 87 - Across the Barrens to Arctic Sound. Dr. John Rae, Cree wisdom
Outfit 88 - Great Whale River, Elliott Merrick's last words, Paddling the Web
Outfit 89 - George River preview, Merrick Memorial, Stew Coffin- George 1967
Outfit 90 - Rat River 1926, George River Online, Chestnut Canoe book rev.
Outfit 91 - Cross Country Voyageur, Arctic Unravelled, Schwatka book rev.

Expeditions

Danes on the Barrens *continued from Page 8*

Inuit have used the place for caribou hunting. There is a clear crossing point and along the ridge of the esker there was dozens of stone rings just above the main caribou trails.

While windbound and exploring our campsite, we found a lot of old rifle shells and also an old "Campers" oven. In fact, it was the same type of oven that Hornby used in his cabin. Although it was most probably a common thing among old trappers, we couldn't help but wonder if this oven could have been Hornby's. If his cabin had been looted by passers-by, who knows? At least it gave us a funny story since we could compare it with the picture taken by the RCMP upon arrival in Hornby's cabin so long ago. The oven became our friend for the next week. Somehow, we had either miscalculated our fuel consumption or about eight litres had gone missing since we left Fort Smith. We were in dire need of fuel for cooking but the oven made it possible for us to cook with scrubs and dried moss and the few sticks of little driftwood we could find. That kept us going for another week without having to tap into our fuel reserves.

Finally, Garry Lake let us go. We had a day with pleasant mild winds and decided to paddle throughout the night. We made almost 40 miles from south to north of Garry Lake and started on our last set of portages across to the Armark River. At the northern end of Garry Lake, a little river joins from the north. We went upstream and it turned out to be incredibly scenic and abundant with fish and wildlife. Although small we caught a couple of big trout and saw a lot of caribou. The further upstream we went, the smaller and more shallow the river became. However, at the location where we expected to start our four mile portage we were truly blessed with a little wonder. The terrain was like a large grassy meadow and the river suddenly became relatively deep and without any significant current. We were able to follow this river another three miles upstream and hence cut short our long portage to just over a mile.

This morning, I almost peed on a barren ground grizzly. I got up to relieve myself about 7 am and while standing in my own thoughts trying to get things working, there was a grizzly galloping towards me no more than 130 feet away. I hardly managed to zip my pants up again before I ran over to the guys who had the rifle and the firecrackers. They had to be woken up and finally came out to see the bear about 80 feet away. Somehow I think it had seen me as something else, because when it realized the others it turned on a dime and fled without even looking back.

The bad weather came over us again. We made seven portages en route to Armark Lake. It took us the full day and almost made us windbound again. On a lake no more than 200 yards wide (but 800 long) we could hardly paddle across and had to portage after a few unsuccessful attempts to paddle across.

Armark Lake threatened to make us windbound again for a couple of days. The following day we explored the very interesting surroundings where hundreds and hundreds of inukshuks covered the mountain ridge mile after mile. We found several flint speartips, old rounds of ammunition, empty shells, old skin knives and heaps of caribou bones scattered everywhere. We even found a lonely grave and through the rock pile we thought the remains were those of an Inuk woman.

As soon as the wind subsided towards the evening, we set out on another night of marathon paddling. We were blessed again with wildlife encounter. This time a grizzly bear was on its way across the lake at a point where this is six miles wide! It is amazing how they can do it. But since we were faster in our canoes, we could approach it to within 50 feet. The bear was obviously frightened and sometimes turned around growling at us. My bow paddler and I had a

camera and since it was almost dark and we needed to get closer in order to take a pic with flash we went into about 25 feet away.

That was too close! The bear turned around and in a flurry of water and loud growls it started to chase us. I didn't have to tell my bow-paddler to drop the camera and get his paddle going! It all happened totally automatically and we didn't stop paddling until we had put at least 100 feet between us. The others had a good laugh since they claimed the bear chased us for about 60 feet, but we kept on paddling for 300!

Once out of Armark Lake we came to the best angling site of the whole trip. Just when the lake turns into river there were loads of very large lake trout. It was shallow and we could see many 12-20 lb. fish buzzing around the canoes. We had a go and in 17 throws we hooked 17 fish and landed 13. We kept only two 10 pounders and left the others to grow bigger in case we should come back in a few years time.

The Armark is relatively shallow and of little interest for most of the way. The water turns murky because of silt, and most of the river is shallow with hardly any current. A few places it is fast flowing with small rapids, but many times they were too shallow to descend and we had to get out and drag or portage again. Once on the Armark we ran into our longest stretch of real bad weather. For nine days it kept drizzling, either rain or sleet and we had to battle the ever present northern wind. Every day we chose to paddle at night as long as this was possible. We got up at 2 am and made camp around 11 am when the wind became too strong again. The worst thing about this schedule was not getting up early but the cold. It was freezing at that time of the day. Ice covered our tents and we did not have enough fuel for a hot cup of soup or chocolate during the day. Out of an old tin of powdered milk we made a little oilstove with cooking oil as fuel. We managed to heat a good deal of water this way for a nice warm cup of chocolate while in the tents.

At a major unnamed and unmarked waterfall we caught a few big Arctic char (10-12 pounds). The meat was not as tasty and nice as the lake trout, perhaps because the char had already seen their best times and were either going to die or to return to the sea. But despite a very desolate landscape the place was crawling with bird life. Peregrine falcons were abundant, and we even spotted several couples of bald eagles. We also encountered the trips largest herd of muskox, 24 animals were grazing in a southern slope.

All along the Armark we could see Inuit settlements, stone rings, inukshuks, etc. The last day on Armark river was a breeze. We had to line down two unmarked rapids, and portaged another one, and strangely enough the strong wind turned into a southern wind. The last six miles of the river was like a lake and we went for sail all the way. When we came down to the delta of the Armark, we had a choice of following the main stream and going east around McTavish Point in the Arctic Ocean or try to make a short cut west of it along a little strip of water. The western route would cut short the route by 10 miles and more importantly, put us into a better position to cross the big Ogden Bay.

We took the chance and went west and was blessed with plenty of water and easy paddling. It was a trip through bird sanctuary and it was like the whole land area was made up of piles and piles of bird feces. A mile before the Arctic Ocean we went up on some rocky cliffs to have a view of the area. To our big surprise there were numerous old, possibly Inuit, stone house relics. They were beautifully made, some of them with decent floor made out of flat pieces of rocks. I don't know about the age of these houses, but they looked pretty ancient.

From the top of these relics we got our first view of the sea. Ice blocked the delta although not enough to prevent a canoe to go through. We went onto the



photo: Carl Traeholt

NOSE TO NOSE -- Mikkel Jungersen had a pretty good look at this large muskox bull on the Thelon River during his group's two month northern sojourn. Carl Traeholt noted the animal wasn't disturbed by Mikkel's presence. Can the same thing be said of Mikkel?

CANOEING WEBSITES

Here are a few new and interesting websites. Let us know of ones you have.

www.uwm.edu/Dept/MassComm/Olson/contents.htm

www.agt.net/public/gottfred/links.html

www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/Land/Geography/phys06.htm

www.canoefrontier.com

www.wcha.org/index.html

CHE-MUN

Founded in 1973 by Nick Nickels

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