

Project Cornerstone

Newsletter #16:

7 April, 2009 (Tuesday)

In Newsletter 14 I talked about the polar swim in the big Theseus tent and how Christie had blown everyone else out of the water with her sangfroid (literally) and her synchronized routine. A number of impressed people have inquired about her last name. I couldn't remember when I wrote the newsletter, but I asked around and found out that she is Christie Webster.

Tudor Davies, who was an officer attached to DREP at the time (1996?) and who participated in the big dip, sent me a few pictures.



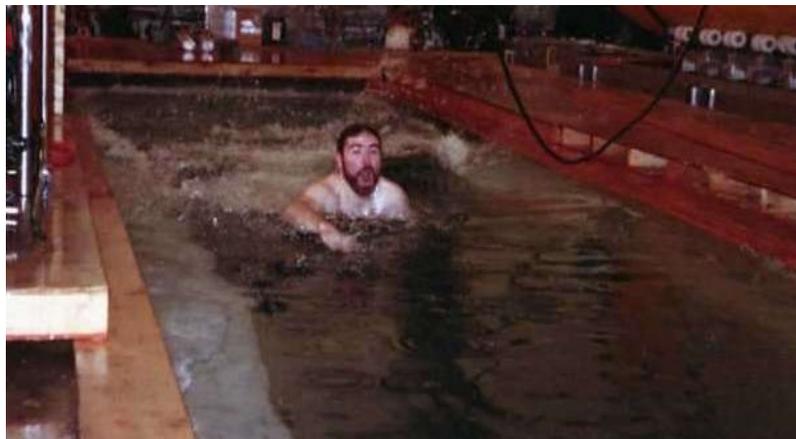
The one on the left shows Christie swimming the long ice-bound trough. The one on the right shows her doing her little routine. The smile still blows me away.

The picture below right shows Tudor, himself. His expression was more the norm. Thanks very much, Tudor; it takes guts to release a picture like that.

Now that the old news has been wrapped up, we can go on to the more pressing items.

Our schedule calls for us to leave for home on the military Hercules aircraft tomorrow. I was busy hauling my bags down to the so-called Haps Ramp, the place where the check-in baggage is left, when I ran into the station manager. "Where are you going?" he said. When I gave him my destination he said, "Haven't you heard that there is a 24-hour delay?" Apparently, he had just received an email giving him the news and saying that the Hercules had not left.

So, that's it. We are delayed by 24 hours – at least. Often a delay like this is caused by problems with an aircraft, and they (and we) have no guarantee that it will be fixed by flight



time tomorrow. Everyone took the news in stride, and we are all waiting very patiently. And, if you believe that, I've got a bridge – cheap – just for you. As someone said, amongst the hubbub, "There's nothing like a delay to generate conversation." We are now in the process of changing airline tickets, hotel reservations, and so forth, and we are wondering whether we will have to do it all again tomorrow.

We made good use of the extra time. The final Octagon tent came down today, and it is bundled up ready to go out to the big camp that will be built north of Greenland. The only thing still down at the AUV camp is the hole cover. For safety's sake we are waiting another day before we expose the ice hole. The ice will be thick enough by then that no-one will accidentally fall through.

Although we are quite short of gasoline, we are essentially finished the trip.

Moreover, there is still about a barrel of mixed gasoline, which is suitable for the smaller machines, primarily the old Elans. Six of the guys went out on a reconnaissance – i.e, a little voyage of discovery. Alex, Peter, Ron, Chris, Darrell and Alban went out to Colan Bay



and Cape Woollen and got a taste of the stark and beautiful scenery. (The map in Newsletter 2 contains a map that shows Cape Woollen.) They came back happy but fairly tired after riding an Elan all that way.

The final suggestions for AUV names are as follows.

Bob and Doug McKenzie. You could then name your base camp the Kanadian Korner.

what about North and South. Like:

Cape Columbia - Canada's most northerly point of land, not too far from Alert

Point Pelee - Canada's most southerly point of land

Ian and Sylvia

Beluga and Nanook

Kamik and Paluk (boot and sock in Cree; I'd have to verify the spelling of Paluk).

Brian and Celine (Canadian male and female; east and west; English and French; recognizable/iconic, even without the last names)

Knossus and Minotaur

Pictures today were by Tudor Davies and Peter King

Best Wishes, Ron Verrall.

We'd like to hear from you. (ronverrall@gmail.com)

You can download any newsletters you may have missed. Go to:
http://a76.dk/expeditions_uk/spring_2009/index.html#cornerstone