

# Field report from the journey to Northeast Greenland in the summer 2004

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*The Bass Rock houses.*

*The easily recognisable octagonal cabins on Bass Rock, erected in 1901 by the Baldwin-Ziegler expedition. One of the houses is still in amazingly good condition and as such the oldest still usable buildings in Northeast Greenland. Bass Rock was one of the approx. 100 sites surveyed by Nanok during the summer of 2004. Read more about the survey in this report.*

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[Danish version](#)

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## Introduction

The 14<sup>th</sup> field season of Nordøstgrønlands Kompagni Nanok has been carried through as planned.

This summer we continued the extensive project of survey, commenced in 2003, which includes a total, contemporary status of all, old cabins and stations in Northeast Greenland. In 2003 and 2004 we succeeded in surveying a total of approx. 200 sites, meaning that updated information about almost 2/3 of all sites of this type now is available. We plan to continue this work in 2005, a.o. in the

Dove Bugt area.

Material gathered during the summer of 2003 was passed on to the Grønlands Nationalmuseum and is now a valuable part of the museums considerable status of Greenlandic national heritage monuments.

In spite of this year's reduced stay in Greenland - from five to three weeks - we managed to carry out a complete program. This is partly due to favourable weather- and ice conditions, which allowed us to sail the area between Kong Oscar Fjord in the south and Haystack in the north relatively unhindered.

Nevertheless, the limited amount of drift ice causes the recent years coastal erosion to continue; this was especially noted along Hochstetter Forland, where the Ailsahytten [519] during the summer of 2004 has vanished into the sea.

It has, however, been most encouraging to experience how frequently the cabins and stations, restored by Nanok, are used by travellers on the Coast. This can be observed by numerous intros in the cabin logbooks and by stories told by e.g. Sirius men and scientists. A restored, old trapping station is often preferred as night shelter to a modern Sirius depot. Although the new cabins are very comfortable, they lack the fantastic, rustic atmosphere you find in some of the old buildings. Nanok wishes – as agreed with the Hjemmestyret – as soon as possible to resume restoration of selected cabins and stations.

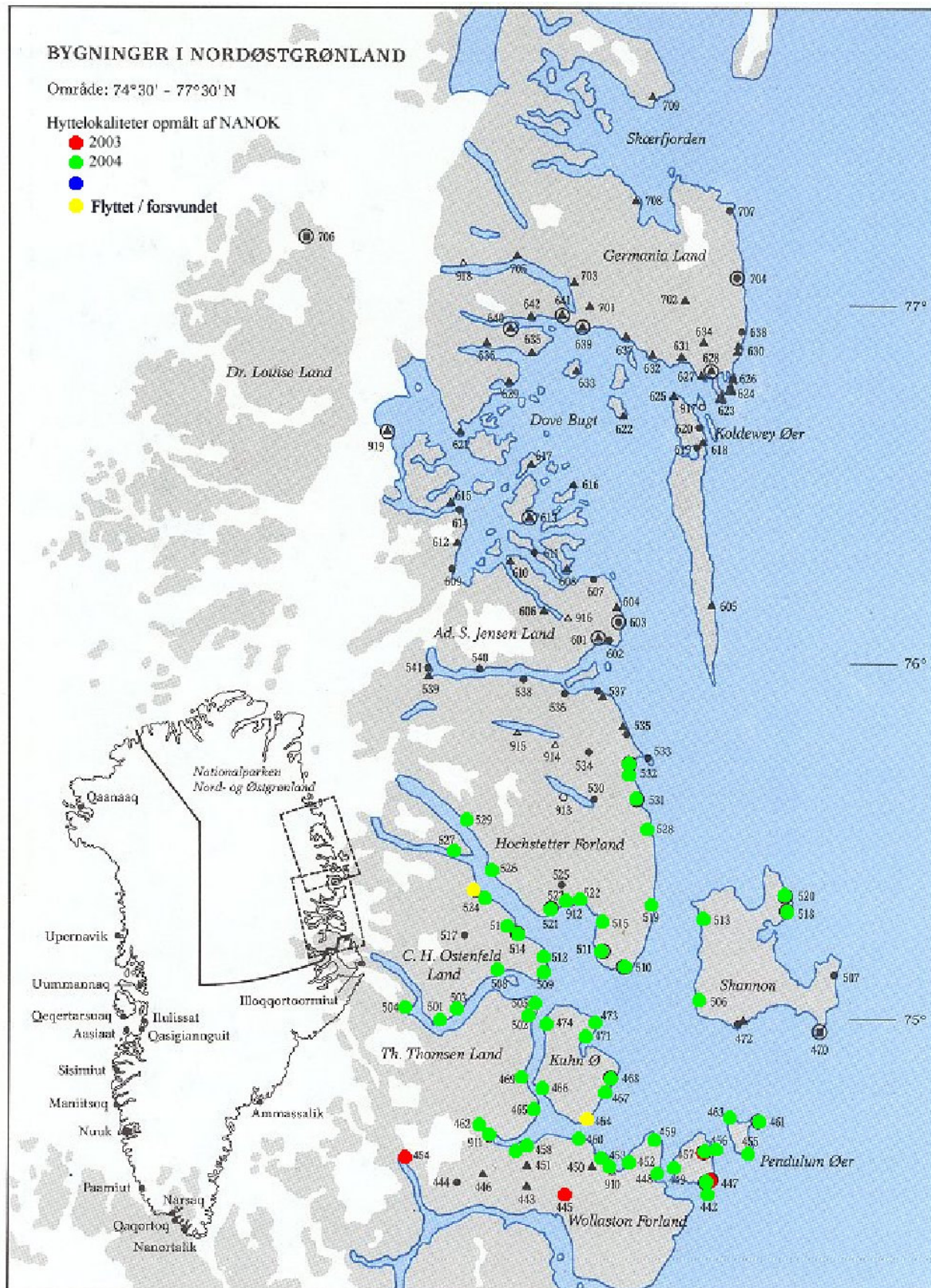
Occasionally we meet people who believes, that Nanok owns some of the cabins in Northeast Greenland, but it is not so; Nanok has no property in Greenland. Furthermore, we are convinced that all cabins and stations in the Northeast Greenland's Nationalpark should belong to the Grønlands Hjemmestyre. Nanok's interest in the old buildings consists solely of securing continuous maintenance of a selected part of them.

Finally, Nanok wishes to express warm thanks to our sponsor Aage V. Jensens Fonde for never failing trust and support and also to thank the large number of individuals who in their own way has supported or shown interest in our work. Also warm appreciation to our collaborators and expeditions and institutions, which have participated in making our work possible.

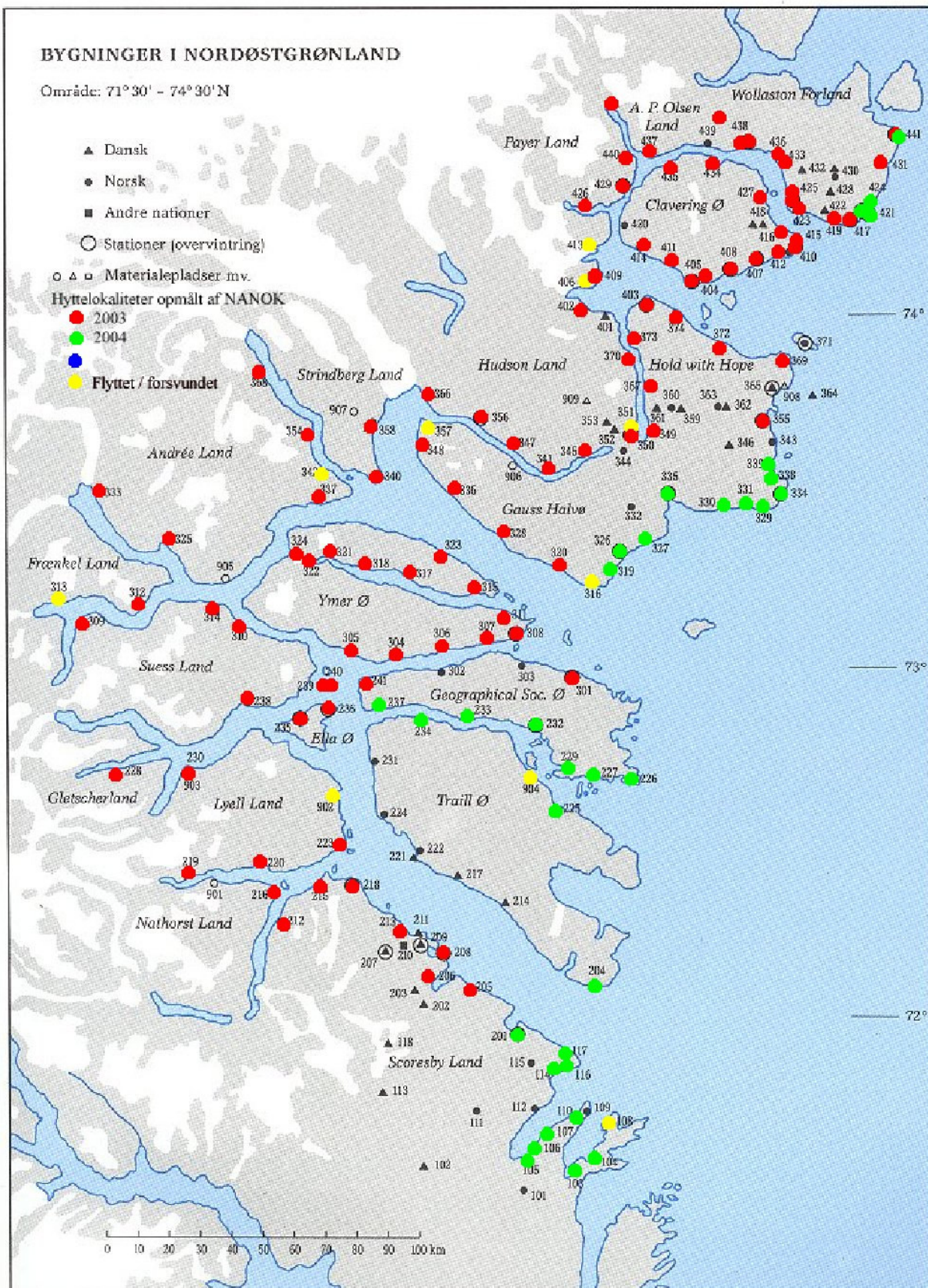
On behalf of Nanok

Peter Schmidt Mikkelsen

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*The two maps illustrate the extent of Nanok's work during the summers of 2003 and 2004. All sites marked with red or green, are cabins and stations visited and measured by Nanok's expedition teams. Sites marked with yellow are places, where buildings or remains of buildings were not to be found.*



## Field report for the North team 2004

### Task

The primary task for the North team was to survey and draw up a structural status of the cabins and stations in the navigable area between Daneborg in the south and Hochstetter Forland in the north, including Shannon and Pendulum Islands.

With Daneborg as point of departure and by means of a rubber boat, the team was to navigate the area in the extent possible. The recording was to be carried out by systematic digital photographing of the buildings, as well as ground plans, list of inventory and things left behind. All visited locations were also to be measured by GPS.



*The travelling route for the North team 2004. A total of 1.287 km was travelled by rubber boat.*

### The North team

The task was to be carried out by three persons: Erik Jochumsen, photographer, Søren Kristensen, student, and Peter Schmidt Mikkelsen from Nanok. All three are previous members of the Sirius Patrol.

### There and back again

At 10.40 a.m. on the 19th of July '04 we left Kastrup together with the South team. After spending the night in Akureyri we flew by Fokker 50 to Constable Pynt. After a short stay we split up with the South team and continued by Twin Otter to Mestersvig and spent the night here. The following day, July 21 and also by Twin Otter, we arrived at our destination, Daneborg.

The journey home started on 10<sup>th</sup> of August by Twin Otter, on which we returned from Daneborg to Mestersvig, and reunited with the South team. A few hours later a Fokker 50 flew us - and a number of other travellers - directly to Reykjavik, where we spent the night. The following day, August 11, at 12.45 p.m. we reached Kastrup as scheduled.

### **Clearing and departure**

Immediately after arriving at Daneborg on 21<sup>st</sup> of July, Erik and Søren continued by the same Twin Otter to Sirius' depot at Fligely Fjord to deposit 500 litres of petrol to be used later on for our rubber boat. The flying weather was not optimum, but despite low clouds and wind the capable pilots from Flugfélag Íslands managed to follow the coastline and to land in Fligely Fjord.

In the meantime, Peter started clearing Sandodden where we, according to practice, took lodgings. The cabin is in good condition, and we could immediately make use of the kitchen corner, which the North team 2003 had arranged in the renovated porch.

Due to the time pressure and the extensive program we decided to move on from Daneborg as quickly as possible. Gear and provisions were prepared and at midday on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, we headed north in Nanoks Humber rubber boat with its 40 HK engine. Well loaded, including 200 litres of petrol on "deck", the rubber boat lay solid on the fresh waves, we met en route to the first middle station, Germaniahavn [447-3]. The trip along the barren eastern coast of Wollaston Forland in misty, cloudy weather is no great experience. We were therefore pleased to reach Germaniahavn, which now is an excellent traveller's cabin, thanks to recent years renovation carried out by both Nanok and Sirius.



*The Humber rubber boat is a perfect means of transportation for the surveying project. Here landed at an ice floe in Ardencaple Fjord. From left: Peter and*

*Søren.*

### **Pendulum Øer**

The morning of July 23<sup>rd</sup> was windy and foggy. We therefore walked around the Germania Havn inlet to Vestre Havnenæs, where the foundation of one of the Koldewey-expedition's stone houses [447-1] from the wintering in 1869-70 can be seen. Since the old days, Sabine Ø and Germania Havn has been a central spot, and with open waters therefore often has been the gateway to Northeast Greenland. Eskimo ruins testify that it also was a good living area in the prehistoric period.

The weather changed, as we in the middle of the day returned from our walk. In the south Hvalros Ø emerged from the fog. The wind calmed, and we launched the rubber boat to find the cabin [442] on the southern side of the island. On our way back to Germaniahavn we saw that the clearing – as an extra bonus - continued towards the east. After a quick refuel we therefore headed across Pendulum Strædet to Lille Pendulum and Bass Rock. This fine evening trip ended an hour after midnight. The visit at the Baldwin-Ziegler expedition's houses [461] from 1901 and the burnt German weather station at Hansa Bugt was especially interesting.

### **Kuhn Ø and Fligely Fjord**

The next day, the 24<sup>th</sup> of July, it was time to relocate and head for Fligely Fjord. As we passed through the Clavering Strædet the sun broke through the mist and we enjoyed good weather as we stopped at Falkberget [448] and Kroneberghytten [449]. Later on, as we passed Kap Berlin, a light mist set in, and we discovered that Albrecht Bugt was blocked by drift ice. However, the ice floes left enough space to let us pass on to Sigurdsheim [468] on Kuhn Ø. From here we had no trouble in following the coast southwards and with a detour to Kap Schumacher [460-2] the Fligely depot was reached in fabulous evening sun.

The Fligely depot was hence our jumping-off station for the further activities. First, on July 25, a one-day trip to Lindeman Fjord and Svejstrup Dal followed by a three-day trip to Ardencaple Fjord.



*A couple of rarely visited cabins. Above: Kap Buchenau hytten [463] on Lille Pendulum. Below: Tomsborg [506] at Shannon.*

### **Ardencaple Fjord and Ny Jonsbu**

Early in the evening on July 26, after a day's journey of 150 km during which we had recorded the cabins in Fligely Fjord and Grandjean Fjord, we reached Ny Jonsbu. Heavy wind on July 27 hindered rubber boat navigation, and we needed a short break! While the wind was shaking the pipe, we enjoyed a day off as well as freshly baked buns and pancakes in the fine station.



The next day the wind had calmed and we surveyed the inner Ardencaple Fjord, Smalle Fjord and Brede Fjord.

The amazing Greenland sun was shining bright on the morning of July 29, and we left Ny Jonsbu to return to the Fligely depot. We met a polar bear, that curiously watched us as we measured Arnliotstua [509]. Having reached the Fligely depot we gave the house a thorough wash down in appreciation to Sirius for having lent it to us. The midnight sun was twinkling in the calm fjord, and we decided to move our base to station Nanok [510] on Hochstetter Forland. After less than two hours we reached Nanok around midnight without having seen any drift ice.



*The Ullahytten [508] at Grandjean Fjord with Ulla Ø in the background.*

### **Hochstetter Forland and Shannon**

The following seven days the fabulous Hochstetter station served as our base. During the summer of 1996 a Nanok team saved the house was from becoming a total ruin. A magnificent panorama view over the entire Hochstetter Bugt combined with lots of rustic east coast atmosphere has since turned the station into a popular place to stay the night for a.o. Sirius. In addition, it also provides good opportunity for baking outstanding buns or bread!

From Hochstetter we made three one-day trips. The first went to Peter Bugt, where we a.o. visited Kulhus [511] and the ruin of the old Jonsbu station [521]. Due to heavy wind from southwest, we

then had to wait two days, during which we observed how the sea is cutting into the sandy cliffs at Hochstetter Forland.



*The Hochstetter station [519] has again become a fine place for a day of rest; however, slowly but surely, the sea is working it's way closer to the house. Today, the distance from the house to the cliff is 16 meters.*

On August the 2<sup>nd</sup> the weather made it possible to navigate again: blue skies and calm. The eye and the course were set towards the east, against Shannon. By foot we had made a couple of scouting trips to Muschelbjerg and Kap Rink and knew that the wind had forced the drift ice towards the south coast of Shannon and that some ice was present north of Shannon. The question was therefore, how thick the ice was and which course it would take. We decided to make our first attempt south of Shannon. If the ice was blocking here, we would find a more open "backdoor" north of the island.

After a fine sail across the Hochstetter Strædet we landed at Tomsborg hytten [506] north of Kap Tramnitz. A kilometre off shore, we bumped into the ice. It was spreading massively but quickly southwards, so when a "road" appeared along the coast, we decided to make a go for it – supervised by a party of walrus, sunbathing on the shore. The road, however, soon closed and we chose to turn, get out of the drift ice and take the northern route in stead.



*One of the absolute prime experiences this summer was the visit at Alabamahuset [518] at Shannon. From left: Erik, Søren and Peter.*

Here we had more luck with the ice and without any trouble, we reached both Kap Sussi [520] and Alabamahuset [518]. It was a fantastic experience to visit these historic places, and – given the time and the right situation - we could easily have spent many hours there. The plan was to go to Sirius' Kap Pansch depot, but it turned out that ice in the small, northern bay blocked the landing, and as fog and wind started to come on we paid our respect to the weather gods for now. We set course for Hochstetter and it was great to return at 02.00 a.m. after a 240 km's day, filled with memorable events.



*The lonely grave of Lieutenant Gerhard Zacher at Kap Sussi [520] on Shannon.*

*The German soldier was killed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1944 by an attacking force from Nordøstgrønlands Slædepatrulje. During the winter of 1991-92 the Slædepatruljen Sirius has replaced the original cross with a new, white one.*

The next day we re-evaluated our options. The south coast of Shannon had to wait, but in stead we had time and opportunity to push our boundary further north. This resulted, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August, in a fine trip to Mønstedhus [532] – or rather "Ny Mønstedhus" – and to Ottostrand [531], which is an obvious subject for restoration by Nanok in the future.



*Søren is measuring of Ottostrand [531], a Norwegian trapping station, erected in 1932. The station is decaying and is as such an obvious subject for a future restoration by Nanok, especially bearing in mind, that the sea took Mønstedhus in 2002.*



*Ottostrand [531].*

### **Albrecht Bugt and the way home via Kap Herschell**

The original plan was that we should be returning on Sandodden, the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, and on August 5 we were able to gather all our gear and empty petrol drums and head south for the Sirius depot at Albrecht Bugt. All the drift ice from July 24 had vanished.

On August 6 we closed our survey, as we sailed south for Kap Herschell, where we had decided to spend our last day of rest. It was fantastic to experience how the old station has revived from the ruins, thanks to the hard work carried out by Ivar Ytreland and his Nanok team in the summer of 2002. All that is lacking is a new coal stove and some fresh paint.



*Erik with freshly baked buns are a natural element of a good day of rest.*

## Closure

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, carrying our empty petrol drums, we sailed the final kilometres to Sandodden where we dismantled and made ready for the home journey.

In 18 days we had visited 67 cabins and stations. We had covered approx. 1.287 km in rubber boat and spent 600 litres of petrol i.e. 2,1 km/litre. The weather had been variable, but fit however, well in to our program with wind and waves on our days of rest.

The ice conditions turned out to be almost optimum. Practically no compact ice and only sporadic gatherings of drift ice. It was only at the southern coast of Shannon we had to turn back without any success.

During our survey we had seen a large number of animals: polar bears, arctic foxes, walruses, hundreds of seals, many flocks of muskox and a lot of various birds.

The equipment had functioned satisfactorily and we had had no accidents. We were more than pleased!

The North team sends warm thanks and regards to Sirius, to Forsvarets Vagt Mestersvig and to

Søren Rysgaard & team for loan, help and pleasant fellowship.

Erik, Søren and Peter.



*Back at Daneborg. From left: Erik, Søren and Peter.*

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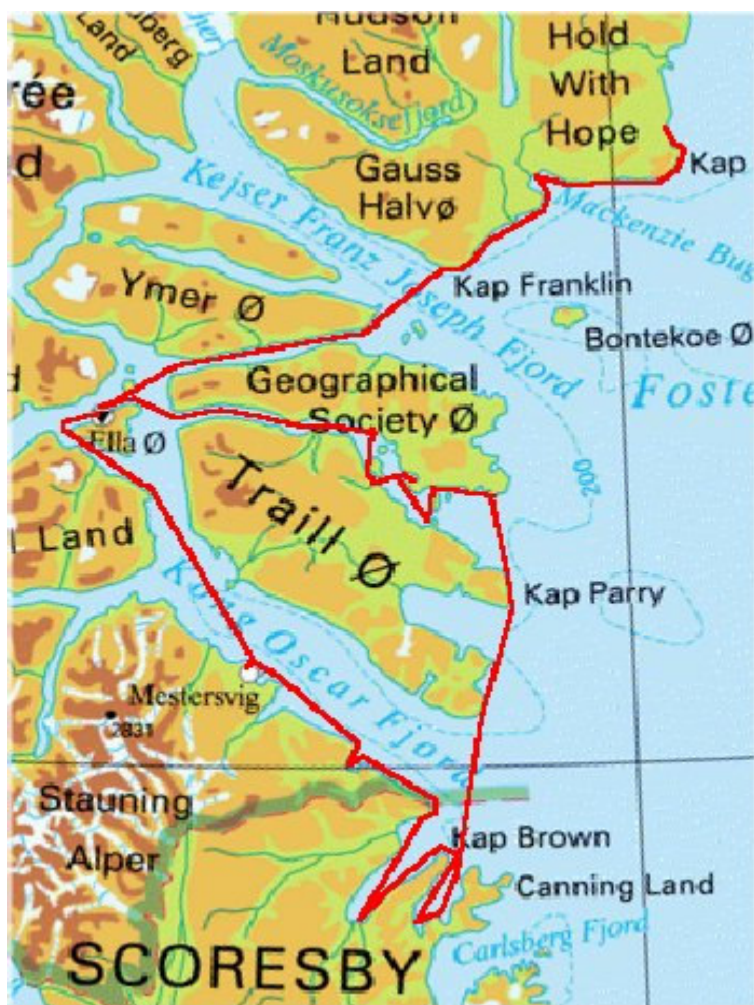
## Field report for the South team 2004

The South team from Nanok had two main tasks this summer:

1. To continue the recording of trapping stations and cabins in the area from Nathorst Fjord in the south to Hold with Hope in the north.
2. To carry out a larger modification of the cutter, Agsut.

These tasks were given to Lars Bønding, 34, structural engineer, Jesper Stentoft, engineer and Ole Schirmer Nielsen, 29, plumber. All three are previous member of Sirius from class 1996 and 1997 respectively.





*The route for the South team 2004. A total of 924 km was covered with the cutter Agsut.*

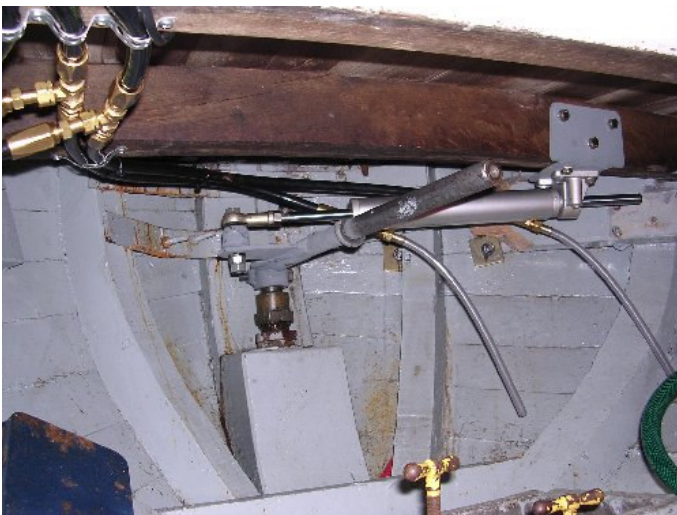


*The South team 2004. From left: Lars, Jesper and Ole.*

On Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2004 the North team and we left Kastrup. After one night in Akureyri we continued by Fokker 50 to Constable Pynt. In the late afternoon we arrived at Ella Ø by Twin Otter. We had an intermediate landing in Mestersvig, where we loaded goods, shipped by C-130 Hercules. Around 8 p.m. we landed on Ella Ø, and were welcomed by the Chief of Sirius, Per, class 2001.

Over the evening Agsut was stripped of her tarpaulins. We observed that the wood had shrunk quite a bit during the last year. The humidity in the wood had been better preserved during the previous winters, when the cutter had been stored in the helicopter hangar at Mestersvig than this winter's outdoor stay at Ella Ø.

The following days Agsut was cleared for navigation. The cutter was due for a larger modification, the purpose of which was to make her more easy to manoeuvre and to increase safety during navigation. Apart from changing the oil and filters Agsut was mounted with: a hydraulic steering system, an echo sounder, a holder for emergency engine, combined gear/gas handle and frost proof battery.



*The hydraulic steering system is mounted.*



*Outer steering wheel on the wheel house.*

### **The first trip**

On Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> of July Agsut was launched and around Sunday noon we set out for Myggbukta. The weather was fine and Agsut lay steadily. The goal on this first trip was the trapping station on Kap Humboldt. However, plans are made to be changed. In the evening we sailed into very bad weather with rain, huge waves and 20 knot in the face. We found a relatively calm cove, in which we anchored. We soon realised that Agsut was a poor place to spend the night. Due to dry wood, it was dripping practically everywhere, so we sailed the boat ashore to spend the night here. The next morning the weather was calmer, so we headed for Humboldt once more. Around midday – in cloudy and rainy weather - we reached the station where we spent the rest of the day drying our wet gear. We also took a walk in the mountains to look at the ice conditions for our upcoming

journey towards Kap Franklin. They seemed promising.

On Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, while it was raining cats and dogs, we weighed the anchor and crossed the calm waters of Kejsler Franz Joseph Fjord. We searched the south side of Gauss Halvø but found no trace of Funkis [316], our primary goal for the day; but then, the cabin was supposedly taken by a stone slide in 1955.

About 1800 hours, we located and registered Franklin Strand [319] and concluded, that the weather was too bad for visiting more cabins. We headed directly for Myggbukta Station [335], which we reached late in the evening. Although it had rained, we had met no ice, and all in all the day's journey had been satisfactory.

### **Myggbukta**

Wednesday was spent on recording the cabins on the coast from Myggbukta via Kap Broer Ruys station [334] to Skandalen [339] north west of Kap Broer Ruys. We were somewhat anxious of this part, as none of us previously had sailed further than to Kap Franklin. However, the weather was at its best and not the least due to recent year's lack of ice, the trip went smoothly.

All that was found at the Kap Broer Ruys Station was a stack of boards, and we wondered that anyone would place a station on such an inhospitable location.



*The ruins of the Kap Broer Ruys station [334].*

Yet another night was spent at Myggbukta. During the recording of the station the following day, we discovered the reason for naming of this place was no coincidence, and pursued by mosquitoes we went on south towards Ella Ø. We looked for the Franklin-Huset [326], and eventually found the ruins of what used to be a trapping station. Only the ramparts – showing the shape of the house –

were left.

After a tremendously fine night passing Sofia Sund, we anchored at Ella Ø at 7.20 a.m. on July 30.

Agsut has sailed 396 km on her first journey, and we found a day of rest to be in order.

### **The second trip, Vega Sund**

After a rainy day of rest on Ella Ø, Agsut set out on another cruise. This time we were going through Vega Sund to sail along the outer coast of Traill Ø to Nathorst Fjord and Fleming fjord and from here passing Kong Oscar Fjord back to Ella Ø. A trip of approx. 550 km.

The first day in Vega Sund we visited three cabins and a single trapping station. We finished by recording Sverresborg [232] on the north side of the strait; an interesting station in tremendous need of a helping hand.



*Sverresborg [232].*

The next day we set out at 1300 hours in foggy, but fine weather. Our first goal was a site of building materials [904] on the south side of the strait. Having searched, both from Agsut and on land, we gave up and returned to the north side of the strait. Navigation on the low and rocky water at Scott Kelties Øer went swimmingly, thanks to our now echo sounder. The other cabins were easily found and we anchored for the night at Kap Mac Clintock Hytten [226].



*Navigating among ice floes along the outer c*

On Monday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August we started out with a recording of the Kap Mac Clintock hytten. The cabin was very moist, but nevertheless in good condition. At noon – with fine weather and calm water, we sailed southwards along the outer coast. After a brief stop at Kap Simpson hytten [204] we continues towards Fleming Fjord. Late in the evening on Tuesday, we found the ruins of the burnt down weather station Kap Biot [116]. The only evidence of the previous station, was a stack of rusty hoops and some old door hinges; the rest was consumed by the riverbed.

### **Fleming and Nathorst Fjord**

Tuesday and Wednesday were spent in Fleming Fjord and Nathorst Fjord. It rained both days, but there was only a small amount ice in the fjords.

In Fleming Fjord we rounded the Kap Brown house [107] a.o. It was somewhat annoying to see the bad condition of the house: the entire building is crooked and the floor is rotten.



*Kap Brown Huset [107].*

Due to the heavy rain and waves during the night, we found our boat under water the next morning. We managed to raise it, emptied the motor of salt water and were ready for a new sail.

Having recorded the cabins in both fjords, we turned the stem towards Mestersvig. Leaving Nathorst Fjord we met, however, heavy waves and looked for shelter in a cove. After a 5-hours wait the weather improved so that we could continue our trip. In fine weather and calm water and made a stop at the trapping station Villa [117]. The weather allowed us to enjoy toasted buns with Danish salami and canned shrimps on deck.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, at 4 a.m. we reached the ruins of Antartichavn Station [201].

Friday was a day of rest, spent in good company in Mestersvig. On Saturday we sailed Agsut to Ella Ø, heavily loaded with oil and fuel, that had been delivered by ship. Our last day at sea was enjoyed in the best possible weather – a fine closure of a good journey.

On Sunday we pulled Agsut ashore, cleaned the gear and packed it away for the winter. On Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, we left Ella Ø by Twin Otter.

### **Closure**

Even though the stay on the coast this year only lasted 3 weeks, a lot was accomplished. Agsut had 11 days of navigation and travelled a distance of 942 km. 34 sites were recorded – divided on 1 site of materials, 2 stations and 31 cabins.

Furthermore Agsut had a major technical overhaul and carried more than 750 litres of fuel and oil from Mestersvig to Ella Ø.

Almost all the old cabins in the South area have now been recorded. Only a few cabins in Kong Oscar Fjord and some cabins further in the land remain to be registered.

During Nanok's stay at both Ella Ø and in Mestersvig we were met by a bunch of kind and helpful Sirius men – a warm thanks to you all.

Lars, Ole and Jesper.



*Thank you for this summer!*

*The NANOK team on departing Mestersvig. From left: Lars Bønding, Jesper Mølbæk Stentoft, Ole Schirmer Nielsen, Søren Kristensen, Erik Jochumsen, and Peter Schmidt Mikkelsen.*

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## On Nanok

*Nordøstgrønlandsk Kompagni Nanok* (Nanok) is a private, non-profit organisation founded in 1992 upon the former *Østgrønlandsk Fangstkompani Nanok A/S*, founded in 1929.

The aim of Nanok is a.o. *to contribute to spreading knowledge of Nordøstgrønland and its culture history and to contribute in securing the cultural monuments and buildings in the area.*

Nanok consists of a management of seven persons. These are Peter Schmidt Mikkelsen (dir.), Jens

Erik Schultz, Tommy Pedersen, Søren Andersen, Martin Reenberg, Palle V. Norit, and Søren Rysgaard. Besides the management a number of individual persons participate actively in Nanoks projects. All work in Nanok is voluntary and unpaid.

Each summer Nanok sends an expedition of typically 5-10 persons divided on 2-3 teams to work in Northeast Greenland for 3 to 5 weeks. Result of this work is documented and published in a field report. The management chooses the expedition participants.

In order to perform its tasks, Nanok controls a considerable amount of expedition equipment; However, Nanok possesses no property in Greenland.

Aage V. Jensens Fonde finances Nanoks projects. The organisation is furthermore supported by a number of private contributors. Among Nanoks partners are a.o. Slædepatruljen Sirius, Forsvarets Vagt Mestersvig, Patruljetjenesten Nord- og Nordøstgrønland, Grønlands Hjemmestyre, Grønlands Nationalmuseum, Royal Arctic Line, Dansk Polarcenter, Flugfélag Islands and Danmarks Miljøundersøgelser.

Nanok has a great network and is equally represented in several forum, including "*Arbejdsgruppen til koordinering af forskningsindsatsen i Nordøstgrønland*".

Since 1991 Nanok has restored approx. 20 culture historic buildings and has for this effort gained considerable recognition from a.o. Grønlands Hjemmestyre and Grønlands Nationalmuseum.

Encouraged by Grønlands Hjemmestyre Nanok in 2003 has initiated a new structural survey of all cultural-historical cabins and stations in Northeast Greenland. This work will run for a period of 3 to 4 years. The records are available free of charge for Grønlands Nationalmuseum.

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List over Northeast Greenland stations repaired by Nanok 1991 - 2004:

No.	Name	Repaired year
514	Ny Jonsbu	1995
510	Hochstetter	1996, 1998
447	Germaniahavn	1999
438	Zackenbergt	1991, 1992
429	Moskusheimen	1994
425	Sandodden / Karina	1994 - 2000
417	Kap Herschell	2002
405	Eskimonæs	1998
356	Hoelsbu	1999, 2000
350	Loch Fyne	1993
340	Kap Ovibos hytten	2000
335	Myggbukta	1999



324	Varghytten	2002
308	Kap Humboldt	1997
224-2	Kongeborgen	2001
222	Holm Bugt hytten	2001
218	Kap Peterséns	1998
201	Antarctichavn	2001 (demolished by avalanch in 2002)

Source: Station numbers and -names including historical information referred to:

Peter Schmidt Mikkelsen: [Nordøstgrønland 1908-60, fangstmandsperionen](#). Aschehoug 2001.



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### North East Greenland Company NANOK

Further information about Nanok and North East Greenland can be found at [NANOKs homepage](#)

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This page was updated: 29 August 2004