

Field report from the journey to Northeast Greenland in the summer 2001



Photo: The Antartichavn Station was restored by Nanok, Summer 2001.

[English version](#)

INTRODUCTION

One more Nanok season, number 11 in a row, has closed with a good result.

When planning our activities for the summer 2001, we intended sending three teams to the National Park, namely one team to the Kong Oscar Fjord district, one team to Kap Herschell on Wollaston Foreland, and a team to Kap Harald Moltke in Peary Land.

Due to unexpected circumstances in the spring 2001, the team for Kap Herschell had to be cancelled at a late stage. This task is now instead scheduled for 2002.

The two other plans were accomplished as planned, and an account of these can be read in this report.

During the years 2000 and 2001 different steps have been taken which in the course of time may be expected to have an influence on the activities of Nanok.

Initiated by the Environment and Nature Directorate under the Greenland Home Rule, a "Status report for the National Park/ The Biosphere reservation in North and East

Greenland" has been produced in 2000-2001. As one participant in the National Park, Nanok has been able to contribute substantially to the report, which partly presents the state of affairs and partly points to circumstances which need clarification. So the report can be said to form a good foundation for revising the Ministerial Order for the National Park, and for the comprehensive planning of the future of the National Park.

One point to be clarified is how old historic huts and stations can be an asset to future activities in the National Park. It has been shown by Nanok that the old buildings, when well preserved, are of considerable usefulness for a number of users, such as scientists, the

sledge patrol, and sports expeditions. Since it is neither realistic nor appropriate to maintain all of the buildings, a general plan, which meets all future needs, is called for.

To this end a task group was formed in June 2000, with the participation of Nanok.

It was a great helping hand to Nanok when, in the fall 2000, The Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation offered substantial support to our work for a given period of time. Huts and stations are considered by the Foundation an important asset to scientific work in the National Park, since buildings repaired by Nanok are useful as field stations for scientists. One example is the "Holm Bugt Hut" (see p.7), which was repaired by Nanok this year, for just that purpose.

Nanok wishes to thank our sponsor The Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation for the support, and we also wish to thank the long list of private persons, who have supported us and shown interest in our work. A warm thank also to our partners, expeditions and institutions that have contributed in making our work possible.

For Nanok

Peter Schmidt Mikkelsen

Field report for the South Team

The south team this year consisted of: Lars Koch Andersen, Jannik Berntsen, Jens Chr. Gotfredsen (Goffi), Jesper Graae, Wagn Kromann, Niels Lindegaard and Martin Reenberg.

The primary task was renovation of the station "Antarctichavn" [201] and the huts "Holm Bugt" [222], "Kongeborgen" [224-2] and "Kap Mæchel" [216]. The secondary task was to check on the condition of the stations "Sverresborg" [232] in Vega Sund and "Laplace" [301] on the north side of Geographical Society Island.

Five of the team members arrived in Iceland by plane on 22 July. Wagn had arrived three weeks earlier to work as a handyman in Mestersvig (MVG). Jannik came up on 5 august. After an overnight stay in Akureyri we arrived on schedule at MVG on 23 July at 11.30 am. We had the usual fine reception by both the PNG and the DPC people. We took lodgings at "Grand Hotel" and were allowed to use the kitchen in the "Millionærbarakken", furnished with both a gas stove and running water - a great advantage compared to the cooking on a primus stove on the steps in front of the Grand Hotel.

Again this year we received great helpfulness from the MVG people whenever we needed a vehicle for the transport to Nyhavn and the heli-hanger for making ready the "Agsut".

After Lars had changed the oil on engine and gearbox and changed the filters, Poul (Ipsen) on 25 July made a perfect launch of "Agsut". Materials, tools, provisions and personal gear were loaded, and we departed for Antarctichavn at 15.30, arriving at 20.30 after a fine trip.



Antarctichavn at arrival. The station was in a poor state. The porch had collapsed. All inventory had to be removed for the renovation to begin.

Antarctichavn is the station where the well-known Norwegian writer and scientist, Helge Ingstad (who died in 2001, 101 years old), resided as "sysselmand" (comparable to a chief administrative officer), from 1932 to 1933 - the year when the International court in The Hague ruled against Norway on all issues. Although Antarctichavn is a fine little station, it must be fair to say that it was a modest residence for the Norwegian "sysselmand" of "Eirik Raudes Land".

Three men were put ashore at Antarctichavn: Goffi, Lars and Jesper. The three others took an overnight stay and sailed off next morning on 26 July, bound for Holm Bugt, intending to gain an overview of needed materials there.



The restoration of Antarctichavn is well under way. The porch has been rebuilt.

The Antarctichavn team started out with the station, which was in a very poor condition. A lot of carpentering was done. Rot was widespread, especially under the turfs. The old stove was taken out and replaced by one of Nanok's newly renovated stoves. The stove, a load of 250 kg, had been brought out during last winter from MVG on a snow scooter by the "tawny owls" (the MVG crew). On rollers and lifting bars and by a lot of muscle power it came in place. The collapsed porch was resurrected, but we were short of boards for walls. Many odd things from the trapper period were found, and we tried to recreate the atmosphere by putting up old things, in the workshop and outside, old sledge parts and worn skis being lashed on top of one of the wind-swept sheds.



The new stove, weighing 250 kg, is rolled in.

We had many fine experiences. Waking up one morning we saw a grand old musk ox drinking off the seawater, then slowly strolling up the hills and lying down in a snowdrift to cool off in the hot summer heat.

The boat team, departing from Antartichavn on 26 July, had to give up going to Holm Bugt and returned to Nyhavn, since a compact belt of ice from Menander's Islands and across the fjord barred the passage.

In Nyhavn further materials were loaded. The day after we had an ice report from a helicopter, announcing free passage around the ice, and we started for Holm Bay, arriving first thing in the afternoon after a good trip - with a lot of seals basking on the ice in the sun.

"Karupelv Valley Project" has its base here, but there was nobody home in camp. A message said that they were on a long trip and would be back at about 10 p.m. We unloaded 10 rolls of felt, and left a message that we would return later. From there we sailed along Traill Island to "Bådhytten" (Polyppen) - another of Wagn's old boats from his time with Lauge Koch. "Bådhytten (The Boat Hut) is in a poor condition and also it sits in a rather uncharming terrain. Returned to Nyhavn.

Next morning, after loading more materials, we went for Antartichavn. We put up felt on the main house, a new chimney flue, made new shutters, dug out coal from the sand piles and much more. After a few busy days the main house was finished with new felt and a fine working stove - which was put to test with lovely buns and "stegt hvetekake" (fried wheat cake) - as Karlsbak and Aambak wrote in their diary 15 August 1930.



After some busy days the main house was ready with new felt and a well-functioning stove, which was tested with lovely buns and "stekst hvetekake" (fried wheat cake).

Departed 31 July at 4 p.m. for Nyhavn. Were stopped by sea ice, drifting into the fjord at Kap Syenit. After some hours of waiting and shift of the tide, we got so much room that we could pass with Wagn as the skipper and Goffi as the ice pilot in the mast. The rest of the trip to Nyhavn went well.

That "Agsut" was not suitable for six persons at a time we had to realise. It was therefore decided that Martin and Niels stayed in MVG, while the other four went on to "Kongeborgen" and Ella Island.

"Kongeborgen" was renovated with new felt. Doors and windows repaired. The stove had to be discarded. The hut is now in good condition and suitable for an overnight stay for two persons.



"Kongeborgen" (King's Castle) was inspected and renovated with new felt. Door and window were repaired.

We went on to Ella Island, where we were received with great hospitality. After a fine day here "Agsut" returned to MVG - with a stop over at "Kap Peterséns".

Martin and Niels, in the meantime staying in "Henrik Friis' house" in Nyhavn, had been busy sorting out and discarding part of the old store in the depot. Also we had representative tasks - having visitors, both new and old friends, and a lot of coffee was boiled and occasionally a glass of "malaria medicine" was served.

On 6 August Jannik arrived after an uneventful trip via Iceland.

Since Agsut, as mentioned, was not suitable for 6- 7 persons, and the rest of the job could be managed by four persons, it was agreed that Wagn, Goffi and Lars should speed up their return home.

"Kista Arctica" arrived at MVG 7 August, bringing many things for Nanok, not least our new rubber boat with outboard engine. Next day we rigged boat, hauling-up cart and engine and made a test run. We helped unloading oil drums from "Kista Arctica".

9 August we left for Holm Bay. The hut was put up in 1932 by the Helge Ingstad expedition. For many years it has been used during the summertime by Dr. Benoit Sittler and his team as kitchen and "study". Dr. Sittler is the leader of the "Karupelv Valley Project", primarily studying lemmings, snow owls and foxes. The hut was in a very poor condition and very leaning. It was straightened up and given two layers of felt.



"The Holm Bay Hut" at arrival.



- and as it looked when we left it.

We made a new door and shutters. During our stay we were fairly spoiled and got acquainted with finer French gastronomy under the arctic sky. On Saturday night 11 August we had a housewarming party in the newly renovated hut. A 3-course dinner with odd French delicacies was served with delicious wine. Eight people together in about five square meters. Those were quite happy and content people taking leave next Sunday morning, where we departed for "Kap Mæchel" via "Kap Peterséns".



Niels, Jannik, Martin and Jesper at "The Holm Bay Hut".

Here we met a kayak expedition lead by Henrik Skjodhøj (Sirius man 98-00 and "tawny owl-to-be" in MVG). Arrived at "Kap Mæchel" in the evening in gloomy weather. The hut is in a fairly good shape. According to the cabin diary it got new felt by Sirius in 1995. Minor repairs were done. We had to move "Agsut" to a more calm anchorage to leeward of Arwidsson's Island.

Next morning we proceeded to Ella Island. A trip into Alpefjord was given up due to thick fog. As always we had a cordial welcome at Ella Island by the two Sirius people. Were invited to dinner and billeted in "Kokkens hus" (the chef's house). Next day was relaxation day, and by evening a further three Sirius guys arrived in the Sirius boat "Dorthe" and we spent a nice evening together.

In fine weather we proceeded on 15 August to "Sverresborg" in Vega Sound. The station has only been in use for one wintering in 1929 - 1930, since the exterior part of Vega Sound proved to be unfit for hunting purposes. The station is in bad shape, and it will take a lot of materials and probably the work of several seasons to restore it, but it is possible.



"Sverresborg". The Station is in a poor condition, and it will take many materials and most likely more season of work to restore them, but it is a possible task.

Departed next morning and had a fresh head wind through Vega Sound. Decided to drop the inspection of "Laplace" and to go to MVG instead for loading of some of the materials we received from "Kista Arctica", and proceed to Antartichavn for repair of the erected porch with boards and felt and the floor in the little radio room.

We spent the night at Kap Peterséns. It was nice to revisit the station, which is still in good shape. It is used frequently, and there were a lot of compliments to Nanok in the station diary.

Arrived at Antartichavn 18 August 8.30 p.m. after a rough ride against wind and sea, but we found lee in the bay. The next day we covered the porch with boards and felt.

21 August we got a strong wind right into the bay. "Agsut" began to drift on the anchor, and Jannik, who slept alone on board needed assistance. Jesper came out in the rubber boat and the anchor was taken. Only 36 hours later they returned. They had to keep the ship going against the waves until the wind slackened and they found a place where the anchor could hold. Getting ashore in their survival suits they needed food and sleep. We then held an anchor-watch from the shore, ready for a quick turnout if the ship moved.

During the night of 23 August the Norwegian "quest expedition" in m/s "Fogo Isle" arrived and anchored in the bay. It carried 40 passengers on a trip to Svalbard, Northeast Greenland and Jan Mayen. Unfortunately the weather was still bad the next morning with heavy surf on the shore. After many futile attempts to land the passengers in the rubber boats, it was given up, but suddenly

a big rubber boat approached with four people in survival suits. They flung themselves into the surf and came ashore. They turned out to be the old Norwegian trapper Otto Lapstun and his friend Monica Heiberg, together with a Norwegian TV photographer and 1st officer of the engines.

It was a great experience to witness Otto's reunion with his old station. He lived in Antartichavn for several periods in the 1950ies. Again many laurels were given to Nanok for the work done on the coast. After a while with talk and tales of old times it was time to take leave of our guests. Fitted with their suits they waded into the surf, got in the boat and on board the "Fogo Isle".

The weather improved a bit and we decided to try to get to MVG. Fitted with our suits all four came onboard "Agsut", only the gear got a little wet. Coming out of Kong Oscars Fjord the weather improved - and on long smooth waves from the Atlantic we headed for Nyhavn, where we anchored by midnight.



Antartichavn. From left: Jesper, Lars, Jens Chr., Martin, Niels, Wagn

The next days were spent taking "Agsut" on shore and rig it down. Kristian Nevers (departing chief of Sirius/Daneborg) handled the tractor and the boat wagon with a safe hand. Jesper continued the work at the depot, which now looks like a well-assorted supermarket. "Agsut" is now safely placed in the helicopter hanger.

On 27 August at 6.30 p.m. the course was set for home with Fokker 50 to Reykjavik, with a short interval in Akureyri and an overnight stay in Reykjavik. On 28 August we arrived on schedule in Kastrup at 1.00 p.m.

We are looking back on a successful and eventful season in the Kong Oscars Fjord district, and we wish to thank the people at MVG and Ella Island for their help, support and hospitality. They have to a great extent contributed to a fine summer.

Lars Kock Andersen - Jannik W. Berntsen - Jens Chr Gotfredsen - Jesper Graae - Wagn Kromann - Niels Lindegaard - Martin Reenberg.

The Peary Land Expedition 2001

In July 2001 a Nanok team paid a visit to the two arctic scientific stations at Jørgen Brønlund Fjord in Peary Land: Kap Moltke and Brønlundhus.

Both stations have been built on the initiative of Eigil Knuth, and have been the bases of many scientific expeditions - in the case of Brønlundhus since it in 1948 was erected by an "air lift" of Catalina airplanes from the base at Zackenberg, some thousand kilometres to the south.

The Kap Moltke station was put up later, when the natural airstrip east of the mouth of Jørgen Brønlund Fjord was put into use. The stations are 10 km. apart on opposite sides of the fjord, and the connection between them is therefore during the summer by boat, and dependant on ice conditions.

Since the death of Eigil Knuth in 1996 the stations have been administered by the Peary Land Foundation. After agreement with the committee Nanok undertook the task of making repairs and maintenance of the buildings and producing a status report.

The Nanok team was accompanied by the director of the Arctic Institute Leif Vanggaard, and professor Gert Steen Mogensen, from the Botanic Museum, Univ. of Copenhagen. Each of them respectively has a historic and scientific project based in the region.

We found both stations with adjacent buildings in a reasonably good condition, and we made minor repairs and exterior maintenance with paint and felt.

The natural airstrip at Kap Moltke was in good condition when dry, and could render service to a Hercules plane, as often done before.



"Moltkehus" at Kap Harald Moltke.



"Brønlundhus"

Brønlundhus can today be characterised as a museum, giving account of an important period in the history of arctic science in the last half of the last century. The many artefacts today constitute a historic collection, and it is Nanok's proposition to the committee of the Peary Land Foundation that house and artefacts be preserved as such.



Kap Harald Moltke. The building is levelled.



Kap Harald Moltke. The guesthouse is painted.

Our transport to and from Station Nord was by the Royal Danish Air Force, and from here by rented a Twin Otter to and from Kap Moltke.

On station Nord our stay was prolonged by bad weather with snow, but our visit was a pleasure thanks to the personnel, whom we wish to thank for their kindness and helpfulness.



From left: Jens, Erik, Gert, Leif, Tommy, Helle, Søren, Jette

Søren Andersen - Jette Bøgsted - Erik Jensen - Helle Mogensen - Tommy Pedersen – Jens Erik Schultz.

List over North East Greenland stations repaired by Nanok 1991 - 2001:

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
405	Eskimonæs	1998
356	Hoelsbu	1999, 2000

350	Loch Fyne	1993
340	Kap Ovibos hytten	2000
335	Myggbukta	1999
308	Kap Humboldt	1997
224-2	Kongeborgen	2001
222	Holm Bugt hytten	2001
218	Kap Peterséns	1998
201	Antarctichavn	2001

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

Peter Schmidt Mikkelsen: [Nordøstgrønland 1908-60, fangstmandsperionen](#). Dansk Polarcenter 1994. Aschehoug 2001.



North East Greenland Company NANOK

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

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