

The Arctic Arc

Celebrating IPY 2007-08: An Arctic Adventure in Support of Polar Science

February 2007 – June 2007

Alain Hubert - Dixie Dansercoer

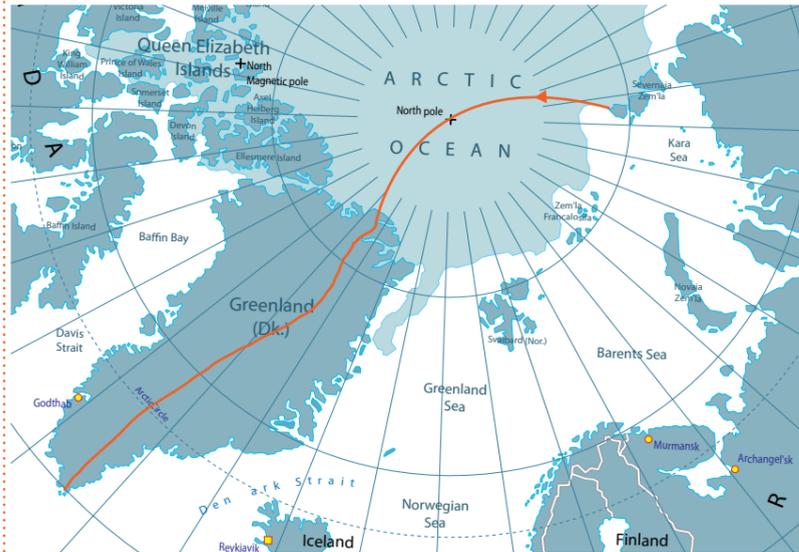


The Challenge

At the beginning of the International Polar Year in March 2007, a massive international collaborative research effort is to be launched in the Polar Regions. To be a part of this event, which occurs only every 50 years, from February 2007 Alain Hubert and Dixie Dansercoer will attempt a new style of Polar Expedition: a crossing of the Arctic from Siberia to Greenland. This feat, linking land to land, Siberian peoples to the Inuit people, Russia to Greenland, has never before been attempted.

The crossing will begin in the Severnaya Zemlya archipelago in the Russian Arctic, and will pass, via the North Pole, to the northernmost point of Greenland, from where it will continue southwards across the ice cap to Narssarsuaq, at the southernmost tip of Greenland.

The planned route arching over the Arctic Ocean and Greenland is approximately 4300 km.



Arctic Climate Change

Learning through Adventure

In keeping with the previous polar expeditions organised by Alain Hubert, this traverse will serve to focus attention on research in the high latitudes, with particular emphasis on the Arctic at a time when the international scientific community is putting together an integrated Arctic Ocean Observing System to study the early signs of a global change on this critical region.

Alain Hubert and Dixie Dansercoer will be travelling through the Arctic for four months, and will be well placed to participate in the observation activities being coordinated around this time. The Arctic Ocean is the ideal place on Earth to see the signs of early warming. The Arctic ice pack in particular has been significantly diminished in thickness over the last decade. The true extent of the loss of ice has still to be ascertained. The Greenland ice cap is also experiencing accelerated change.

As they have undertaken to carry out various observation and monitoring tasks (including measuring the thickness of the ice along the route), Alain and Dixie will be able to participate in an international research effort, while experiencing at first-hand the progressive and ineluctable decline in the pack ice.



The Expedition

Until now, major crossings of the Arctic begin from Cape Arktishewski in Siberia, and end at Ellesmere island (see map), a distance of approximately 1700 kilometres. The trajectory envisaged by Alain Hubert is significantly longer, ending at the southernmost tip of Greenland: approximately 4300 km. A comparable feat has never been undertaken before in the Arctic.

The expedition will start in February 2007, and is expected to last until June 2007. The team will be on the ice, leaving from the Severnaya Zemlya Archipelago (at N80°30' E), and will (if all goes according to plan) arrive at Narssarsuaq (N60° W) one hundred and ten days later.



Progress will be maintained following the classic practise for the Arctic ice pack. Each team member will be pulling a sledge, which, initially, will weigh about 130 kilos. The sledges have a certain singularity in that they have been conceived of and developed by Alain Hubert and his team to withstand the shocks that are a part of moving over a chaotic glacial environment. The sledges will also serve as amphibious craft, able to cross open water, of which there is an ever-increasing incidence.

Expedition materials, Polar equipment, food and other items have been subjected to careful scrutiny and refined to meet daily needs. The expedition will encounter numerous difficulties along the route: not least is the cold, compounded by the wind chill, the instability of the ice, massive compression ridges, open water, which increasingly punctuates the route as global warming continues. To this add the eternal fear of falling into the freezing waters, days of bad weather and white out.



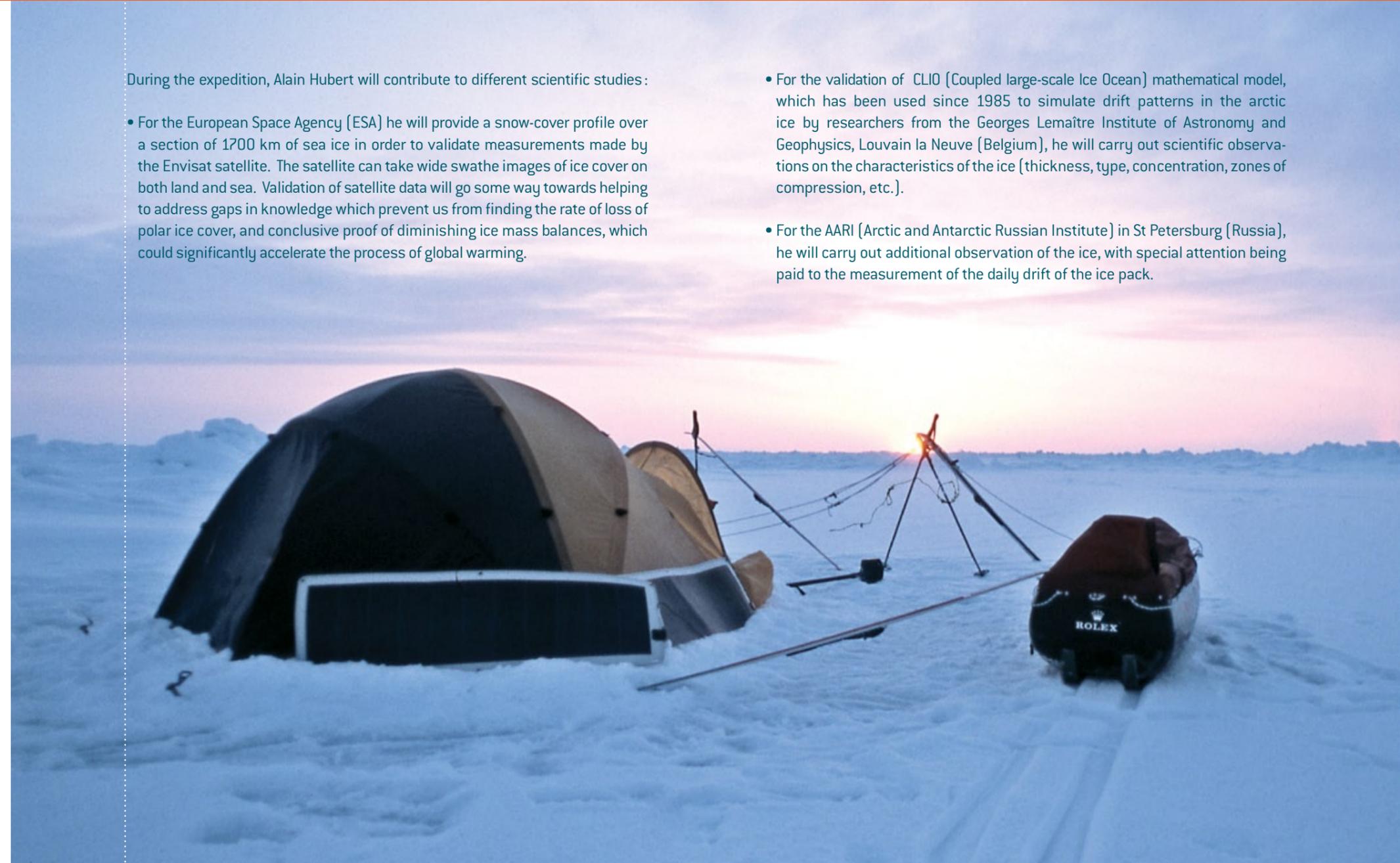
The Science

During the expedition, Alain Hubert will contribute to different scientific studies:

- For the European Space Agency (ESA) he will provide a snow-cover profile over a section of 1700 km of sea ice in order to validate measurements made by the Envisat satellite. The satellite can take wide swathe images of ice cover on both land and sea. Validation of satellite data will go some way towards helping to address gaps in knowledge which prevent us from finding the rate of loss of polar ice cover, and conclusive proof of diminishing ice mass balances, which could significantly accelerate the process of global warming.

- For the validation of CLIO (Coupled large-scale Ice Ocean) mathematical model, which has been used since 1985 to simulate drift patterns in the arctic ice by researchers from the Georges Lemaître Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics, Louvain la Neuve (Belgium), he will carry out scientific observations on the characteristics of the ice (thickness, type, concentration, zones of compression, etc.).

- For the AARI (Arctic and Antarctic Russian Institute) in St Petersburg (Russia), he will carry out additional observation of the ice, with special attention being paid to the measurement of the daily drift of the ice pack.



The Team

Alain Hubert, Expedition leader

53 years old, explorer, civil engineer, entrepreneur and mountain guide (UIAGM). Public speaker, good-will Ambassador for UNICEF, founder and Chairman of the International Polar Foundation. "Georges Lemaître International Prize", for services to science, 2003.

Initiator of the project to construct the first "Zero Emission" station in Antarctica for the IPY 2007-08.

Numerous ascents in the Himalayas, the Andes and the Alps including a good number of great classical itineraries:

1983 : Amadablam (6858m), first ascent of the East ridge, Nepal.

1987 : Kanchenjunga South (8491 m), solo attempt, Nepal.

1989-90: Cho Oyu (8201m), winter attempt SE face and direct ascent N face, Nepal/Tibet.

1991-99 : Everest (8846 m), 5 attempts (without oxygen) on N, S and NNE face, Nepal/Tibet.

2001: Gasherbrum I & II (8064m & 8130m), Pakistan, attempt.

2003: Mustagh Ata (7550m), China (Xingjiang) / Mount Vinson (4897m), Antarctica.

2004: Mc Kinley (6187m), Alaska / Mt Cook (3754m), New Zealand.

2005 : Kilimanjaro, (5895m)Tanzania / First ascent Wideroefjellet, Sor Rondane, Antarctica.

Expeditions

1990-2006 : Ski Trek in Scandinavia, Iceland, Svalbard, Greenland, Alaska and Arctic Ocean.

1991 : Baffin Island, skiing expedition, 600 km in autonomy, North Eastern Canada.

1994 : Geographic North Pole (with Didier Goetghebuer), Polar expedition – first Belgians to ever reach the North Pole, on ski and on foot, covering over 760 km, in autonomy, over the Arctic Ocean.



1995 and 1997 : Trans-Greenland expedition, 700 km on skis with power kites.

1997-98 : World record crossing of the Antarctic continent, with Dixie Dansercoer, 3924 km in 99 days in autonomy - the longest crossing ever made on foot and ski, using innovative new power kites, Antarctica.

1999-2000 and 2000-2001 : Dronning Maud Land Expedition - first ever ascent of the south summit of Holtanna and a dozen of other rock peaks, Antarctica.

2002 : Attempt at the longest crossing (over 2400 km) of the Arctic Ocean, in autonomy with Dixie Dansercoer. The Expedition was forced to abandon after 68 days because of poor ice conditions.

Dixie Dansercoer

44 years old. By training an interpreter & translator. Worked for 13 years for Sabena, the Belgian national airlines. Manager of Circles, public speaker and good-will Ambassador for UNICEF

1987 : Belgian windsurfing champion in the wave-riding discipline.

1991-99 : Many trekking expeditions over the World including some classical climbing, such as Mount Fuji and Mount Kenya, NE and SW faces.

1994 : "Karakoram Bike Adventure", 1200km through Pakistan and China.

1995-2006: Ski Trek in Iceland, Svalbard, Greenland, Alaska and Arctic Ocean.

1995 : Trans-Greenland expedition with Alain Hubert, 700 km on skis with power kites.

1997-98 : World record crossing of the Antarctic continent, with Alain Hubert, 3924 km in 99 days in autonomy - the longest crossing ever made on foot and ski, using innovative new power kites, Antarctica.

2000 : Ascent of Mount Vinson, Antarctica.

2002 : Attempted traverse of the Arctic Ocean from Siberia to Canada. with Alain Hubert. 69 days in autonomy.

2005 : Attempt to cross the Bering Strait (with Troy Henkels).from Alaska to Siberia.



Outreach

The expedition "LIVE" via www.antarctica.org

Using sophisticated satellite communication technologies, Alain Hubert and Dixie Dansercoer will be in permanent contact with the Expedition Headquarters in Brussels.

www.antarctica.org, adventure web site of the International Polar Foundation, will follow the day to day advance of the two explorers, keeping the public informed on-line about the progress of the team.

The site will publish photos and short films taken during the expedition, as well as live interviews with Alain and Dixie from the middle of the Arctic. Since it was launched in November 1997, the site www.antarctica.org has been very successful with more than two million hits per month registered during expeditions.



The Clim@tic Project

"Education is a continuous, life-long process" Alain Hubert

In the context of the European Clim@tic project, the International Polar Foundation is participating in an educational initiative which reaches more than 220 000 school children in nine different countries.

This expedition will participate in the activities planned under the project and interact directly with schools, addressing complex themes such as sustainable development, and the consequences of warming of the Arctic and its likely impact on the future climate of the Earth.

Contact

Alain Hubert / 120A, Rue des Deux Gares / B-1070 Brussels / Belgium
alain.hubert@skynet.be

Dixie Dansercoer / circles@telenet.be

www.ultimate-earth.com - www.antarctica.org
www.polarfoundation.org - www.educapoles.org

