



## **MANCHESTER CRUISING ASSOCIATION**

**In Tilman's Wake – A Voyage in Pelagic  
Roger Chisholm 21 September 2006**

Pelagic Australis is a 22 metre ketch, purpose-built for long-range adventure cruising in polar regions. Constructed in aluminium she has a massive lifting keel that gives her a minimum draft of just 1.3m and makes passages in areas of uncertain depth just that bit less traumatic. Roger took a two-week trip on her in July 2005 off the west coast of Greenland, including a circumnavigation of the mysterious Disko Island.

Readers of Bill Tilman's books will recognise the area and the association was clearly one of the factors that led Roger to want to go to this remote corner.

There were many stunning facts: the Greenland ice cap is 3000 m thick, it produce most of the arctic icebergs and contains enough water for everyone on earth to have three billion litres (over 1000 Olympic swimming-pools-full) each. As Roger pointed out, with global warming, we might all get our share.

The presentation was engrossing; the slides outstanding. Intermingled with the views of beautiful ice-strewn wastes were pictures of whales and seals and the most exquisite plants and flowers. As they explored remote fjords, mountains and immense ice cliffs emerged, unexpected, from the mist and fog. In some pictures the brooding Greenland ice cap lurked in the background – a possible source of polar bears. They do occasionally wander down to the shore and Roger's strategy was to make sure that there was always someone between him and the ice cap so that any bears had a handier meal than him.

They didn't manage much sailing but since Pelagic carries enough fuel to motor across the Atlantic it wasn't much of a constraint. Pelagic is designed to carry around a dozen but it turned out that Roger was the only paying guest. The other three on board were crew. It didn't seem to get him out of many jobs though. And that's the way he would want it I'm sure.

©Manchester Cruising Association 2006