

## Diary 16 - 24 September 2013

### A bonus week at the Zackenberg station

This week, we stayed for an extra week at the research station Zackenberg. The area around the station is well known for its arid climate with hardly any precipitation over the year. However, climate is not the same as day-to-day weather as we could see this week.

On Wednesday, we had a bit of rain. We checked in at the airport just after dinner and waited in Terminal Zero to get our Twin Otter flight to Iceland. However, clouds covered the astonishing views to Clavering Ø and the Young Sund; at the time of departure we could hear our airplane flying on high altitudes from Danmarkshavn to Constable Point... We picked-up our luggage and found our comfortable rooms again.

Normally, the arrival of fall at the Zackenberg station means restricted water usage. The water level in the river falls and night temperatures drop below zero creating ice. This hinders the water intake from the river to fill up the fresh water reservoirs at the station. People have to change their habits as well: they have to stop washing clothes and they need to postpone their parade towards the showers in building 9.

However, there was no severe water shortage at this time. The weather did not improve on Thursday and a cold wind from the North increased during the day. The rain kept falling on all of us. Luckily, we were still treated like kings at the dinner table. This time, Lone served us delicious pancakes for dessert. Thereafter, the rain changed into snow and on Friday professional measurements by Laura from GeoBasis showed 10 cm snow coverage over the whole Zackenberg valley. The snow was very wet and close to zero degrees Celsius. Optimal conditions for Søren from the bridge-builders team to create the first snowman of the season! The high-tide mark along the shores was also clearly visible with no snow in the intertidal zone. However, the snow started to melt at noon. The water level in the river Zackenberg increased by the hour and a lot of sand and mud was eroded from the slopes and flushed into the river. It is impressive to see all the landslides in the river bends and to see the sediments arriving in the delta area and adjacent fjord! On Saturday and Sunday, the water level in the river was as high as a regular water level in a summer season and logistic coordinators Jørgen and Kenny were able to fill the fresh water reservoirs.

Monday came a shift in the weather. It suddenly cleared and sunny weather appeared, just in time for the grand opening of the Zackenberg Bridge. Over the last weeks, seven men forming the bridge-building team worked on this project and constructed a very nice and robust bridge just north of the station. Due to their efforts it is now possible to cross the river Zackenberg without getting a wet suit. The festivities in the field included speeches, baptising and opening the bridge with orange fire balls, and eating 'pølser'. The event was well visited, all inhabitants of the Zackenberg valley appeared and everything was carefully photographed by Lars from BioBasis.

Inside the Zackenberg station, some other activities developed during this week. Jørgen was suddenly very busy to arrange extra flights to get us out of Zackenberg and Lone continued to prepare the delicious food, even for two extra guests. After weeks of good food, cakes and chocolate, there suddenly appeared an illustrated warning for eating Ritter Sport. We also celebrated a birthday of one of our respected residents with a long history partly related to Greenland (no name mentioned). Finally, there is running an intense e-mail competition between Lone and PhD fellow Mette: it is all KB that counts!! The competition hopefully stops soon when our flight for Iceland leaves.

Aart Kroon