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The Northwest Passage - Issuma's tale

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'Issuma - centreboard steel staysail schooner'

As the 2012 flotilla of yachts headed for the Northwest Passage prepare their boats, last years flotilla of yachts have reached the other side long ago, and slowly their stories come in - stories of icebergs and gales, sometimes together and sometimes fiercely on the bow, sometimes nothing. One of these is Issuma, who started in 2011, but over-wintered in Sitka, and finished in June.

In 2011, Issuma, a 15m centreboard steel staysail schooner, sailed from east to west, skippered by Richard Hudson, who comes from a long line of sailing adventurers. His great-uncle sailed with Ernest Shackleton on his famed, but ill-fated expedition to Antarctica in 1914-16.

When undertaking the journey Richard, who had begun sailing at 12, had already sailed over 40,000 nautical miles and had been a teacher with the New York Community Sailing Association. His 7,500 mile journey started in Toronto on May 2, 2011, and ended June 3, 2012, when he docked in Victoria. Giant icebergs, pack ice, gales, fierce headwinds and equipment failures had not deterred him, but it was not as icy as they had anticipated and the journey was relatively trouble-free.

Greenland was the first major stopping point in his voyage. Baffin Bay, Davis Strait, Bellot Strait, Cambridge Bay, Ulukhaktok and Barrow, Alaska were on the route he chose. While in the Bering Strait, he sailed within 19 miles of Russia.

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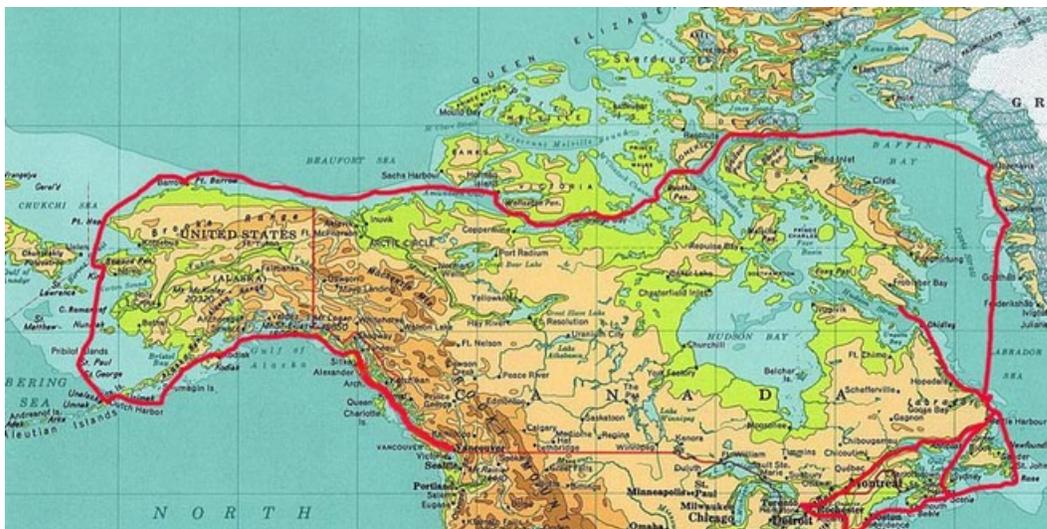
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Sitka, Alaska, where she over-wintered showing snow on the deck - ...



Issuma route - ...

Of the voyage, Marine Surveyor and Consultant, Captain Joseph G. Berta said, 'Hudson deserves recognition for a great accomplishment and for providing a spirit of encouragement for those who dream of adventures in less traveled regions of the world'.

To learn more about Issuma and read the long and fascinating blog of the voyage, check out his website : <http://www.issuma.com/rhudson>

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Northwest Passage and Climate Change:

The navigability of the Northwest Passage is one of the most notable and dramatic indicators of Climate Change. Until 2009, the Arctic pack ice prevented regular marine shipping throughout most of the year, but climate change has reduced the pack ice, and this Arctic shrinkage made the waterways more navigable.

This is currently causing political unrest around Arctic waters as the governments of adjoining countries try to legislate for controlling shipping and for access to the mineral rich areas. Environmentalists are also concerned for the plight of the sea life that depends on the ice and for the potential for pollution of the pristine region as traffic increases.

by Sail-World Cruising round-up



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