

THE ICE DISCIPLE.

CHAPTER 1. 'ICE FOR TEA' (1990)

The WORLD CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE held in Geneva was a recognition by the major powers in the western world that the environment was in a state of turmoil. Experts from many scientific fields, were there along with a vast audience of newspaper reporters and assorted T.V. network crews, looking for the latest gimmick and sensation. Key speakers from the academic world of Meteorology were invited to expound their recent findings and baffle the media with a bewildering assortment of figures proving their ideas. Without doubt the message to be conveyed was that Global Warming was a threat to mankind and that the process was accelerating beyond control. World temperatures could rise by 5 degrees centigrade within the next century, a dire situation with consequences that could be catastrophic for civilisation. The consensus of opinion was clear and a host of prestigious bodies were implemented to find a solution to this nightmare.

As with all events of this nature there were numerous sideshows where marginal organisations paraded their leading exponent. Limited to an audience of second-rate journalists covered in past glory, they relayed their reports without excitement or humour. In fifty such rooms with broken sound systems and dismal lighting, eminent individuals attempted to question the vogue paradigm, choosing their words carefully to ensure they would still be employed after the close of play. In a room such as this stood a funny old chap called Professor Charles Wilding Frost.

His presence on stage was something of a miracle for his posture suggested great frailty and from time to time his head lowered as though sleep was ready to claim him. He was there at the request of the SCOTT POLAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE to review materials relating to the Greenland Ice Sheet and Sea Ice formations for the period 1950 to 1986. As a scientist his record was one of untarnished professionalism, without highlight or distinction. However, he did have a reputation for candid revelation and there were several episodes in his past where he had questioned authority.

As befits a man of his status the atmosphere was polite, mild applause rippling through the hall as he recalled stories of his work in the Arctic and the hardships he had endured. The speech in itself was comprehensive in detail as expected and everyone felt his grasp of current theory was exceptional. As he neared the conclusion of his report the crowd thinned for it was lunch time and the bars beckoned. Still, a number of third world delegates remained to listen to this ancient gentleman, their presence a confirmation of his skill and power upon the cold stage.

As he reached the penultimate stage of his paper the professor became far more

animated and it was obvious to everyone present that he had decided to let loose a torpedo from hell! Raising his tiny head toward the scattered delegates left in the room, he presented a bold and revolutionary theory of rapid Global Cooling and resurgent glaciation. In a voice filled with heat and blood he rammed this message forward, anticipating a response of utter ridicule. It never came. The corridors outside the room were filled with a thousand hungry scavengers and their concerted cacophony managed to drown out his desperate plea.

Professor Frost left Geneva the following day, having decided to retire from public life and leave the world stage to the “Hot Boys”. Returning to the UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA to collect his lifelong collection of Arctic souvenirs he was asked by a friend how the conference had gone, to which he retorted “Bloody marvellous”. His papers on Global Climate were stored in the reference library of the department and destroyed during the fire of 1996. His work disappeared along with any record of his having requested an urgent meeting with THE BRITISH METEOROLOGICAL CENTRE in 1995.

CHAPTER 2.

THE BLACK WAVE. (SPRING 2007).

Fishing in the period leading up to late February had been average with nothing exceptional to report in the North Atlantic Region. Deep water vessels busy searching their traditional haunts for Cod and Whiting were confident that the season's catch would be sufficient, bills could be met and one or two among the older seamen were talking about bumper nets. However, conditions began to deteriorate as March roared in with a series of sharp low-pressure fronts forming rapidly, accompanied by storm force 10 winds and waves reaching 12 metres. The severity of the seas forced many of the fleet to seek safe harbour and there were unconfirmed sightings of ice from several Icelandic locations.

The Ocean Weather Ship 'Sandbird' was the first to record a positive ice hazard. This was duly notified in line with maritime law: experience ensured prompt action. Due to the unusual nature of this event all instruments on board were thoroughly checked to verify accuracy and efficiency. Captain Philip Andrews had sailed this bleak location for many years and had been astounded to find ice at this location. Apart from this affair and the fact that sea surface temperatures were slightly below normal, the routine work of the journey suggested most other variables were essentially stable. Having satisfied himself that his Shipborne equipment was correct and that his standard documents were in order, he set sail for his return trip home. He had received advance notice of an impending storm; it made sense to finish this work programme two days early. Why invite danger? he reasoned.

Some 500 miles west of his station a mass of dense, cold Polar Maritime Air was plunging Southward, colliding with warm air veering North East from the eastern seaboard. As these behemoths strove for supremacy the ocean was whipped into a frenzy, great volumes of water carved and battered as the winds began to heave. Soon the birth of a colossal storm commenced, spreading a monstrous tide of water upward between gusts measuring 140mph and more. As the tempest raced across the endless plain of water the raw energy grew tenfold, until the first gigantic wave was borne, lulling and cascading like a concrete whirlpool. Shoals of water without colour or form chased across the sea, destroying the stillness with total carnage.

Captain Andrews second warning of the storm came in the shape of a strange darkness, normal daylight replaced by clouds tinged in deep grey without definition or scale. As the visibility disappeared and the roll of the ship became horrendous, he issued instructions for the crew to be vigilant and to prepare for rough times ahead.

His cool, calm manner was a great comfort to the younger team members and despite their misgivings they were confident he would lead them to safety. Suddenly, the wind abated and for a brief moment the seas around them became still, totally calm and quiet as though the storm had passed. As the Captain peered into the retreating turmoil his senses became aware of a new sound, something familiar like thunder but far greater! Trying desperately to make sense of his surroundings there appeared before him for one glorious moment a coloured wave that could only mean one thing. Death.

The 'Sandbird' was one of three vessels to go down during the Spring of 2007 in the North Atlantic Area. Despite extensive searches carried out by all of the rescue services available there were no survivors. A single notification of a 'Black Wave' was classified by The British Oceanographic Data Centre as 'Unclassified'.