

11th AUGUST

We all had a fairly sleepless night, Sean and Shoure (my nickname for Gregor) were like elephants as they went past Sissel and I to go to the loo in the middle of the night waking us both up - we are in the front of the barrel so hear all traffic. We all tossed and turned and felt awful when Luis woke us at 7.15am. We had breakfast and I chatted to Tom and his crew before we set off for our next acclimatisation hike. This was everyone's first time in crampons with the exception of Myself and Sissel and they all did great. Everyone was strong and we made a decision to go and touch Pastakova rocks today instead of tomorrow as the weather forecast wasn't great. When we arrived at Pastakova rocks the visibility was zero, it was really cold, windy and starting to hail - nothing scenic at all. We went back to the barrels for a late lunch and it started to pour with rain. Luis is trying to negotiate for us to stay an extra couple of nights at the barrels opposed to heading up to a dingier hut 1,000ft higher up the mountain. We are now all in the barrel taking a siesta and reading books. We have a rest day planned for tomorrow. Our summit day attempt is scheduled for Friday 13th luckily I believe in the Chinese characters in terms of superstition whereby the number 4 is unlucky.

The rest of the afternoon was spent playing cards. Sean, Shoure, Sissel and myself played cards, I lost and was almost laughed out of the barrel when I offered the others some tips.. Dinner was at 8.00pm and we had the same soup we have had the past few lunches and dinners. The ingredients don't really bode well with altitude - kidney beans, onions and garlic and we are praying our barrel doesn't blow! " what are we all doing in a barrel in the middle of Russia" asked Sean as we all got ready for bed - u may well ask!