

## Arctic 1984–85

Derek Fordham

Plate 87

During the past few years there has been a great deal of expedition activity in the Arctic mountains but, in keeping with the trend elsewhere, much has been of small scale and has gone largely unreported.

The two most noteworthy expeditions of the past two years, of which details are available, were both British and both to East Greenland. The first, led by Derek Fordham, was the 1984 Mont Forel Expedition which made two unsuccessful attempts on the summit in May and was the subject of an article in *A790*. The second, the Kejser Franz Josef's Fjord Expedition, under the leadership of Iain Smart made a successful ascent of Petermann Peak, 2620m in the summer of 1985, just before the start of some bad weather. Zeyen and Todd climbed the NE ridge encountering much loose rock and a steeper section in the upper reaches that gave a couple of very difficult pitches. Slesser, Sellar and Smart climbed via the E ridge in six hours by a long steep scramble up disintegrating laminae of upended strata.

In the Staunings Alps an eight man expedition from Rome claimed ten first ascents in the Dansketinde/Norsketinde region although 'firsts' must be getting a trifle hard to find in such a well frequented area. The expedition also liberally applied confusing Italian names to local peaks; names which are unlikely to be acceptable to the Greenland authorities.

Further south, in July, an expedition of ten Italians, two Slovenes and two Greenlanders were helicoptered to the Kristians glacier area north of Angmagssalik. Despite bad weather they made a number of new routes on peaks in the Henri Dunant Bjerg/de Quervain Bjerg region. (A full list of the ascents claimed by both these Italian expeditions is in *The American Alpine Journal* 1985 pp220–222.)

In September Jaroslav Pavlicek and Miroslav Jakes from Czechoslovakia made a crossing of the Inland Ice from Angmagssalik to Sondre Stromfjord. As was to be expected so late in the season they encountered poor conditions and bad weather. The traverse of the icecap itself took 32 days, far longer than would normally be necessary.

Also in Greenland a Danish military team attempted to find previously undiscovered relics of the Mylius Erichsen 'Danmark' Expedition but were largely unsuccessful and hampered by a crevasse fall which necessitated a difficult helicopter evacuation of one member.

Elsewhere in 1984 a party led by Tony Billingham made an enterprising coast to coast traverse of W Spitsbergen from Ny Alesund to Mohnbukta, linking together explorations carried out in previous years.

In 1985 the Newcastle University SE Greenland Expedition carried out mainly scientific work in the area north of Angmagssalik and climbed some minor peaks in the Tasilaq area. They also met two Greenland women who



87 *Petermann Peak near the head of Kejser Franz Josef's Fjord, E Greenland, at 0200hrs on 8 August 1985. The E ridge is on the right.*

*Photo: P. J. Sellar*

had wintered at Kangerdlugssuaq with Lawrence Wager and his wife some 50 years ago.

Further north in the Staunings Alps the I M Marsh College East Greenland Expedition established a base camp at the junction of the Bersaerkerbrae and Dunottar glaciers and made ascents of some 14 routes on peaks in the area. Ascents of Royal, D Eglin Spids (an un-named spire between Bersaerkertinde and Royal) and Dunottar SE face are believed to be the longest face routes in the Staunings.

Just south of the Staunings in Jameson Land the Gurreholm Bjerg Expedition under Geoffrey Shaw climbed a number of minor peaks whilst investigating the flora of the region.

The above are only a few of the many expeditions known to have been in the field and these notes can make no claim to be in any way comprehensive. Indeed, the Danish Ministry for Greenland announced to the press in 1984 that over 100 expeditions were planned for Greenland that year!

