

## Greenland

**History of exploration** The book by Mario Fantin, reviewed on p 302 below, gives a complete survey of Greenland mountaineering up to 1968.

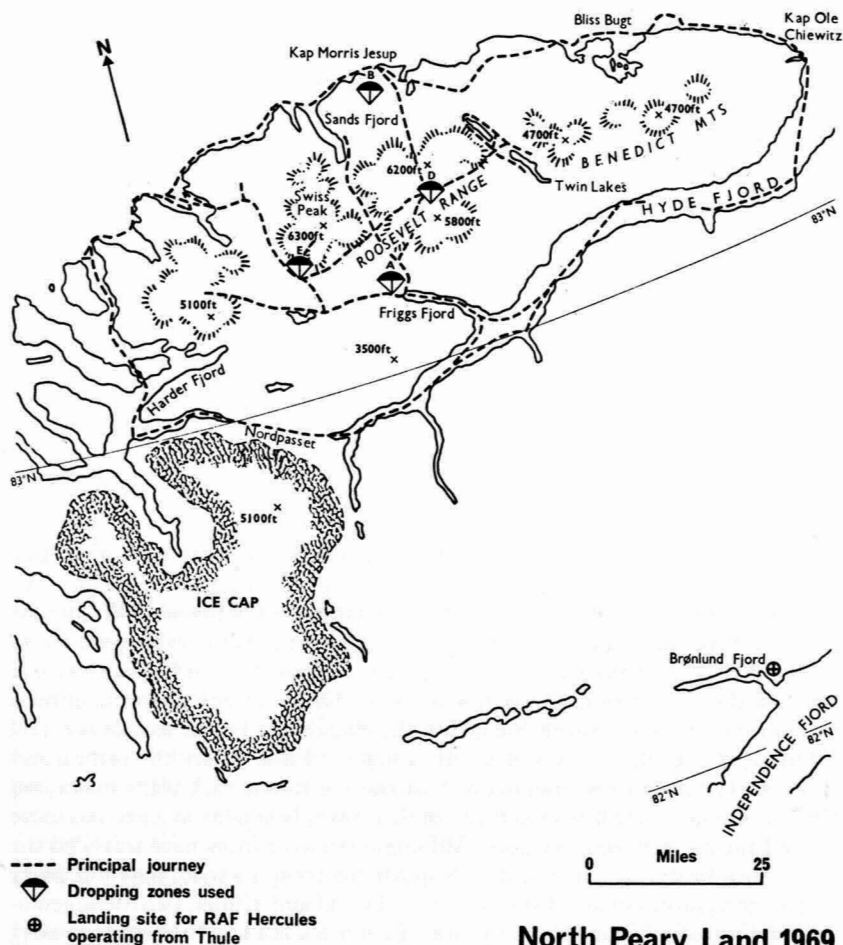
### NORTH GREENLAND

**North Peary Land, British expedition, 1969** The Joint Services expedition. I. W. Cox, A. D. F. Dalton, P. R. Dawes, R. A. Fountain, C. J. Grant, A. M. Griffin, S. G. Lloyd-Morrison, H. P. May, J. D. C. Peacock (leader), B. K. Reid (deputy leader), C. E. Shorrocks, N. J. Soper.

Although our objectives were primarily exploratory and scientific we aimed also to climb as many peaks as possible. The peninsula itself contains two mountain groups, the Roosevelt Range in the west and the Benedict Mountains to the east (see map [128]). Of these, the latter are of a character very similar to the Red Cuillins of Skye, though their greater size and the few big glaciers lead the casual observer to overlook this initially. The similarity at first continues westward into the Roosevelt Range but the glaciers get bigger and longer, and fill most, if not all, of the valleys. It is not until one enters the central and western sectors of these mountains that the big rotten rock walls begin and the peaks assume a distinct character of their own, becoming steeper and more rugged the further west one goes. Although various parties have travelled the coast since Peary's original visit to Kap Morris Jesup in 1900, only one party had made a journey of any distance inland: Fränkl and Müller, two Swiss geologists, who crossed from Friggs Fjord to the north coast and back again in 1953 (*Mountain World* 1954).

In all, twenty-one peaks were climbed, including the two highest Pts 1890 and 1920 m (Swiss Peak). None gave any difficulties which could not be avoided, although in several places the rope was used for a short rock- or ice-pitch when walking the sharper ridges or crossing snow-covered glaciers. The most satisfactory ice-climbing was on Mount Lauge Koch on a 1500 ft slope of steep ice on the south-east side, the upper 600 ft being climbed with crampons, ice-axe and dagger, using ice-screws for belays. However, this was only an interesting deviation from the easier way up. The slopes of the mountains tended to be very steep and, where there was no snow or ice, covered in very loose scree and boulders. Rock when found was very shattered and friable, not lending itself to climbing; it was usually preferable to turn it on the adjacent snow or ice.

The mountains tend not to be isolated but connected by ridges, which in places extend for miles and include several peaks. Many of the ridges are very narrow



### North Peary Land 1969

128 *North Peary Land* showing the activities of the British expedition 1969. Map supplied by the expedition, slightly revised

and flanked by steep slopes of rock and ice. Air Force Cirque was characteristic of a splendid day's ridge walking.

Several peaks and glaciers running down from quite close to the summits provide easy access on ski, but where the glaciers crossed ridges they were often heavily crevassed. These crevasses were often concealed; thus on the steep ascent of the ridge to Air Force Cirque several crevasses were discovered only a few feet away, they being very narrow at the top but bottling out below into enormous caverns. Most of the mountains were approached on ski over the glaciers, as the snow covering was rarely firm enough to allow a crossing on foot. Lower down, the glaciers became bare ice as the summer progressed.



129 *Swiss Peak and neighbouring areas from north* This and next photo: J. D. C. Peacock

Although heavily snow-covered in early May, by the time we moved into the interior in early July much of the snow had melted, reducing many of the surrounding peaks to bare rock and scree. At the same time the firn line on the glaciers receded to about 2500 ft.

Details of the peaks climbed have been deposited with the Mount Everest Foundation. **John Peacock**

#### EAST GREENLAND 1969

**Blosseville Coast: Knud Rasmussens Land** The Watkins Mountains expedition (leader Alastair Allan) set out to explore the terrain south of Scoresby Sund and west of the Blosseville Coast, with its main mountaineering objectives to determine and explore an access route to the Watkins Mountains from Scoresby Sund and to climb Ejnar Mikkelsens Fjeld. Unfortunately they encountered very bad weather for all but six of the thirty-eight days spent on the ice-cap, and white-out conditions presented severe problems. They turned back at a point some twenty miles from the main peaks in the Watkins Mountains, but wrote subsequently that 'Ejnar Mikkelsens Fjeld is certainly the Nanga Parbat of Greenland. The ascent will be a great problem and the access



130 *Apollo Camp, 3800 ft North Peary Land 1969*

an even greater one. The existence of the mountain is not generally known in Britain although it has very great significance to the Danish people.'

Another expedition (leader Malcolm Slesser) had similar objectives, but tried to approach the mountain from the coast. They also failed on account of the weather.

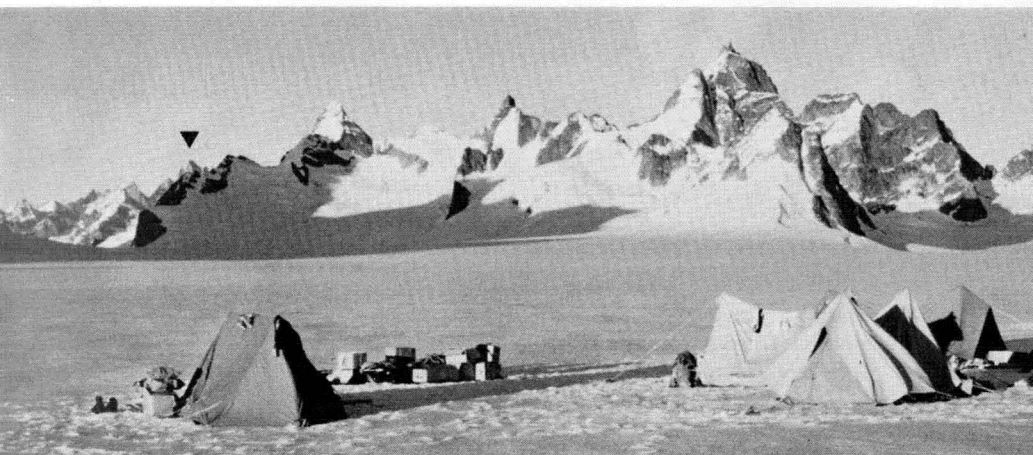
**Kristians glacier area** London Graduate M.C. expedition. J. Ashburner, A. Clarke, D. Fordham (leader), D. Kemp, D. Morgan, D. Roscoe, M. Tuson. We reached Kulusuk on 10 July and thence went by boat to Kungmiut at the head of Angmagssalik fjord. Plans for the expedition were based around a substantial depot of food left on the Kristians glacier by the Army expedition of 1968 and on the explorations of the L.G.M.C.'s expedition in the same year (*A.J.* 74 276, 282, with maps). On 14 July we went by boat to the snout of the Knud Rasmussens glacier. The original plan had been to sledge up the glacier de France from Kangerdlugssuatsiaq, but this had to be abandoned owing to the uncertain conditions of the sea ice and the difficulty of obtaining a boat to transport the party and its equipment.

Before leaving Kungmiut arrangements were made with a local boatman, the school teacher, and the Kongelige Gronlandske Handel's representative for us to be picked up at the head of Kangerdlugssuatsiaq on 15 August, by which time we thought the pack ice would have broken up.

The route followed the Knud Rasmussens, Haabets, and Conniats glaciers to the glacier de France, where the originally planned route was joined, and continued through the Femstjernen to the junction of the Kristians and Champs Elysées glaciers. Base Camp was established on 24 July on a rocky spur on the south side of the glacier near the Army expedition's food dump. Two days later five of the party skied down the Kristians glacier and climbed two 2000 m peaks at its south-west end.

On 28 July four men established a depot of seventy man-days food on the edge of the Sekstjernen, while the rest of the party made an attempt on the unclimbed 3000 m peak west of the Col de Woppers (see *A.J.* 74 279 for map), but were turned back by poor visibility and bad weather on the second day. The expedition was reunited at Base Camp on 30 July and was then confined to its tents for four days by a blizzard. Only thirteen days now remained before the rendezvous on the coast with the boatman, and it was decided to commence immediately the return sledge journey.

The return route ascended the Kristians glacier to its eastern end and dropped down to the Sekstjernen, where a nunatak peak was ascended. The heavily crevassed Sekstjernen was negotiated and the Steenstrups Nordre Brae gained on its western edge. A new pass was crossed to the Steenstrups Sondre Brae, and the Thank God glacier was gained by skirting Pinderbjerg to the south-east.



131 *Haabets glacier looking south-east to Pt 1860 m, Fairy Mountain*  
The summit of Ingolsfjaeld, 2232 m, is visible over left hand ridge at place marked. Photo: Michael Tuson

As no boat had appeared by 17 August, two men went overland to Sermiligaq to investigate its non-arrival. They went up the very broken lower reaches of the glacier de France and then by way of the Failsafe glacier joined the expedition's outward route on the Haabets glacier, reaching Sermiligaq on 20 August.

As the pack ice had not broken up, the Danish Navy dropped food by Catalina to the rest of the party, who had been on short rations for the previous week. We were eventually picked up by U.S. helicopters, and the whole expedition was back in England by 2 September.

**Derek Fordham**

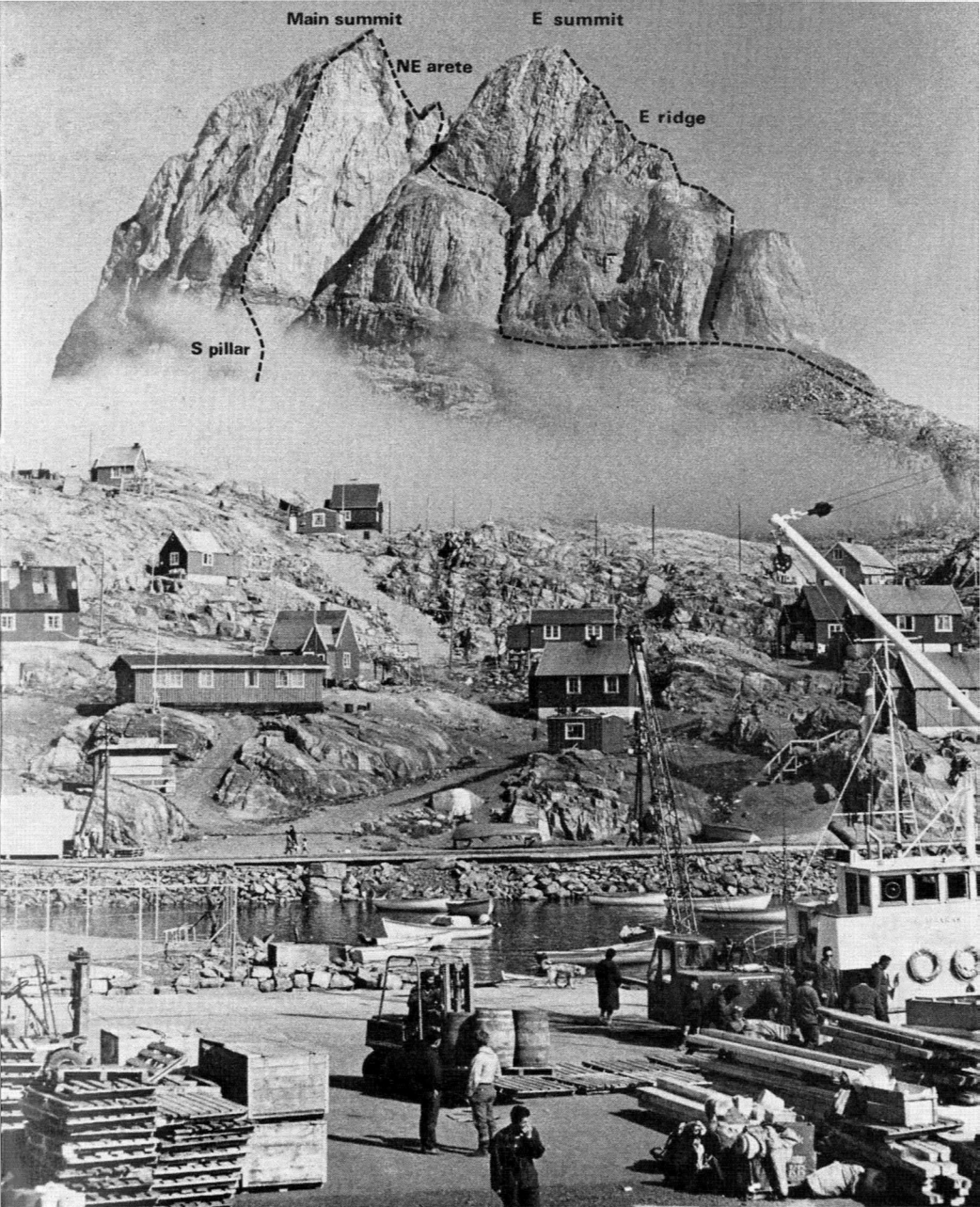
#### WEST GREENLAND

**Upernivik Island 1969** University of St Andrews expedition. K. Avery, W. Band, P. Gribbon (leader), M. Heller, D. Kirkland, J. McDowall, N. Ross, J. Shade, A. Stevenson, W. Tauber. The expedition was delayed for a week at Umanak in early July until a suitable boat was available to take the party and its equipment to the main base at Iglorssuit. During the enforced wait all the members of the expedition succeeded in climbing the impressive double-towered rock peak, Umanaktind, overlooking the town [132]. The first ascent was made in July 1929 by the Germans F. Georgi and E. Sorge (*A.J.* 41 428) and no further ascent had been made in the meanwhile. The original route was repeated and three new routes made of much higher quality and difficulty.

Base Camp was established on the West coast of Upernivik Island close to the main glacier, Quvnerussup sermia (see map [133]). The expedition then split into two groups, one going to the northern glaciers and the other revisiting the centre of the island; both groups climbed extensively for a fortnight.

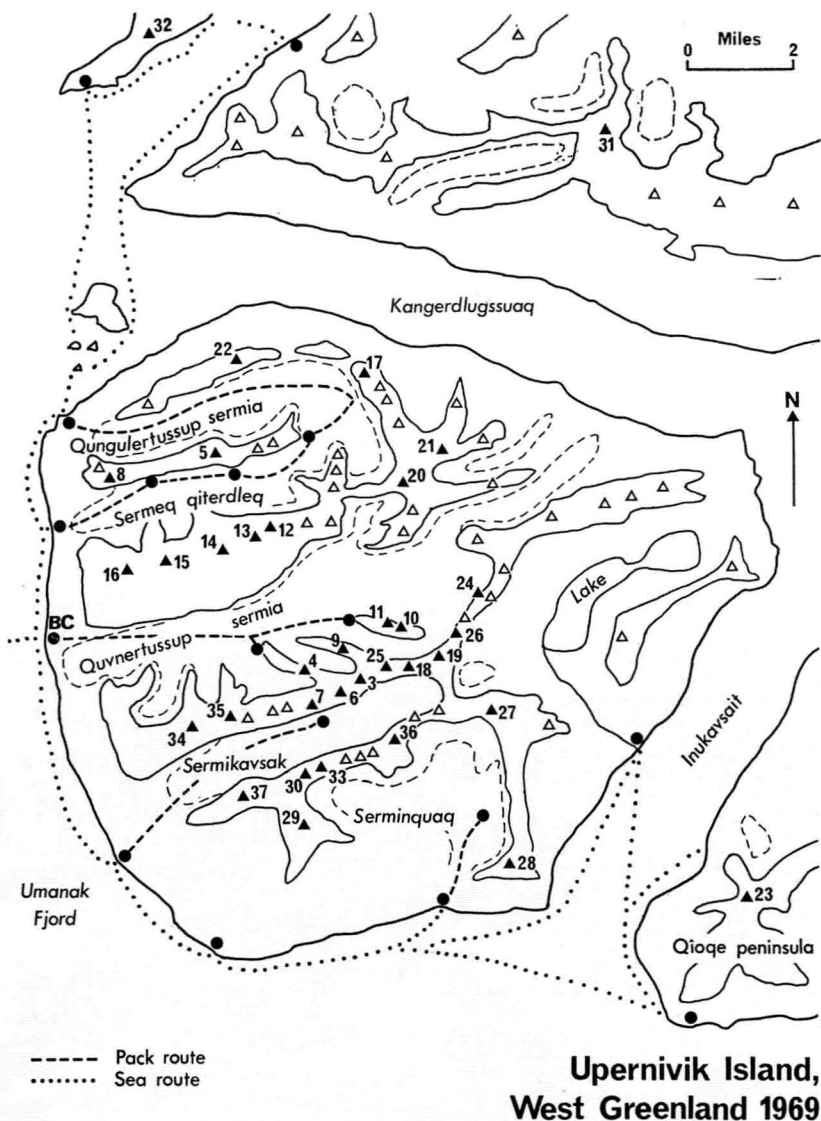
The third week gave the ascent of the West ridge of Qioqe. This ridge had been one of the objectives of the 1967 expedition but had been out of condition then, under new snow when the time had come to make the attempt. Qioqe possesses a great, smooth, slabby North face and a sheer West wall, and between these features there is the long sigmoidal West ridge, rising to a slender spire close to the summit of the peak (*A.J.* 73 20). A party of six spent forty-eight hours on the mountain. For twenty-four hours they were climbing continuously on three ropes along a 5000 ft long ridge on excellent rock, to give the longest, hardest and most sustained rock climb yet tackled by a St Andrews party.

The second half of the expedition was spent in a variety of activities, and late in August the party returned to the main base at Iglorssuit to find that the m/v *Disko* had been damaged, but another boat, the *Ujarak*, used on part of the



132 *Umanaktind, Upernivik Island* showing the routes taken by the 1969 St Andrews party. Photo: Mike Heller

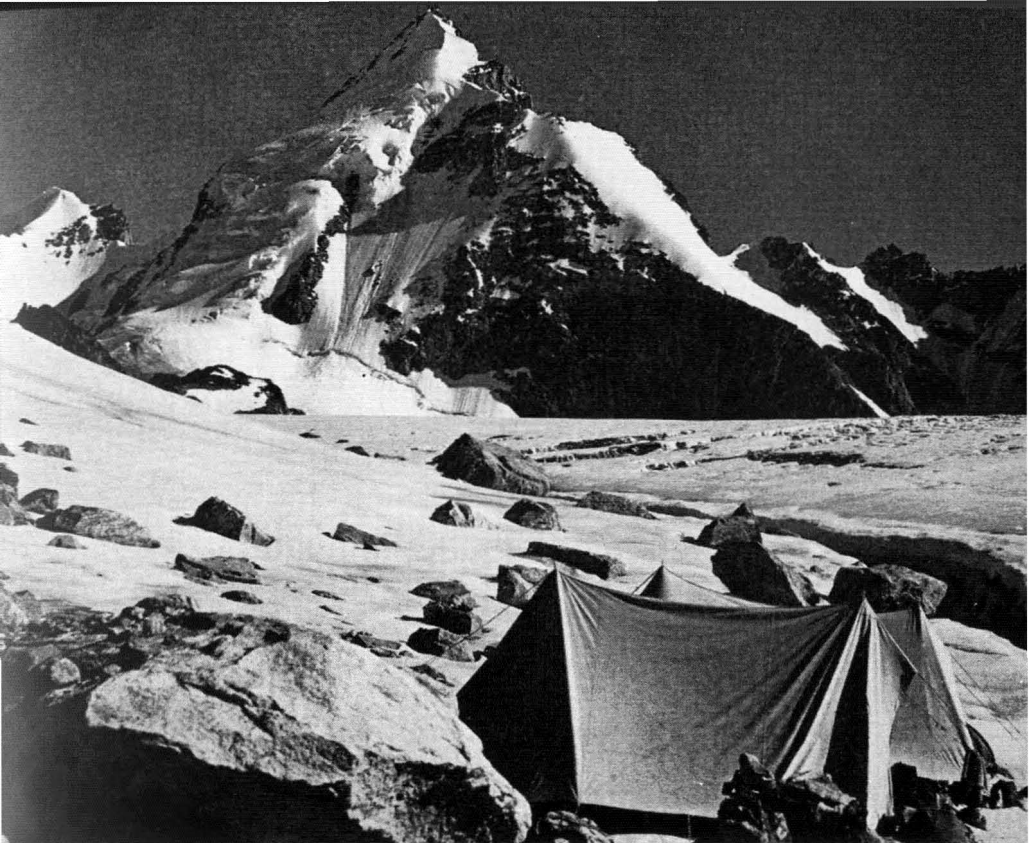
outward journey, took the party on to Umanak. The final stage of the journey was made by police boat from Holsteinborg to Sondre Stromfjord, whence the party flew back to Scotland via Copenhagen.



133 *Upernivik Island* showing the activities of the St Andrews expedition 1969. Map supplied by the expedition, slightly amended. The numbers relate to the list below. See *A.J.* 73 69 for 1967 exploration

Summary of ascents made (the numbers relate to the map [133]):

1	Umanaktind (see [132]): Main summit,* North face, AD 3800 ft	2 July	Shade, Kirkland; Gibbon, Stevenson; McDowall, Avery
	North-east arête, AD	2 "	Tauber, Band
	South pillar, D	5 "	Band, Tauber
	German route,* PD inf.	5 "	Ross, Heller



134 *Merendi* traversed from right to left. This and following photo: Mike Heller. See also *A.J.* 73 [21]

2	East summit, East ridge, AD sup. c 3500 ft	2 July 5 "	Band, Tauber Shade, Stevenson; Gribbon, McDowall
3	Cima Danimarca,* West ridge, PD	14 "	Tauber, Stevenson, Ross, Shade
4	'Tilman's' Peak,* East ridge, AD int. 6400 ft	14 "	Ross, Shade, Tauber, Stevenson
5	Palup qáqâ,* West ridge, AD sup. 6885 ft	14 "	Band, Kirkland, Gribbon, Heller, McDowall, Avery
6	Cesana,* West ridge, PD sup. 6130 ft	16 "	Tauber, Ross, Stevenson, Shade
7	Thor, East ridge, AD inf. 5700 ft	16 "	Tauber, Ross, Stevenson, Shade
8	Palup's Left Toe, East ridge, AD sup. 4130 ft	16-17 "	Band, Heller, Gribbon, Kirkland; McDowall, Avery
9	Consolation, North ridge, PD 5940 ft	19 "	Ross, Stevenson
10,11	Two Horns of Upernivik,* E-W traverse, D sup. c 6600 ft	19 "	Tauber, Shade. See <i>A.J.</i> 73 [21]
12	Hammer, North face, AD inf. 6000 ft	19 "	Gribbon, Band; McDowall, Kirkland; Heller, Avery

	South face		25 July	Tauber, Shade
13	Tongs	} E-W traverse, F	19-20	
	c 5600 ft			
14	Yabass			Band, Gribbon, Kirkland, McDowall, Avery, Heller
	6125 ft			
15	Gorm			
	6065 ft			
16	Cairn*		25 ,,	Tauber, Shade, Stevenson
	6145 ft			
17	Castor* South face, AD		22 ,,	Band, Gribbon
	6470 ft			
18	Merendi,*	} W-E traverse, D inf.	23 ,,	Shade, Ross, Stevenson, Tauber. See [134]
	6750 ft			
19	Piaccio,*			
	6400 ft			
20	Great White Tower,** W-N traverse, AD		24 ,,	Gribbon, Band
	6900 ft			
21	Gollytind, South-west face, PD sup.		25 ,,	Kirkland, McDowall
	c 5900 ft			
22	Qungulertussup qáqá,** Castle ridge, F		25 ,,	Heller, Avery
	c 6000 ft			
23	Qioqe,* West ridge, ED inf.		29-31 ,,	Tauber, Band; Shade, Kirkland; Gribbon, Stevenson
	6100 ft			
24	Phyllostop,* South-west ridge, PD		28 ,,	Ross, Avery; Heller, McDowall
	5580 ft			
25	Rook and Castle, North-east face, PD sup.		30 ,,	Ross, Avery; Heller, McDowall
	c 5900 ft			
26	Chown*	} S-N traverse, AD inf.	3 August	Shade, Tauber. See [135]
	5550 ft			
	Excalibur*			
	5650 ft			
	Excalibur,* North-west ridge, PD sup.		3 ,,	Ross, Stevenson
27	Bicen, South-east ridge, PD		4 ,,	Gribbon, Kirkland, McDowall
	5700 ft			
			5 ,,	Band, Heller
28	Bullhead of Ujaragssuaq, North face, PD sup.		4 ,,	Band, Heller
	5970 ft			
29	Paravicini,* North-east face, PD		5 ,,	Gribbon, McDowall, Kirkland
	6360 ft			
30	Alamo, North-west face and rib, TD inf.		8 ,,	Tauber, Shade
	c 5600 ft			
31	Snepyrmiden,* North ridge, PD		9 ,,	Heller, McDowall, Stevenson
	7400 ft			
32	Karrats qáqá,** South face, F sup.		9 ,,	Gribbon, Band
	2600 ft			
33	Bastion, West Ridge, TD		10 ,,	Shade, Tauber
	c 5900 ft			



135 *The central snow-field, Upernivik Island* From left to right  
Phyllostop, Excalibur, Chown

34	Gaffer, South face, F 6030 ft	12 August	Tauber, Ross, Avery
35	Fang, West ridge, PD inf. c 5500 ft	12 ,,	Tauber, Ross, Avery
36	Punta Genny,* North ridge, AD inf. 6300 ft	14 ,,	Band, Tauber
37	Biancai,* North-east ridge, PD inf. 5780 ft	14 ,,	Gribbon, Shade, Kirkland
38	Ivpiup qáqâ, F c 4000 ft	18 ,,	Gribbon, Stevenson
39, 40, 41	Nameless Svartenhuk hills c 3500 ft		

\* Indicates a second ascent (either of the peak or the route), while \*\* indicates a third or higher ascent. No asterisk beside a peak indicates a first ascent, or beside the route indicates a new route.

**Philip Gribbon**