

I was there in July and it was quite the wrong time of the year for hill walking. The heat was intense, the hot sun making the plateau like the Sahara. For this reason I was unable to get to Sv Jure, the highest point away to the NW, but I did get up Lopata (1536 m). On that occasion I was lucky in getting a lift for 2 or 3 miles along the plateau in one of the few cars which venture on this road, after I had slogged up all the way from Podgora, suffering severely from the heat despite wearing only shorts, socks and boots. I think May would be the best time of the year. You need almost fanatical determination to get much done in the summer months.

In cool weather it should be possible to explore most of Biokovo's tops in a few days especially with a car to get up the 900 m to the plateau. A car should be regarded as a means of providing more time to explore these hills, time to stand and stare, enjoying the views and the solitude.

## Triennial Report 1973-5 Greenland

Derek Fordham

The general trend over the past 3 years has been a swing away from a few large highly organised expeditions to a proliferation of short term and not always well organised parties which, competing during the short summer season with the various commercial interests also operating for the limited but essential onward boat transport, often create delays comparable with those caused by the ever present and unpredictable pack-ice.

The rather arbitrary manner in which the closure of the airfield at Mestersvig to mountaineering expeditions is administered has meant that this trend, which is as much a reflection of changing attitudes to expeditions as a result of easier and cheaper air access, has centred on 2 distinct areas, the SW coast and the E coast immediately N of Angmagssalik. The former being a finite area now in danger of becoming inundated with climbers each summer, and the latter, whilst sharing similar problems in the immediate vicinity of Angmagssalik and the airfield at Kulusuk, being on the S fringe of extensive ranges of magnificent and largely unexplored Alpine peaks which, perhaps fortunately, demand time, perseverance, and perhaps most of all, luck with the pack-ice, to enable any expedition to come within striking distance. Contributing to the pack-ice problem are the mighty arctic glaciers draining the Inlandsis and every year this 3000 m high, silent dome of ice lures small parties away from the coast to sledge and ski across its vast white desert, a landscape and experience totally arctic.

### 1973

On the E coast only 3 parties managed to get permission to fly into Mestersvig. These were a scientific expedition, from Imperial College, London and the University of Cambridge, concentrating on the Lang and Roslin glacier areas, and from the University of Sheffield working on the coastal geology of the

area. Further S in the Hurry Inlet area 2 British geologists, Richard Sykes and Simon Kelly, made the ascent of J. P. Koch's Fjeld, the highest point in Jameson Land at 909 m, during their search for Mesozoic rocks, and the geologists of the Copenhagen Mineralogical Museum continued their exploration of the Kangerdlugssuaq region. Angmagssalik saw the departure of 2 expeditions to cross the Inland Ice. The first, which left in May was the three-man American Arctic Greenland Expedition led by Dennis McAllister, trying again with a less ambitious plan after their failure in 1972. With one fibreglass sledge and a total load of 213 kg they took an incredible 46 days to complete the 550 km traverse to Sondre Stromfjord. In contrast, 2 Norwegians, Ralph Hoibakk and Herman Mehren (whose father crossed the ice-cap in 1931) made the same journey in 16 days, leaving Angmagssalik with dogs in early June!

Angmagssalik became the focal point for the summer's invasion with the arrival in early June of 50 Naturfreunde Austrians to climb and 'naturalise' in the area N of Kungmiut. The ten-man German contingent of this group led by Hans Altheimer climbed 28 peaks, including 15 first ascents, in the area around the Karales Glacier. The peaks ranged from 1430-2020 m in height and were graded 3-5. They were followed in mid July by numerous parties totalling approximately 70 persons who had arrived on the Dansk Bjergklub's group flight from Copenhagen. Amongst the latter were Tony Howard and Bill Tweedale, the British members of the Anglo-Danish expedition to the S face of Ingolfsfjeld. Led by Dolfi Rotovnik, who had been a member of the Croatian expedition which successfully climbed the mountain by the E Ridge in 1971 (AJ 78 216), the expedition was frustrated from the start by bad weather and lack of time, and Howard and Tweedale had to retreat from a point barely higher than that reached by the unsuccessful University of London Graduate MC Expedition in 1971 (AJ 78 216). A number of smaller summits in the area were climbed before the party was picked up by boat. Also in the Angmagssalik region 3 parties of Swiss, totalling 41, climbed among the mountains fringing the inaccessible 'Schweizerland' massif, a further 22 Swedes studied Arctic Nature, and 9 Spaniards managed to locate some unoccupied mountains to the N of Kungmiut! During the mid-July peak period there were 190 visiting mountaineers and naturalists in the Angmagssalik area, no doubt to the benefit of the Greenlanders, but hardly to each other! On the S and W coasts, usually thought of as being more accessible and well known, and therefore of less interest to the mountaineer, a backlash effect was apparent and there was no overcrowding. In the Lindenows Fjord area the Italian GARS Gronland expedition led by F. de Fachinetti flew by helicopter to the glacier below the Apostelens Tommelfinger where they set up a camp. As well as carrying out geological work they made an attempt on the very difficult E Face. The face itself was climbed (5 and 5sup) but the party were stopped by friable rock on the ridge 70 m short of the summit. The helicopter for the return flight was delayed by bad weather and did not arrive until international telex lines had been warmed up by heated exchanges between Trieste and Greenland.

Further N, 2 Spanish expeditions focused their activities on Upernavik Island. The Navarra Greenlandia expedition led by Daniel Bidaureta placed a base camp on the Sermeq Qiterdleq glacier and made several first ascents in



*87 Base Camp below Schanze. Photo: R. Kreuzinger*

the upper basin, and a number of second ascents of peaks first climbed by expeditions from St Andrew's University in 1939, 1967 and 1969.

In the Thule area Tsuguo Saotome, Japanese veteran of previous expeditions including crossing the Inland Ice and making the second ascent of Mount Forel (3360 m) in the Schweizerland area, completed a year as leader of the Japanese Arctic Expedition, and Wally Herbert, veteran of the top of the world spent a year with wife and small child living with the Polar Eskimos on the aptly but not eponymously named Herbert Island!

#### **1974**

The trend for modest shorter-term expeditions continued usually to areas by now relatively well known and within easy reach of the settlements. The exceptions to this occurred mainly on the E coast where favourable ice conditions allowed a geological party from Sheffield and Aberdeen Universities

to reach and continue for the third year their work in the spectacular but unexploited mountains of the Lilloise Berg. The open nature of the pack-ice also enabled Mike Tuson to sail his motor vessel along the length of the forbidding Blossville Coast before entering Scoresbysund with a combined geological/botanical expedition on board. In the Watkins Mountains the advance party of Dr Herrligkoffer's expedition had a lucky escape when the light aircraft they had chartered in Iceland crash landed on the beach of Mansen's Fjord while attempting to establish a base camp there. Due to this set-back the fourteen-man expedition was postponed for a year.

Further S the Westminster East Greenland Expedition led by Stan Woolley established a base in Tasilaq fjord, 200 km N from Angmagssalik, and made a 3 week, 200 km round trip to the previously unvisited area of Mount Forel, during which journey they made 5 first ascents of peaks ranging from 1900 m-3000 m. Under the 'blanket' of the scientific project mounted by Dundee University and the Wash Waders ornithological group, a number of small parties were able to get into Mestersvig. These included a party from Cambridge under S. E. Howard, and one from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, under R. Anderson which due to poor weather and limited time available made only one ascent above the Bersaerkerbrae Glacier. The perennially popular region N of Angmagssalik also enjoyed unusually good weather and a Polish/American group made 24 ascents from a base camp on the 'Sahara' snow-field. Two small Italian parties totalling 15, and a Swiss group of 10 were active in the area, as well as 25 members of the Danish Alpine Club who flew in during July. In Greenland a party from Cambridge led by Rick Hoare made 21 first ascents, both in the mountains S of the head of Lindenows Fjord, and on the island of Pamiagdruk (AJ 80 203). In the same general area a party of Austrians led by Thomas Abermann made 18 first ascents in the Ketils Fjord (Tasermiut) area, and a large French party from the CAF, despite delays due to non-arrival of their equipment, split into several groups and made a number of ascents in the same area, including an attempt on Ketil Pingasut (2010 m) which had been climbed by the Austrians a few weeks previously. On the W coast the Ministry for Greenland's records list a meet of the Ski Club Alpin Parisien at Holsteinberg in July! Reports are still awaited of how the participants coped with the snow-free tundra of that time of year!

Elsewhere, a German expedition led by Robert Kreuzinger, and including Kurt Diemberger, made a number of ascents on Alfred Wegeners Halvo and the Qioqe peninsula, including Schanze (1650 m), and an Italian group from Cuneo climbed several peaks on the Akuliaruseq peninsula. In early May a joint services expedition led by Flt Lt Dan Gleed commenced a W-E crossing of the Inland Ice from Sondre Stromfjord. They reached Angmagssalik 37 days later having spent the last part of their journey marooned on a rotting ice-floe!

## 1975

Two significant British successes were achieved on the E coast by expeditions with wider objectives than the usual well trodden areas around the settlements, firstly Steve Chadwick's British East Greenland Expedition, which despite access problems due to pack-ice succeeded in placing Keith Myhill,

Tony Mercer, and Jim Davenport on the summit of Ingolfsfjeld (2232 m). This fine peak, which has been the objective of a number of expeditions (see 1973) since the first reconnaissance led by Derek Fordham in 1968 (AJ 74 282) and the first ascent, of the E ridge by a Croatian expedition in 1971 (AJ 78 216), did not submit easily and repulsed 3 earlier attempts by the expedition including one on the original E ridge route before the successful party reached the summit via the 1600 m S face after a 5-day ascent of 63 pitches up to grade 5-6. This route, together with the Croatian ascent of the E ridge, represents the hardest rock climbing yet attempted in Greenland and was carried out in a remote region with very few rescue possibilities in the event of a mishap. The climb was completed in indifferent weather and during the ascent one of the party was injured by a falling rock. The descent down the E ridge took 1½ days with a number of accidents illustrating the fatigue of the party at this stage. The expedition was evacuated by helicopter a few days later since pack-ice had prevented the pre-arranged boat from entering the fjord and now faces a sizeable bill from the Greenland authorities for this rescue.

The second major achievement on the E coast was farther N in the Staunings Alps where Keith Miller and a party of 3 others made the first N-S traverse (see p. 143). Travelling S from Kap Petersen the party took 17 days to complete the 290 km to Syd Kap during which time they traversed 14 glaciers, and 2 new passes were located which proved to be the keys to the successful completion of the journey. Snow-shoes were essential on most of the glaciers and Miller was able to make use of food dumps left in various strategic locations by his 5 previous scientific expeditions to the area. After the completion of this fine Alpine traverse the party returned to Mestersvig at low level by the Schuchert Dal. Dr Karl Herrligkoffer received permission to take a reduced six-man expedition to the Watkins Mountains, having postponed it from 1974, but no news is yet available of this expedition's achievements, if any, in this fine range of mountains.

Elsewhere on the E coast, in the Angmagssalik region Rick Hoare's Cambridge E Greenland Expedition, thwarted by ice from more remote objectives on the W side of Sermilik Fjord, spent 2 weeks in the splendid but well-known peaks N of Kungmiut where their enjoyment of the arctic environment was lessened by discovering considerable pollution left by earlier German expeditions.

During June-July Tony Howard and a small Anglo-Danish team were active in the Trillingerne Towers group and made 2 first ascents in a subgroup christened 'the Organ Pipes' among which they claim to have noted a number of other 'interesting possibilities'! Later in July an Italian expedition led by Dr Sergio Maccio sledged and climbed in the area farther inland from the Trillingerne massif.

Angmagssalik itself was the departure point for a three-man Swedish ice-cap expedition which included Monica Masuda, only the second woman to cross the Inlandsis, in this case to Sondre Stromfjord. In the SE the French continued their activities of 1974 by climbing a number of interesting routes and summits in the group between Tasermiut and Kangikitsaq fjords, including the second ascents of Pt 2051 and Pt 2010 (Ketil Pingasut), first climbed by Tomas Abermann's Austrian expedition in 1974. Also in this area was an



*88 Agdlerussakit N ridge (St Andrews expedition 1975). Photo: J. Cant*

*89 Greenland peak climbed by St Andrews expedition 1975. Photo: D. Brown*



eight-man French party under the leadership of Maurice Barrard who made ascents of the spectacular S Pillar of the Apostelens Tommelfinger, and the W Face of Ketil Pingasut. These fine routes of ED standard were both approximately 500 m long and took 8 and 5 days respectively. To the E an Irish party led by David Walsh made 12 first ascents in the mountains up to 1600 m E of Qinqedalen, while in the mountains to the W of Angpilagtoq the St Andrew's University annual pilgrimage to the Greenland mountains, under the leadership of Philip Gribbon, made 40 first ascents, as well as repeating some made by earlier British and French expeditions and carrying out a scientific programme. Farther N an RAF expedition under Flt Lt Cartwright made a number of ascents in the Sondre Sermilikfjord area, including an unsuccessful attempt on Kuugssup Qaca (2124 m), first climbed by the Austrians in 1974, but in general were victims of the notorious weather of the area and the poor quality of rock on some of their routes.

The number of expeditions visiting the more accessible areas of Greenland each year is still increasing, and soon it would seem likely that for the short-term expedition attention will swing away from any remaining unclimbed summits to the ribs and faces of previously climbed peaks, as has already happened in the case of Ingolfsfjeld even though it is by no means in an easily accessible area. For those with more time, money and ambition, vast numbers of beautiful, unclimbed but highly inaccessible peaks still await the mountaineer/explorer who can overcome the access problems and reach the remote arctic coasts of Greenland.

## Climbers' playgrounds—Europe

### 17 The Caroux

Charles Mont

The S facing wall of the Cevennes which rises above the Garrigues and the Mediterranean coastal plain is formed at its W end by the mountain massifs of Montagne Noire, Monts de Lacaune and L'Espinouse. Much of these fall within the Parc Naturel Regional du Haut Languedoc.

Some 8 km W of Lamalou les Bains, above the villages of Mons-la-Trivalle and Colombières, a block of mountains known as the Caroux forms the E edge of L'Espinouse. The highest point is Mont Caroux (1091 m); the top is a plateau which throws down shapely arêtes with towers and pinnacles towards the gorges and valleys below. There is a refuge of the CAF at Verdier close to the mouth of the impressive and rocky Gorges d'Eric, and another, the Refuge de la Fage, in the upper reaches of the Gorges des Colombières further to the E. The long distance footpath, GR7, passes the latter on its way over the Caroux plateau. The valley villages are served by a bus which links with main line trains at Bedarieux just beyond Lamalou.

The rock is a firm gneiss, highly suitable for climbing, which provides a distinctive alternative to the considerable amount of limestone found elsewhere in Languedoc. The guide-book lists large numbers of routes, some close on 150 m, and plenty of prospects remain. Superficially the hills and rocks