

GREENLAND

Gunnbjørnsfjeld. Our expedition made the third ascent of Gunnbjørnsfjeld, Greenland's highest mountain, on August 8. It lies in the Watkins Mountains of East Greenland, north of Kangerlugssuaq Fjord. The peak was first climbed in 1935 by a party that included Courtauld, Wager and Longland. The second ascent was made in 1971 by a party led by Alastair Allan. Our 1987 group consisted of Robin Illingwood, Rob Ferguson, Steve McCabe and me as leader. We landed in Sodalen, Mikis Fjord, on July 22. We spent two days carrying stores and sledges over two miles of moraine to the Sodalen Glacier, where we could use cross-country skis and man-haul sledges. The route was initially difficult, taking a line between the East Frederiksborg and Sorgenfri Glaciers. We lost and gained much height. We crossed the Black Cap Pass, named by Wager, and descended to the Sorgenfri Glacier and across it to the Christian IV Glacier via another high previously uncrossed pass, south of Wager's Icefall Glacier Pass, from which we had a 200-foot, much-crevassed descent. This glacier is some 100 miles long and 15 miles wide. We had been delayed for two days by icefalls on the Sorgenfri Glacier, but once beyond there we found better sledging. By August 4, we had crossed the Christian IV Glacier after some difficulty with melt streams and crevasses. The 1935 and 1971 expeditions ascended Gunnbjørnsfjeld via Gino's Glacier which flows north-northwest from the summit. We did it differently. We left a depot, including one of the Nansen sledges, at the foot of Gino's Glacier and then sledged around the flank of the Watkins Mountains until we could attempt the ascent via an unnamed glacier on the peak's northern side. We made a depot at the foot of the unnamed glacier and established a high camp on August 7. After a summit attempt that same day which was frustrated by lassitude and soft snow, on August 8 we all reached the summit, which we feel to be about 4000 meters (13,123 feet), but which appears on the official Danish maps as 3700 meters (12,139 feet). There were few technical problems and we made the greater part of the ascent on skis. At the base of the summit pyramid, we joined the 1971 route on the northwest ridge. The 1935 party had ascended the south ridge. The northwest ridge did include a 150-foot pitch with a 40-foot section of ice, directly under the summit. Time prevented further climbs, as we were due back on the coast by August 19 for the flight out. On the return, we crossed the Christian IV Glacier to the Sorgenfri by Windy Gap, used and named by the 1935 expedition on its return to the coast. We checked one of their depot sites at Dumpen, unvisited in 52 years. Pemmican and butter were in good order, albeit the tins were a little rusty. The prize find was a sealed tin with some 80 bars of chocolate, still in perfect condition. Because from the summit of Windy Gap we could see that the surface of the Sorgenfri Glacier had deteriorated badly, we deposited the sledges and other equipment and backpacked to Sodalen, arriving there on August 18 after a round-trip of just under 200 miles.

STAN WOOLLEY, *England*

Snehätten, West Greenland. On August 13, Egidio Bolis, Dario De Nigro, Andrea Farina, Amedeo and Margherita Gatti, Emilio Moreschi, Giovanna Nava and I climbed Snehätten (Nugatsiaup Qaqa; 1765 meters, 5791 feet), the culminating point of Qeqertarssuaq (Nugatsiaq) Island, 100 kilometers north of Umanak. The climb on ice was easy. We set out from 650 meters, went up the Akerte valley and climbed the south spur. We were unroped and used crampons only for the last 250 meters. The mountain was probably first climbed by Greenlanders centuries ago in a time of glacial recession. We found on the top a huge ancient construction, 80 cms across the base and two meters tall.

PIERO NAVA, *Club Alpino Italiano*

Ketil, South Greenland. A strong four-man Austrian team from Lienz under the leadership of Siegfried Girstmair spent three weeks in June and July on the Tasermiut Fjord area. In very fine weather they were able to repeat the 1974 Austrian route on the south face of Ketil Fjeld (2010 meters, 6595 feet) in two days of climbing (UIAA V to VI difficulty). They also made a new route on the east face of Kirkespiret on the western side of the fjord and a three-day ski trip onto the inland icecap.

DOLFI ROTOVNIK, *Dansk Bjergklub*

Ketil Attempt. During four weeks in July and August, three Danes, Sören Smid, Uffe Mortensen and I, and Swede Magnus Nilsson climbed in the granite section of Tasermiut Fjord. Our main objective was the smooth west face of Ketil Fjeld. We gave up a new route after 250 meters on the right of the face beside the 1984 Piola route because of dangerous loose flakes. We turned to a repetition of the 1984 Catalan route. Six ropes were fixed and two nights spent in portaledges before a major föhn storm struck. After a sitting bivouac 400 meters below the top, the weather forced a retreat first to the wrecked portaledge camp and then all the way down. The weather was never settled during our stay, in strong contrast to that of spring and early summer, which gave South Greenland the warmest, sunniest weather in decades.

MICHAEL HJORTH, *Dansk Bjergklub*

Stauning Alper. I have just (February) received information on a French expedition led by François Wolf with two others. They did 400 kilometers on skis and made three first ascents. They descended all the mountains by *parapente*, the first time this has been done in Greenland. Details are lacking.

DOLFI ROTOVNIK, *Dansk Bjergklub*

Lauper Bjerg Attempt. East Greenland. The British Tasilaq Expedition started with four members: Anthony Day, Stuart Raeburn, Nigel Topping and

me. Unfortunately, Day had to leave the expedition early. Along with geological and glaciological studies, one of our major aims during our ten weeks in Greenland was to attempt the first British ascent of Lauper Bjerg (2580 meters, 8465 feet), first climbed by Swiss in 1938. After skiing 100 kilometers from Tasilaq Fjord, just south of the Arctic Circle, Raeburn, Topping and I reached the peak early on July 26. We decided to attempt a new route from the northeast, involving 1300 meters of ascent, long and committing, but technically straightforward. We skied to the foot of the climb that same day and made steady progress over mixed ground to the top of the subsidiary northeast spur, where I decided to return, allowing the other two to continue faster. Two abseils and scrambling down loose rock allowed Raeburn and Topping to work onto the northeast face. Unfortunately, when they were only 25 meters from the east ridge and a few hundred meters from the summit, they were hit by an avalanche. Both had only minor bruises, but after twelve hours on the mountain, they decided to retreat. By August 4, we had safely returned to Base Camp on Tasilaq Fjord.

GRAHAM POOLE, *Cambridge University, England*

MEXICO

Cerro Blanco. Steve Grossman, Peter Noebels and I made a new route on the western portion of the broad south face of this gigantic rock formation on January 1. The peak can be seen from the rural town of Peñón Blanco. The pillar is to the left of the south promontory, very distinctive in shape and reddish in tone. The rock is superb with fine slab climbing and some interesting shallow face cracks. (III, 5.9.)

FRED BECKEY

SOUTH AMERICA

Ecuador

El Obispo, 1986. The first Venezuelan expedition to the Altar group was led by Luis Troconis. We shouldered supplies to the traditional Base Camp south of El Obispo. On December 25, 1986, we placed two tents at 4900 meters and the following morning we set out in two teams for the summit (5319 meters, 17,450 feet). C. Pernalet and N. Rojas made a new variant up the southwest ridge, while Troconis, Dora Ocanto and I made the second ascent of the Calvario variant on the normal route. An Ecuadorian team led by M. Purúncajas climbed our route right behind us. We did not reach our tents until six A.M. the next morning while the Ecuadorians bivouacked on the wall. On