

GREENLAND NORTH LIVERPOOL LAND EXPEDITION 2018



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The compilers of this report and the members of the expedition agree that any or all of this report may be copied for the purposes of private research.

(Cover Photo Jim Gregson)

1. Introduction

Liverpool Land is a double-headed peninsula that lies to the north of Scoresby Sund on the east coast of Greenland.

The southern reaches of Liverpool Land have been extensively explored, but North Liverpool Land is little known, and prior to our expedition, had only been visited by four mountaineering teams although a few ski touring parties had operated on the periphery of the area. Several ascents were also made by a British survey party in 1971.

Jim Gregson led three of these expeditions (2007, 2014 and 2015), which all succeeded in making many first ascents. Although the peaks of North Liverpool Land are of modest height (none exceeding 1200m max) they rise from the sea and there remain many striking unclimbed peaks and mountaineering objectives in the area.

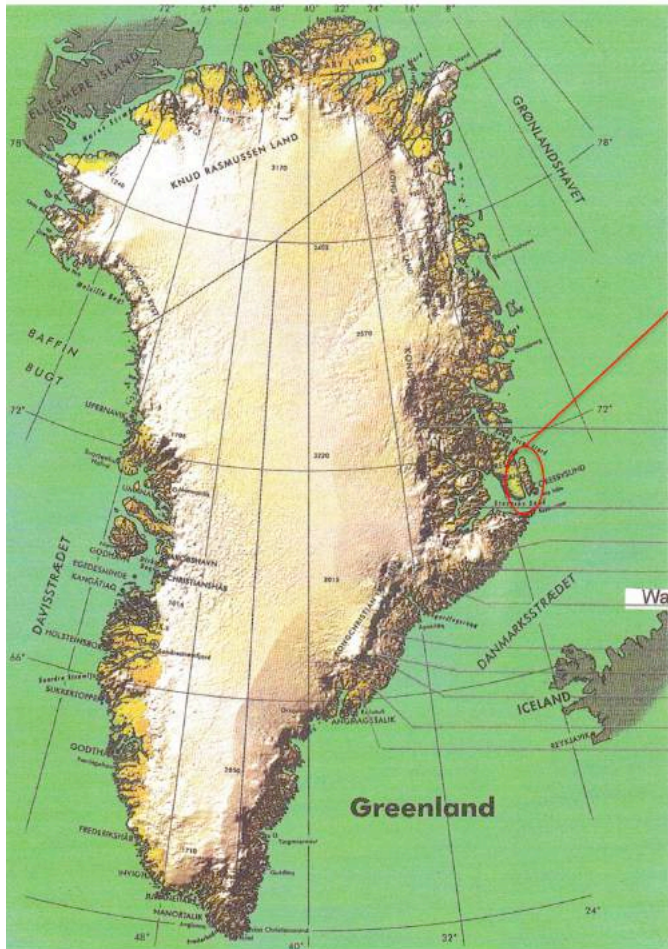
We flew via chartered aircraft from Iceland to Constable Pynt where we were transported by skidoo to our Base Camp which was located close to the 2014 and 2015 Base Camp sites. Our original intention was to camp further north, but we realised this would severely limit our access to many of the peaks (see map page 4).

The expedition had three objectives:

1. Exploration of the Mountains in the North Sector of North Liverpool Land
2. Make a High Level Ridge Traverse
3. Complete a Technical Ascent

All objectives were achieved. Highlights include:

1. Eleven ascents of previously unclimbed summits
2. High level ridge traverses of the Hulya and Midnight peaks
3. New technical ascents on the Tower of Silence and Longridge Peak



Liverpool Land

Shackletons Bjerg

Milne Land

Rignys Bjerg

Sortebrae Ranges

Watkins Bjerge/Gunnbjorns Fjeld

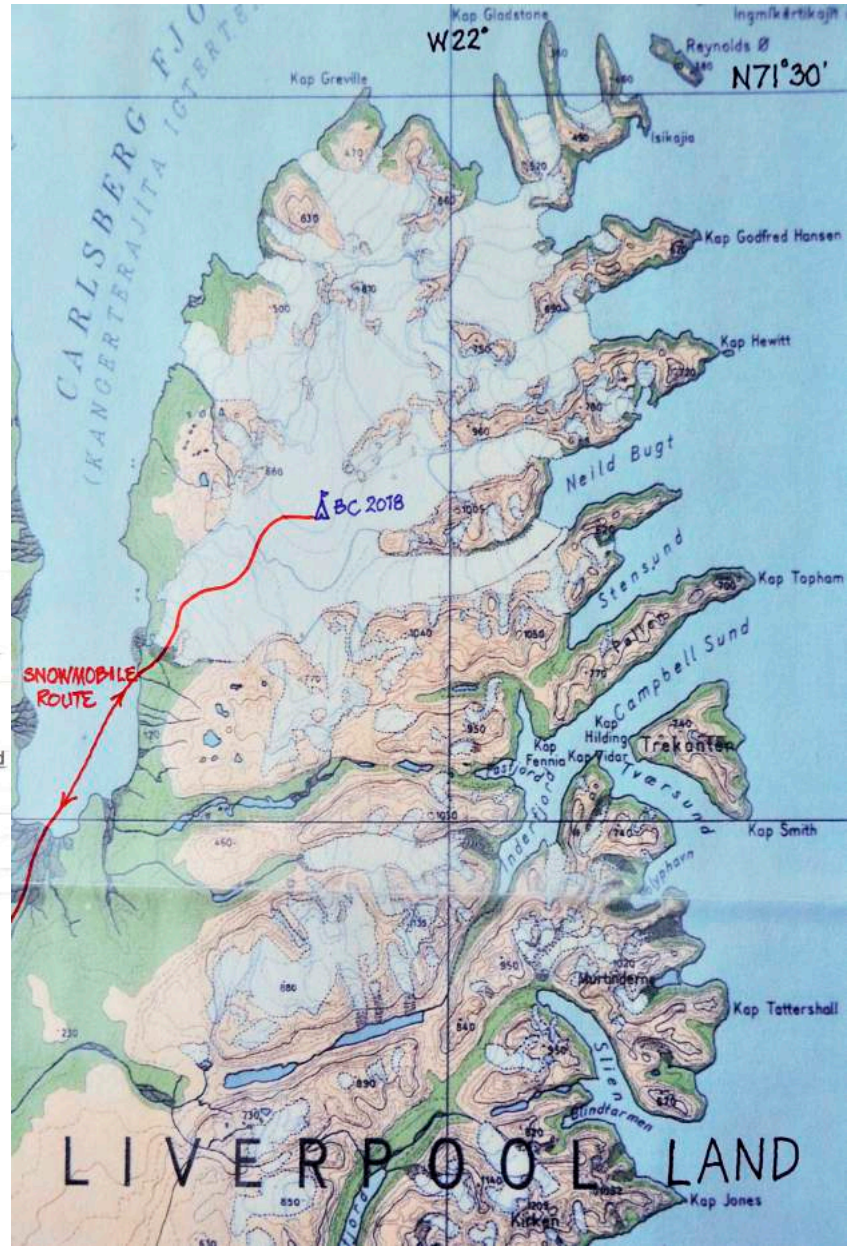
Kronprins Frederik Bjerge

Champs-Elysees Glacier

Pourquoi-pas Glacier

Schweizerland

Tasiilaq Fjeldhytte



2. The Team

During the planning phase for the expedition, attempts were made to recruit potential team members via contacts in the Alpine Club and elsewhere, as this approach had worked well in 2014 and 2015. Unfortunately in 2018 there was little or no interest from younger people, probably due to costs and likely duration of the expedition, so although the team had an open policy towards recruitment the real commitment this time lay with the following very experienced people.

Simon Richardson, 57, British, Mountaineer and Writer

Active Scottish winter climber with over 600 new routes to his credit. Has climbed extensively in the Alps (15 first ascents in Mont Blanc Range). Successful expeditions to the Andes, Himalaya, Karakoram, Alaska, Caucasus and St. Elias Range. Recent expeditions include 16-day ski traverse of South Georgia climbing new peaks along the way (2016), and first ascent of 1300m-high SW Pillar of Monarch Mountain in Canada's Coast Mountains (2017).

James (Jim) Gregson, 70, British, Retired Schoolteacher, Author, Photographer

50+ years experience as mountaineer. Has climbed very widely throughout European Alps, Pyrenees and Norway, as well as all over the UK summer and winter. Experienced telemark-style ski mountaineer especially in Norway. 2018 will see JG take part in his 18th Greenland expedition since 1991, most of these as leader, and all unguided. Author of "Exploring Greenland" (Vertebrate Publishing 2012). Dozens of first ascents in Greenland to date.

Sandra Gregson, 71, British, Retired Bank Employee

40+ years experience as mountaineer. Almost identical experience as Jim Gregson above and has been on just three fewer Greenland expeditions to date.

Ingrid Baber, 51, German, Environmental Scientist

Very competent skier and climber. Has been a member of two previous Greenland expeditions under leadership of JG when completed several good first ascents. Good camping skills in glacier terrain. A frequent visitor to Norway for ski touring and has also made several adventurous solo trips abroad recently to Iran and New Zealand.

Mark Robson, 48, British, IT Manager

Keen and experienced British mountaineer with Scottish first ascents in summer and winter. Has climbed big walls in Norway inc the Troll Wall, and in USA inc one-day ascent of The Nose, El Capitan, Yosemite. Many classic routes in European Alps and Dolomites. First

ascents in Coast Range, BC, Canada. Experienced ski tourer in Scotland and Norway. Ultra-runner recently. Completed Berghaus Dragons Back Race 315km along mountain spine of Wales. Member of Dundonnell Mountain Rescue Team.

Ron Kenyon, 66, British, Retired Accountant

Principally a rock climber in the UK, extensively from N to S including Scottish islands. Has also climbed in Switzerland, France, Spain, Balkans, Morocco and USA, with numerous first ascents at home and abroad. In bigger mountains has climbed in the Alps, Russian Caucasus, and Himalaya. Keen skier/ski tourer with experience in the UK plus Bernese Oberland, Silvretta, Lyngen peninsula of Norway, Georgian Caucasus. One previous trip to East Greenland.



Setting off down the North Arm of the Neild Bugt Glacier with Hulya, Kuldefjeld, Høngbjerg and Castle Peak on the skyline. (Photo Jim Gregson)

3. Climbing Literature and Maps

Mountaineering in North Liverpool Land has been well documented as follows:

2007 British Expedition

North Liverpool Land, Various Ascents, Jim Gregson, American Alpine Journal 2009, pp154-155

2012 Australian Expedition

North Liverpool Land, Various Ascents, Gemma Woldendorp, American Alpine Journal 2013, pp184-185

Their expedition was reported on the BMC website: <<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/australian-women-make-first-ascents-in-liverpool-land>>

It is also worth watching this video by the same couple: <<https://vimeo.com/80243598>>

2014 British Expedition

The Really Northern Playground, North Liverpool Land, East Greenland, Jim Gregson, Alpine Journal 2014, pp167-176

North Liverpool Land: Ascents and Ski Descents, Jim Gregson, American Alpine Journal 2015, pp183-184

2015 British Expedition

A Polar Bear had Walked by Unseen, North Liverpool Land, East Greenland 2015, Jim Gregson, Alpine Journal 2016, pp110-119

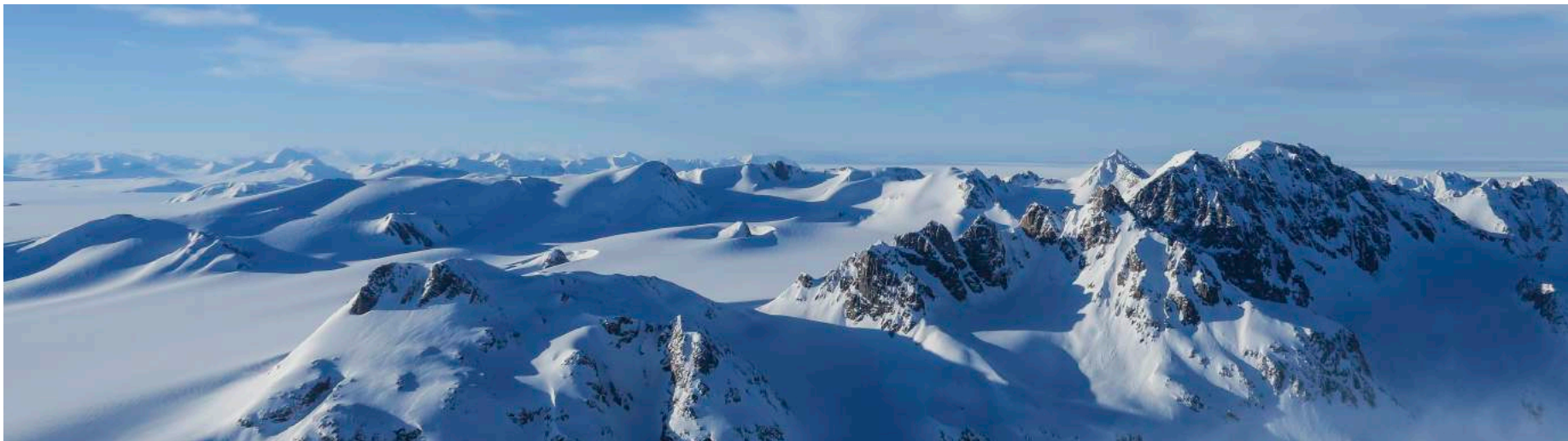
North Liverpool Land, Many First Ascents Above The Icecap, Jim Gregson, American Alpine Journal 2016, pp178-179

Historical Correction: The First Ascent of Hongberg (aka Mount Mighty), Lindsay Griffin, American Alpine Journal 2017, p178

The best map is Saga Maps sheet "ITTOQQORTOORMIIT Scoresbysund" at scale 1:250,000. This is a compilation map based on official K&M Danish Survey sheets. GEUS, the Geological Survey of Greenland and Denmark (www.geus.dk) holds its own database and publishes a series of topographic maps at the same scale. GEUS can also produce 'bespoke maps' for any given area that is covered by that database, and they can be ordered in a variety of scales. The extent of glaciation and more up to date spot heights are the main differences compared with the maps noted above.

K&M have aerial photograph coverage for many parts of Greenland at scale 1:150,000 but some of these photographs have definitely not kept pace with the quite drastic developments being wrought by global warming and climate change which are affecting the Arctic, so these photographs are not nowadays a sure guide to conditions in the field.

Although Google Earth imagery gives quite good overall impression of the topography of the area by comparison with the available maps, it rapidly breaks down in resolution when magnified up to a scale that might be usable in the field becoming very pixellated and thus useless as a guide to navigation or precise orientation. This may be due to the orbits of satellites covering the High Arctic not being quite so close to the ideal as could be wished for. It would not be wise or prudent to rely on Google Earth as a prime source of topographical information for this part of the world.



Looking north from the summit of Mount Thistle towards Castle Peak, The Seven Dwarfs group, Kuldefjeld and Høngbjerg. The North Arm of the Neild Bugt glacier lies behind. (Photo Simon Richardson)

4. Expedition Summary

The mountains of northern Liverpool Land in East Greenland are no higher than Ben Nevis but they look like striking alpine peaks rising straight out of the sea. Having been a pioneer climber and explorer in this area I was eager to return to try to make further first ascents and explore new territory so in 2018, three years after my previous visit I was able with friends to put together a group of keen climbers and skiers to join a new expedition for that purpose.

From Iceland we flew into Greenland at the airstrip of Constable Pynt, Nerlerit Inaat in the middle of April 2018, to find the place heavily snowed up after some recent bad weather. A day later we loaded up all of our kit and expedition supplies onto sledges and snowmobiles for a journey north over sea ice and winding river valleys and after several hours of “bump and bang” travel we were driven up onto the small ice cap in North Liverpool Land where we set up our Base Camp at the confluence of the two arms of the Neild Bugt Glacier. This was close to a previously used location, which allows very good access to the most impressive peaks of the area.

It was noticeably colder, and there was much more snow on the mountains than had been the case in 2015, but after all Mid-April is still really winter this far north (Lat. 71 deg.) Once we had the camp set up, protected with a trip-wire to warn of any possible polar bear incursions and held a rifle drill just in case, we made a an introductory ski tour so that those making their first trip to Greenland could get a feel for the lie of the land, maps for this area being somewhat cursory to say the least.

Luck was with us as far as the weather went at this stage, and in fact we enjoyed a run of ten or so days of very good sunshine and little wind as we set about some of our mountaineering adventures. The first outing we made yielded two new routes on Castle Peak, fairly close to camp, allowing us to test the snow conditions, but also to realise that the cold conditions would not be conducive to technical rock climbing at a high standard, so we looked for climbing of a more mixed nature.

Over this first part of the trip we managed in various combinations to reach a number of new summits but also to complete several very adventurous new routes and traverses on some peaks that my own groups had climbed during earlier visits. These outings produced the first ascent of the impressive Tower of Silence, high level traverses over Høngbjerg (aka Mount Mighty) and Kuldefjeld, and the several tops of the Hulya group, the first ascent of “The Long Ridge” on the eponymous Longridge Peak, reminiscent of Tower Ridge, two more of the unclimbed summits in the Seven Dwarfs group and others. During some exploratory ski tours further new summits were reached, among them Bloqqortoq and Qaqqaq Jutta and Fox Tor on Old Man’s Peak.

As we wished to investigate more new ground we skied further afield on some days to discover if other interesting objectives might be found. At this stage the snow conditions for ski travel and descents were very good so we covered quite a lot of distance, at the same

time as picking up some smaller summits as part of our tours. In the more northerly reaches of the area we could see that access to new peaks would be more complex due to steeply falling glaciers, which might need a change of camp location, but there remain any number of very attractive peaks for the determined explorer.

Leaving camp heading south some of us made a very long ski trip into and along the southern arm of the Neild Bugt Glacier, covering several kilometres until we reached the very snout of the glacier dropping vertically into the still frozen sea in the fjords. Here we again came across quite a lot of polar bear tracks, having already seen more such tracks further inland, making us glad to have a firearm with us as a precaution in case the 'neighbours' or 'local residents' proved to be unfriendly. It was evident from our map that the glacier here had retreated for a noticeable distance inland by comparison with its position on the map. We also note some very good-looking peaks, which could be accessed from this branch of the glacier.

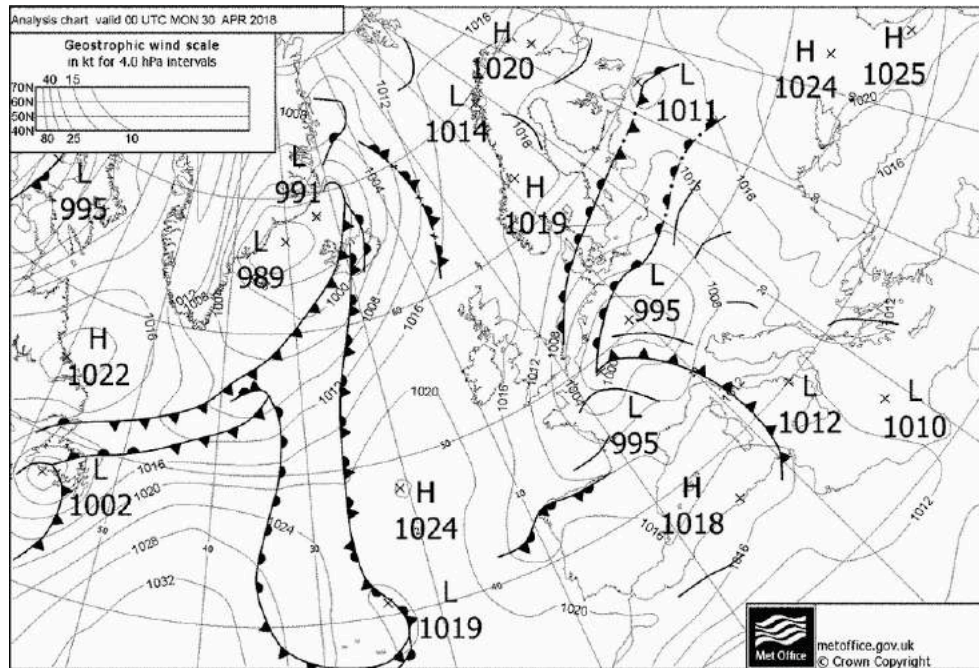
Thus after ten days we were sitting pretty and anticipating more good days to come. Little did we suspect that fate would rapidly overtake us. Taking a rest day in camp in brilliant sunshine one of us commented "We'll soon be in fog!", and very quickly we were, as the bank of fog rolled over us and the temperature dropped as the sun was blanked off. Very soon after that a wind sprang up and then with astonishing rapidity we were plunged into a storm, the like of which I had seldom seen over the twenty-five years of Arctic expeditioning I have been involved in.

The storm worsened, and raged non-stop, day and night, for the next three full days, and unusually for the Arctic brought a lot of new, heavy wet snow. The tents of course formed obstacles to the wind and we were getting very heavily drifted up. The pressure values were amazingly low and as the wind shifted direction the drifting process came from more than one direction. For two of our four tents this led to almost complete burial and entombment for the occupants until it became absolutely necessary to brave the outdoors and go out to shovel off the masses of snow. I don't quite know how the pole wands of my own trusted expedition tent did not actually break but thankfully they did not but were left with bends that far exceeded their normal configuration and will need replacing.

Our very carefully constructed latrine was lost completely, with no sign that it had ever existed. We had also built a "sun saloon" enclosure, which we had to convert into use for obvious purposes – but even that eventually was lost as the weather from then on did us no favours. Although the worst of the storm finally relented, the camp area had to be cleared somewhat, leaving us as occupants of a rather snowy maze complex. Worse was the fact that the peaks were now blanketed in heavy new snow with consequent very elevated avalanche risk that was to hamper our mountain activities. The weather stayed unsettled with no more prolonged periods of sunshine to settle things down, so in all we lost perhaps a week of our climbing time. We did though set out for more exploratory ski trips and by bold opportunism a few more new summits were gathered in, before we had to ready ourselves for a pickup by our team of snowmobile drivers.

Having made very good progress with sorting and re-packing our kit, it was frustrating to experience another night that brought almost a metre depth of new snow once more, burying everything we had carefully got dry. Having confirmed our pickup arrangements by a satellite phone call we were pleased that the drivers turned up as expected and after a quick loading up period we were transported down off the glacier and ice cap to cross the sea ice in Carlsberg Fjord, with a stop to take a very close look at some spectacular frozen-in icebergs on the way. The return journey to Constable Pynt was smoother due to the copious amounts of new snow and after our trials by storm we were very glad to check in for one night at the amusingly-named "Hilton", the airstrip accommodation block, and after a much needed shower to sit down at tables in the airstrip canteen for a good meal of non-expedition food. The next day we flew back across the Denmark Straits to Akureyri in Iceland and thence to Reykjavik. We then had a day or two in Iceland to wind down before returning to the UK after a memorable and productive trip.

Jim Gregson



Weather chart for 30 April (start of 5-day storm) showing low pressure centred over East Greenland.

5. The Climbing

A total of eleven new summits were climbed, plus eight new routes were found on previously ascended peaks. In addition repeat ascents were made of four peaks previously climbed, plus a number of lengthy exploratory ski tours.

New Summits Climbed:

23-Apr-18, Tower of Silence (730m), Silence is Golden (300m, TD) - MR, SR
24-Apr-18, Bloqqortoq (657m), North Ridge (100m, F) - JG, SG, RK, IB
24-Apr-18, Qaqqaq Jutta (697m), North Ridge (100m, F) - JG, SG, RK, IB
26-Apr-18, Hulya 5 (830m), Firepot Couloir (400m, AD) - MR, SR
26-Apr-18, Hulya 4 (831m), East-West Traverse (D) - MR, SR
26-Apr-18, Hulya 3 (844m), East-West Traverse (D) - MR, SR
26-Apr-18, Hulya 2 (811m), East-West Traverse (D) - MR, SR
28-Apr-18, Dwarf 1- Grumpy (870m), North Spur (330m, D) - MR, SR
28-Apr-18, Dwarf 3- Bashful (840m), North Gully Headwall (300m, D) - MR, SR
05-May-18, Mount Reckless (976m), North Flank (Ski ascent) - IB, MR, SR
05-May-18, Midnight Peak (995m), West Ridge Traverse (AD) - IB, MR, SR

New Routes on Previously Ascended Peaks:

22-Apr-18, Castle Peak (780m), Arctic Wisdom (300m, PD) - MR, SR
22-Apr-18, Castle Peak (780m), Noynek Buttress (300m, PDsup) - JG, SG, RK, IB
23-Apr-18, Dwarf 7 - Sleepy (740m), South Ridge (100m PD) - MR, SR
24-Apr-18, Longridge Peak (960m), The Long Ridge (450m, D) - MR, SR
26-Apr-18, Hulya 1 (830m), East-West Traverse (D) - MR, SR
27-Apr-18, Mount Thistle (1040m), West Flank (500m, Ski ascent) - IB (RK to Gorse Point)
27-Apr-18, Kuldefjeld (980m), West Ridge (450m, AD) - MR, SR
27-Apr-18, Høngbjerg - aka Mt Mighty (1005m), West Ridge (100m, PD) - MR, SR

In addition there were ascents of Diamond Peak (890m), The Beacon (660m), Old Man's Peak (707m), Bird Bone Point (726m) and exploration of the South Arm of the Neild Bugt Glacier.

The following diary entries describe the key ascents:

22-Apr-18, Castle Peak (780m), Arctic Wisdom (300m, PD)

Mark and I set off for the north face of Castle Peak at about 10am. The 4km ski takes just over an hour. We change boots and then head into the scoop under the north face. There are two blunt ribs. We decide on the left one because it is mixed all the way and we are uncertain about the snow conditions. Jim, Sandy, Ingrid and Ron are headed for the right-hand rib.

Changing boots and gearing up takes about 30min and then we head down into the scoop, which is deeper and steeper than it looked from afar. The snow is semi-consolidated and firm and we make fast progress. We gain the crest of the rib via a slanting ramp on the left then follow the broad crest up easy mixed ground to the summit snow slopes.

Mark leads on a single rope and I follow. It is very straightforward so we do not place any gear and are in the top after 45min. We have lunch on the top and take in the view. There is no wind. We can see the mountains down Ron the foot of the Neild Bugt glacier and to the head of the glacier beyond Mount Mighty. We can also see the right side of the Tower of Silence that is cut by a Scottish-style gully leading up to the snowy south ridge. We resolve to climb it tomorrow whilst it is still in winter condition.

We descend the East Ridge which gives an excellent scramble - a bit like the easier sections of the Cuillin Ridge - then we walk back along the glacier through ankle-deep snow to our skis. An hour ski back and are back at camp by 3.15pm. Overall we travelled 8km on skis and 3km on foot. Mark's altimeter gives 317m of ascent for the route.

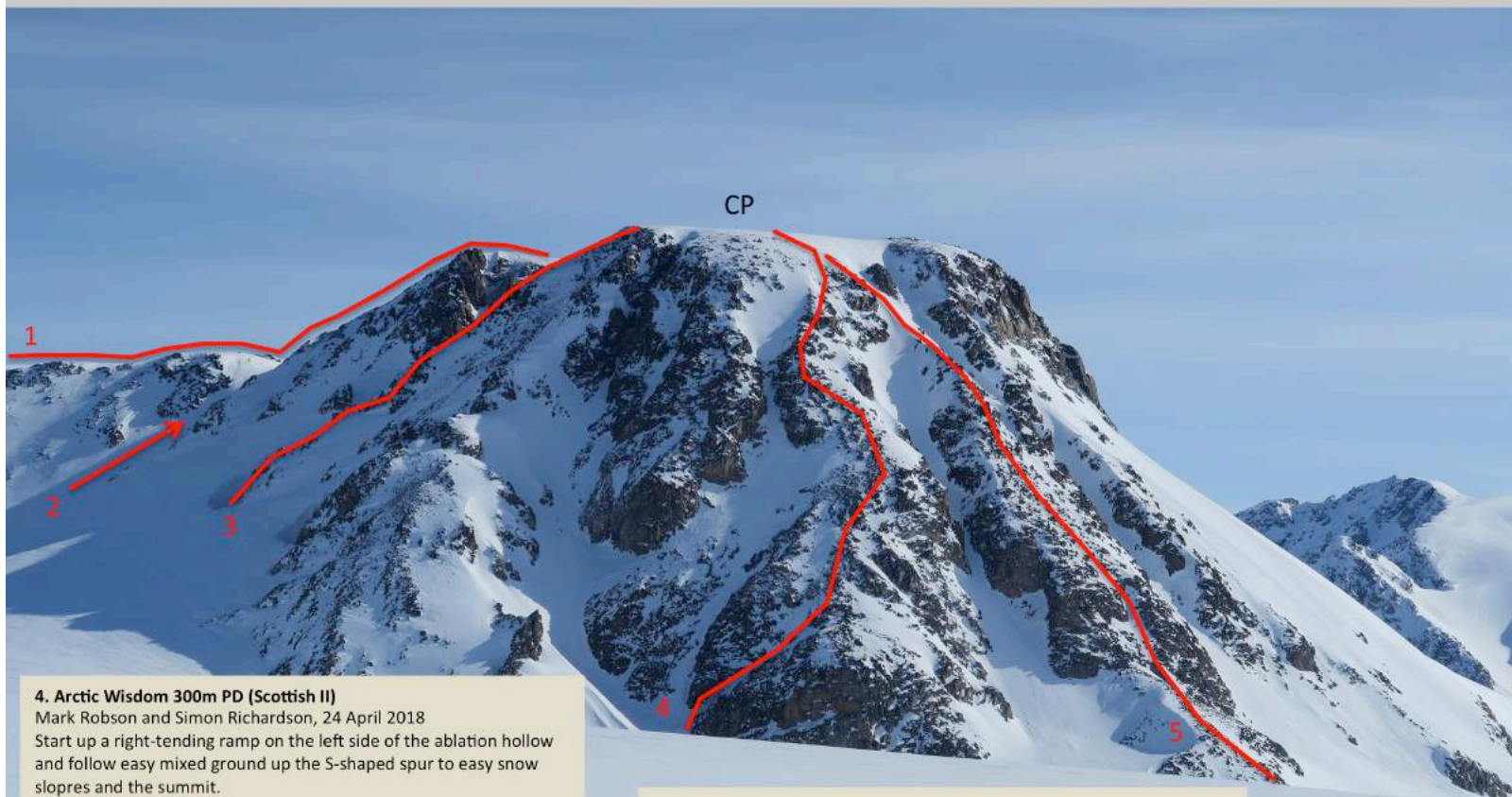
Simon Richardson

22-Apr-18, Castle Peak (780m), Noynek Buttress (300m, PDsup)

Simultaneously to the above ascent, the two rope teams of Gregson & Gregson, Kenyon & Baber made another first ascent on Castle Peak - Noynek Buttress, (300m, PD sup) – lying parallel to and right of Arctic Wisdom. This line was accessed from the ablation hollow at its foot then followed a series of shallow snow/ice grooves up the buttress centre to where it became a narrow snow arête dividing two couloirs. This arête led to a steepening headwall, which was climbed bearing left until it was possible to outflank an incipient cornice to exit the face and gain the summit. Descent was made by the line of Postern Gate, a route climbed in 2015.

Jim Gregson

Castle Peak (780m)



4. Arctic Wisdom 300m PD (Scottish II)

Mark Robson and Simon Richardson, 24 April 2018

Start up a right-tending ramp on the left side of the ablation hollow and follow easy mixed ground up the S-shaped spur to easy snow slopes and the summit.

5. Noynek Buttress 300m PD+

Jim Gregson, Sandy Gregson, Ron Kenyon and Ingrid Baber, 22 April 2018

Access the buttress from the ablation hollow at its foot then follow shallow grooves running up the centre until it develops into a snow arête dividing two couloirs. Bear L onto the headwall as it steepens and then move R to turn an incipient cornice before exiting onto summit slopes. Summit of Castle Peak is then a short walk further.

CP	Castle Peak (780m)
1	Eastern Ramparts Ridge (FA Gregson/Gregson/Bonney/Baber, 2015)
2	Postern Gate (PD) (FA Gregson/Gregson/Bonney/Baber, 2015)
3	Original Route (PD) (FA Sebire/Woldendorp, 2012)
4	Arctic Wisdom 300m (PD)
5	Noynek Buttress 300m (PD+)

Photo Simon Richardson

23-Apr-18, Tower of Silence (730m), Silence is Golden (300m, TD)

Mark and I wake at 6am and we're away by 8am. From the Dwarfs-Castle Peak col we traverse under the west face of the Tower until we reach the steep snow tongue that bears up and left into the gully. The ground is a little confusing so we use yesterday's photo on the camera to check.

Mark runs together two pitches up and left and belays in a bergschrund-cum-hole. I traverse left into the base of the gully and climb it on good thin ice to where it is blocked by a chockstone. I find some good gear on the right but the way ahead looks thin so I hang my rucksack off the runner before climbing a thin ice streak on the left side of the chock stone to the continuation gully above.

The way ahead is blocked by a precariously balanced chock stone, so Mark steps left into a parallel gully line to the left. This gives a brilliant pitch over several bulges with good gear. It reminds me of pictures of climbing in the Ruth Gorge of Alaska with red granite and white ice.

I continue up the final part of the gully and climb a long snow slope to a belay a little below the crest of the south ridge. Mark traverses left and climbs an open couloir with an awkward rocky exit to the crest.

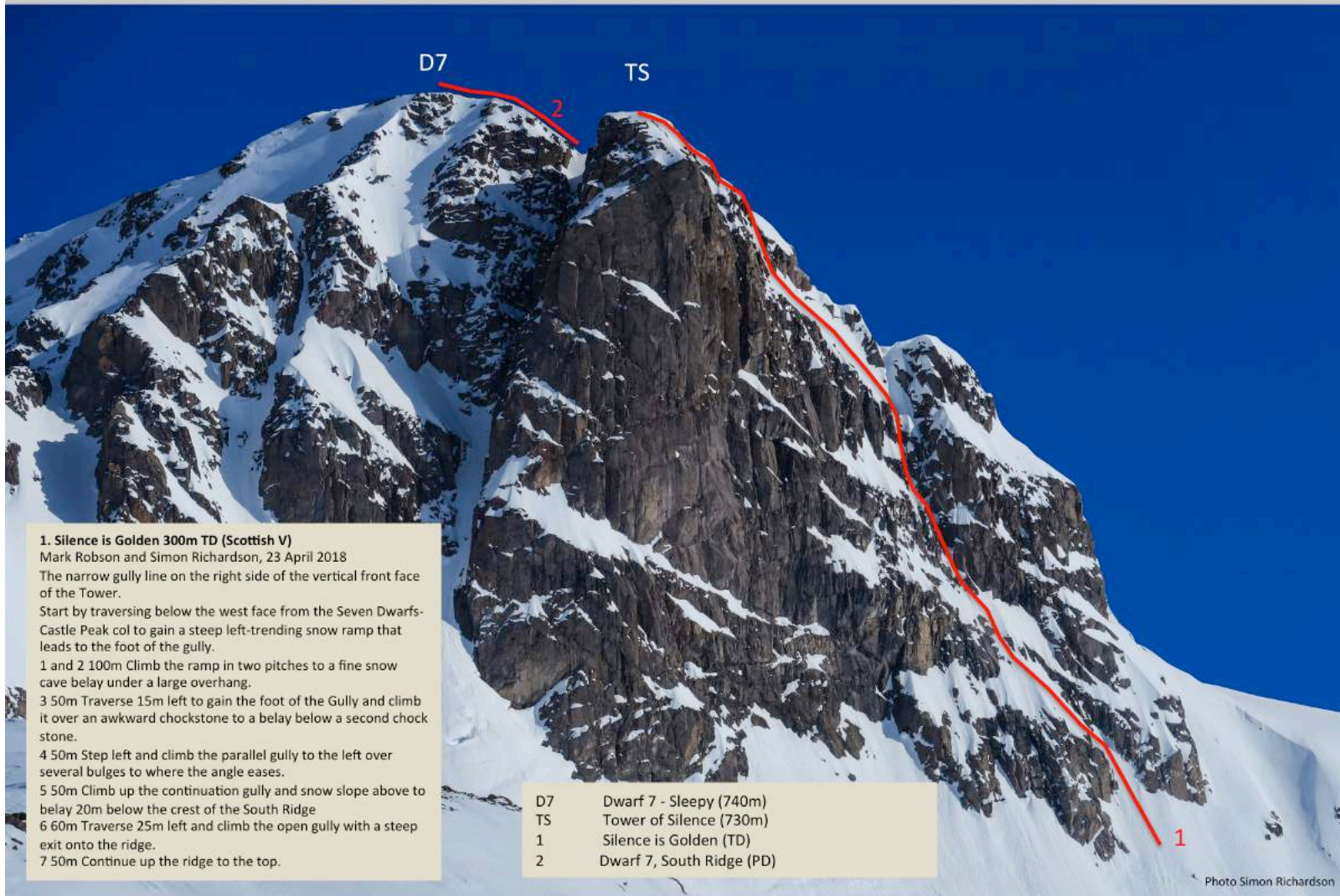
We are confused by the view ahead. We are concerned that the ridge will continue to be pinnacled and think the summit is over to the right. (This turns out to be the top of Dwarf 7). To avoid the ridge I lead down on the east side for 25m and belay on a pinnacle. Mark climbs down and then goes diagonally right across a snow slope to a col. Mark looks down it and realises that it is the top of the steep snow gully between the Tower of Silence and Dwarf 7. So he heads back up and left onto the summit. I follow and we are on top!

The lower top (western) is the most spectacular and we take photos. Since we are so close to Dwarf 7 we decide to traverse across to it and see if we can descend Jim and Sandy's route Nanok. This turns out to be an excellent plan and 45min later we are in the ablation scoop under Dwarf 7 where we grab a late lunch.

The ski back takes less than an hour and we are at camp at 5.30pm. Our route is not perfect as it does not climb the very steep rock on the Tower but it does climb the west face by a logical mixed route. And with the current temperatures, mixed climbing is the only real option at the moment.

Simon Richardson

Tower of Silence (730m)



1. Silence is Golden 300m TD (Scottish V)
Mark Robson and Simon Richardson, 23 April 2018
The narrow gully line on the right side of the vertical front face of the Tower.
Start by traversing below the west face from the Seven Dwarfs-Castle Peak col to gain a steep left-trending snow ramp that leads to the foot of the gully.
1 and 2 100m Climb the ramp in two pitches to a fine snow cave belay under a large overhang.
3 50m Traverse 15m left to gain the foot of the Gully and climb it over an awkward chockstone to a belay below a second chock stone.
4 50m Step left and climb the parallel gully to the left over several bulges to where the angle eases.
5 50m Climb up the continuation gully and snow slope above to belay 20m below the crest of the South Ridge
6 60m Traverse 25m left and climb the open gully with a steep exit onto the ridge.
7 50m Continue up the ridge to the top.

D7	Dwarf 7 - Sleepy (740m)
TS	Tower of Silence (730m)
1	Silence is Golden (TD)
2	Dwarf 7, South Ridge (PD)

Photo Simon Richardson

24-Apr-18, Longridge Peak (960m), The Long Ridge (450m, D)

Mark and I are up at 6am and away by 7.45am. The weather does not look very settled today with high grey cloud, but more worryingly, low cloud bubbling up from the sea at the end of the glacier.

The plan is to climb the 'Long Ridge' on Longridge Peak so we set off down the glacier for 1hr 45min and 7.5km to the foot of the route. Jim's photos showed a direct start up a groove in the lower buttress but this did not look very attractive on our recce three days before, so we decide to take the most natural line from the left toe of the buttress which follows a snow tongue and rocky ribs onto the crest.

We start climbing at 10.10am and two blocks of climbing lead to the rounded snowy whaleback crest. We move quickly up this expecting the ridge to be like this all the way to the top but are surprised to round a rise to find the ridge thins to a sharp winding crest. To start there is an awkward rock step that we bypass by traversing right and climbing a short snow gully through the step itself. Beyond there are two more steps, both 10m high, before the ridge merges with the upper snow slope.

The weather has been threatening all morning and cloud has covered the surrounding tops. Mark leads up quickly along the summit ridge. I join him, snap a quick photo and then we head down. It's 12.30pm. Fortunately Mark can see the lower rocky rib of Jim, Sandy and Ingrid's route 'Cryogenic' through the murk so we head down sastrugi slopes to reach snow slopes on the flank of the rib.

Lower down we reduce the length of the rope to avoid falling in the bergschrund and contour round below the spur and arrive back at the skis at 1.10pm. We head off back at 1.40pm and arrive back at camp after 3.15pm.

Simon Richardson

Longridge Peak (960m)

Photo Jim Gregson



LP Longridge Peak (960m)
DP Diamond Peak (850m)
1 Original Route (PD)
(FA Sebire/Woldendorp, 2012)
2 The Long Ridge (D)
3 Cryogenic (PD+)
(FA Gregson/Gregson/Baber 2015)

2. The Long Ridge 450m D (Scottish III)
Mark Robson and Simon Richardson, 24 April 2018
The prominent south ridge well seen in profile from the west end of the Neild Bugt glacier. An excellent mountaineering route similar in length and difficulty to Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis. Gain the Ridge via a snow ramp on the west side and follow this to a broad snow crest. Climb this easily to where the Ridge narrows and follow it over a series of rock steps in an excellent position to where the Ridge merged with the final snow slope. Follow this to the short summit ridge that leads to the top in 50m.

24-Apr-18, Bloqqortoq (657m), North Ridge (100m, F)

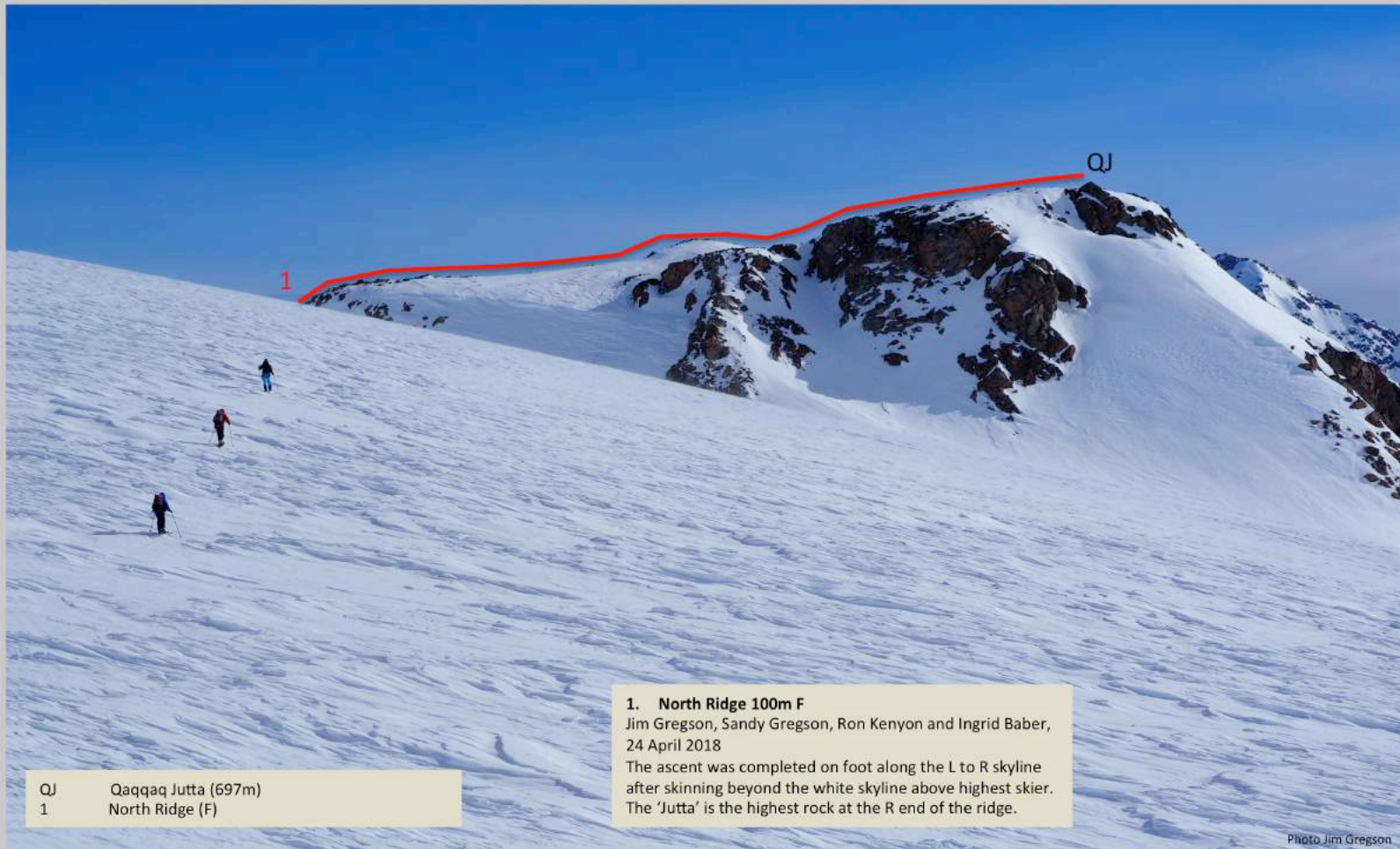
24-Apr-18, Qaqqaq Jutta (697m), North Ridge (100m, F)

The two Gregsons, Baber and Kenyon left camp to ski to the east to attempt to climb two of the minor summits projecting from the flanks of the Carlsberg Crest range. After an initial *descent*, they skinned up on a diagonal line until continuing on foot along a spur to the obvious topmost rock block perched on the spur, making the first ascent of 'Bloqqortoq' facing directly across the glacier to the Høngbjerg-Kuldefjeld- Seven Dwarfs range.

From this top they returned to their skis then skinned further east to gain access to a second, longer spur, which again was climbed on foot to its far end where a large rock spur jutted out above the nunataks. This gave the first ascent of 'Qaqqaq Jutta'. ('Qaqqaq' is Greenlandic for 'Mountain' and 'Jutta' is a piece of confection for the prominent rock projection). There followed a running ski descent on varied terrain down towards the nunataks and thus back to base camp.

Jim Gregson

Qaqqaq Jutta (697m)



QJ Qaqqaq Jutta (697m)
1 North Ridge (F)

1. North Ridge 100m F
Jim Gregson, Sandy Gregson, Ron Kenyon and Ingrid Baber,
24 April 2018
The ascent was completed on foot along the L to R skyline
after skinning beyond the white skyline above highest skier.
The 'Jutta' is the highest rock at the R end of the ridge.

Photo Jim Gregson

25-Apr-18, Ski Exploration to the North

The Gregsons, Baber and Kenyon set out to explore the approaches to peaks lying in the more northerly reaches of Liverpool land, where as far as is known, only one or two summits have been reached to date. They passed alongside the Carlsberg Crest by the extensive ablation channel below the peaks, passing beyond a first access bay used in 2014 and 2015, then passing the entry point to a through pass. Turning the corner of the ridge to run east they traversed steeper slopes to arrive at a projecting spur overlooking some of the northerly glacier basins. The glacier falls away very steeply below this point so access from here would be quite difficult, and not conducive to bringing pulks this way.

The spur gave extensive views to the north and east revealing a lot of interesting peaks and untrodden ground. Getting into this area would require a more roundabout approach from further west and probably a camp at a much lower altitude would be needed as a base. The rewards would be worth the effort of getting there, but there would probably be increased chance of polar bear encounters as there are several places where the glacier basins debouch into the sea. The map gives an overview of the terrain complexities, but does not adequately show the variety and number of peaks, which lie along the various crests.

The team then decided to take the opportunity to make the ascent of Diamond Peak (890m) by skinning up from the north side into the through pass before descending southeast onto the Neild Bugt Glacier by the two obvious nunataks before returning to base camp. The ridge between Diamond Peak and Longridge Peak has a very interesting-looking section of narrow crests and pinnacles, not known to have been traversed.

Jim Gregson

26-Apr-18, Hulya 5 (830m), Firepot Couloir (400m, AD)

26-Apr-18, Hulya Peaks Traverse (D)

After a day's rest Mark and I are ready to head back down the glacier to try Hulya Peak. We'd spotted a good gully line from Longridge Peak but when we arrive underneath it after two hours of skinning we realise that it is not complete with ice. Instead we decide to climb the couloir to its right that leads towards the leftmost summit of the five-summitted peak. Only the rightmost summit has been climbed (Hulya 1) via the west ridge (Marmot Ridge).

We move together up the couloir, which winds around through great scenery and is surprisingly amenable. Towards the top we veer left onto the north spur of Hulya 5. Some mixed then snow leads to a short chimney and the top. It's clear that we are not on the highest summit so we traverse west to Hulya 4 and then Hulya 3, which is the highest point. The climbing is continuously interesting with many ups and downs into the cols between the summits but a helpful rift along the summit spine is choked with snow so we are often descending or ascending gullies.

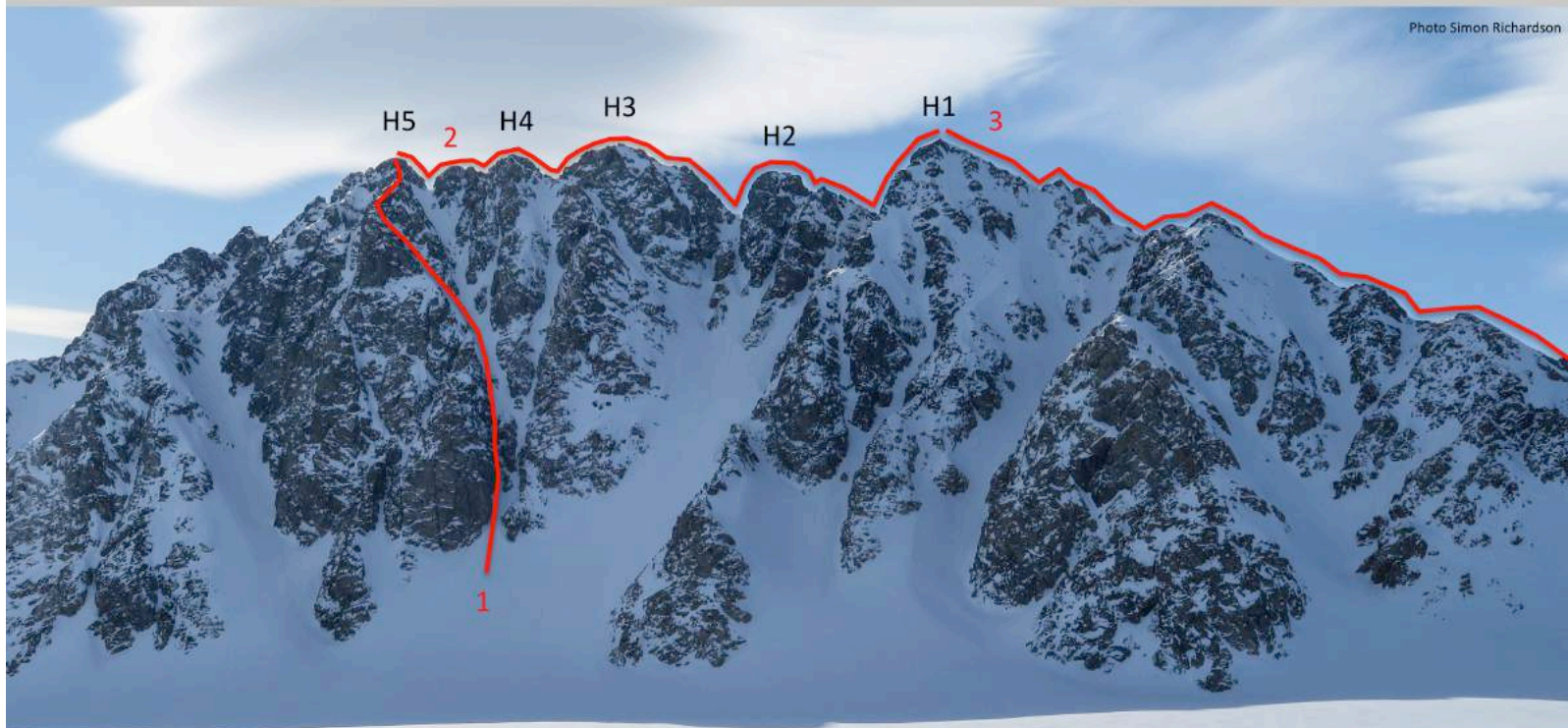
Once on the summit of Hulya 3 we decide the classy thing to do is continue the traverse onto Hulya 1 rather than descend the broad snow couloir below. The way across to Hulya 2 is straightforward but Hulya 1 presents a vertical rock arête. We turn it on the left on very steep snow to gain the airy summit. The top of the Marmot Ridge is more complex than it looked from the glacier but some good route finding on the north side of the towered crest takes us to the easy angled lower ridge. From here it is a 20min trudge back down the glacier to our skis.

We skin back fast and arrive at camp at 6.30pm after a very satisfying day.

Simon Richardson

Mount Hulya (844m)

Photo Simon Richardson



H5	Hulya 5 (830m)
H4	Hulya 4 (831m)
H3	Hulya 3 (844m)
H2	Hulya 2 (811m)
H1	Hulya 1 (830m)
1	Firepot Couloir (AD)
2	Hulya Peaks Traverse (D)
3	Marmotte Ridge (PD) (FA Buisse/Hoare 2014)

1. Firepot Couloir 400m AD (Scottish III)

Mark Robson and Simon Richardson, 26 April 2018

Climb the narrow snaking couloir (Scottish II) to the right of Hulya 5 (the leftmost summit) before breaking left onto the north spur 100m below the top. Turn a steep section via mixed ground on the left and move up to the summit triangle which is climbed by a short slanting chimney on the left.

2. Hulya Peaks Traverse D (Scottish III)

Mark Robson and Simon Richardson, 26 April 2018

The continuation traverse west across the remaining four Hulya summits provides an excellent (and lengthy) continuation.

27-Apr-18, Kuldefjeld (980m), West Ridge (450m, AD)

27-Apr-18, Høngbjerg - aka Mt Mighty (1005m), West Ridge (100m, PD)

Mark and I are a little tired after yesterday's big day so we have a more leisurely start and are away by 9am. The weather is overcast and everything looks a little grey but there is no wind.

The plan is to climb the West Ridge of Kuldefjeld and then traverse over to Mount Mighty. We ski slowly across and are surprised to find fresh polar bear tracks about 3km from camp. The prints are huge and you can see where it has dragged its claws through the snow. The prints are fresh too - probably just a few hours old. All a bit close for comfort!

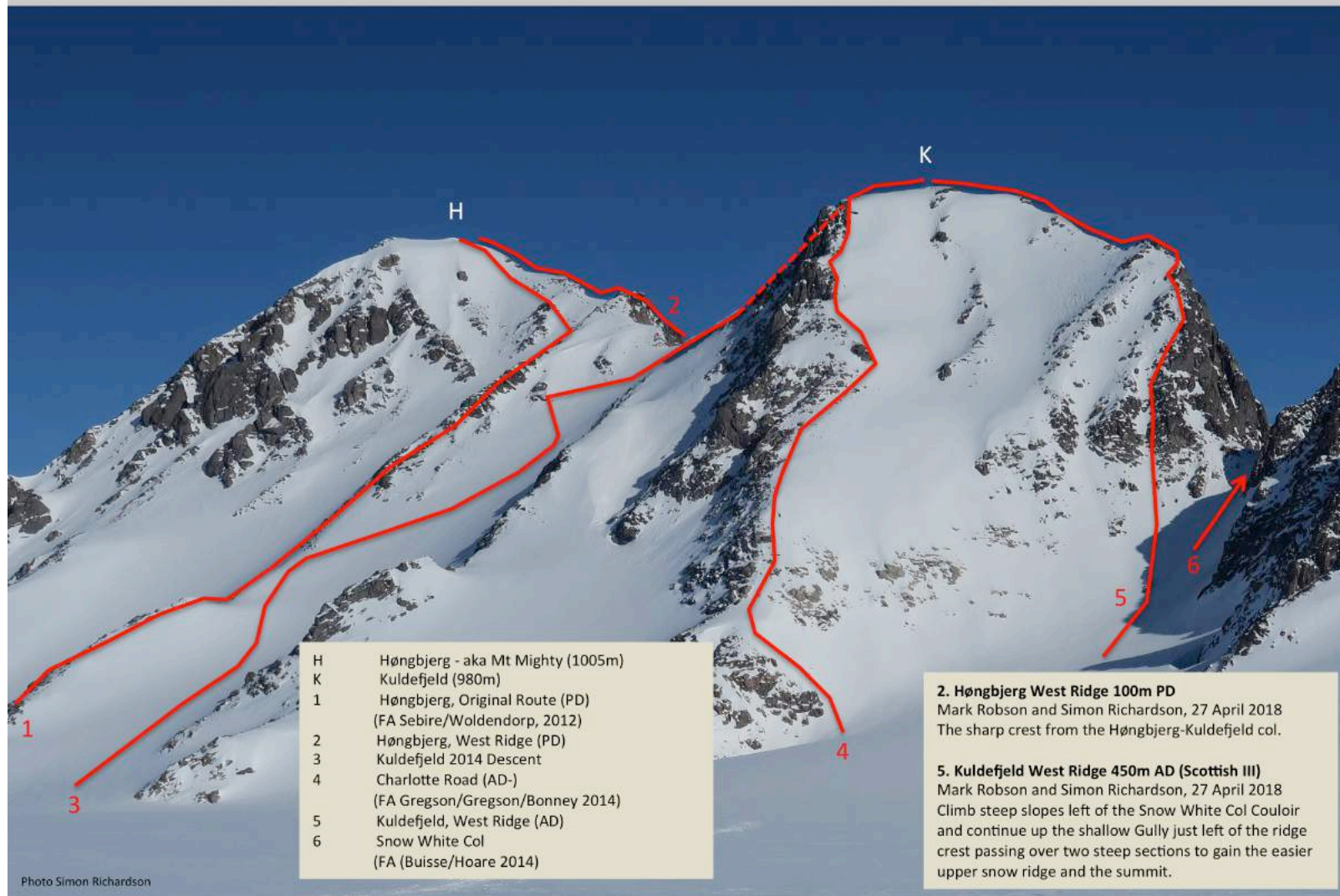
We're slow gearing up but are away by 11am. I kick steps up to the start of our line that follows a shallow mixed couloir to the left of the west ridge. Mark leads an excellent mixed pitch of Scottish III past a huge jammed block on good snow ice and I lead a similar pitch to where the angle eases. Mark takes over and we move together along the upper ridge to the summit. We sit down on a rock bench and enjoy the view and eat our lunch. We feel very relaxed and take our time.

My turn now to lead us down to Kuldefjeld-Mighty col and then up along the sharp snow arête of the west ridge to the summit of Mount Mighty. The situations are spectacular and we have a few flakes of snow as we approach the summit but it doesn't amount to much. We look for the 'message in a bottle' near the summit cairn but to no avail. (This cairn is positioned at the highest rocks just beyond the exit point of 'Snake in the Outback', some 50m distant from the true summit -JG).

Mark then leads us down Jim, Sandy and Ingrid's 2015 route 'Snake in the Outback' that takes an interesting line through mixed ground and sinuous snow fields back to the glacier. The snow conditions are very good and we heel down most of the way. I take over for the slog back up the glacier to our skis, which we reach at 3.30pm. Mark's GPS records that we travelled 7km on the mountain.

Simon Richardson

Høngbjerg - aka Mt Mighty (1005m) and Kuldefjeld (980m)



27-Apr-2018, Mount Thistle (1040m), West Flank (Ski Ascent, 500m)

It was somewhat overcast in the morning so four of us (Jim, Sandy, Ron and I) decided to head out for a ski. We headed towards the prominent lump south of our camp, skiing down about 200m and then up the glacier on the other side. Near the top of the glacier, Jim suggested that Ron and I could ski up Mount Thistle given we were relatively close by this time. I jumped at the chance and Ron was keen as well. We found a snow ramp heading up to the ridge, which had a number of rocky promontories along it.

Nearing the top, Ron decided to wait at a subsidiary top that we called Gorse Point (c1000m). I continued swiftly on to reach the top at 1040m. The sun was out by this time and the views were stunning in all directions, with a good view south towards Central Liverpool Land 'and the distinctive summit of Kirken with its twin steeple peaks. I headed back to catch up with Ron and then we skied down a very lovely slope, possibly the best ski descent of the trip!

We caught up with Jim and Sandy who meanwhile had ascended Fox Tor on Old Man's Peak (707m) and together we circumnavigated around the back of the mountain and skied back to camp.

Ingrid Baber

Note by Jim Gregson: Old Man Peak has a number of tops, Fox Tor being the highest as far as we could tell. The 2014 info from Mike Smith just says Old Man Peak was climbed but no more specific than that. Fox Tor had no cairn on it until Sandy and I erected one, and we think our approach to it was from a new direction.

See p32 for a topo of the Mount Thistle, West Flank ascent.

28-Apr-18, Dwarf 1- Grumpy (870m), North Spur (330m, D)

28-Apr-18, Dwarf 3- Bashful (840m), North Gully Headwall (300m, D)

Mark and I make an even later start this morning and it's a bit breezy. The others have set off to explore the southerly arm of the Neild Bugt glacier and possibly climb the east fore summit of Mount Thistle but we eventually get away by 10.30am aiming for the Dwarfs 1 and 3. Our proposed routes both share the same access couloir and we'd been saving them for a short(ish) day.

We ski slowly and gearing up takes an age but finally we're ready to start climbing at 12.30pm. Mark kicks steps up the initial couloir to where the side couloir to Dwarf 3 breaks out right. The wind is from the west (off the ice cap) and it is noticeably colder today but bright sunshine. We leave our sacks in a small ablation hollow and cross the main couloir (which leads straight to the Dwarf 1-2 col and the way Dwarf 2 was climbed) and head up steep snow onto the north spur of Dwarf 1. This leads around a subsidiary tower to the steep rocky summit tower.

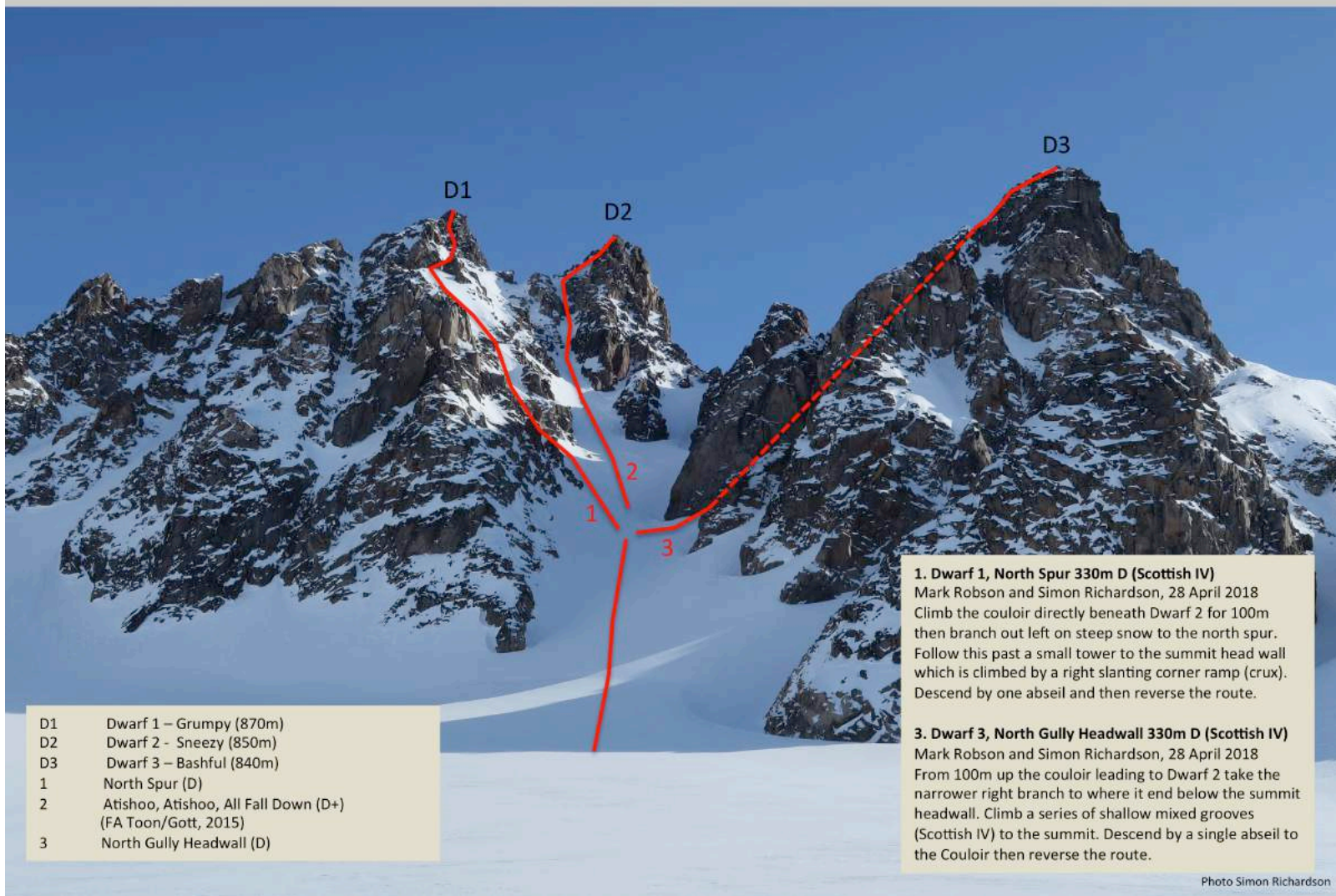
Mark leads off up and right up a right slanting mixed pitch and the summit. It's an excellent pitch, about Scottish IV with good snow ice whenever it gets steep and the granite provides excellent protection. I'm very cold at the belay and am glad to be moving but on the summit we're in the sunshine and it's pleasantly warm again. We build a small cairn (unusually everything is not snow covered) and I take a GPS reading. Rather gratifyingly Dwarf 1 appears to be the highest summit of the group.

We abseil back down to the stance (thankfully the ropes pull OK through the jagged rock) and we down climb swiftly back to our sacks where we have a quick lunch. Now it's Marks turn to lead up the right branching couloir to Dwarf 3. It veers round to the right and Mark belays on a small snow crest about a rope length below the summit. I try to go straight up but am shut down by blank rock after 10m so I downclimb back to the belay and start further left.

Once again a series of snow ice grooves of Scottish IV lead to the summit. Mark comes up and we rig an abseil from the summit block. Unfortunately I forget to take a GPS reading. A long 50m abseil takes us back into the couloir and then it's a quick heel down to our skis collecting our sacks en route. It's 5.30pm and it has been a remarkably enjoyable couple of ascents.

Simon Richardson

Dwarf 1 – Grumpy (870m) and Dwarf 3 – Bashful (840m)



- D1 Dwarf 1 – Grumpy (870m)
- D2 Dwarf 2 - Sneezy (850m)
- D3 Dwarf 3 – Bashful (840m)
- 1 North Spur (D)
- 2 Atishoo, Atishoo, All Fall Down (D+)
(FA Toon/Gott, 2015)
- 3 North Gully Headwall (D)

1. Dwarf 1, North Spur 330m D (Scottish IV)
Mark Robson and Simon Richardson, 28 April 2018
Climb the couloir directly beneath Dwarf 2 for 100m then branch out left on steep snow to the north spur. Follow this past a small tower to the summit head wall which is climbed by a right slanting corner ramp (crux). Descend by one abseil and then reverse the route.

3. Dwarf 3, North Gully Headwall 330m D (Scottish IV)
Mark Robson and Simon Richardson, 28 April 2018
From 100m up the couloir leading to Dwarf 2 take the narrower right branch to where it end below the summit headwall. Climb a series of shallow mixed grooves (Scottish IV) to the summit. Descend by a single abseil to the Couloir then reverse the route.

Photo Simon Richardson

28-Apr-18 Exploration of the South Arm of the Neild Bugt Glacier

The two Gregsons plus Baber, set off from camp to head south across into the southern arm of the Neild Bugt Glacier (Kenyon having opted to remain behind) with the initial intention of trying to make the first ascent of a spur peak projecting from the Mount Thistle massif – proposed name to be *Fangstmanstind* ('Hunter's Peak') if successful. The wind was so fierce and bitterly cold that this idea was abandoned in favour of a ski exploration down the several kilometres of glacier to its seaward end, which gave excellent reconnaissance of the terrain on both sides of the glacier.

Above the true left side rose the southern flanks of Castle Peak, the Seven Dwarfs, Kuldefjeld, Høngbjerg, the Hulyas and Farfarer Peak. It was interesting to note the extent of rock exposures along these south-facing slopes. On the true right there rose some other steep terrain including the fine projection that is the so-called "Mini-Matterhorn" (which deserves a more Arctic name when finally climbed). The big peak of Lancstuk, climbed in 2015, stands high above the glacier.

By comparison with the map, the Neild Bugt Glacier south arm has retreated by some considerable distance but still ends with a tall front falling directly into the sea, frozen at this time of year but still showing signs of frequent collapse. Polar bear tracks were much in evidence adjacent to this front. A side glacier also runs into Neild Bugt from the south at this point complicating the terrain further with its own front and seracs. The two enclosing peninsulas of Neild Bugt both hold quite extensive ridges of unclimbed peaks projecting far out into the Greenland Sea.

Jim Gregson

05-May-18, Mount Reckless (976m), North Flank (Ski Ascent)

05-May-18, Midnight Peak (995m), West Ridge Traverse (AD)

We only have two days left and time is running out. So much snow has fallen over the last five days that climbing is out of the question and steep slopes will be severely avalanche-prone.

Whilst lying in the tent we've been hatching a plan to explore the mountains at the end of the south arm of the Neild Bugt glacier. These look low-angled and can be ascended on skis so look relatively safe. We prepare for a quick dash with the capability to stay out overnight if necessary. We pack the bivouac tent, lightweight stove and food so we are ready to go as soon as the weather improves. Ingrid is keen to join us, and going as a three will give us strength in numbers.

The weather is still poor in the morning so we wait, but finally at 2.00pm it starts to clear and we are away an hour later. On the ski across the glacier we stop to look down the south arm of the Neild Bugt once our peaks come into view. They look extremely snowy and will involve traversing steep slopes that look avalanche-prone. Mark suggests that we climb Mount Thistle via the West Ridge (the way Ingrid climbed it on 27 April) instead, and see if we can access the two high unclimbed summits to the east from there. It's a good suggestion so we change our plan and Ingrid sets about breaking trail through the deep snow retracing her route from eight days before.

As we near the Thistle-Old Man's Peak col we head up steep slopes to reach a rocky tor on the skyline where we have a bite to eat, leave the gun and redistribute the loads a little. We then continue up past Gorse Point to the summit of Mount Thistle. The view is spectacular down the line of the Neild Bugt glacier, and for the first time we can see the peaks to the south.

We press on to Mount Reckless (as Mark tongue-in-cheek names it) by skiing down to the broad col to the south and zigzagging up steep 40deg slopes to the small flat summit. There are hints of windslab here and it feels exposed on the small top as the ground drops away on all sides. I immediately take off my skis and we descend a little to where we all take them off. It's climbing from here, so we put on crampons and uncoil the rope. The wind is strong and our position makes it all feel very exciting.

Mark heads off down the steep East Ridge. It's steep snow at first but soon develops into a series of gendarmes. We move together with Ingrid in the centre of the 50m rope with Mark occasionally placing a runner. The technical climbing finishes just as the rack is exhausted. I take over and break trail through calf-deep snow below a subsidiary top (P959m). We double back to tag the summit. Mark takes over the trail breaking whilst I hang back and take photos and we meet up again on a second subsidiary top (P921m).

A big snowy peak looms to the east. From the angle we're viewing from it appears to be part of Lancstuk, but I know from looking at it from base camp (I recognise the summit rocks) that it is a separate peak and a significant summit in its own right. Mark captures my thoughts by saying that it would be a shame not to climb it, so we press on with me breaking trail in the lead. The sun is setting to the NNW and the light is golden. Every flake of snow kicked up by my boots lights up like a piece of yellow fire. It truly is magical.

We descend over a 100m through knee-deep snow to a broad col and I then continue up the steepening snow slope to the summit. The snow continues to be deep and it's hard work kicking steps. The wind is getting up, and behind, the summit of Mount Thistle has disappeared under cloud. I don't hesitate when I reach the top of the snow slope and push on across the broad final ridge to the top.

Ten minutes later I'm on the summit wary of not falling through the cornice. The others soon arrive and I snap a quick photo of Mark. The time is 11.45pm and later we decide to call the mountain Midnight Peak (995m). It is the most significant new summit of the expedition. But there is no time to talk. The cloud has descended even further down Mount Thistle and Mark quite rightly says "Now let's get out of here!" as soon as he arrives.

It's Marks shift for trail breaking now and he swiftly takes us down to the col and without a break in pace leads us up through the deep snow from the col. We pass the familiar landmarks and the two subsidiary summits and witness the sun rising again about 1am not far from where it set on the horizon 90 minutes before.

The wind increases in intensity but there is a hint that the weather is clearing from the west. Incredibly our tracks have mostly blown over but Mark can just about make out the line. I take over the lead at the ridge section, and after about 30 minutes of moving together we are back on the summit of Mount Reckless happy to be reunited with our skis. We heel down the 40deg slope but it's too windy to put up the bivouac tent on the col. We're keen to have a break but we need some shelter first.

Now on skis, Ingrid leads the way bypassing the summit of Mount Thistle to the north. It's too cold to stop, so we collect the gun and continue down towards the glacier. Mark spots a sheltered spot in a small wind scoop below a small outcrop so we stop and put up the bivouac tent. We all get in and I light the stove in the tent to warm us through. Mark then goes outside and makes us drinks and a freeze-dried meal each before taking his turn in the tent. We pack up and have a mellow ski down to the glacier below Old Man's Peak.

It's still early in the morning and the weather is good. Mark sets a blistering pace up the rise to Base Camp and we arrive at 7am.

Simon Richardson

Mount Thistle (1040m) to Midnight Peak (995m) Traverse

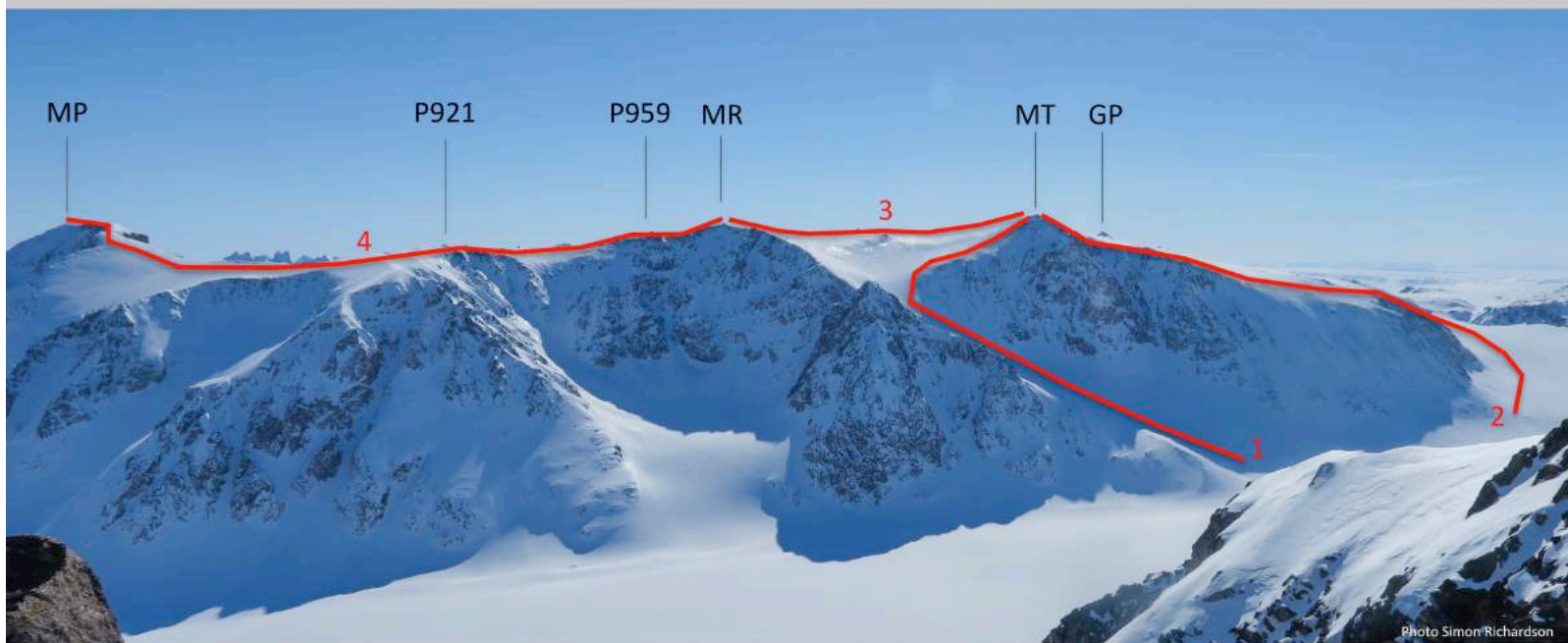


Photo Simon Richardson

MP	Midnight Peak (995m)
P921	Point 921m
P959	Point 959m
MR	Mount Reckless (976m)
MT	Mount Thistle (1040m)
GP	Gorse Point (c1000m)
1	Mount Thistle, North Flank (ski ascent) (FA Buisse/Hoare 2014)
2	Mount Thistle, West Flank (ski ascent)
3	Mount Reckless, West Flank (ski ascent)
4	Midnight Peak, West Ridge (AD)

2. Mount Thistle West Flank 3km 500m (ski ascent)

Ingrid Baber and Ron Kenyon (to Gorse Point), 27 April 2018
Straightforward snow slopes leading up from the Thistle-Old Man's Peak glacier.

3. Mount Reckless West Flank 1km 50m (ski ascent)

Ingrid Baber, Mark Robson and Simon Richardson, 5 May 2018
From the broad Thistle-Reckless col ascend 40 deg snow slopes to the narrow summit of Mount Reckless.

4. Midnight Peak West Ridge 3km 250m AD

Ingrid Baber, Mark Robson and Simon Richardson, 5 May 2018
Descend the narrow gendarmed south-west ridge of Mount Reckless for 100m to a narrow col and ascend easily to P959m. Descend snow slopes to the isolated tor P921m and continue down to the deep col below the north flank of Midnight Peak. Climb this and follow the broad summit ridge southwards for 200m to the top. The complete traverse (and return) from the Thistle-Old Man's Peak glacier entails 14km of travel and 1100m ascent.

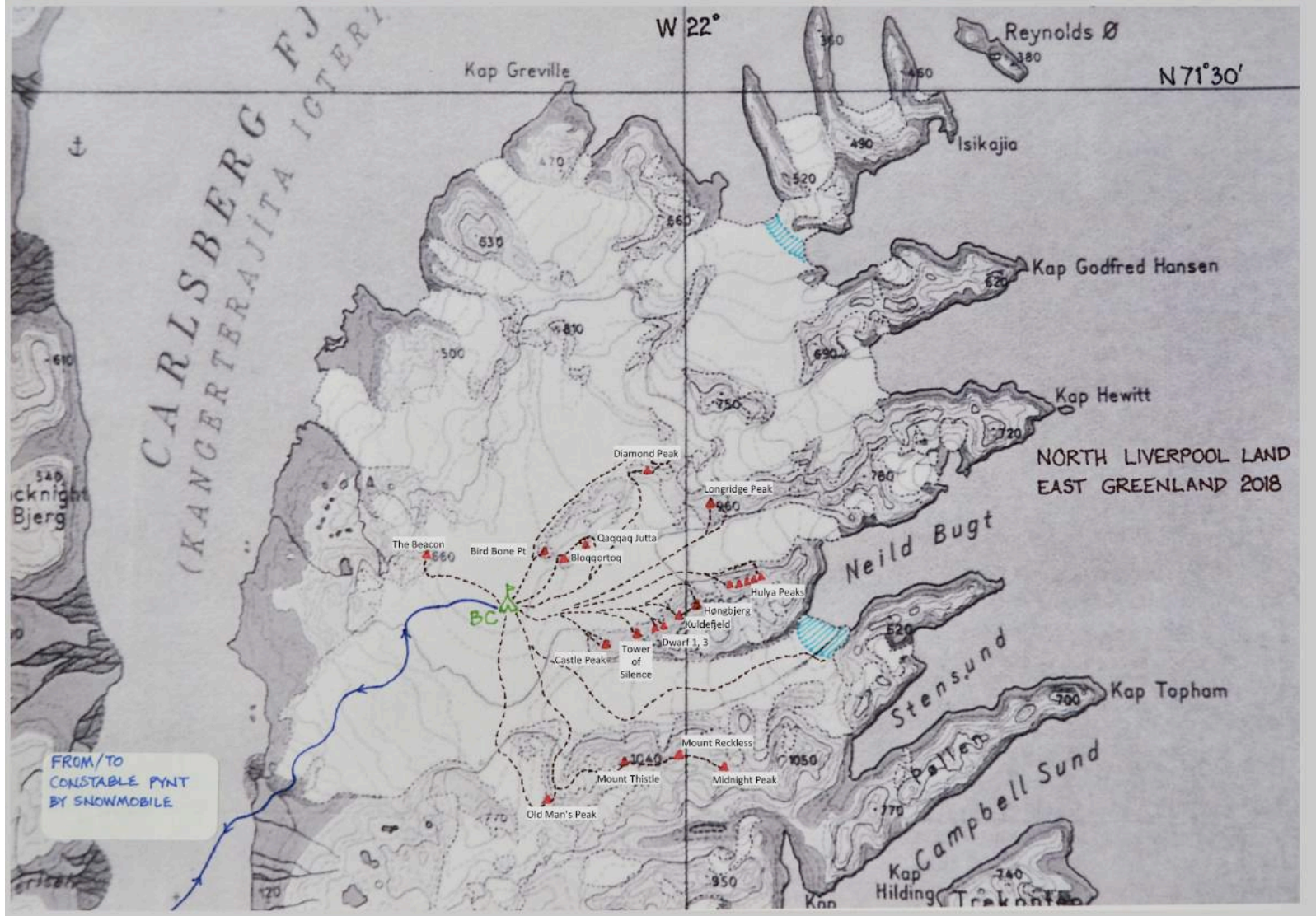
6. Diary of Events

15 April	Fly UK to Reykjavik (IB, JG, SG, RK)
16 April	Fly UK to Reykjavik (SR, MR)
17 April	Drive Reykjavik to Akureyri
18 April	Akureyri
19 April	Fly Akureyri to Constable Pynt
20 April	Constable Pynt to Base Camp
21 April	Familiarisation Ski Tour
22 April	Castle Peak
23 April	Tower of Silence, Dwarf 7
24 April	Bloqqortoq, Qaqqaq Jutta, Longridge Peak
25 April	Diamond Peak
26 April	The Beacon, Hulya 5, Hulya 4, Hulya 3, Hulya 2, Hulya 1
27 April	Mount Thistle, Old Mans Peak, Kuldefjeld, Høngbjerg
28 April	Dwarf 1, Dwarf 3 , Exploration of Neild Bugt Glacier South Arm
29 April	Rest Day
30 April	Storm bound
1 May	Storm bound
2 May	Storm bound
3 May	Storm bound
4 May	Bird Bone Point
5 May	Mount Thistle, Mount Reckless, Midnight Peak
6 May	Return from Midnight Traverse
7 May	Return to Constable Pynt
8 May	Fly to Akureyri
9 May	Drive Akureyri to Reykjavik
10 May	Reykjavik (IB, RK fly to UK)
11 May	Fly Reykjavik to UK (SR, MR)
13 May	Fly Reykjavik to UK (JG, SG)

7. List of Peaks Climbed

Date	Summit	First Ascent	Altitude	Route Name	Length	Grade	New Route	Climbers	GPS posn.	GPS posn.
22-Apr-18	Castle Peak	No	780m	Unnamed	300m	PD	Yes	MR, SR	N71 20.778	W22 03.322
22-Apr-18	Castle Peak	No	780m	Noynek Buttress	300m	PDsup.	Yes	JG, SG, RK, IB	N71 20.778	W22 03.322
23-Apr-18	Tower of Silence	Yes	730m est	Silence is Golden	300m	TD	Yes	MR, SR		
23-Apr-18	Dwarf 7-Sleepy	No	740m	South Ridge	n/a	PD	Yes	MR, SR	N71 20.974	W22 01.428
24-Apr-18	Bloqqortoq	Yes	657m	North Ridge	<100m	F	Yes	JG, SG, RK, IB	N71 22.096	W22 05.595
24-Apr-18	Qaqqaq Jutta	Yes	697m	North Ridge	<100m	F	Yes	JG, SG, RK, IB	N71 22.351	W22 04.556
24-Apr-18	Longridge Peak	No	960m	The Long Ridge	450m	D	Yes	MR, SR	N71 23.031	W21 58.073
25-Apr-18	Diamond Peak	No	890m	North Flank	ca.150m	Ski ascent	unknown	JG, SG, RK, IB	N71 23.519	W22 01.352
26-Apr-18	The Beacon	No	660m	South Flank	150m	Ski ascent	No	JG, SG, RK, IB	N71 22.216	W22 12.596
26-Apr-18	Hulya 5	Yes	830m est	Firepot Couloir	400m	AD	Yes	MR, SR		
26-Apr-18	Hulya 4	Yes	831m	Traverse	n/a	D	Yes	MR, SR	N71 21.809	W21 56.046
26-Apr-18	Hulya 3	Yes	844m	Traverse	n/a	D	Yes	MR, SR	N71 21.779	W21 56.150
26-Apr-18	Hulya 2	Yes	811m	Traverse	n/a	D	Yes	MR, SR	N71 21.746	W21 56.351
26-Apr-18	Hulya 1	No	830m	Traverse	n/a	D	Yes	MR, SR	N71 21.732	W21 56.571
27-Apr-18	Mount Thistle	No	1040m	West Flank	500m	Ski ascent	Yes	IB		
27-Apr-18	Gorse Point	Yes	c1000m	West Flank	500m	Ski ascent	Yes	IB, RK		
27-Apr-18	Old Man's Peak	No	707m	Fox Tor	ca.150m	F	unknown	JG, SG	N71 18.582	W22 06.578
27-Apr-18	Kuldefjeld	No	980m	West Ridge	450m	AD	Yes	MR, SR	N71 21.219	W21 59.522
27-Apr-18	Høngbjerg(aka Mt Mighty)	No	1005m	Traverse	n/a	AD	No	MR, SR	N71 21.391	W21 58.850
28-Apr-18	Exploration Neild Bugt Glacier South Arm		n/a	n/a	n/a	Ski tour	No	JG, SG, IB	n/a	n/a
28-Apr-18	Dwarf 1- Grumpy	Yes	870m	North Spur	330m	D	Yes	MR, SR	N71 21.040	W22 00.180
28-Apr-18	Dwarf 3- Bashful	Yes	840m est	North Gully Headwall	300m	D	Yes	MR, SR		
04-May-18	Bird Bone Point	No	726m	West Flank	200m	Ski ascent	No	JG, SG, RK, IB, MR, SR	N71 22.215	W22 06.359
05-May-18	Mount Thistle	No	1040m	West Flank	500m	Ski ascent	Yes	IB, MR, SR		
05-May-18	Mount Reckless	Yes	976m	West Ridge	n/a	Ski ascent	Yes	IB, MR, SR	N71 18.746	W22 00.650
05-May-18	Midnight Peak	Yes	995m	West Ridge	n/a	AD	Yes	IB, MR, SR	N71 18.743	W21 57.275

North Liverpool Land Expedition 2018 – Peaks Climbed



8. New Route Possibilities

A study of the map for the expedition area shows the extent of what was reached during the 2018 expedition. JG has in his files similar maps that show expedition activity from trips made in 2007, 2014 and 2015. The very few other visitors to North Liverpool Land have also reported on their own activities. It might thus be thought that the area has little more to offer, but direct experience shows that this is far from being the case. All expeditions have finite time available, and some, as in 2018 get a raw deal from the weather limiting what might be achieved.

It is accurate to state that the bulk of mountaineering achievement to date has centred on those ranges and peaks, which are easily accessed from the Neild Bugt Glacier, and in particular its more northerly arm. This report, plus others cited elsewhere in it, will provide a fuller picture of what has been done.

The more northerly reaches of Liverpool Land are more complex, and choice of a suitable base location is more difficult. The glacier basins lie at a much lower altitude and there appear to be more crevassed or icefall zones than in the central parts. Additionally, these glacier areas open out into the sea and this makes it more likely that polar bear activity therein may be more frequent, a factor to bear in mind.

Elevated viewpoints reveal that there are many interesting-looking peaks including P750m (although this spot height is misleading for it is just one along a more complicated ridge of several peaks) and the exciting range stretching out towards Kap Godfred Hansen where some beautiful mountains lie. There will be good prizes to be won there.

East of Longridge Peak, along the peninsula running far out to Kap Hewitt, stand the three climbed summits, Varmtind, Hvithorn, and Lewty Peak, but beyond them there are several other fine summits with high south faces. (Of course, they also have north faces but these lie less accessibly above the wide fjord separating the two capes/headlands named above). Climbing on south faces in the Arctic can be problematic due to the long hours of exposure to warm sunshine affecting the stability of snow slopes. It might be possible to reach some of these new peaks by traversing the ridgeline itself - a tactic that was productive in 2018 on the Mount Mighty/Høngbjerg range. There are however some large exposures of rock that might be more difficult to scale.

East of the Hulya group the only other summit reached is that of Farfarer Peak, which itself has an attractive north face so far untouched. The Hulya group of summits, traversed this year, has a wide north face with several ridges, buttresses and couloirs still virgin. The rock quality looks good. The approaches are short - some good targets there.

There is still room for at least one more new line on the north face of Høngbjerg/Mighty itself. On the Seven Dwarfs, only one summit remains unreached from the north; it may not be as interesting as its close neighbours.

The 2018 exploration into and along the southern arm of the Neild Bugt Glacier confirmed that that glacier provides quick and easy access to the large south face areas of the Seven Dwarfs, some of which have very prominent crags of very good rock. Both Kuldefjeld and Høngbjerg are much bigger affairs, again with some sizeable rock exposures that might repay closer inspection. As the ridge continues into the Hulya and Farfarer Peak reaches, things get much more complex, with several large subsidiary peaks projecting from the main crest line. These would have to be approached from this south side. Farfarer Peak has a central main summit, already climbed, but from an eastern shoulder falls a very prominent rock rib approachable via glacier slopes, which might give a very good climb. The map is of very little help in unravelling the detail of this group of summits. Note though, that not all of the rock exposed hereabouts is of the good granite noted elsewhere in this report; there is some dubious-looking grey stuff to be seen.

Along the south side of the Neild Bugt Glacier south arm runs the big range from Mount Thistle through Mt Reckless and Midnight Peak all the way to the massive Lancstuk. On the north sides there are several glacier bays with interesting looking headwalls, which hold what could be technical mixed routes. Not pushovers. From Thistle itself, the prominent spur of *Fangstmanstind* (a proposed name) sticks out into the glacier. There are good lines to be found on it.

Further east there lies the so-called *Mini-Matterhorn* (crying out for a more appropriate 'arctic' name), which remains unclimbed at present. Beyond Lancstuk, a big bulky mountain, a side glacier now comes into the main flow, complicating the terrain with huge crevasses just before reaching the sea. Running northeast from hereabouts the ridge continues out over P520 for several kilometres to another unnamed cape above Stensund. If a way can be found passing the zone of big crevasses that ridge could give a very fine high level ski ascent over a number of summits with a good running return below the actual crest line. Little could be seen during our ski exploration of this glacier along the north slopes of the peninsula (Neild Bugt face), but pictures from Farfarer Peak suggest some tricky looking ground.

Returning west, on the north front of Mt Thistle there is an area resembling a "Scottish winter crag" which might furnish a number of routes for those looking for technical climbing without going right up to the main mountain summit.

Further west still, lies the large mass of Old Man's Peak, separated from the Thistle group by a steeper side glacier branch. On the east side of OMP, just round into this side glacier is the very prominent and attractive crag of *Scoresby Prow* (suggested name). This appears to consist of mostly very good rock and is very easy to approach. It would most likely give high standard technical rock

climbing. There are two main pillars or buttresses, set either side of a huge hanging slab. Estimated height of the pillars is 300/400m. To the right there is a deep snow/ice couloir and right again another more broken buttress.

Our ski exploration took us right up the length of the side glacier – passing a descending polar bear track en route – and revealed more crags of some size further up. One in particular is of a big barrel shape and seems to be made from the very solid-looking brown-red granite, which occurs fairly widely.

It is a moot point to know if the ‘winter’ conditions of April would normally allow difficult rock climbing to be done in relative comfort for objectives such as these; in 2018 that was definitely not the case, due to cold and stormy weather.

Later, summer access to North Liverpool Land would be a different proposition altogether. The snowmobile travel option would not be feasible. The glaciers, judging by what is observable in the southern half of Liverpool land, will lose almost all of their winter snow cover and revert to ‘dry glacier’ (in reality, wringing wet with melt water!) For that reason also, movement on skis would be unlikely to be possible. This leaves walking – but that doesn’t solve the problem of how to get there in the first place. Air access by fixed wing aeroplane will not work as there are no suitable landing areas close by. Helicopter access would work, but only for the very wealthy, and there would also be the problems of very limited payload for any one flight.

Come in by boat? It is possible to charter a sea-going boat from Ittoqqortoormiit (Scoresbysund village), but it would have to sail along the outer east coast of Liverpool Land and put into where? There are lots of fjords and inlets but possibly not good ground for landings. Carlsberg Fjord to the west has more gentle coastlines, but then it is a long way to backpack up onto the glaciers.

To sum up, there is a wealth of new possibilities waiting, but difficult choices over the best calendar period in which to go, and the most profitable choice for base camp location relative to objectives under consideration. That’s before factoring in limited expedition time and the sort of weather, which might prevail.

As an ‘expedition recidivist leader’ myself, with a sort of prior interest in this region of Greenland, I would urge any potential report readers and future visitors to treat this wonderful area with great respect and make sure that if you do go, you will leave it as my own groups have invariably done, clean and unmarked except for some temporary tracks and the odd cairn or two if you get to any new summits.

Jim Gregson



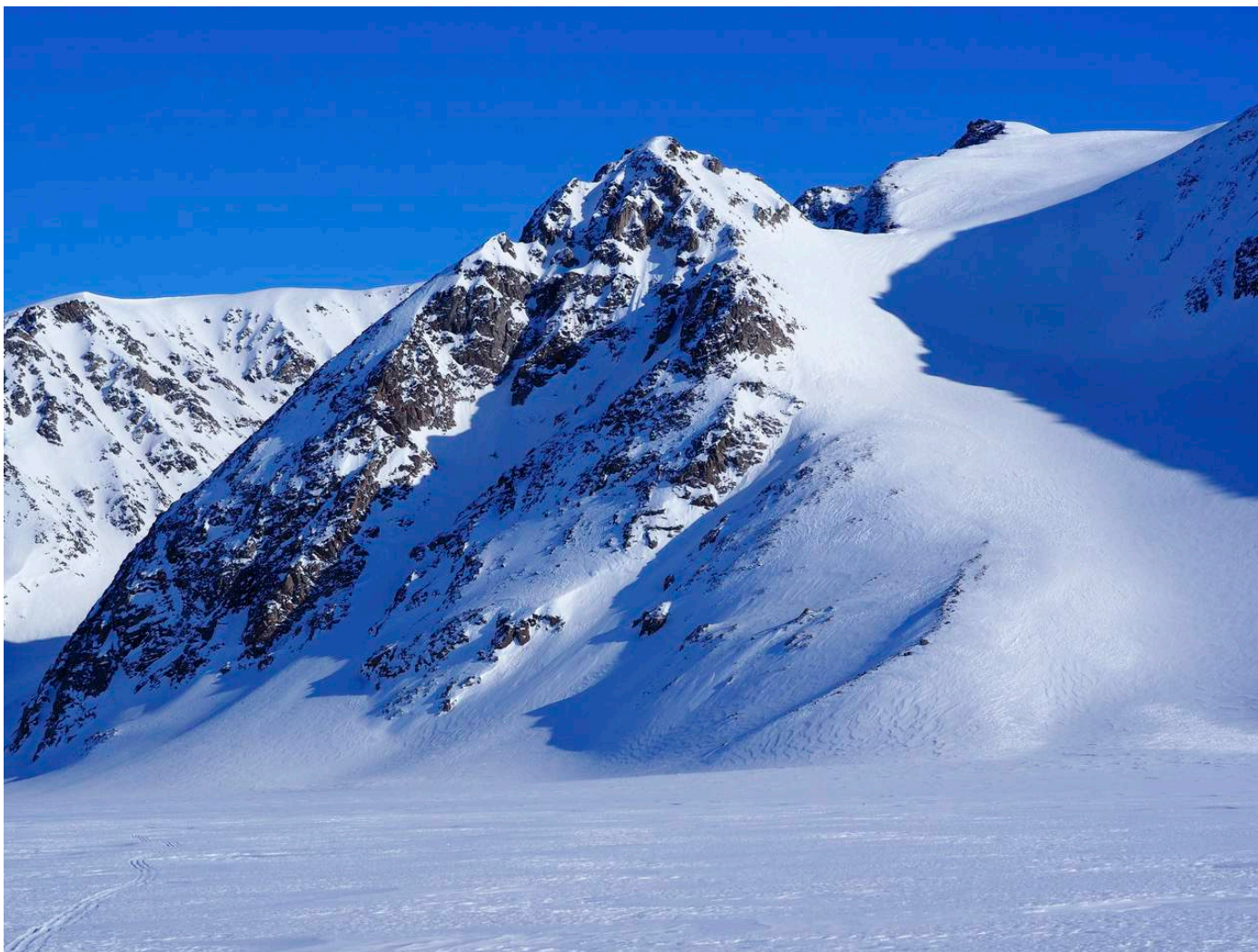
Neild Bugt peaks - looking out to Kap Hewitt (P720m on map?) (Photo Jim Gregson)



Glacier front/icefall is the seaward end of northern arm of Neild Bugt Glacier - all unclimbed (high point to R is probably P780m). (Photo Jim Gregson)



Peaks on peninsula running out to Kap Godfred Hansen - one of these may be P690m – Photo Jim Gregson



'Fangstmanstind' - unclimbed. Several possible route lines; note that at far left toe is the start of a very steep narrow gully, to access L skyline and then up to two pointed foretops and then summit. Mount Reckless is summit up to the right. (Photo Jim Gregson)



The 'Mini-Matterhorn' with bulky Lancstuk behind. (Photo Jim Gregson)

9. Expedition Account

EXPENDITURE	£
Travel	
Flights to Iceland	1228
Travel across Iceland	1020
Insurance	4450
Accommodation	3601
Communal Meals	188
Tangent Expeditions Ltd	35700
Freighting equipment etc to Greenland	
Flights from Iceland to Greenland	
Food in Greenland	
Hire -	
Emergency Beacon, VHF radios	
Satellite Telephone	
Emergency Flares, Pepper spray and 2 rifles, with ammunition	
Polar Bear warning perimeter fence	
Tent Snow Pegs	
Snow shovels	
Snow Saws	
Tent insulation matting	
4 Dragonfly Stoves and fuel	
4 Pulk Sled	
Snowmobile transport from Constable Point to Basecamp	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	46187
LESS INCOME FROM GRANTS	
Mount Everest Foundation	2000
Gino Watkins Memorial Fund	2500
Austrian Alpine Club (UK)	800
TOTAL GRANTS	5300
NET COST OF EXPEDITION	40887

Income and Expenditure Account prepared by R J Kenyon FCA

10. Notes on Travel, Accommodation, Logistics and Equipment, Insurance

Travel

Team members flew from the UK to Keflavik, Iceland, from different airports, with cheap flights particularly with EasyJet, which now operates to Iceland from several UK start points.

For onward travel in Iceland getting to and from Reykjavik to Akureyri, we rented self-drive vehicles from Hertz and Bilaleiga/Europcar, sharing the driving as required.

Accommodation

Over the course of many expeditions the Gregsons have stayed in Reykjavik while in Iceland, at the very reasonably-priced but excellent *Snorris Guesthouse*, operated by Magnus Gunnarsson (*Snorrabraut 61*; www.guesthousereykjavik.is). *Magnus is very welcoming and helpful and is well versed in dealing with expedition groups.*

In Akureyri we stayed in self-catering apartments at *Briet Apartments*, and at *Hotel Ibudir Apartments* (above a fine ice cream parlour!). *Both of these were excellent and very well appointed. (Also worth trying is Hotel Akureyri – a bit more expensive – which also operates some apartments elsewhere in the town).*

When we returned to Constable Pynt after our stormy period out on the ice, we stayed for one night at the airstrip accommodation block, known as “The Hilton”, not cheap, but very welcome after being out in the cold. Its facilities allowed us access to hot showers (plus some space to dry out some kit items). By special arrangement we were also able to take meals at the airstrip canteen as a change from eating more freeze-dried expedition food.

Logistics and Equipment

The expedition group contracted with Tangent Expeditions Ltd, the most reliable and experienced logistics supplier in the UK, owned and operated by Paul Walker – www.climbgreenland.com. Jim Gregson has close personal links with Tangent extending back over twenty-five years.

The logistics contract took from our workload all matters concerning flights to and from Akureyri to Constable Pynt; freighting of equipment from UK to Greenland and back; provision of all expedition food in ready to use daypacks (with quite a surplus remaining by the end of the trip); rental/hire of telecoms equipment (Iridium Satphone, VHF & Marine Band radios, EPIRBs, solar charging

system); Polar bear deterrent equipment (incl. firearms – 2 x 30-06 rifles plus ammunition & police permit, emergency flares, pepper spray, 'tripwire' bear 'fence for camp perimeter); rental of specialist equipment (4 x Snowsled Pulks, tent insulation matting, channel-section snow pegs, snow shovels and snow saws, 4 x MSR Dragonfly stoves – easy to maintain in the field -plus cooking pot sets, all stove fuel – SBP 'white gas'/heptane type, which proved to be very economical in use); some additional items of climbing equipment.

The logistics contract also provided for our snowmobile travel and transport of equipment between Constable Pynt and our base camp location with return pickup at the end of the expedition. Tangent Expeditions has a very comprehensively set up forward base at Constable Pynt, which is staffed throughout the main climbing/skiing season and where almost all of its equipment is stored. The use of snowmobile transport offers a reliable and efficient means of transport into the mountains at a very considerable cost saving compared with the use of aircraft. Tangent employs a team of experienced snowmobile drivers who all worked very hard to provide us with impressive good service in a friendly fashion. Their attention to safety is very reassuring as travel is often across areas of sea ice and glaciated terrain. Tangent's team based at Constable Pynt are also able to supply weather forecast updates via satphone calls. The Expenditure section of this report shows the cost to us of making this contract with Tangent Expeditions Ltd. It was money well spent.

We supplied almost all of our own climbing equipment and tentage (apart from one rented tent via Tangent; this was the only tent not fitted with snow valances and this was a disadvantage in the severe storm conditions encountered. Another tent, of some vintage, suffered damage to the pole wands to the extent that its owner (JG) has needed to purchase a complete new set of pole wands since returning home. However, the benefit of a geodesic-type tent was borne out by the experience as it did 'spring 'back to shape once released from its massive burden of snow. The poles however looked distinctly the worse for wear.

Although we had more than ample hardware for climbing, the very cold conditions meant that not so much rock gear was brought into use. The best climbing was of a mixed nature and an alpine-style approach worked best.

Skis in use were for most team members fitted with randonee/alpine touring-type bindings, but the Gregsons are very experienced devotees of telemark style skiing and they brought that type of equipment. Nobody was handicapped. The expedition area presents lots of opportunity for some very fine skiing, both for its own sake and for quick approach to climbs. Avalanche transceivers were used by all participants as appropriate. Climbing skins were essential, but there was no need for using harscheisen/ski crampons, even by those who possess them.

First aid/ medical supplies – the group members provided their own material for first aid purposes. Several of the members had quite comprehensive first aid training at times in the past and as they were all experienced expedition mountaineers it was felt that they

could/would cope in the event of incidents occurring. Adventure often involves risk and the group was fully aware of this and accepted all of that as part of the experience.

Waste Disposal

All of our the expedition food supplies came in two-person daypacks which themselves came in cardboard boxes. These boxes were kept as intact as possible during the expedition so that they could be re-used for transport of waste matter back to the airstrip at Constable Pynt. From the daypacks, waste matter consisted of food wrappers or packaging which was a mixture of paper, card and plastics plus the foil packaging from the freeze-dried expedition meals which formed our main courses and breakfasts. All of this material was kept and bagged up on a daily basis and re-boxed for return. On arrival back at Constable Pynt, this waste matter was consigned into the airstrip's own waste disposal system. At one time Constable Pynt operated an incineration system but in recent years this seems to have fallen into disuse, and there is somewhat rudimentary 'landfill' procedure in use. This being the Arctic, this may not be the most environmentally sound policy, but that is what is available. We did not attempt to burn or other wise dispose of any of our expedition waste.

For human waste purposes we used a (very) deep latrine system on the glacier, digging as deep as was feasible but ensuring that our excavations passed through several layers of annual snow accumulation including some actual ice layers. A high wall of snow blocks and fill was constructed round the latrine compound to give protection from the wind (external!) During the expedition period the holding trench was not backfilled as exposure to UV light gives a good start to the necessary breakdown processes, and backfill is normally just about the last thing to be done before exiting the base camp location. Under these conditions it is very unlikely that any latrine contents will ever be re-exposed at the surface, and by the time the glacier moves on such material will be thoroughly macerated and is unlikely to become any sort of hazard to the environment.

Due to the unusual amount of stormy weather and excessive snowfall during the expedition, our first major latrine was completely lost to drift infill and disappeared , so we couldn't add any further backfill ourselves. Fortunately, at an early stage of the trip we had excavated and constructed what was intended to be a 'sun lounge' enclosure for communal use beyond the camp perimeter. For a good while this was very useful and encouraged socialisation. After the worst storm period and the loss of the original latrine this sun lounge had to be pressed into service and altered in its configuration to become a replacement latrine - basically more digging! Even then we were dismayed to gradually see that this replacement was also in turn almost completely buried in drift snow, so in effect we were saved from the extra effort of backfilling once again.

Once all of our kit was loaded onto the snowmobile sledge train for exit there remained nothing but tracking and trampling of the snow, which would be rapidly covered by drift and restored to a pristine condition.

Insurance

Over recent years it has become more difficult to find insurers who are prepared to offer cover for expeditions to Greenland, especially when the members of such expeditions are of an age when premium surcharges are likely to be levied by underwriters.

A further complication arises in that there is no such thing as an organised setup for Search and Rescue in Greenland so groups very much have to be self-reliant and accept the risks of operating far from help in often unknown terrain. This tends to make one sufficiently cautious – if one wants to keep going on expeditions! Some parts of Greenland do require permits for access; fortunately for us, North Liverpool Land is not one of those, for a condition of such a permit is the requirement for an insurer to agree to sign the ‘Special Certificate’, which in effect is an indemnity to the Greenland/Denmark authorities that the true costs of any complex SAR operation will be met. Most insurers run a mile away from this!

JG through long familiarity and experience of Greenland and expeditions was able to prepare a dossier of information about the Liverpool Land area in particular and the relative closeness to means of evacuation in the event of emergency, availability of medical assistance, short duration of flight times if aircraft usage became necessary, the lesser likelihood of a ‘search operation’ as satphone and GPS equipment would indicate a more precise location. This dossier was put before the underwriters of the British Mountaineering Council specialist insurance scheme who then after consideration did agree to offer insurance to the group members at rates that did not need a mortgage to cover them (although the Gregsons, the oldest group members were stung rather severely on the age loading of premiums – with no discount for having already survived numerous previous Greenland expeditions without mishap!)

Wildlife

Apart from signs of polar bear presence, most of the tracks we saw were accompanied by those of Arctic foxes, which commonly track polar bears in the hope of scavenging for food in the form of prey leftovers. The only other forms of wildlife we saw were camp visitors with wings - ravens, which are one of very few year-round resident birds in the High Arctic, and several small flocks of snow buntings which would be returning from further south in anticipation of the coming summer breeding season.

Jim Gregson

11. Acknowledgements

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Gino Watkins Memorial Fund (grant aid)

Austrian Alpine Club (UK) (grant aid)

John Allen

Roger Everett

Dennis Gray

Jim Krawiecki, BMC Insurance Administrator

Paul Walker, plus the Tangent Expeditions team at Constable Pynt

Christine Richardson: a special thanks is due to Christine, Simon's wife, who very kindly agreed to serve as our UK-based contact in case of emergencies. Thankfully she was not called into service during the expedition, but it was reassuring to us all to know that she would have been able to do whatever might have become necessary.

Ron Kenyon, our team member, did a splendid job of keeping an eye on our accounts and expenditure, using his professional skills to our mutual benefit.