



## AAC Publications

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### **Eastern Fjords, Polar Molar, Bonfire of the Vanities**

Canada, Baffin Island, East Coast

After a rest and recovery in Upernavik (see Greenland section), we made a four-day crossing to Pond Inlet in Baffin Island, mainly under sail. Our goal was to discover new lines in an area of fjords 40 miles southwest of Pond Inlet settlement. After some exploration we found what we were looking for. White Bay has a series of impressive, completely unclimbed white cliffs, including a miniature Half Dome. On August 3, three of my crew, Steve Bradshaw, Clinton Martinengo, and Andrew Porter from South Africa, established Bonfire of the Vanities (280m, 5.11a) on a formation dubbed Polar Molar. They had hoped to climb the main buttress on Polar Molar but apparent cracks turned out to be blind, so they opted for a line much further right.

There is huge potential in this area but the climbing will be hard: some of the rock is friable and the rest is compact, making it very difficult to protect naturally. However, the team made the ascent free, without recourse to pitons or bolts. It is hoped this tradition will continue here, as in northwest Greenland.

We were held up by ice for five days in Pond Inlet but then finished the expedition by traversing the 2,800-mile Northwest Passage. The boat was left to overwinter ashore, in Nome, Alaska. The expedition received a Gore-Tex Shipton-Tilman grant and a Gino Watkins Memorial Award, for which we are most grateful.

Bob Shepton, Alpine Club, UK

## Images



Clinton Martinengo and the South African flag a long way from home on the summit of Polar Molar. The cliffs behind are unclimbed.



Polar Molar and the line of Bonfire of the Vanities.



White Bay, east coast of Baffin Island. Polar Molar is on the far right. There is only one route on this entire section of coastal cliffs.

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