



## AAC Publications

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### **North Liverpool Land, Many First Ascents**

Greenland, East Greenland, North Liverpool Land

**In April and May, following two previous visits to this area (AAJ 2009 and 2015), I returned with regular partners Geoff Bonney and Sandy Gregson, plus new recruits Roger Gott, Richard Toon (all U.K.), and Ingrid Baber, a German living in Scotland.** We flew from Iceland into Constable Pynt/Nerlerit Inaat, and from there were transported by the Snow Dragons snowmobile service operated by Tangent Expeditions to the icecap zone of North Liverpool Land.

Once there we set up base camp at 71°21.679'N, 22°07.389'W (525m), just 45m north of our 2014 site. This was chosen because of its central position and maximum exposure to sunshine, very important at the tail end of an Arctic winter.

We had colder conditions than in 2014, but also much better, stable weather. The mountains and glaciers were well-cloaked with snow, yet there was ample sunshine to settle it and lower the avalanche risk. Once we had our camp in order—deep pit latrine, a tripwire around the perimeter to warn of polar bears, flares and firearms shared between tents—we were good to go.

As we were three newcomers and three Greenland veterans, we first went for orientation and shakedown purposes to the top of 3 P.M. Attack Nunatak, which has sufficient elevation to overlook the glacier systems. A ski outing then took us north, and higher, onto the ridge of Carlsberg Crest to scout snow conditions. From then onward we were able to go on a spree of sunny day outings, usually in two teams, with Roger and Richard operating as a pair.

Over many expeditions in Greenland, I have adopted the policy of taking one pulk to the start of any ascent, transporting climbing equipment, first aid and survival kit, etc., and also as a potential stretcher in the event of mishap. On this trip Ingrid frequently volunteered to act as the main pulk pilot, proving very adept. We smilingly referred to her as the Big Diesel for her prowess (she was also the youngest group member).

Our ascents began to stack up—mostly mixed climbing, as early season is usually rather too cold for technical rock. Some were first ascents of unclimbed peaks; others were new routes on previously ascended mountains.

On the Seven Dwarfs, which form the end of the ridge extending westward from 1,005m Mt. Mighty, we made the first ascents of:

Sneezy (Summit 2, 850m, 71°21.11'N, 22°00.40'W) via Atisshoo, Atisshoo, All Fall Down (D+), the north couloir and east ridge (Roger and Richard) Happy (Summit 4, 830m) via the route Disneyland (PD+) on the north face (Ingrid, Sandy, and me) Dopey (Summit 5, 820m) via Vanishing Gully (AD+/D-), a gully and rock ridge on the northeast face (Roger and Richard) Sleepy (Summit 7, 740m, 71°20.974'N, 22°01.428'W) via Nanok (PD+) on the north face (Geoff, Ingrid, Sandy, and me). The starts of these routes were reached on ski in one or two hours from base camp. The other three summits of the Seven Dwarfs remain unclimbed.

To the west of the Seven Dwarfs, Geoff, Ingrid, Sandy, and I made the second ascent of Castle Peak (780m, 71°20.778'N, 22°03.322'W) by a new route, Postern Gate (PD), on the north flank, followed by a

traverse and descent over the Eastern Ramparts Ridge.

On Mt. Mighty (71°21.391'N, 21°58.850'W), first reported to have been climbed by an Australian pair in 2012, Geoff, Ingrid, Sandy, and I climbed Snake in the Outback (PD+/AD-) up the northeast face for the peak's second recorded ascent. [Editor's note: See the note at the end of this report about an earlier ascent.] East of Mt. Mighty, toward the inlet of Neild Bugt, Ingrid, Sandy, and I made the first ascent of Farfarer Peak (815m, 71°21.839'N, 21°54.295'W) via the northwest face and ridge (Dennis Davis Memorial Route, PD+). To the north, on the opposite side of the glacier from the Mt. Mighty chain, Roger and Richard made the second ascent of Longridge Peak (960m, 71°23.031'N, 21°58.073'W) following the original 2012 Australian Route (AD) up the west ridge. Two days later, Ingrid, Sandy, and I made the third ascent via a new route, Cryogenic (PD+), on the southeast rib and east face. Further east Ingrid, Sandy, and I made the first ascent of Hvithorn (825m, 71°23.148'N, 21°55.925'W) via Blanco (PD+) on the south face. This was particularly satisfying as Sandy and I had tried this peak by the west ridge in 2014 and were stalled at the 750m foresummit of Varmtind. The next summit east was climbed by Roger and Richard and named Lewty Peak (855m)—they ascended the snowy Memorial Ridge (PD+, hard névé to 50°) on the south face to the rocky summit.

South of the Mt. Mighty chain, Roger and Richard made the first ascent of Lancstuk (1,050m map height, 71°19.27'N, 21°54.45'W: the nearest coordinates, taken at around 840m on the north ridge) via the northeast face and north ridge at PD+/AD-. This is a remote summit, and the ascent started at ca 100m above sea level. The altimeter reading at the top, corrected later by GPS from the ridge, was 1,070m.

Further north, Eastern Nunatak (620m, 71°22.574'N, 22°01.876'W) was climbed from the west (F) by all except Geoff. This was the second ascent. In various combinations we also made repeat ascents of Bird Bone Peak and Carlsberg Crest, with superb ski descents of Pulk-Hauler's Plummet and Pulker's Plunge *inter alia*.

When Ingrid, Sandy, and I returned to camp from Cryogenic, Roger and Richard reported the discovery of a fresh polar bear track just a short distance west of the tents. On investigation the next day it was obvious that the footprints had been made by a BIG bear. Luckily he didn't see us, and we hadn't seen him, but he had been close. He didn't come back, but one team member admitted to a couple of sleepless nights, while I "zizzed" away happily, cuddling a loaded rifle. (At Constable Pynt, on the way in, I had spoken with the leader of a French military group who told me of several polar bear sightings during their north-to-south traverse of Liverpool Land.)

From all of the summits we reached, we could see and photograph peaks that remain unclimbed in North Liverpool Land. The area still has much to offer, but some base camp locations would increase the potential for polar bear encounters.

More difficult technical rock climbing is available on targets such as the still-virgin Tower of Silence, ridges on the north side of Mt. Hulya, other exposures on the south side of the Seven Dwarfs, and possibly the large prow on the east side of Old Men's Peak. These would perhaps be better attempted in a warmer season, although access then would be more complex.

As we reached the end of our time, a sat phone call to Tangent Expeditions alerted us to some mechanical/electrical problems with the snowmobiles. Generously, they piggybacked our group onto a Twin Otter ski-plane charter. Instead of a "bump and bang" snowmobile exit, we were evacuated by air, with a pickup right from base camp followed by a 20-minute flight to Constable Pynt, and then on to Akureyri next day. A very comfortable end to one of my best and most successful Greenland trips.

Jim Gregson, Alpine Club, U.K.

**Addendum: Mystery Note Discovered on Mt. Mighty**

It was previously thought that the first ascent of Mt. Mighty was made in 2012 by a female Australian duo, who flew from the summit by paraglider. In 2015, when my team climbed the peak via a new route on the north side, I found a tumbled small cairn at the highest rocks, maybe 40m distant from the true summit but only 2m lower in elevation. Among the rocks was a small bottle containing a tightly rolled but very brittle piece of paper, on which was written a note. It was faded and illegible to me, and I did not think to try to photograph it. I rebuilt the cairn, returning the bottle within.

The Australian ladies have since told me they did not leave a note and were unaware of its presence—they had not even noticed the cairn. None of my research to date has unearthed any report of a previous ascent of this peak. If any reader can shed light on the real first ascent—and maybe a peak name different than Mt. Mighty—the Australians and I would be interested.

Editor's note: In 2016 the identity of the climbers who left the mysterious note on Mt. Mighty was discovered. The story of the first ascent of this peak, called Høngbjerg by the first-ascent party, can be found [here](#).

**Jim Gregson**, Alpine Club, U.K.

## Images

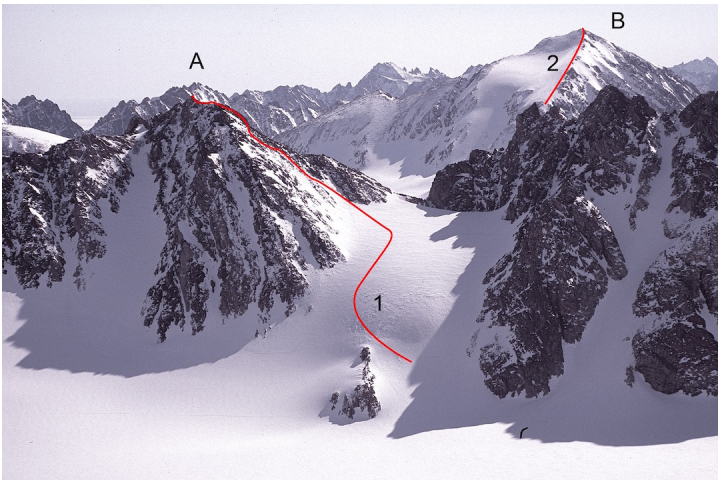


Ascending the Dennis Davis Memorial Route on the northwest side of Farfarer Peak.

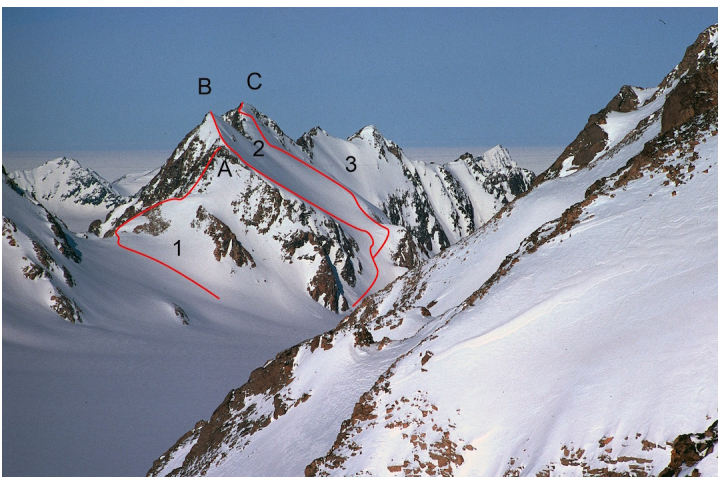


During the descent of Longridge Peak. Below, an unnamed glacier flows down to the frozen ocean at the first inlet north of the Neild Bugt.





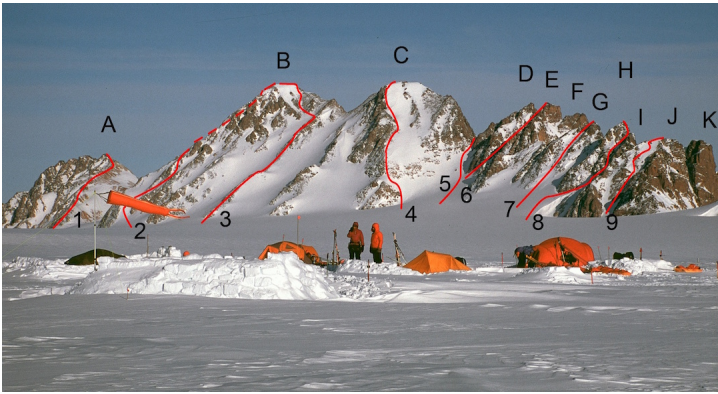
Looking south over the northern branch of the Neild Bugt Glacier to (A) Farfarer Peak and (B) Lancstuk. (1) Dennis Davis Memorial Route (2015). (2) North Ridge (2015).



Looking across the northern branch of the Neild Bugt Glacier to (A) Varmtind, (B) Hvithorn, and (C) Lewty Peak. (1) West Ridge (Gregson-Gregson, 2014). (2) South face-Blanco (2015). (3) South face-Memorial Ridge (2015).



Longridge Peak from the southwest, above the northern branch of the Neild Bugt Glacier. (1) West Ridge (2012). (2) Cryogenic (2015).



(A) Mt. Hulya I. (B) Mt. Mighty. (C) Kuldefjeld. (D) Grumpy (unclimbed). (E) Sneezzy. (F) Bashful (unclimbed). (G) Happy. (H) Dopey. (I) Doc (unclimbed). (J) Sleepy. (K) Tower of Silence (unclimbed but attempted in 2012). Only ascent routes are shown. (1) Marmotte Ridge (2014). (2) Snake in the Outback (2015). (3) Australian Route (2012). (4) Charlotte Road (2014). (5) Snow White Col (2014). (6) Atisshoo, Atisshoo, All Fall Down (2015). (7) Disneyland (2015). (8) Vanishing Gully (2015). (9) Nanok (2015).



Exceedingly large polar bear footprints.

## Article Details

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