



AAC Publications

North Liverpool Land, Many First Ascents

Greenland, East Greenland

Building on the successes of my earlier expeditions to the region (AAJs 2008, 2015, and 2016), Ingrid Baber (Germany), Sandy Gregson, Ron Kenyon, Simon Richardson, Mark Robson, and I (all U.K.) visited the Neild Bugt area from mid-April to mid-May, intent on making more first ascents and carrying out ski reconnaissance into new terrain.

Flying into Constable Pynt/Nerlerit Inaat just after a period of storm, we were inserted onto the icecap by the very capable snowmobile team operated by our logistics supplier, Paul Walker of Tangent Expeditions International. Base camp was close to the location used in 2014 and 2015 (approx. 71°21.7'N, 22°07.4'W). This time we noted much greater snow cover on the glaciers and mountains, the latter having a distinctly more wintry appearance than previously seen. As usual, we excavated and constructed what we hoped would be a durable and bombproof deep-pit latrine—later weather and storm conditions were to confound this hope.

Despite low temperatures throughout the trip, during the first two weeks we completed high-level ridge traverses of the Hulya peaks, linked the ridges of Kuldefjeld and Høngbjerg (a.k.a. Mt. Mighty), and made a technical ascent of the Tower of Silence. On the latter, intense cold meant that a frontal assault on the steep granite of the west face was avoided in favor of an intricate line of icy grooves and chimneys just to the right. Two new routes were established on the north side of Castle Peak, and a new line climbed on Longridge Peak, reminiscent of Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis. In the Seven Dwarfs Range, following a couple of first ascents during this trip, only one of the summits is now unclimbed. A full traverse of all seven would give an ambitious party a major and committing adventure. Richardson and Robson were particularly active in achieving this roster of successes, but all group members had a share in these achievements.

Intermingling with all this climbing activity, a number of long exploratory ski tours to the north and east of camp were carried out for the purposes of investigating approaches to the considerable number of unclimbed peaks that lie throughout North Liverpool Land. Several easier summits were reached. There was copious evidence of polar bear presence in the form of numerous fresh tracks, often at some distance from the coastline. This ski exploration revealed many possible mountaineering objectives plus opportunities for technical rock climbing on some big exposures of sound-looking granite.

The trip was subjected to one of the most challenging periods of storm I can recall in all my 19 expeditions to Arctic Greenland. Very persistent low pressure brought high winds from changing directions, and, more unusually for Greenland, prolonged periods with heavy, wet snowfall. This may be linked to climate change, the evidence of which is now sadly rife across the Arctic. The conditions cost us a week of climbing, during which time our “deluxe” latrine completely disappeared under new snow, as did our sun-lounger complex, which had been pressed into service as a replacement. Two tents and occupants were buried, severely bending—though fortunately not breaking—the poles. After this period, Baber, Richardson, and Robson made a very cold and bold high-level traverse, linking the summits of Mt. Thistle (first climbed in 2014) with the first ascents of Mt. Reckless and Midnight Peak. They returned to camp looking a little stressed after a brief few hours of bivouac/rest during a wild, windy night.

We arranged our snowmobile pickup via a satellite phone call to Constable Pynt, after which a further

burst of heavy snowfall reburied all of our kit. Despite this weather, the snowmobile team duly turned up on time the next day to transport us back to the airstrip. The expedition thanks the Mount Everest Foundation, the Gino Watkins Memorial Fund, and the Austrian Alpine Club (U.K.) for its financial support.

A total of 11 new summits were climbed, plus eight new routes were found on previously ascended peaks. In addition ascents were made of four peaks that had been previously climbed.

First Ascents of Peaks

Tower of Silence (730m), Silence is Golden (300m, TD, MR-SR, April 23)

Bloqqortoq (657m), North Ridge (100m, F, JG-SG-RK-IB, April 24)

Qaqqaq Jutta (697m), North Ridge (100m, F, JG-SG-RK-IB, April 24)

Hulya 5 (830m), Firepot Couloir (400m, AD, MR-SR, April 26)

Hulya 4 (831m), East-West Traverse (D, MR-SR, April 26)

Hulya 3 (844m), East-West Traverse (D, MR-SR, April 26)

Hulya 2 (811m), East-West Traverse (D, MR-SR, April 26)

Dwarf I – Grumpy (870m), North Spur (330m, D, MR-SR, April 28)

Dwarf 3 – Bashful (840m), North Gully Headwall (300m, D, MR-SR, April 28)

Mt. Reckless (976m), North Flank (ski ascent, IB-MR-SR, May 5)

Midnight Peak (995m), West Ridge Traverse (AD, IB-MR-SR, May 5)

New Routes on Previously Ascended Peaks

Castle Peak (780m), Arctic Wisdom (300m, PD, MR-SR, April 22)

Castle Peak (780m), Noynek Buttress (300m, PD+, JG-SG-RK-IB, April 23)

Dwarf VII – Sleepy (740m), South Ridge (100m, PD, MR-SR, April 23)

Longridge Peak (960m), The Long Ridge (450m, D, MR-SR, April 24)

Hulya 1 (830m), East-West Traverse (D, MR-SR, April 26)

Mt. Thistle (1,040m), West Flank (500m, ski ascent, IB-RK as far as Gorse Point, April 27)

Kuldefjeld (980m), West Ridge (450m, AD, MR-SR, April 27)

Høngbjerg, a.k.a. Mt. Mighty (1,005m), West Ridge (100m, PD, MR-SR, April 27)

Repeat ascents of Diamond Peak (890m), The Beacon (660m), Old Man's Peak (707m), and Bird Bone

Point (726m) also were made.

Download a full report, which lists GPS coordinates and much other useful information, at this link.

Jim Gregson, Alpine Club, U.K.

Images



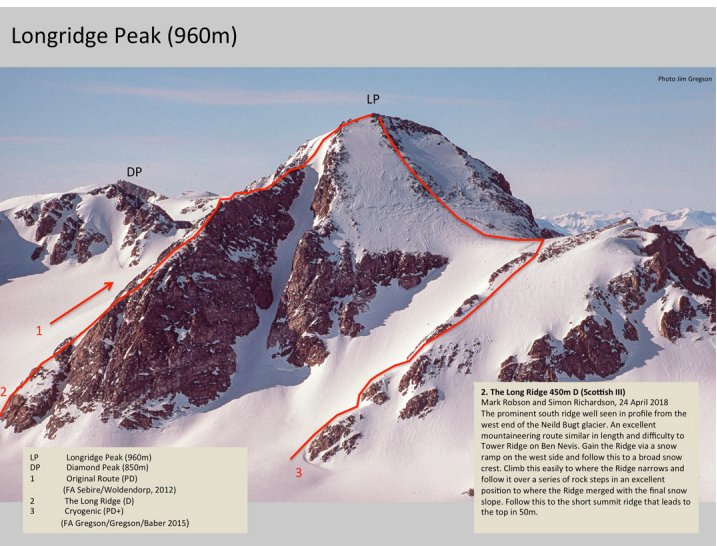
The 300m north face of Castle Peak with (1) Original Route (PD, Sebire-Woldendorp, 2012), (2) Arctic Wisdom (PD, Scottish II, Richardson-Robson, 2018), and (3) Noynek Buttress (PD+, Baber-Gregson-Gregson-Kenyon, 2018).



Unclimbed peaks at the east end of the Neild Bugt Glacier.



Unclimbed Fangstmanstind above the south arm of the Neild Bugt Glacier.



Longridge Peak with (1) Original Route (PD, Sebire-Woldendorp, 2012), (2) The Long Ridge (450m, D, Scottish III, Richardson-Robson, 2018), and (3) Cryogenic (PD+, Baber-Gregson-Gregson, 2015).



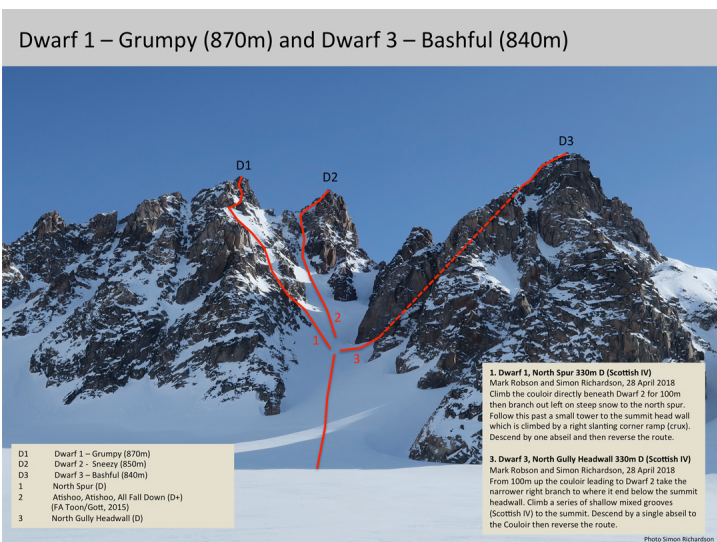
Looking down on the still unclimbed Mini Matterhorn.



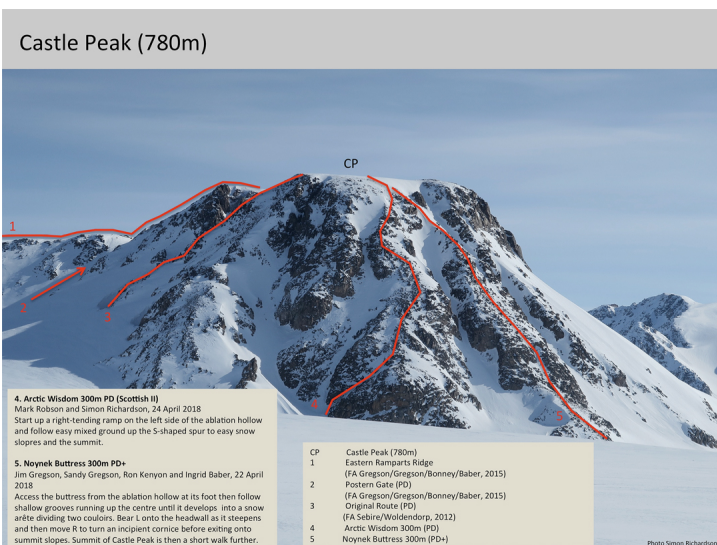
The 300m rock walls forming the east face of Scorseby Prow. No climbs have been recorded.



Unclimbed peaks above the south arm of the Neild Bugt Glacier

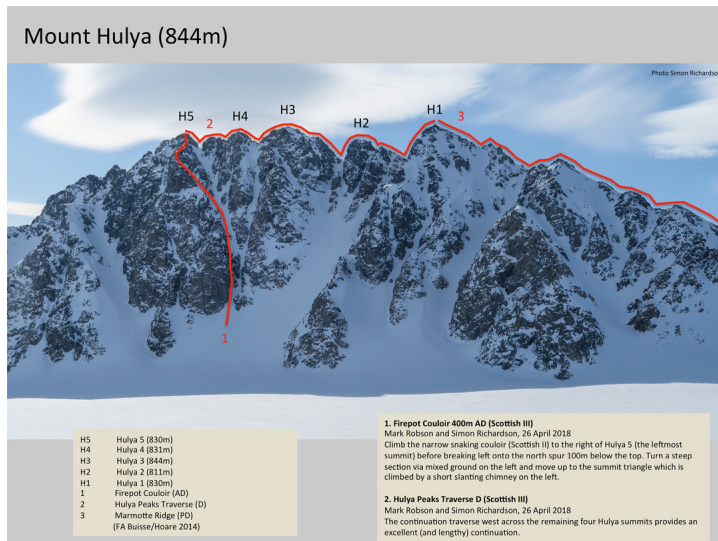


Seen from the north, (D1) Dwarf I or Grumpy (870m), (D2) Dwarf II or Sneezzy (850m), and (D3) Dwarf III or Bashful. (1) North Spur (330m, D, Scottish IV, Richardson-Robson, 2018). (2) Atishoo, Atishoo, All Fall Down (D+, Gott-Toon, 2015). (3) North Gully Headwall (330m, D, Scottish IV, Richardson-Robson).

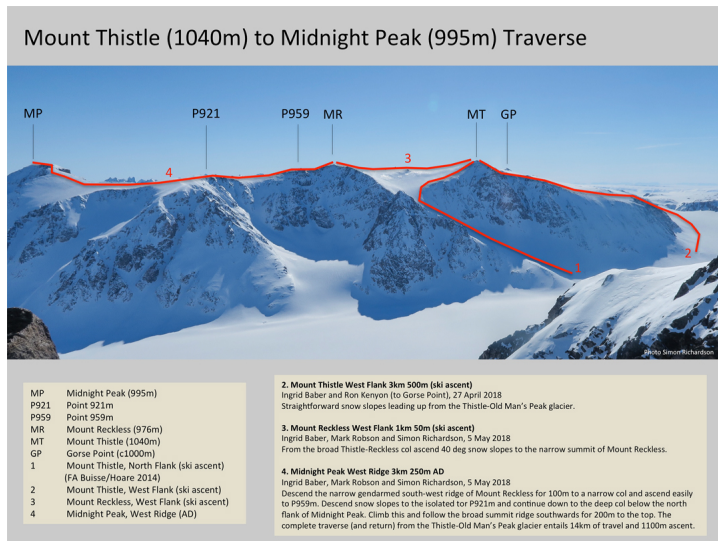


Castle Peak from the north. (1) Eastern Ramparts Ridge (Baber-Bonney-Gregson-Gregson, 2015). (2)

Postern Gate (Baber-Bonney-Gregson-Gregson, 2015). (3) Original Route (PD, Sebire-Woldendorp, 2012). (4) Arctic Wisdom (PD, Scottish II, Richardson-Robson, 2018). (5) Noynek Buttress (PD+, Baber-Gregson-Gregson-Kenyon, 2018).

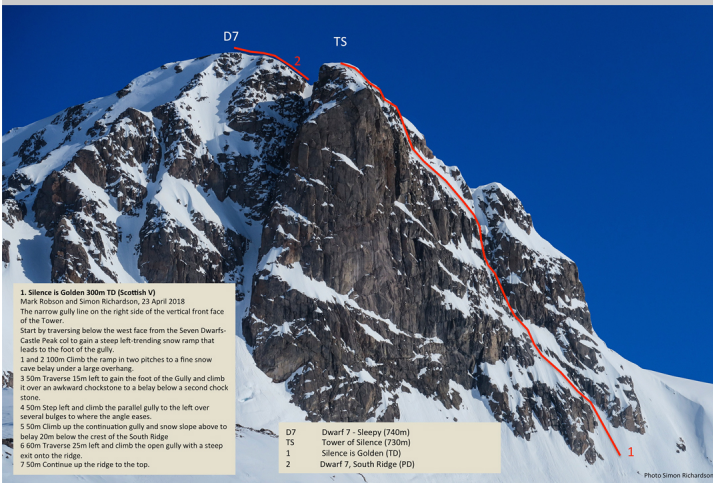


The Hulya Peaks from the north. (1) Firepot Couloir to the summit of Hulya V (400m, AD, Scottish III, Richardson-Robson, 2018). (2) Traverse to Hulya I (D+ Scottish III, Richardson-Robson, 2018). (3) Marmotte Ridge (PD, Buisse-Hoare, 2014).



Seen from the northeast: (MP) Midnight Peak, (MR) Mt. Reckless, and (MT) Mt. Thistle. (1) The original route to Mt. Thistle (Buisse-Hoare, 2014). On May 5, 2018, starting up (2) the west flank of Mt. Thistle, Ingrid Baber, Simon Richardson, and Mark Robson traversed via Mt. Reckless to Midnight Peak and returned the same way (16 hours round trip from base camp).

Tower of Silence (730m)



The Tower of Silence (730m) and the line of the first ascent: Silence is Golden (300m, 7 pitches, TD, Scottish V, Richardson-Robson, 2018). The pair continued to the top of Dwarf 7 and descended via the Gregson route Nanok.



Mark Robson climbing on the north spur of Dwarf I.



Mark Robson during the first ascent of Silence is Golden, Tower of Silence.

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