



## Renland, Five First Ascents

Greenland, East Greenland

The unclimbed east face of Northern Sun Spire (e). The upper section of A Grand Day Out, which climbs the west face, is marked. The mountain marked (a) is Peak 1,881m, climbed by the west ridge. Tom Harding

**In a year when the rapid melting of Greenland's ice was making international news, it was surprising to find ourselves stuck at Nerlerit Inaat Airport (Constable Pynt), waiting for the sea ice to break up so we could make the 180km boat journey to Renland. In the last decade, this icecap-covered peninsula has seen an increasing number of expeditions, but vast swaths, particularly around the coast, remain largely untouched.** Inspired by photographs of an unnamed and little-visited valley in the southeast, we had spent more than a year planning this trip—now the four-day wait seemed endless. [Editor's note: This area has been visited three times, though only two expeditions completed anything of significance; see AAJ 2017 and AAJ 2013.]

Finally, on July 2, boats carried Neil Cox, Niall Newport, Cameron Ree, and me across the iceberg-filled Scoresby Sund, before abandoning us on Renland's sandy coast. We spent the next eight days hauling food and equipment through difficult glacier terrain to establish a high camp at 1,290m (71°11'14.6"N, 25°51'00.4"W). This became our home for the next 11 days and gave perfect access to a number of unclimbed objectives.

We made first ascents of five peaks, including the huge spire that dominates the entire valley, and climbed six routes in all, three of them long rock climbs. On July 11 we made the first ascents of Peaks 1,881m (71°10'12.24"N, 25°50'52.37"W) and 1,763m (71°10'40.56"N, 25°51'25.56"W), both by their respective west ridges (PD-/PD). On the 13th we climbed the Bastion (2,014m, 71°11'17.40"N, 25°53'47.10"W) via the South Gully (450m, PD, 45°), and on the 15th Skyline Peak (2,080m, 71°12'44.04"N, 25°53'46.26"W) via the southwest flank and west face: the Bristol Flyer (480m, AD+, short crack pitches from British 4b–5a 55°). This is probably the second-highest mountain in the area; the highest, Peak 2,084m, was climbed in 2012.

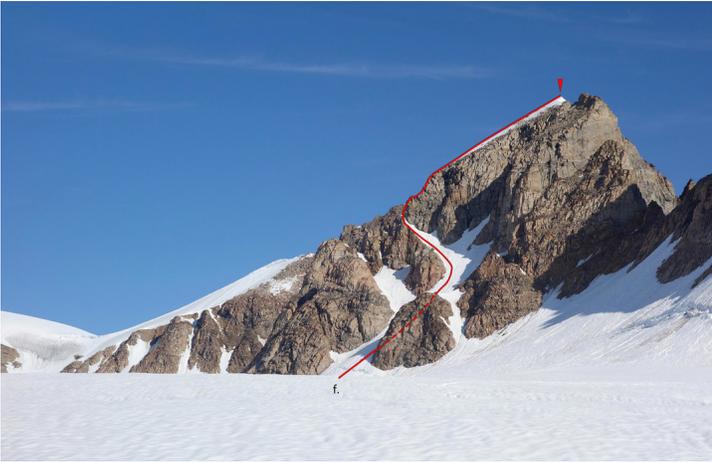
On the 18th we climbed the Northern Sun Spire (1,527m, 71°10'32.10"N, 25°48'37.44"W). The impressive 700m east face had been noted by the 2016 expedition, but we found more broken terrain on the west face, reaching the summit via A Grand Day Out (450m, PD+, UIAA III).

On the 21st we returned to the Bastion and climbed Footloose (520m, AD, British 4c) on the southeast face, descending easily to the northwest. The route follows a steep ridge on generally excellent rock, culminating in wild positions on a final blocky tower.

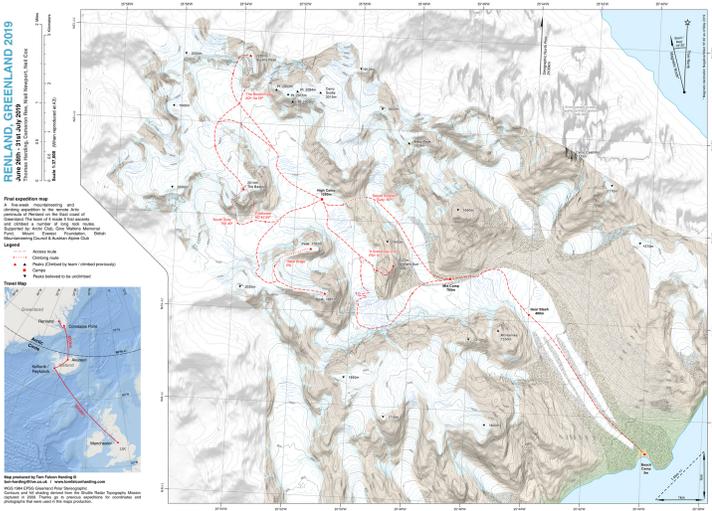
We have published the first large-scale map to this valley (available at the AAJ website), and there is still huge potential for future expeditions. The logistics are generally manageable, and we flew in with all of our equipment, saving the stress and cost of advance shipping. A complete trip report can be downloaded [here](#).

– Tom Harding, U.K.

# Images



Skyline Peak, showing the Bristol Flyer up the southwest flank and west face.



Harding\_Renland\_2020\_Map



Climbing beautiful orange granite on the Bristol Flyer on Skyline Peak.



A Grand Day Out on the west face of Northern Sun Spire



The unclimbed east face of Northern Sun Spire (e). The upper section of A Grand Day Out, which climbs the west face, is marked. The mountain marked (a) is Peak 1,881m, climbed by the west ridge.



The final rock pitch of Footloose on the Bastion



The final snow slopes of Footloose on the Bastion. (A) Northern Sun Spire, (B) Peak 1,763m, and (C) Peak 1,881m. These last two peaks were climbed on the same day, via their west (right-hand) ridges. In the distance are the waters of Scoresby Sund.



The Bastion with (1) South Gully and (2) Footloose on the southeast face.

## Article Details

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