

In worsening weather, we decided to downclimb the upper part of the north buttress and traverse onto a glacier that then led down to a plateau at the bottom of the buttress. The down climbing took a lot of concentration and the heavily crevassed glacier made movement painfully slow; it took us five hours from the summit to cross the bergschrund. The descent back to high camp and the ensuing events were far from dull.

Over the next ten days, the team of eight split into two groups at high camp. One team (Brian, Will, Bill and Tania) descended to our base camp to undergo a ski tour and look at some unclimbed peaks, whilst the other team was to attempt a new route on Mount Paget, the highest peak on the island. The ski tour group, which comprised the remaining four, succeeded in making the first ascent of an unnamed 4,600-foot peak at the head of the Heaney Glacier. The peak was subsequently named Mt. MacArthur in honor of the British yachtswoman Ellen MacArthur, who placed second in the Vendee Globe race. The mountain was climbed via an obvious snowy couloir (Scottish I, 1,500'). At the top of the couloir there were two pitches of grade II mixed ground leading to a three-foot square summit. We descended by the same route.

Winds over the following days reached an estimated 130 miles per hour. We were unable to walk and were forced to crawl to make progress. Both of our tents were destroyed and we were forced to spend a night in an improvised snow shelter. After the wind dropped, we managed to make it back to base camp and rendezvous with the other team.

The second team had experienced the same storm while high on Mount Paget. At one point, Will Manners had both axes in the ice with his body blowing horizontally in the wind. It is a miracle that the team made it down alive. Credit for this must go to Bill Bilous for holding a fall by Will and to Tania Noakes for making the decision to turn around. After meeting up, the two teams packed immediately and descended the Nordenskjold Glacier to the beach and our arranged pick-up point.

The team members have climbed in the Himalaya, the Alps, Alaska, Yukon, the Andes, Scotland, Norway and Greenland. All team members agree that they have never experienced wind like on South Georgia. It is absolutely ferocious.

STUART MACDONALD, *The Alpine Club*

## ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

*The Ice Princess, Mt. Scott, and Various Descents.* On February 28, 2001, Rick Armstrong, John Griber, Kris Erickson, Doug Stoup, and I sailed from Ushuaia, Argentina, across the treacherous Drake Passage on the *Grigory Mikheev*, a Russian icebreaker, to test our luck against the glaciated Antarctic coastline. With the logistical support of the *Mikheev*, which has full accommodations, a Russian staff, and a doctor on board, we scoured the northern half of the Antarctic Peninsula for first ski descents. In the course of skiing eight new descents, we bagged one beautiful first ascent, *The Ice Princess*, which we linked with the northeast ridge of Mt. Scott.

On March 8, we lay moored just south of the Lemaire Channel in front of Mt. Scott. After a much-needed rest day and inspired by the full moon, we got after it. In the morning, we zoomed to shore in a Zodiac raft to tackle a 2,400-foot west-facing line that looked like a giant dorsal fin. We climbed ropeless, front-pointing up the steep snow. Our Black Diamond Whippets only scratched the surface of the wind-scoured slope. We hit the summit sometime late in the morning and used a GPS to determine our coordinates (65° 10' 03.2" S, 64° 02'

05.4" W). Our elevation was 2,410 feet. On the descent, our skis chattered like hypothermic teeth as we slid our way down the 53-degree upper headwall. March 8 is the day in Russia when all women are honored, so we named our line *The Ice Princess* in honor of our Russian cooking staff aboard the *Mikheev*.

From the bottom of *The Ice Princess*, we made an attempt on Mt. Scott. The glacier was broken and difficult to read in the flat light of the evening shadows, but we were able to find a path to the northeast ridge. Perhaps the highlight of the trip was working our way along a 70-degree knife-edge ridge several hundred feet below the summit, grabbing the top of the ice like a handrail, and traversing unroped 2,500 feet above the Lemaire Channel. Kris and I skied right off the summit, down the northeast ridge, with a short 100-foot section (the knife-edge ridge) where we took off our boards. All in all, we had a ten-hour day.

After a tasty steak dinner, we made our way to the top of the ship, where the full moon had risen in a giant orange glow. What a gift to have six days of sunshine in a row.

HANS SAARI, *unaffiliated*

## DRONNING MAUD LAND

*Dronning Maud Land, Various Ascents, Previously Unreported.* In December, 1999, and January, 2000, our dream of dreams came true when, sponsored by the Elvia Insurance company, we traveled to Queen Maud Land, a beautiful mountain region in Antarctica. In the Fernisfjella (explored by the Norwegian expedition of Erik Tollefsen in 1993-94), we climbed Mundlauga by a new route, the West Face (snow and ice climbing to 55°) on January 1. We also tried a steep rock rib on the picturesque jagged summit of Midgard.

We then shifted our activities to the nearby Holtedahlfjella. It took us three long days and a maximum of concentration to cross the Sigynbreen Glacier. As we later discovered, nobody had climbed in the Holtedahlfjella before; perhaps no one had been there before at all. From a base camp at 1400 meters, we reached the top of six mountains. We measured the coordinates and the height and gave them names (informing the Norwegian Polar Institute regarding these names upon our return). On January 9, we climbed Byrd Peak (1780-1800m), which is the north peak of Steinskaregga, via the west face (firm and ice) to the shoulder and on to the summit via the west ridge (broken rock).

On January 10, we made the first ascent of Elvia Peak (2200m; 71° 49.049' S, 8° 58.886' E) via the northwest face. Approach was made over the Sigynbreen Glacier, then through the Lukeš Gap to the Swiss Glacier. The ascent climbed the right part of the northwest face and involved ice climbing, with three pitches of 55-degree ice.

On January 11, we climbed the South Summit (1960m) of Steinskaregga. From the Sigynbreen Glacier, we approached an inlet from the southwest, then made the ascent from the south via easy broken rock to the top.

On January 12, we climbed Kubbestolen (2080m, 71° 46.976' S, 8° 54.206' E) via the funnel-shaped west face; this involved the same approach as for Elvia Peak. It was the most difficult route we did, a 650-meter ice route (50 to 60°) with two ice bulges that we had to pass on the right side.

On January 13, we climbed Carasole Peak (71° 49.529' S, 8° 54.929' E) via the East Ridge (broken rock). The approach was the same as for Elvia Peak.

On January 15, we climbed Soglio Peak (2325m, 71° 48.104' S, 8° 59.132' E) via ice on