

day realized it would take several days due to the complexity of route finding. As we hadn't budgeted for this, we focussed on a nearer goal. We reached the top by 3:30 p.m. on August 9, then rapped the route, spending one more night on the mountain. Calleditas has 13 pitches up to 5.9.

Back in camp our bodies were exhausted and although we still had time for another climb, we headed out to the village of Kuummiut with some local fishermen. Here we spent five glorious days with locals, who invited us into their homes. We ate whale steaks and fresh fish and were allowed a small insight into Inuit life. During the five weeks we spent in the area, we had only three days of rain. This is really unusual for the region.

KAREN MCNEILL



Trillergerne Peaks (high on left) in the Fox Jaw Cirque, from the valley floor. Karen McNeill

*Fox Jaw Cirque, Tasiilaq Fjord, first ascent of The Incisor.* As part two of the Year of the Snake Expeditions 2001, I arrived at Kulusuk in July. I then took a boat through a maze of icebergs to the small village of Tasiilaq, also known as Ammassalik, home to about 2,500 Inuit people and a few Danes. Greenland is owned and governed by Denmark and my Danish contact, Hans Christian Florian, one of the top doctors in Greenland, wasted no time accentuating my jet lag even further with strong Danish pilsners. My plans to get to the fjord were quickly set after a couple of phone calls. For a small fee I hitched a ride in a helicopter on its way out to the area, arranging for a boat to pick me up on the coast several weeks later.

We flew over endless mountain ranges surrounded by dark ocean fjords dotted with huge tooth-like icebergs. As soon as I stepped out of the helicopter, it raced away. I stood alone, some distance from the base of a tower that resembled a gigantic fang from a fox's jaw. Shutting loads, I soon had all of my gear at its base. The reason I had chosen this tower was not only that it was the most prominent and beautiful in the area but also because I thought I might be able to climb it without standing in aiders. My goal was to free climb the entire route on sight without any aid, solo.

The first half of the tower looked like wonderful free climbing. It also looked like I would have to shuttle loads up fixed lines; relentless and painstaking work. Starting at the very base of the tower, the first ca 300 meters of climbing ranged from 5.6 to 5.10 and was mostly high-quality cracks mixed with some desperate face moves here and there. It took me two days to climb, fix ropes, shuttle loads, set up a portaledge camp, and pull up all my ropes.

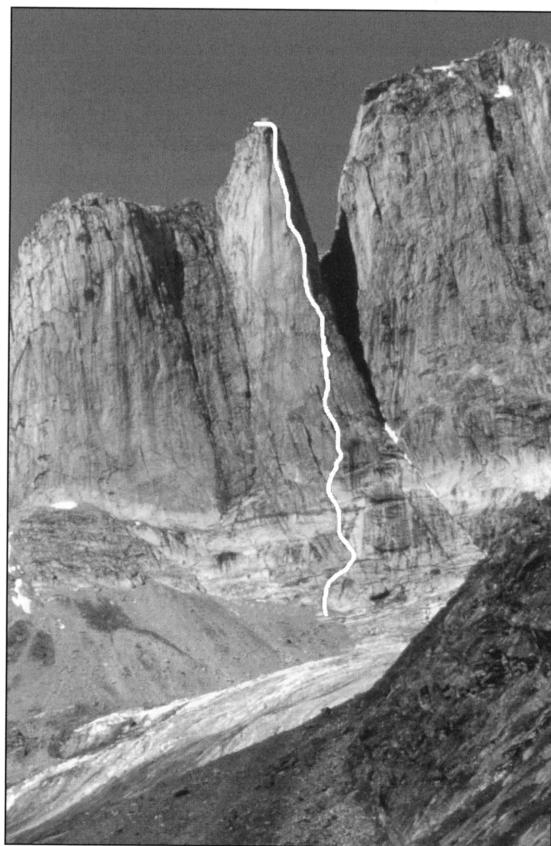
From there, the wall got much steeper. It looked like there was at least another 300 meters of climbing to the summit. The weather stayed sunny and breezy, like early spring in Yosemite. It was the middle of Arctic summer and I had 24-hour daylight with sun hitting me about eight hours a day while up on the wall. From my portaledge camp, I climbed four more pitches in the next two days (nine pitches total so far). All the pitches were climbed free with no falls. There were a couple sections of 5.11 and lots of spicy 5.9 and 5.10. Teetering blocks, expanding flakes, and pieces of creaking, balanced rock required meticulous climbing.

On my fifth day on the tower, and my eighth day in the fjord, I ascended the four fixed ropes to my high point, pulled the last two up with me and set up my solo belay system. It took only two more pitches to reach the summit. Unfortunately, on these last two pitches, my goal for the style that I wanted was interrupted. On the second-to-last pitch the crack narrowed to a hairline seam. Difficult nailing for at least 10 meters would be necessary, whereas free climbing this section would involve spicy stemming and face climbing. It seemed my safest choice would be to aid this section first.

After nailing a bunch of blades, I then down aided, leaving in the pins. I then free climbed the pitch. I used the same tactic on the last pitch. I summited on the morning of my ninth day in the

fjord just minutes after midnight, then took a rest day to hydrate before leaving my portaledge camp and rappelling with all my gear. I named the ca 550-meter route Tears in Paradise (11 very long pitches, VI 5.11 A1) and the tower The Incisor. There was no evidence that it had been climbed before.

The scariest part of the whole trip happened later, while ferrying heavy loads back across one of the glaciers. The glaciers were quite dry, with only small sections of thick, frozen snow remaining in places. Crossing at night when they were most firm, I unfortunately fell in a crevasse about half a meter wide and seven meters deep. The huge haul bag on my back stopped me. My feet dangled below. I felt helpless at first but was able to roll out using my ice axe and pole. It was one the scariest moments of my life. Finally I was able to hitch a ride from a fishing boat two weeks before my scheduled pick up. Of course, Hans Christian had more Danish pilsners waiting.



Tears in Paradise, The Incisor, Fox Jaw Cirque. Mike Libecki

MIKE LIBECKI, AAC

*Staunings Alps, Great Cumbrae Glacier, first ascents.* Following previous Scottish Mountaineering Club expeditions to the Staunings Alps of Northeast Greenland in 1996 and 1998, our party of six (J. Fairey, C. Jones, C. Ravey, B. Shackleton, N. Walmsley, and me) was lifted by helicopter from the coastal airstrip at Mesters Vig to the Great Cumbrae Glacier. Base camp was established on July 23.

Over the next 25 days the weather remained mainly fine and stable with only two days of bad weather. In the warmer hours snow conditions would deteriorate and slopes and couloirs become dangerous, but 24 hours of daylight allowed us to move around in the colder periods (night time temperatures were around -5°C), when the snow was stable. However, there were several nights when it was even too warm to do this.

The surrounding glaciers were explored on skis and a number of unclimbed peaks noted, some of which were not shown on the maps in our possession. On July 26, climbing as pairs, the whole party made what we believe to be the first ascent of Keswicktinde (2380m) on the ridge between Tupilaq and Sefstromsgipfel. An easy couloir followed by two steeper pitches of ice led to a col, from where the northwest ridge, heavily corniced and steep in places, was followed for 10 pitches to the summit snow cone (650 meters, Grade AD).

On July 28 a new route was established on Sussex (2330m) from the Great Cumbrae Glacier by Shackleton and me. The line followed the far left-hand branch of the couloir between Sussex and Sydney. This was easy at first, after which there were several pitches of steeper ice to a col. Two pitches up a steep ice slope, followed by five pitches of rock on the southeast face led to the final ridge section above the south face. One rock pitch put us on top (650 meters, D). Sussex had only received one previous ascent, in 1963 from the northeast (AD).

The first ascent of a fine rock spur (the Jones/Fairey Spur) above Great Cumbrae Glacier leading to unclimbed summit (2570m) just north of Sefstromsgipfel was completed by Fairey and Jones on July 28-29. The 550-meter route had 27 pitches and was graded ED. The pair descended by rappelling into a couloir to the south, after which one climber was avalanched 300 meters and finished up unharmed in the rimaye. He was rescued from this point by the other five members.

On August 10 Fairey and Jones made the first ascent of a small peak at the junction of Little Cumbrae and Cantabraise glaciers. Pap of Cumbrae (1695m) was climbed via its southeast ridge, giving four pitches on rock (200 meters, AD). On the same day Ravey, Shackleton, Walmsley, and I made the first ascent of Mearsfjeld (2100m), a peak on the ridge between Little Cumbrae and Cantabraise. From Little Cumbrae Glacier we climbed a couloir, which steepened at the top to exit on to a col beside a square rock peak. From here the easy southwest ridge was followed to the top (400 meters, PD). On August 13-14 Fairey and Jones made the first ascent of Tandlaegetinde (2350m) via the south face. This is a peak on the ridge between Tupilaq and Sefstromsgipfel, and the 400-meter route gave 15 pitches of rock at an overall grade of TD.

Attempts were made on the south face of Sussex, a 700- to 800-meter difficult rock wall; a new route on Sydney, which was terminated only 60 meters from the summit due to unstable snow; the unnamed square rock peak, where we got to within a couple of pitches from the summit before loose rock barred the way; and the west ridge of Emmanuel, where 12 pitches were completed at an overall TD before an impasse was reached one-third of the way up the ridge. There is still much potential for new rock climbing in this area.