

pair has stashed them securely on the edge of the ice cap at the end of each trip. In the summer of 2003 the pair was again flown to this site by helicopter and after checking that the equipment was in full working order after four years in the elements, they set out on a 150km journey. They had an initial ambitious plan to reach four previously unvisited areas, with potential for up to 15 first ascents of previously unclimbed peaks up to 2,820m. However, last year the generally good weather that they had experienced on previous trips was missing and they were faced with difficult skiing conditions, rendering distances of no more than three to five km to be traveled each day. At one stage they were forced to sit out bad weather in their tent for six days. This meant that they were unable to reach their intended objectives, but they still managed to make ascents of five peaks on their committing journey, three of these being previously unclimbed. Peaks in this region are generally of the non-technical nunatak variety but well over 2,000m in altitude.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *High Mountain INFO*

*Sermersoq Island, southwest face of The Needle.* In 2002 French climbers, Pierre Mayet, Marrhieu Noury and Marie Ponson climbed a new route on the Needle (which they referred to as the Sermersoq Dibona, after its resemblance to the famous granite aiguille in the Ecrins Massif). The southwest face, which is clearly visible from the town of Nanortalik, gave the French 500m of climbing and is now the hardest route on the island. Dibonaland has 13 pitches up to F6a+ and A1 but the team stopped 15m short of the summit due to adverse weather and very high wind. On June 19 they climbed the first 11 pitches of superb knobbly granite but were forced to descend. They returned on the 21st and completed their 350m-high route. The Needle is a striking, course-grained granite, 1,200+m summit in the central range of the island and was climbed during the first expedition to Sermersoq. In 1957 British mountaineers, G Francis and D Fletcher, climbed the north face; a six-pitch climb at V with one aid point. This route has been repeated twice; in 1993 and 2003.

Prior to this, in six hours on June 17, the three French also climbed a six-pitch (250m) route, christened Buffet Froid (5+/6a with a beautiful diedre), on the southwest face of a nearby, pyramidal, slabby summit, leaving a cairn at the top.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *High Mountain INFO*

*Sermersoq Island, new routes and repeat ascents.* In August 2003 a six-member British party comprising: Kate Boobyer, Derek and Sarah Fuller, Derek's parents Brian and Sue Fuller, and Henry Lickorish, climbed a total of 23 peaks on Sermersoq, the island immediately north of Nanortalik in South Greenland. Nine of these peaks were previously virgin and a number of new routes were added to formerly climbed mountains.

Considering its ease of access, Sermersoq has a surprisingly limited mountaineering history, most parties having continued further east from Nanortalik to attempt bigger things. The island's climbing potential was first explored in 1957 by a small British party, which among other peaks climbed The Needle, the most prominent Aiguille seen from Nanortalik. In 1971 Phil Gribbon, a frequent visitor to Greenland, led an expedition from St. Andrews University, Scotland. The main objective was exploratory mountaineering in the Tasermiut Fjord, but while waiting (for three weeks) for the ship carrying the equipment to arrive in Nanortalik, the team

climbed many of the easier peaks in the southern part of the island. However, they did not touch the main group of granite spires to the north.

A two-man British team climbed five moderate peaks in this northern group during 1977 and one of the team, Mike Banks, returned again 16 years later in 1993. This was the first serious attempt to climb peaks in the north, and 12 summits were successfully ascended by Banks's mature four-man team. Seven of these peaks were first ascents. However, one notable failure took place on Svatakkerne (Danish for Saw Tooth), at 1,276m the highest peak on Sermersoq and situated in the northwest. The unfinished route was completed two years later by Paul Marshall and Jeremy Lee (east-southeast ridge, then south face to west ridge at TD, VI+). No other climbing teams appear to have visited the island until 2002, when the French climbed a hard new route on The Needle (recorded elsewhere in this Journal).

The 2003 party's new route achievements include: Geneva Peak (ca 900m), fourth and fifth ascents via north ridge (V) and southeast face (VI+); Savtakkerene North Peak (ca 1,100m), first ascent via north ridge (IV+); Fullersoq (1,010m), first ascent via the north ridge (easy); Mount Doom (1,080m), first ascent via south ridge; Misty Mountain (1,120m), first ascent via the south ridge (III); Otley Peak (980m), first ascent via the east ridge (III); Sapangarsuaq (1,050m), first ascent via southeast ridge (III+); Akuliatisoq (960m), first ascent via the east ridge; Boulder Peak (ca 900m), first ascent via the west ridge; Neyland Peak (ca 1,100m), first ascent via the south ridge; Kent Peak (ca 1,000m), second ascent via the north ridge. There were also many repeats of existing routes including the Original Route (north face) on the Needle (V with one aid point; fourth ascent of the peak) and the Original 1995 Route on Svatakkerne, where a probable variant was made to the final pitch at the same standard (VI/VI+). There were also several failed attempts due to poor weather, notably on the north ridge of 1,060m Half Dome, which is probably the finest remaining unclimbed peak on the island.

SUE FULLER, U.K.

*Nalumasortoq, south-southwest face of Left Pillar, new route.* At the end of June a four-member team from Spanish TV arrived in Greenland. We flew to Narssarsuaq and then Iñaki San Vicente and I paddled sea kayaks for eight days to the Tasermit Fjord, landing below the towers of Ulamertorsuaq and Nalumasortoq. From July 9–16, San Vicente, Ferran Latorre and myself climbed a new route on the left hand pillar of Nalumasortoq, just left of Life is Beautiful. The route is a classic line following an obvious series of cracks and corners on the black part of the wall. Black unfortunately means lichen and we spent much time cleaning the route. In fact, we debated over naming our line, Black Roses. Over three days from the 9th–11th we fixed to the eighth pitch. Then on the 15th we climbed two more pitches and returned to bivouac at the top of the seventh pitch, where there is a good ledge. The first nine pitches are between F6a and 6c/7a. On the next three pitches we used some aid but climbed the remaining two free. The last pitch was perhaps the most dirty; completely covered in thick black lichen. On the 16th we climbed to the top and returned to the bivouac, rappelling to the ground on the following day. The route has 14 pitches and was filmed for the television documentary series *Al Filo de lo Imposible*.

JOSE CARLOS TAMAYO, Spain