Knud Rasmussens Land, first ascents. Four British climbers, Geoff Bonney, Rosie Goolden, Mark Humpherys, and I, made nine first ascents from the Griffith Pugh Glacier. The team based itself on the glacier at 69° 10.741' N, 29° 9.029' W approximately 40km from the coast. Conditions throughout their stay in June were perfect and daylight uninterrupted.

The highlight of the expedition was the first ascent of Mt. Kellas (2,884m) via the narrow North Ridge (Alpine D). Following a short ski approach from their second camp, the team encountered typical conditions for the area with near perfect ice and névé interspersed with loose, friable rock. The narrow summit ridge gave stunning views of the ice cap to the north.
and an endless array of unclimbed peaks to the south. Other ascents included: One Down (2,750m); Pt Alice (2,316m); Kathleen (2,746m); Pearl (2,673m); Malago (2,788m); Pt Whymper (2,546m) and Gordon’s Choice (2,680m).

This area has been something of a preserve for British climbers, who have visited the mountains of Knud Rasmussens Land five times in the last three years. However last year’s expedition note that there is still enormous potential for first ascents in the lower grades.

JEREMY WINDSOR, United Kingdom

Watkins Mountains, two possible first ascents close to Gunnsbjørns Fjeld. Named by the Vikings “Hvitserk” or “White Shirt,” Gunnsbjørns Fjeld stands as the Arctic’s highest mountain. Its 3,693m summit is not technically difficult to reach, but a good degree of mountaineering skill is still required. Our summit day was clear and cold, allowing stunning views of the surrounding Watkins Mountains and the distant Polar Plateau. I had only been in Greenland for three days and already I was so high. I could feel inside me that this was going to be another momentous trip.

We then climbed two virgin peaks in two days—one ascending a long exposed ridge and another through deep snow before returning to base camp. The peaks are situated just south of Gunnsbjørns Fjeld, one marked 3,535m, and the other a short distance to the north west and situated on the south west ridge of Gunnsbjoern Fjeld. We GPS heighted them at 3,421m (N68° 53.412’ W29° 52.691’—via west ridge) and 3,265m (N68° 53.440’ W29° 51.505’—via east ridge) respectively. The lower peak is not marked on any map. Few people have the opportunity to climb a virgin peak—to stand where no one else has been before and survey all below them. It’s a wonderful experience and for me a very personal one. Being that first person does not fill me with pride or prowess, more an inner peace where I can find my soul again. Perhaps climbing itself is one of the world’s great soul searchers. Other climbers who summited these peaks: Phil Poole, guide, and Liz Roche, UK, and Ulrich Goerlach and Wolfgang Schaub, Germany.

NIGEL VARDY, United Kingdom

Editor’s Note: Claims that these two tops were previously unclimbed arise solely from the fact that they have not been registered with the Danish Polar Institute. Parties have traveled between them (crossing between GBF and Cone) since 1988 at least, but as they are rather more “bumps” than summits, it is possible they have been ignored until now. The team later traveled east to the Silk Road Glacier and made the second ascent of Outpost (2,848m).