

prominent glacier system and then north, toward the coast, down another glacier system to land at a suitable base camp (30–40 minutes flight). On the return they flew by helicopter from base camp to Constable Point (1.5 hours). The use of the helicopter was dictated by the large quantity of filming equipment. They established base camp on July 27 at a height of 400m on the glacier, just 30 minutes walk from the foot of the southwest-facing wall.



The shallow corner system taken by the Japanese route up the headwall of Orca, northern Milne Land. *Yasushi Yamanoi*

The three began climbing the face on the 29th. The first 600m were rather slabby and straightforward, with most pitches 5.9 or less. On August 8 they established a high camp and began work on the headwall, a vertical face of 400m with good crack systems, followed by 250m of ridge. It took five days to climb the 400m, which was mainly crack- and face-climbing at 5.10. However, several loose sections forced the use of aid. On the 15th they placed a final camp on the ridge and the next day, traveling light, completed nine pitches to the summit. The team arrived on top at 11 p.m. after 15 hours climbing. They used 46 bolts. There is no previous report of big wall climbing in Milne Land, but the area has many steep rock walls and alpine faces.

MANABU HIROSE and YASUSHI YAMANOI, *Japan*

*Sortebrae Mountains, seven ascents.* Our eight-member expedition comprising Andy Garman, Alasdair Garnett, Rob Green, Clare O'Sullivan, Jonathan Philips, Tracey Quine, Malcolm Sloan, and I left the U.K. on June 2, bound for an unvisited glacier in the Sortebrae area. This is not the Sortebrae Glacier but an area of mountains to the west of that glacier, our chosen landing site being a little over one day's ski from the Borgetinde Massif to the southeast, and somewhat farther from Ejnar Mikkelsens Fjeld to the south. Our expectations were high, our minds full of unclimbed alpine peaks and what we would achieve. Achieve them we did, but there was an Arctic Odyssey awaiting us.

After a series of delays caused by mechanical failure and a long period of bad weather, an advance party left for our Greenland landing site almost a week late. The flight to Greenland was one that will live long in our memories. Words cannot do justice to the beauty of the ice-flecked sea, eventually meeting the mountains and the glaciers under a curtain of mist. The flight felt too short, too rushed to allow us to feast our eyes on the spectacle and drink in its beauty, its remoteness, its splendor. This was the Arctic, and it was everything we expected.

The reverie was broken when we landed at N 69°1.3', W 27°50.8' (1,552m). The plane stopped violently, as it encountered soft snow and buried itself in the glacier. Two days of digging with the help of a reinforcement of mechanics, sent by a coast guard helicopter, saw the plane back on the level, and it returned to Iceland for the second half of our party, who were



It took two days with the help of reinforcements flown in by a coastguard helicopter to dig out the Twin Otter, get it back on the level and prepare a runway for take off. The mountains of the Sortebræ cast a watchful eye over proceedings. *David Jakulis*

landed 40km from our position. Affecting a reunion filled the next few days.

We split into two parties and from the 14th–17th explored separate subsidiary glaciers for a route onto the icecap. The forays were successful, with both teams getting members onto the icecap, from where three new peaks were climbed. On the 16th Alasdair, Tracey and I climbed the 2,706m Pile of Stones (N 69°10.7', W 27 46.9') at PD and the same day made an ascent of Poacher's Peak (2,773m, N 69°9.6', W 27°43.9'), also at PD. During this period Clare, Jonathan, Malcolm, and Rob climbed an unnamed peak at Scottish II. All were first ascents. We returned in murky weather to find a fresh supra-glacial river cutting off our tents, necessitating a long detour. The following day we raced the sun for the snow bridge so we could move base camp to a safer position, the abnormally warm temperatures beginning to be a real concern.

The new position brought access to new peaks, and we attempted some fine mountains, black spires against a background of endless white glaciers. We generally avoided rock in favor of snow faces and ridges in incredible situations. We made ski descents from the base of some routes, on snow of varying condition. From a camp at 1,532m, Andy, Tracey, and I climbed Solstice Peak (2,222m, N 69°7.8', W 28°4.3') at PD on June 20 and the following day got to within 100m of the top of an unnamed peak at N 69°6.7', W 28 4.7'. The grade was PD to our high point at 2,285m; continuing to the summit would have involved rock at ca UIAA IV. At the same time another party retrieved the equipment a previous expedition had been forced to abandon, encountering crevasse falls and worryingly bad snow before returning with loaded pulks.

A realization that the Twin Otter would not return for us at our present position forced another move, this time heavily laden, to higher ground. The plane returned to collect the equipment belonging to the previous expedition, only to bury its nose in the glacier again, and



Beautiful unclimbed objectives in the Sortebrae Mountains to the north of Ejnar Mikkelsens Fjeld. *David Jakulis*

require our (now expert) extraction techniques. The situation was less serious than the first burial, and the plane was on its way in the early hours. The following day teams struck out for Borgetinde and two nearby unnamed peaks, one unclimbed. We skinned through alpine terrain made more serious, more beautiful, by the vastness and the silence of the Arctic, as we passed impressive seracs and the debris of huge avalanches.

Teams reached a high point on the Borgetinde summit tower. On the 26th Alasdair and Andy retreated from a sentinel peak at the mouth of the Borgetinde Glacier in bad snow. The following day Tracey and I reached the summit of a previously unclimbed peak of 2,842m (N 68°51.8', W 28°14.6') adjacent to Borgetinde, following a knife-edge snow arête with empty space on one side and the Borgetinde plateau shimmering below on the other (PD+). From the summit we could see the sea. The ski descent, believed to be the first from the Borgetinde plateau, was one of the best mountain experiences of my life. Floating down powder, gliding on névé, we passed under huge walls and between immense seracs and crevasses, carving the face of the mountain, the only sound the scrape of our skis in the vast silence of the Arctic mountainscape. There is something about the Arctic, something we glimpsed that day, which will be with me forever, calling me back.

Repeated plane burials meant Flugfelag would not land in our current position. We needed to move to a position on the edge of the icecap, over 30 km away, fully laden, in two days. This immediately after a 16-hour day on the mountain, in which we had covered 32 km. A routine of one-hour pulking, followed by five minutes rest, saw us there in time, passing through unvisited areas, climbing ever higher. On the 29th Jonathan and Malcolm climbed a snow peak on the ice cap at ca N 69°14.2', W°28 52', while Rob ascended a neighboring summit. There was little time for dwelling on the fact that our trip was coming to an end, and the arrival of the Twin Otter heralded a subdued atmosphere. We could have stayed much longer. Our expedition benefited from the kind support of the Arctic Club, the Alpine Ski Club, Andrew Croft Memorial Fund, Gino Watkins Memorial Fund, and the Mount Everest Foundation.

DAVID JAKULIS, U.K.

*Editor's note: Ejnar Mikkelsens Fjeld and Borgetinde had two ascents each prior to 2007. The first ascent of the former, 3,308m peak was a tour de force and thought to be the highest unclimbed peak in Greenland at the time. In 1970 a British team led by Andrew Ross sailed down the coast from Scoresby Sund and trekked inland for over 70km to make a committing ascent of what some people consider to be one of the most impressive summits in East Greenland. It was not climbed again until 1998, when a Swiss team led by Roland Aeschmann repeated this south glacier route. Borgetinde is 3,338m and was first climbed in 1972 by Rod Brown and Nigel Soper from a Sheffield University expedition and again in 2000 by Nigel Edwards's British expedition (see AAJ 2001). Prior to 2007 another British team led by Bob Dawson had climbed peaks a little to the north of the 2007 British location, and in 2006 two Tangent-organized expeditions visited the northeastern sector bordering the icecap (see AAJ 2007). Before the arrival of the British group in 2007 another group made the third ascent of Borgetinde but failed on Ejnar Mikkelsens Fjeld due to avalanche conditions. A second group, an all-women expedition, also climbed peaks in the Sortebrae, situated a couple of days travel from the British group.*

*Schweizerland, Mt. Forel and Perfeknunatak, corrections.* The route climbed on Mt. Forel by the Spanish team in 2006 was the northeast ridge and not the southeast as stated in AAJ 2007 (pp. 204–5). Most likely this was a first ascent; the ridge seen on the right side of the picture on p. 204, the northwest ridge, was climbed by a Tangent expedition. Forel was first climbed in 1938, via a relatively straightforward snow route, by Andre Roch's Swiss expedition, which traveled through Schweizerland and climbed 13 other virgin peaks, including Laupers Bjerg, Rodeburg, and Rytterknaegten, the latter an impressive technical rock ascent. Forel did not receive a second ascent until 1966, when it was climbed by Japanese. However, it is more likely to have had 20 or so ascents, rather than a dozen as reported.

The Spanish also climbed the southwest ridge of Perfeknunatak via a line they named Al Tran-tran. Although the report states they weren't clear if the peak had been climbed before, it is actually located directly opposite Forel and was first climbed by Swiss in '38. Hans Christian Florian, Jens Jørgen Kjærgaard, and Martin Madsen climbed it on June 3rd, 2004, and discovered a fine cairn on the summit. They checked for messages and rebuilt it, and are surprised that it was not visible to the Spanish. The straightforward route to this summit is from the east, just out of the frame to the right on the p. 204 photo.

HANS CHRISTIAN FLORIAN, *Greenland*

*Fox Jaw Cirque, six first ascents.* In mid-June, Josh Beckner, Darcy Deutcher, Kadin Panagoulis, Jed Porter, Annie Trujillo, and I stepped off a boat and schlepped seven miles into the Fox Jaw Cirque in the Tasiilaq Fjord Area. First reports of climbing in this cirque stem from 1998, when Dave Briggs and Mike Libeck climbed a 360m gem on a formation dubbed the Molar. Dave and Mike bestowed the name "Fox Jaw" on the jagged granite cirque, after comparing it to the toothy jaw-line of a fox skeleton that they found during the approach. We took it as a totem of luck when we stumbled upon the same fox jaw during our hike to the area.

And what luck we had. It's possible that we had the best weather of any alpine climbing area in the world during our six-week stay: only seven days of lazy drizzle disrupted the continuous sunny weather. We climbed six new routes—five in the cirque and one on a peak to the east, which we named Ganesh. To say the least, the climbing was marvelous—thin granite