

The final part of the ascent to the Old Man of Saatut. Matthew Burdekin

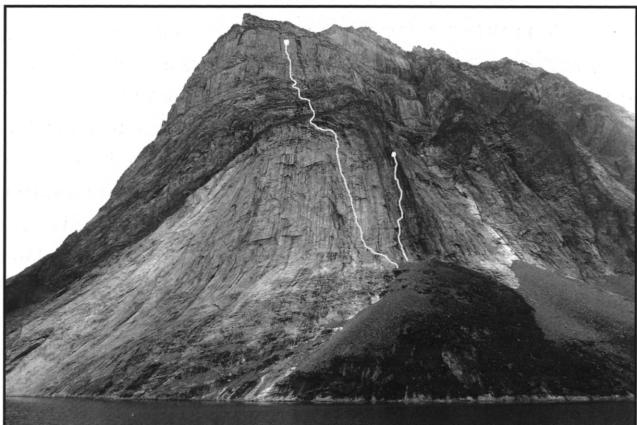
it Cake (135m, E2 5c, Doyle-Hill) and The Big Tasty One (70m, E3 5c, Burdekin-Ullrich). This formation had been climbed via two routes by the 2009 expedition. We visited the island Agpat, where all four of us made an ascent of The Old Man of Saatut ($70^{\circ}53.9' N, 52^{\circ}06' W$, ca 475m of mostly scrambling, with a section of HVS 5a). Off the southeast corner of Agpat lies the small island of Saatuk. We took time toward the end of the trip to befriend the island community, and while there took the children climbing. We also conducted a public presentation on climbing in the area at the local school. The expedition had received a grant from the Gino Watkins Memorial Fund, and we feel our work on the island captured the essence of this organization. We are extremely grateful to the community for their hospitality and generosity, and especially grateful to the owner of Gambo, Alun Hubbard, glaciologist and mountaineer of kindred spirit, along with his crew, who made the expedition possible. The sail home across the Atlantic in late September was a whole new challenge altogether.

MATTHEW BURDEKIN, UK

EAST COAST PAUL STERN LAND

Paul Stern Land, several first ascents. After a first visit to the area in 2008 (see AAJ 2009), Robin Collins (Australia), Geoff Bonney (UK), Paul Walker (UK), my wife Sandy, Willem-B Stern (Netherlands/Switzerland), and I returned to the fine mountains of Paul Stern Land. The combined age of our team was 367 years.

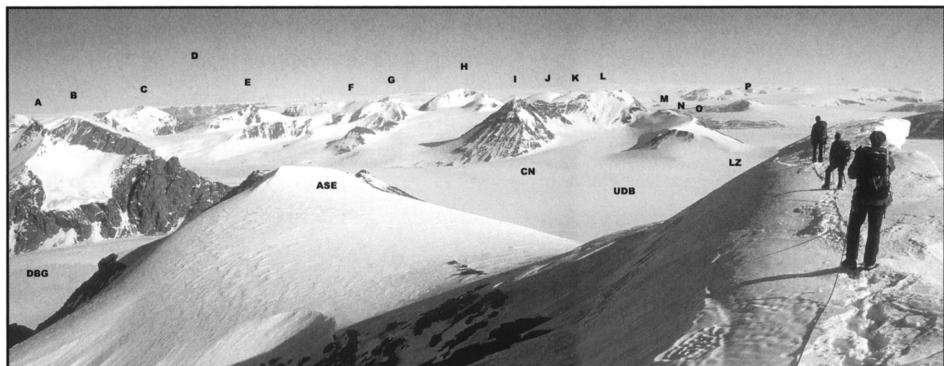
Willem-B is the brother of Paul Stern, after whom the area is named. Like his brother he is also a geologist. He had found my 2008 report, and then made contact, eventually



The Horn, showing the Burdekin-Ullrich attempt (left), and the Doyle-Hill attempt, the latter tried previously, possibly in the 1980s. Matthew Burdekin

deciding to join our expedition to see the area firsthand. In 1959 Paul Stern was killed by stonefall in the Swiss Alps, but between 1955 and 1958 he visited Northeast Greenland as a member of Lauge Koch's geological expeditions. In 1958 Stern was on the Gaaseland Peninsula, but with others crossed the Vestfjord Gletscher to access what is now called Paul Stern Land from the south. His party climbed a peak they called Sfinks (Sphinx, 2,295m).

In 2008 we had believed we were the first to climb in Paul Stern Land, but research since revealed two visits by the British military. In 1978 an Army Mountaineering Association team penetrated Vestfjord by boat and climbed Peaks 1,950m, 2,254m, 1,660m, and Rundefjeld, at least two of which were thought to be first ascents. In 1987 a party from the Royal Greenjackets made a similar approach, repeated Peaks 1,950m and 2,295m, and then claimed five first ascents in the eastern end of Paul Stern Land. None of the central peaks were reached. Other names on the map were bestowed by various groups of geologists between 1968 and 1972.



Central peaks of Paul Stern Land seen during the traverse of Ararat. (A) Arken. (B) Pk. 2,260m. (C) Pk. 2,320m. (D) Distant mountains of Gaaseland. (E) Pk. 2,324m. (F) Pk. 2,240m. (G) Sfinks. (H) Snehorn (2,240m). (I) Baendalbjerg with Cloudspotter's Ridge falling toward (CN), Camp Noah. (J) Pk. 2,370m. (K) Pk. 2,377m. (L) Pk. ca 2,350m. (M) Pk. Bruno. (N) Copper Knob. (O) Weisskopf. (P) Vindbjorne (1,830m). (DBG) North branch of Doede Brae Glacier. (ASE) Southeast ridge of Ararat, descended during traverse. (UDB) Upper Doede Brae. (LZ) Landing Zone at 1,540m. Following a straight line in front of the climbers it is ca 150km to the Watkins Mountains and Gunnbjornsfjeld. Jim Gregson

Iceland's volcanic ash cloud had blown away northeast as our group flew north to Keflavik. On May 22 we reached Constable Pynt (Nerlerit Inaat) and later the same day flew to Paul Stern Land by twin otter ski plane, now operated by a new company Norlandair. The pilots firmly declined to land at our preferred site in the heart of the mountains, mindful perhaps of several incidents in recent years when aircraft have been stuck in deep, soft snow. We eventually settled for a landing site on the upper Doede Brae (glacier) at $70^{\circ}27.174' \text{ N}$, $29^{\circ}52.999' \text{ W}$, at an altitude of 1,540m. This was ca 10km southeast of our 2008 Camp Venturi.

In the evening of May 23, all of us bar Willem traversed a ridge to the south, crossing three tops: Copper Knob (1,890m), Weisskopf (ca 2,000m), and Peak Bruno (2,050m). While these elevations allowed us to look at the surrounding area, the view also revealed numerous crevasse fields in the glaciers, for there was much less snow cover than in 2008.

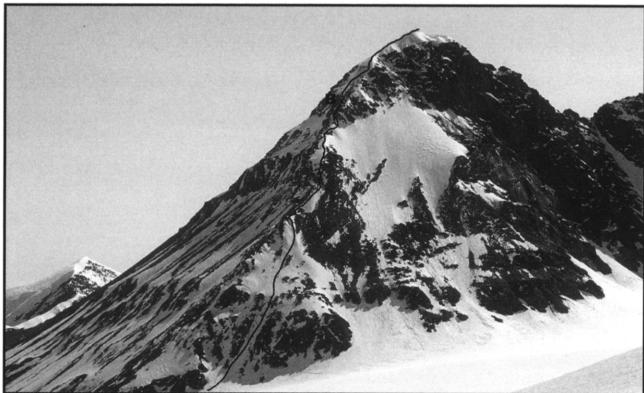
On the 24th we loaded pulks and tried to move camp to our preferred location. However, we were thwarted by a bad crevasse zone, which barred access to a higher glacier. Somewhat dismayed, we retreated a short distance onto the Doede Brae and made a new camp at $70^{\circ}26.396' \text{ N}$, $29^{\circ}47.823' \text{ W}$ (1,450m), close to Baendalbjerg. From here we reconnoitred Arken (The Ark) and found a

possible line of ascent. On the 26th Geoff, Sandy, and I made an attempt on the west ridge of a 2,300m peak next to Peak Bruno. We were stopped by a 75m rock step of very unstable nature.

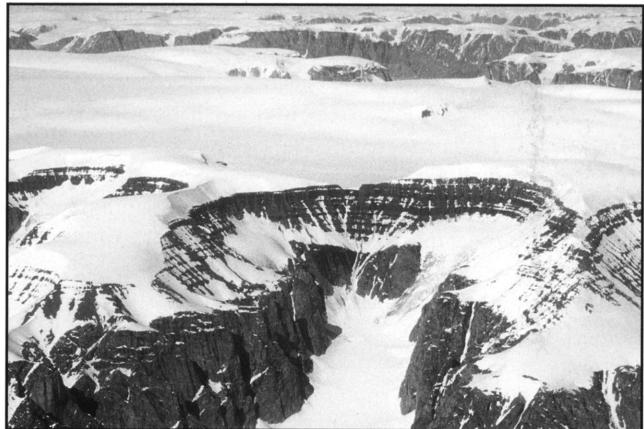
On the 28th we all camped at the foot of Arken's south face, crossing numerous crevasses on the way. Soon after midnight, and leaving Stern in camp, the rest of us started up the face and onto the great snow terrace, which runs for more than two kilometers from west to east. At first we made rapid progress but eventually ran into eggshell crust on the terrace and began to plunge crotch-deep into underlying sugar snow. After hours of tediously slow movement, we pulled onto a glacier shelf that would lead up to the main crest, from where we hoped to reach the summit from the east. This shelf was also in poor condition and criss-crossed by crevasses. Eventually, we ground to a halt at well over 2,000m, questioning the safety of continuing. As Geoff remarked, "It's decisions like these that have kept us alive."

On the 30th Collins and Walker took Stern up Copper Knob by a new route, allowing the elderly gentleman to see more of the area. That evening Geoff and I, chomping at the bit, set out for the first ascent of 2,341m Baendelbjerg (Baendel means tape and was so named by geologists for the striped rocks on the west face). In a 15-hour round trip we climbed and descended the northwest ridge, a mixed climb with a notable crux rockband where I led the "Bonatti Pitch," a series of jutting overlaps climbed in crampons and bare hands. Our 900m route was named Cloudspotter's Ridge (D/D+ with a crux of UIAA V-). We rappelled on the descent.

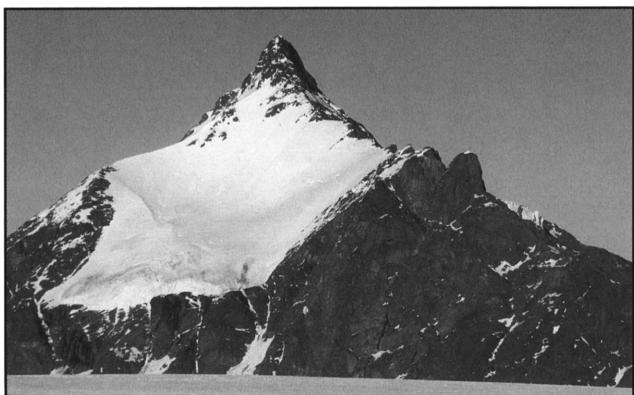
Although tempted by a return to Arken, Geoff and I agreed to go further northwest with the others, and on June 2 made a new camp up glacier at 70°29.113' N, 29°58.896' W (1,640m). Remembering 2008, we soon called this place Camp Katabat, as every evening the familiar,



Baendelbjerg from the west, showing the 900m line of Cloudspotter's Ridge. (B) Marks the Bonatti Pitch (V-). Jim Gregson



Unclimbed rock walls on the north side of upper Vinkeldal. Access to these formations, on the south side of Milne Land, would involve either a long overland trek from the south coast, or approach from the icecap above, where it should be possible to land a twin otter. Jim Gregson



Arken (Ark) seen from a distance of eight kilometers to the northwest. The 2010 attempt ran across the south face, out of sight to the right.
Jim Gregson

piercingly cold ice-cap wind-spill battered the tents, only relenting in late morning. From this location all except Stern made the first full traverse of Ararat (2,480m, and the highest summit in Paul Stern Land), Sandy and I having made the first ascent in 2008. We climbed the west ridge and descended the southeast ridge and southwest face. On the 5th Robin, Sandy, and I skied west toward the ice cap, encountering many crevasses, where in 2008 none

had been seen. We climbed a high nunatak called Solbjorgs Fjell (2,090m) over rock and ice on its north-northeast ridge. We named the route Cryoconite Ridge (cryoconite is a term coined by the polar explorer Nordenskjold to refer to atmospheric debris, soot, dust, pollen, etc. that is trapped in ice and provides a climate record). We skied quickly back to camp under a hot sun.

By the day of our pick-up we were acutely aware how much depletion had occurred in the snow cover, mostly by sublimation in the warm conditions experienced in 2010. Ten or 12 years ago we always came to Greenland at the end of July. For icecap and glacier trips this would now be very unwise. The summer melt is kicking in earlier, and the air company is unwilling to risk landing its ski-planes so far into the summer. We now come in the late spring, and if 2010 conditions become the norm, knowledge and experience of how to cope with crevasses will become increasingly important.

On our journey out the pilot flew us around Arken's summit. We could clearly see that our attempted route would have led us to the top, if we'd had better luck with conditions. Is this a good reason to return? Yes—but we already have our eyes set on a new area further north.

JIM GREGSON, UK, Alpine Club

RENLAND

Grundtvigskirchen (1,977m), east face, Eventyr; Milne Land, Pt. 1,295m, north pillar. An Italian-Swiss team comprising Simon Gietl, Daniel Kopp, Roger Schali, and photographer/climber Thomas Ulrich made the first ascent of the spectacular east face of Grundtvigskirchen, a huge granite wall rising 1,325m from a point not far above the south coast of Renland.

After flying to the airstrip at Constable Point, and crossing Scoresby Sund by Zodiac inflatables, the team established base camp just 50m above the sea. Across the waters of the Ofjord to the south lies the large island of Milne Land. Gietl (Italian) and Schali (Swiss) first crossed Ofjord to a fine granite pillar rising to a 1,295m summit on Milne Land's north coast, more or less directly opposite Grundtvigskirchen. After introductory scrambling the pair started on the upper 850m granite pillar at 6 p.m. They climbed 15 pitches and then took a rest for one-and-a-half hours before climbing the remaining 15 pitches to the