

At the same time, Read and Shackleton attempted a group of three rock spires lying to the northwest of Tillyrie via a couloir on the southwest face. Intense cold and ice-glazed rock forced a retreat just short of the summit. Meanwhile, Preston, Bickerdike and Reid made a reconnaissance of the unclimbed south face of Sussex, a spectacular 800-meter-plus sheer rock wall. This would make a superb target for a future expedition.

By the evening the weather was worsening and a storm put paid to all further climbing aspirations. On May 15 we began an arduous and difficult journey back to Mesters Vig, which was reached at 1:30 a.m. on the 21st. The party was flown to Iceland the same day.

STEPHEN REID, *United Kingdom*

Watkins Mountains, Various Ascents. A seven-member expedition left Iceland on May 24 and was landed in the Watkins Mountains by Twin Otter ski plane. Following a day's ski touring to Base Camp, all seven members made the 20th ascent of Gunnbjorns Fjeld (3693m), the highest peak in the Arctic, by the south ridge on May 28 in perfect weather. Indeed, the weather remained perfect for the whole duration of the expedition, allowing fourth ascents of Dome (3682m) and Cone (3669m), the second and third highest peaks, on June 1 and 2 respectively. (These peaks were first seen by Gino Watkin's 1930 Arctic Air Route Expedition and later named by Alistair Allen's 1971 expedition.) Late in the evening of June 4, the team came across the Dane Hans Christian Florian, who had recently arrived at Gunnbjornsfjeld Base Camp with an Austrian team following a mammoth three-week ski tour from Scoresbysund. Florian's group made a successful 21st ascent of the peak and fifth ascents of Dome and Cone. The group then skied off to a further Base Camp on the more easterly Woolley glacier. From here the group split, allowing John Starbuck, Lyle Closs and John Gluckmann to continue on for a further day's travel to the head of the Woolley Glacier. They then succeeded in making the third ascents of the fourth and fifth highest peaks in the Arctic, Mound (3609m) and Peak 3547m, on June 6 and 7, first named and climbed by Jim Lowther's 1988 expedition. (These peaks were climbed by Florian-Muller-Grossman in 1996 and incorrectly claimed as firsts.) Paul Walker (leader), Phil Cann and expedition doctor Rupert Bourne made what is believed to be a first ascent of P.2848m via a side glacier that runs parallel to, and on the northern edge of, the Woolley Glacier.

On June 10, the group was flown out to the small airstrip at Constable Point in northeast Greenland. This allowed them to pass over range upon range of unclimbed peaks in the Rignys Bjerg and Blosseville Coast region in order to carry out air reconnaissance and identify the proposed glacier landing strip for the two imminent British Rignys Bjerg expeditions (see above).

JAMES GREGSON, *Alpine Club*

SCHWEIZERLAND

Schweizerland Mountains, Various Activity. A seven-member team was flown to the Tasiilaq Mountain Hut (built in 1996 and run by Hans Christian Florian) in the Schweizerland mountain region of east Greenland by helicopter in March. The three-week expedition was very much an exploratory one. Temperatures were more comfortable than expected and rarely fell to below