



Mt. Currahee (2,612m) in the Gronau Nunatak, showing the line of the first ascent (solid) and descent (dotted). The route was completed in a round trip of 28 hours at AD with a bivouac on the ridge at (B). *Hauke Engel*

*Gronau Nunatak, first ascents.* In August three undergraduates from Oxford University, Chris Abbott, Ben Spencer, and I, flew by ski-equipped plane to a glacier in the Gronau Nunatak Range and made first ascents in largely unexplored territory. Traveling on skis and pulling sledges, we crossed 90km of terrain in the region separating the main Greenland Icecap from the Watkins Mountains. Since the range has not been mapped, we navigated using GPS, compass, and aerial photographs taken in the 1970s.



Hauke Engel pulling toward unnamed and unclimbed peaks during the final stages of the Oxford University expedition to the Gronau Nunatak. *Hauke Engel collection*

Crossing 30m-wide crevasses, experiencing 24 hours of daylight, and absorbing the otherworldly beauty of the hostile landscape made the trip worthwhile in itself. But we did not forget our primary objective, and three-and-a-half weeks of snow and ice climbing resulted in 12 first ascents graded between F and AD.

The first climb, a prominent snow-and-basalt pyramid we named Mt. Currahee, proved to be the most demanding ascent of the trip, involving steep ice, an impromptu bivouac just below the summit, and an extremely difficult bergschrund. We deemed the 28-hour climb a perfect introduction to Arctic mountaineering. We made other notable ascents in an unexplored range just west of the huge Christian IV Glacier. We named this range the Oxford Nunatak and climbed six of the seven peaks, small nunataks, at F and PD.

We experienced a variety of weather patterns on the icecap, with high pressure systems giving way to clinging fog and even rain, as the temperature rose to +7°C. Toward the end of the trip, as the Arctic summer began to draw to a close, heavy snowfall produced several tent-

bound days and much lower temperatures. The thermometer dropped below  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  during our last few days, and strong winds forced us to abandon one exposed climb.

After 13 months of planning, preparation, training, and, above all, fund-raising, we agreed that the expedition had been everything we had dreamed of and more. It certainly spawned plans for the future.

The following table gives GPS locations of our camps as we skied through the area, and previously virgin mountains (with grades) we climbed.

NAME	DATE	NORTH	WEST	ALTITUDE
Camp 1 (Drop-off point)	08/06/06	$69^{\circ}35'58''$	$29^{\circ}49'37''$	2,103m
Mt. Currahee (AD)	08/08/06	$69^{\circ}35'33''$	$29^{\circ}55'01''$	2,612m
Camp 2	08/10/06	$69^{\circ}36'23''$	$29^{\circ}32'03''$	2,609m
Abbottsberg (ski ascent)	08/11/06	$69^{\circ}36'09''$	$29^{\circ}38'38''$	2,609m
Camp 3	08/11/06	$69^{\circ}35'10''$	$29^{\circ}24'14''$	2,556m
Mt. Brasenose (F)	08/12/06	$69^{\circ}33'27''$	$29^{\circ}17'48''$	2,562m
Byrnesfeld (F)	08/12/06	$69^{\circ}34'25''$	$29^{\circ}17'33''$	2,628m
Helenasbjerg (F)	08/12/06	$69^{\circ}34'32''$	$29^{\circ}14'46''$	2,603m
Camp 4	08/12/06	$69^{\circ}33'59''$	$29^{\circ}18'42''$	2,490m
Camp 5	08/13/06	$69^{\circ}30'45''$	$29^{\circ}15'01''$	2,382m
Hannahsberg (F)	08/13/06	$69^{\circ}30'55''$	$29^{\circ}14'08''$	2,520m
Schwerdtfegersbjerg (PD)	08/14/06	$69^{\circ}30'09''$	$29^{\circ}11'04''$	2,479m
Qureshisbjerg (F)	08/15/06	$69^{\circ}30'26''$	$29^{\circ}15'55''$	2,517m
Camp 6	08/16/06	$69^{\circ}27'33''$	$28^{\circ}50'01''$	2,215m
Charlottesbjerg (F)	08/19/06	$69^{\circ}26'55''$	$28^{\circ}51'15''$	2,444m
Camp 7	08/19/06	$69^{\circ}24'19''$	$28^{\circ}40'11''$	2,522m
Elizabethsbjerg (F)	08/20/06	$69^{\circ}19'54''$	$28^{\circ}30'08''$	2,602m
Camp 8	08/20/06	$69^{\circ}19'25''$	$28^{\circ}30'20''$	2,465m
Camp 9	08/21/06	$69^{\circ}12'39''$	$28^{\circ}22'47''$	2,019m
Mt. Ward (PD)	08/22/06	$69^{\circ}12'34''$	$28^{\circ}27'44''$	2,550m
Camp 10	08/23/06	$69^{\circ}09'08''$	$28^{\circ}24'50''$	1,913m
Sarah's Spur (F)	08/25/06	$69^{\circ}08'13''$	$28^{\circ}26'12''$	1,975m

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*Gunnbjornsfjeld region first ascents.* A Royal Navy expedition comprising Tim Brookes, Guy Buckingham, Belinda Fear, Al Grieg, Derek Scott, and Barrie Whitehead traveled 160km and climbed 14 peaks in the Watkins Mountains. These included Greenland's highest, Gunnbjornsfjeld (3,694m); Cone (a.k.a. Qaqqag Johnson, 3,669m) the third highest; and the seventh highest (possibly Deception Dome, 3526m), as well as four previously unclimbed peaks of ca