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Final Report:

Baroness Expedition

3rd July – 3rd August 2001



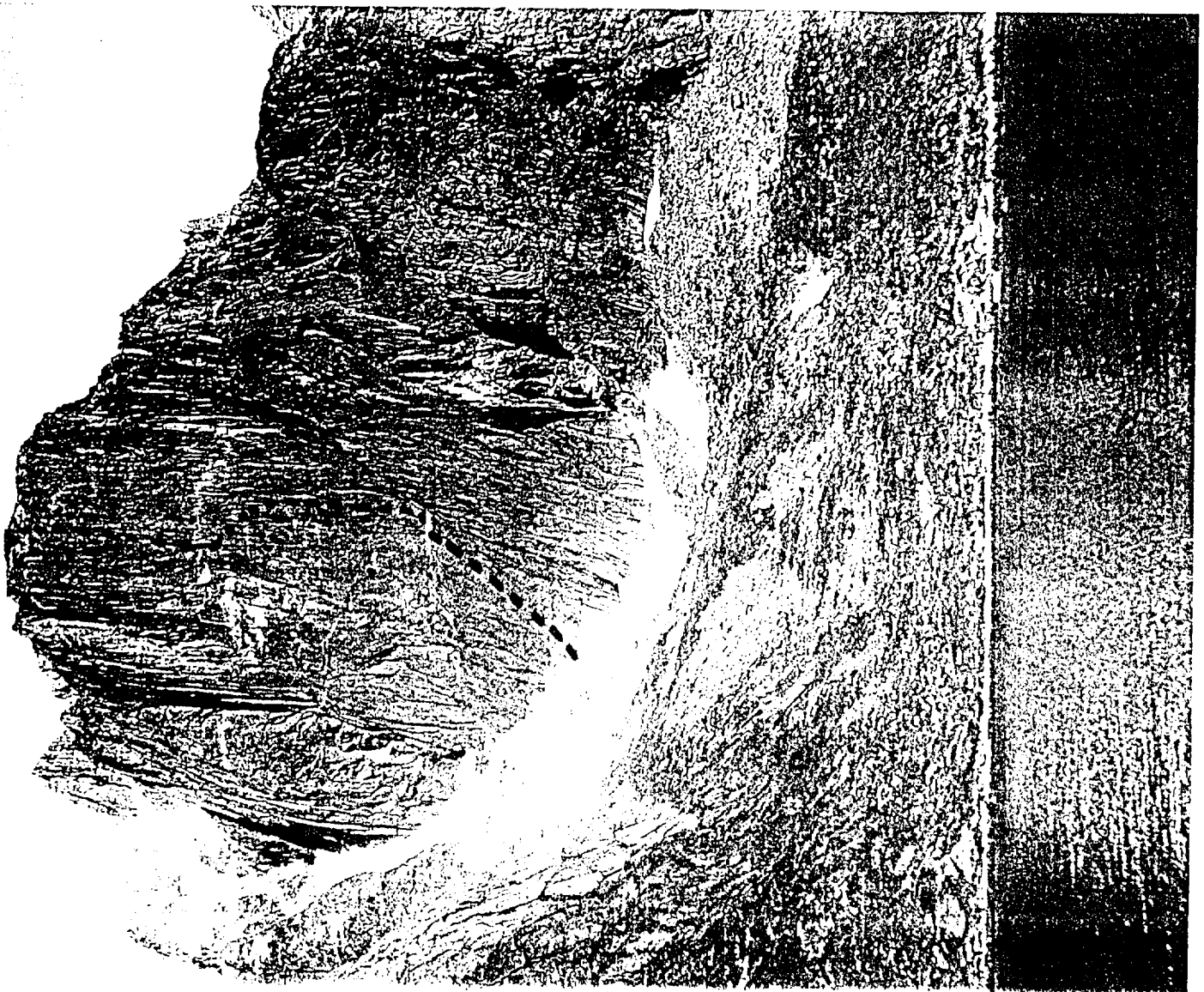
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British Mountaineering Council
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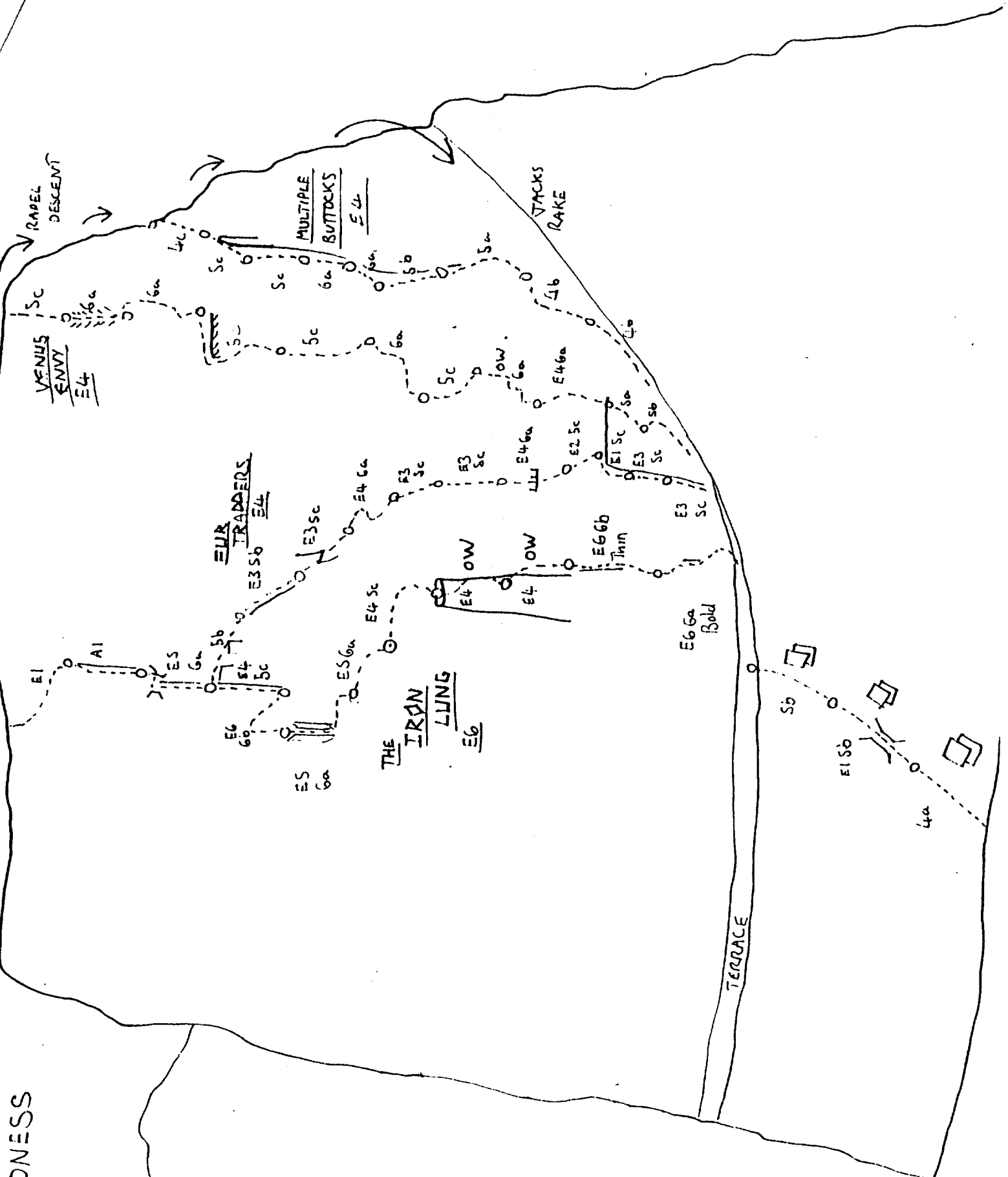


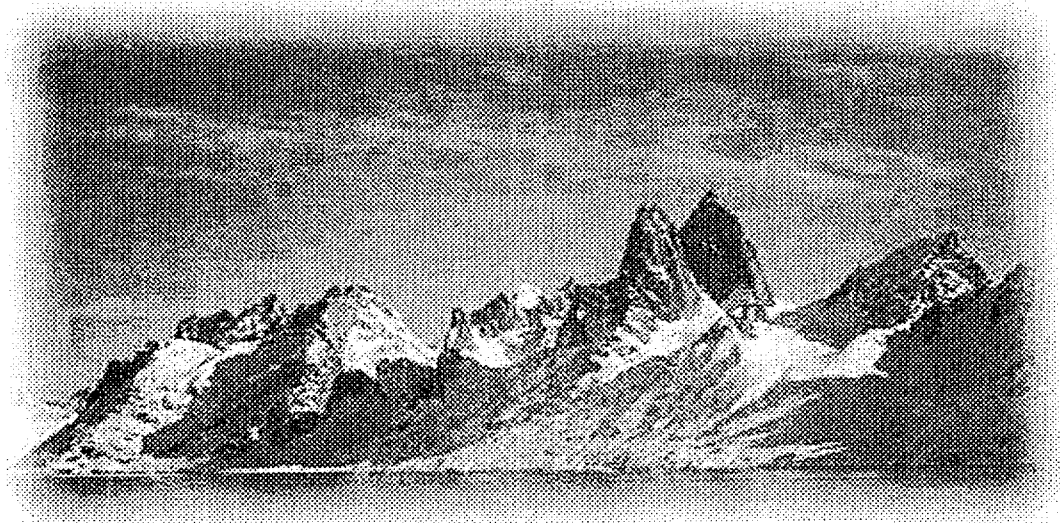
Base Camp



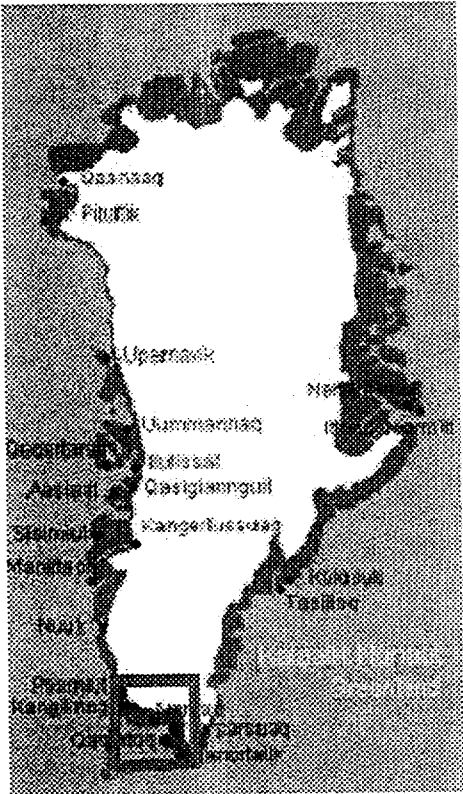
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BARONESS
TOPO

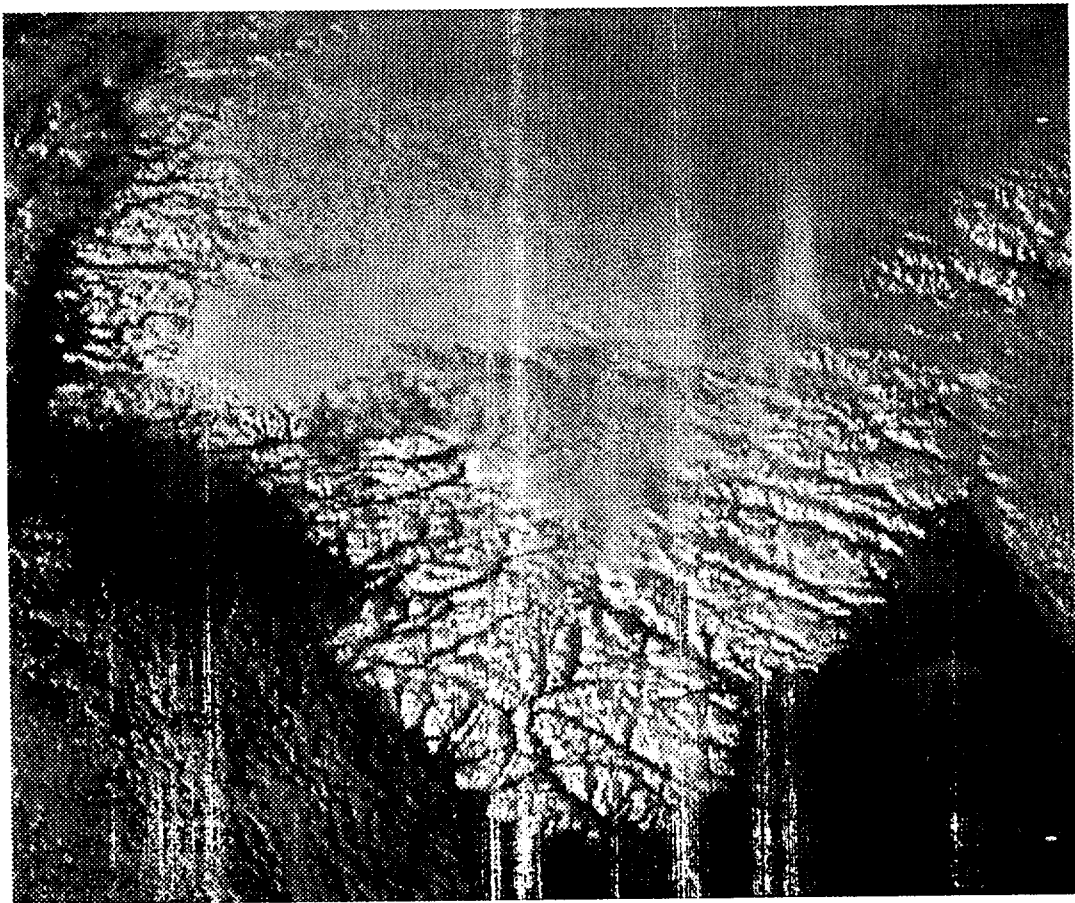
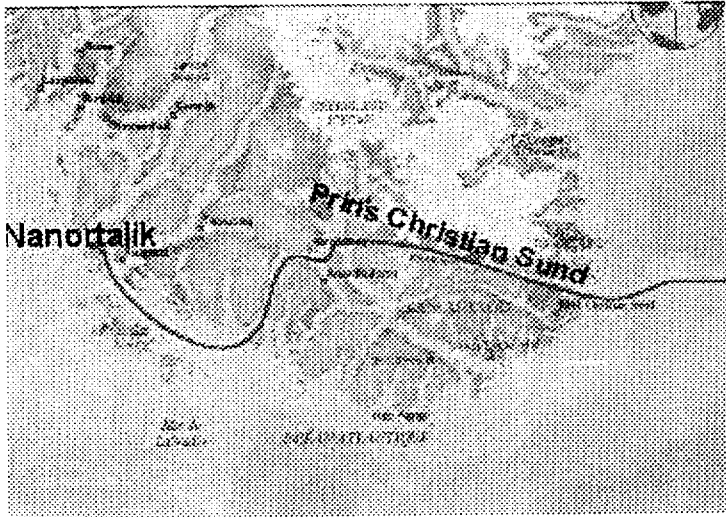




Fjord in winter. High peak is 'The Baron'



Brief location



INTRODUCTION

This report is about the '2001 British Baroness expedition' which took place between 3rd July 2001 – 3rd August 2001. Base camp was located on the east shoreline of Torssuqaatoq Fjord near Cape Farewell, Southern Greenland.

The expedition members were:

Matt Dickinson 29

Leader of the trip, this was Mat's third time in Southern Greenland. He works as both a teacher and leader for Jagged Globe. Mat will climb anything but his No.1 passion is for steep wall free climbing. He is based in Sheffield.

Tom Briggs 26

Tom is the marketing manager for Jagged Globe. He is a very talented on-sight climber, being capable of onsighting E7. Tom proved to be the 'main man' for the style of climbing we were to find. He is based in Sheffield.

Lucy Creamer 29

Very well known and respected professional climber. Lucy pushes British women's climbing standards both indoor and outdoors. Rock, Ice, mixed, bouldering, sport, or anything else you can think of, be prepared to be burned off. She is based in Sheffield.

Airlie Anderson 26

Airlie is a professional climber and of course very well known. Now graduated from pushing woman's sport and trad climbing standards, she concentrating on big wall climbing both aid and free. She is based in Sheffield.

Ian Hey 32

Ian is a versatile climber and Baffin Island veteran. He works as a cartographer. He is based in Sheffield.

Nial Grimes 33

Nial is another well known climber. Along with climbing the odd E8, he is a prolific writer for the climbing press. He is currently editing the new Froggat guide book. He is based in Sheffield.

Matt Dickinson first visited the Torssuqaatoq Fjord in 1998 while guiding on a commercial expedition with Sir Chris Bonnington and Sir Robin Knox-Johnson. He discovered the climbing potential by chance. "We had sailed from Plymouth to Greenland and arrived at the Cape Farewell in a heavy sea. We took the first Fjord entrance we could find to take shelter from the strong winds. Whilst sailing down the Fjord towards the settlement of Aapilatoq I was amazed to see huge, perfect Granite walls none of which had been climbed! I made a pact with myself to return!"

Indeed the granite of Southern Greenland has to be seen to be believed. It is a rock climber's paradise no less. This short extract is taken from a forthcoming article:

"They're a lot of talk about Southern Greenland and a record amount of Mount Everest Foundation and BMC grant money being spent getting there. This is no coincidence. Forget images of blizzards and Eskimos. Southern Greenland in the summer season is snow-free, warm(ish), light for 18 hours a day and with much better weather than the Alps. O yes, then there is the rock. Oceans of granite. It would be an understatement to say that there are numerous big cliffs in this area. Imagine a whole landscape made of rock. Every where you look-rock. The Torssuqaatoq Fjord is Aladdin's cave and when you enter fjord you've got a difficult decision to make, what to climb first? But beware of the shock of returning to the UK - 'what! Did I really use to climb on that?'"

Torssuqaatoq Fjord has a fine array of walls on both sides. The biggest cliff is the Thumbnail, the world's highest vertical sea cliff that drops 1400m straight into the sea. Ben Bransby, Gaz Parry, Ian Parnell and Matt Dickinson made the first ascent in 2000,

during which we had had plenty of time to eye an alarmingly steep, smooth red shield on the opposite bank. Matt fell in love with the 'Baroness' and plotted a return visit.

The Baroness is by no means the biggest cliff in the area however it is both the steepest, smoothest, and reddest. 600m of vertical golden granite, it's the most ascetically perfect, virgin shield any of us had ever seen.

INTENDED CLIMBING STYLE

Instead of a traditional big wall approach, hauling and portaledging, which can often be more exercises in vertical freight haulage, than climbing. The team opted for a lightweight, fast approach and so we had brought neither bolting kit or aiding gear. We would fix the first 200m, retreat for treats, then return back to the high point and then climb to the top in a long push carrying just a day sack. This proved to be a very fast and versatile tactic on a cliff this size. Not having to haul also made the climbing more fun. More climbing-less hauling! However an additional factor when deciding not to haul was the length of the days. With 20 hours of light in early July, it's possible to push the climb round the clock.

LOCATION

Torssuqaatoq Fjord is very near Cape Farewell, which is Greenland's most southerly point. It is east of and parallel to the famous Tassermiut Fjord, home of the big walls: Ketil and Ulamertorssuaq.

The nearest settlement of any size is Nanortalik, which is 5 hours by boat from Torssuqaatoq Fjord.

TRAVEL

There are mercifully few logistical problems associated with a Southern Greenland expedition. New permits or portering is certainly a good thing. Most of the potential problems arise in getting to your base camp. There are quite a lot of different travel legs. The following is a summary of our journey:

Outward

- Sheffield-Stanstead Cars, left parked at Airlies mums house in Bishop Storford
- Stansted-Copenhagen Flight using 'Go' airline. This flight leaves daily and is quite cheap at £100 return fare.
- Overnight at friend of Ian's in the city
- Copenhagen-Narsarsuaq Flight using 'Greenland Air'. This is the expensive leg, which is also difficult to book. We could not find an agent in the UK to sell us these flights. In the end after a small fortune spent on phone bills, we got the tickets through Copenhagen agent called 'Team Arctic'. However we cannot go so far as to recommend this company, the service was poor. Cost of flight: £450 return fare.
- Overnight at youth hostel £10 each per night.
- Narsarsuaq-Nanortalik We used the scheduled Greenland Air helicopter flight. Cost £170 one way. This is a good service however because of its size it books up early.
- The alternative for this leg is to use the ferry to Nanortalik. This is cheaper (approx. £60) but also books up early.

Overnight at Youth Hostel in Nanortalik.

Nanortalik-Base Camp

Private boat charter. Various priced for this service can be obtained. We booked the round trip (5 hours each way) plus the hire of a Zodiac and outboard for £600.

Return Journey

Same as above except that we took the ferry back to Narsarsuaq which took two whole days and also we had to endure a further two day wait at Narsarsuaq. The YH was full so we had to use the hotel...expensive!

TRAVEL NOTES

It feels like a bit of an 'epic journey', we were surprised to find the transportation and accommodation was often full. We employed the Nanortalik tourist board to make bookings for us and to generally help us out. We definitely recommend these people.

We found it difficult to make the transport 'link up'. Two or three days can seem like a long wait in the middle of nowhere

CLIMBING OVERVIEW

Rock

The landscape is dominated by large granite formations. Faces have been created by glaciation.. South facing rock is red/orange, North facing is gray. The rock is more similar to Chamonix Granite than Yosemite. Most of the best looking cliffs are between 200-700m high. The Baroness was 600m.

Formations

The entire landscape is dominated by giant cliffs! These vary in angle, from colossal slabs to overhanging hell. There are also a huge array of pinnacles and peaks and ridges to climb. The highest peaks in the immediate area are 1500m high.

Quality

Variable of course, but mostly good. South faces are most heavily weathered and perhaps the best. Some 'buscuity' rotten bands do occur although they are mercifully short lived.

Landscape

Steep Granite peaks, heather moorland, very little permanent ice (much more inland!)
Difficult to travel anywhere overland due to the rough terrain.

The Climbing on the Baroness

Very steep wall, apart from the initial slab, the climbs were always plumb vertical. Some ledges, but not very big. All the climbing was on cracks and flakes, varying from smallest to off width to chimney.

Protection

Full racks were required. Friend 5 and 6 necessary. Pegs needed sometimes. We chose a no-bolt approach and we didn't need them, however routes further left of 'The Iron Lung' would require some bolting. Double friend sets required at minimum.

Standard

The climbs on the Baroness were always hard due to the angle of the rock. Average pitch grade was E3.

THE FUTURE

Climbing is new in this fjord. Lots of unclimbed spires, ridges, faces, slabs... you name it anything! I have spotted one particular cliff...next year?

BRIEF DIARY

By days.

1. Drive down to Stanstead Airport, stay overnight
2. Flight to Copenhagen, overnight at a friend's place.
3. Problems' getting tickets from 'Team Arctic' the local agent. End up getting free helicopter tickets for Narsarsuaq – Nanortalik leg.
4. 9 am flight to Narsarsuaq. Overnight in Youth Hostel.
5. 10am Helicopter to Nanortalik under heavy skies. Meet Niles from the tourist board. Overnight at Youth Hostel.
6. Harbor locked in pack ice. Chill out and explore for the day.
7. Ice the same today, very frustrating. Get details from Niles about local cliffs around Nanortalik.
8. Trek to huge 300m sea cliffs, climb 3 new routes: Worlds end – E4 5c, Quatormass Experiment E3 5c and Unnamed 6 pitch E2 5b. Very adventurous venue.
9. Find local fisherman who cuts us a deal on the base camp leg. Also negotiate Zodiac hire. Travel to base camp in stunning weather. Set up camp.
10. Chill for day and feast eyes on awesome cliffs all around.
11. Reconnaissance to Baroness 50minute walk in!
12. Lucy, Airlie, Tom and myself fix first 3 pitches on lower slabs of the Baroness.
13. Ian and Nial complete 'Ten Ton Truck'- E1 5b on Camp Peak, a 300 meter diagonal crack system.
14. Mat and Tom attempt pitch four of 'The Iron Lung'. Too difficult and bold for this day. Plan to return. Airlie and Lucy fix pitches 4 & 5 of 'Venus Envy' E3/4 cracks.
15. Mat and Tom succeed in completing pitches 4 and 5 of their route, hard E6. Airlie and Lucy fix up to pitch 6.
16. Bad weather.
17. Bad weather. Arctic foxes visit the campground and start to steal scraps of food.
18. Back on the cliff, Airlie and Lucy complete their route 'Venus Envy' E4 600m in a 16 hour push. They return in the Early hours. Mat and Tom fix 2 more pitches on

- 'The Iron Lung' – a difficult 80m off width requiring 3 No.6 friends. Ian and Nail prepare for another route, a 400m crack bordering the face.
19. Ian and Nial complete their route in a single 16 hour push - 'Multiple Buttocks' E4 6a, 600m. This included a difficult off width roof named 'The Tanya Harding Slot', after the Harding slot on 'Astroman'.
 20. Mat and Tom go to Apilaptoq with local fisherman to buy a new stove and a few extra supplies. Success in finding a paraffin burner. Ian and Grimer fix the first few pitches on 'Fur Trappers'.
 21. Mat and Tom complete 'The Iron Lung' E6 6b, 600m. This route is characterized by strenuous, steep, bold climbing. The girls reconnaissance other potential routes on the left side the Baroness.
 22. Bad weather all night and day. Both the mess tent and Airlie and Mats tent blow down. Wind is so strong, it blows a full barrel into the fjord. This storm worries everybody. However it calms down in the evening.
 23. Rebuild camp, more problems with foxes stealing food.
 24. Ian and Grimer complete the route 'Fur Trappers' E4 6a, 600m.
 25. Trip to the neighboring cliff 'The Baron'. Looks good.
 26. Ian and Grimer get forced back 200m from the top, trying to climb the right arete of 'The Baron'.
 27. Boat collects us for journey back to Nanortalik. Very cold and wet journey, however with little incident.
 28. Board ferry back to Narsarsuaq. Overnight in 'Quatortoq' Youth Hostel.
 29. Ferry to Narsarsuaq.
 30. Kill time in Hotel waiting for onward connection.
 31. Same again!
 32. Flight back to Copenhagen.
 33. Flight back to UK.

EQUIPMENT

Camping

4 Two man tents. (The worst quality of which was flattened!)

1 Mess tent. (This was necessary due to the zillions of mosquitoes and flies.)

Plastic drums for fuel

Large water container

4 MSR stoves + Fuel. (3 working stoves + one spare. Note: Unleaded is not available, so the stoves kept bunging up. Need to be cleaned regularly.)

Other misc. kitchen equipment.

6 Plastic drums for transportation.

Climbing

200m of 10mm fixing rope per team of two.

Two 60m 9mm leading ropes per team.

Wires two of each 1-10 per team

Camming devices 2 of each per team including small 'Aliens' and Friend 5 & 6

10 pegs of various sizes per team + hammer.

Helmets, harnesses etc.

Comfortablist boots

Rucksacks for seconds

Note: No ice gear needed.

FOOD

An itemised food list does not appear in this report. It would be difficult to compile, probably inaccurate and would remain unread! Therefore what follows is some general, useful information on the topic.

Hill Food

Weight was never at a premium due to the 'quick hit' style of climbing we employed. A big meal the night before, followed by a large breakfast set us up for long climbing days.

We would carry the following on route:

Chocolate bars

Figs or other dried fruit

Tinned fish

Nuts

Some of these items were included in the freight from the UK; some were bought in Nanortalik

Camp Food

All this food was purchased at the supermarket in Nanortalik (Visa accepted). Due to the fairly sterile environment, we had no trouble with food going off. We constructed a 'fridge' by leaving a blue barrel dunked in a cold stream. This kept bacon and butter in good condition for the whole trip.

We ate well; weight was never a premium due to the fact we were dropped off by boat at base camp. We ate vegetables (onions and potatoes lasted the whole trip), both fresh and tinned, pasta, tuna, bacon eggs etc etc. Bread didn't last long. A suitable alternative is pancakes or gipaties. Especially the later. Very easy to make after a little practice and go with anything savory or sweet.

All the camp food was purchased at the supermarket in Nanortalik. It's fairly pricey, but there is a good choice and beat trying to bring it in your self.

Note: We had a problem with scavenging arctic foxes. At first we thought 'cute'. However later they became a real pest, and would stop at nothing to get our food.

Notes on Cooking

We used 3+1 spare MSR petrol burners, which were of course excellent apart from blockages, caused by leaded fuel. Petrol is cheap.

ACCOUNTS

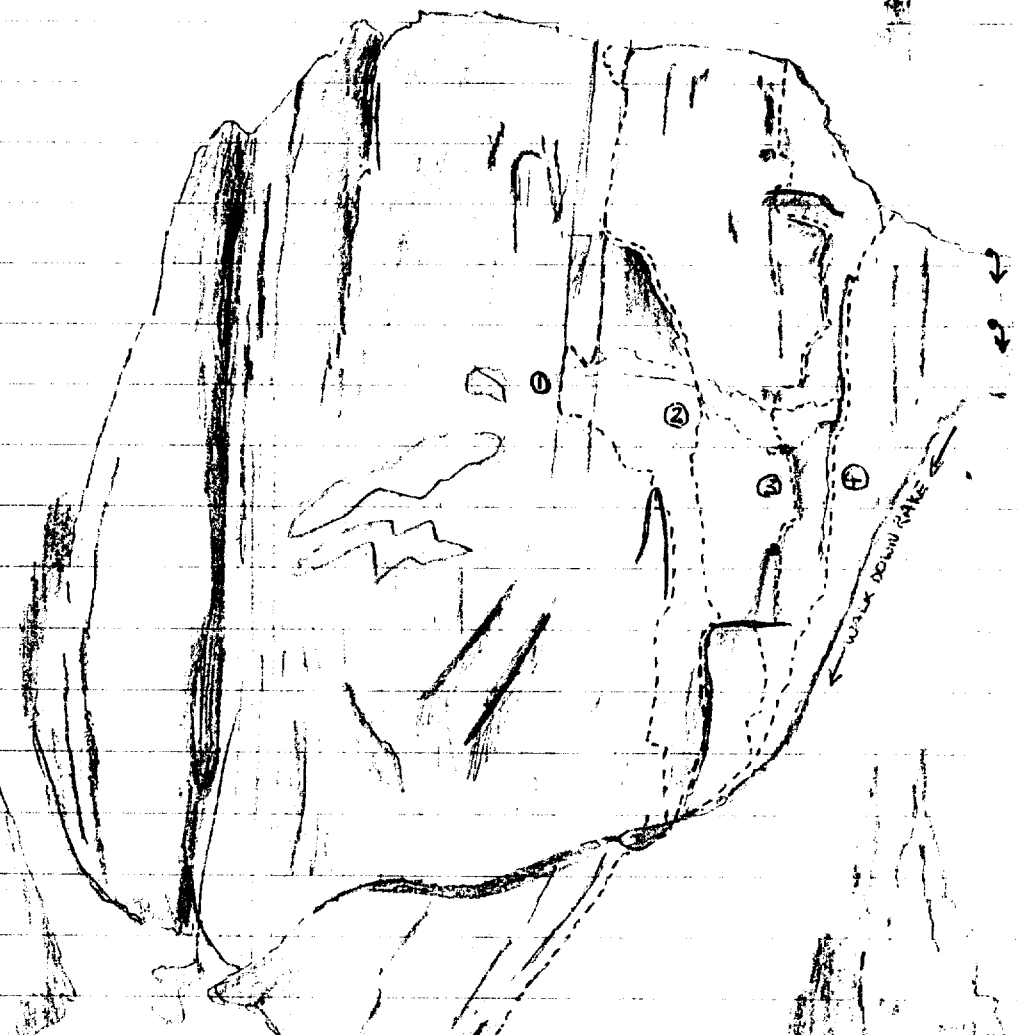
COSTS

Does not take into consideration equipment costs.

Sheffield-Stanstead	2 cars both ways	£80
Stanstead-Copenhagen	£100 return X 6=	£600
Copenhagen-Narsarsuaq	£450 return X 6=	£2700
Narsarsuaq-Nanortalik	£150 X 6=	£900
Nanortalik- Base charter		£400
Dingy Hire		£200
8 nights in various youth hostels	£10 X 8 X 6 =	£480
Food		£740
Insurance	£150 X 6 =	£900
<u>TOTAL</u>		<u>£7000</u>

INCOMING FUNDS

BMC Grant:	£1000
MEF Grant	£580
Personal contributions	£5420
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£7000</u>



- E6/A1 ① IRON LUNG 600m
- E4/A1 ② THE FUR TRAPPERS 600m
- E4 ③ VENUS ENVY 600m
- E4 ④ MULTIPLE BUTTOCKS 500m