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The Saga Magazine
GREENLAND
EXPEDITION
1993

to
Sermersoq Island
(near Nanortalik)
South West Greenland

+ 483

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EXPEDITION MEMBERS

IRELAND

Joss Lynam

Bill Hannon

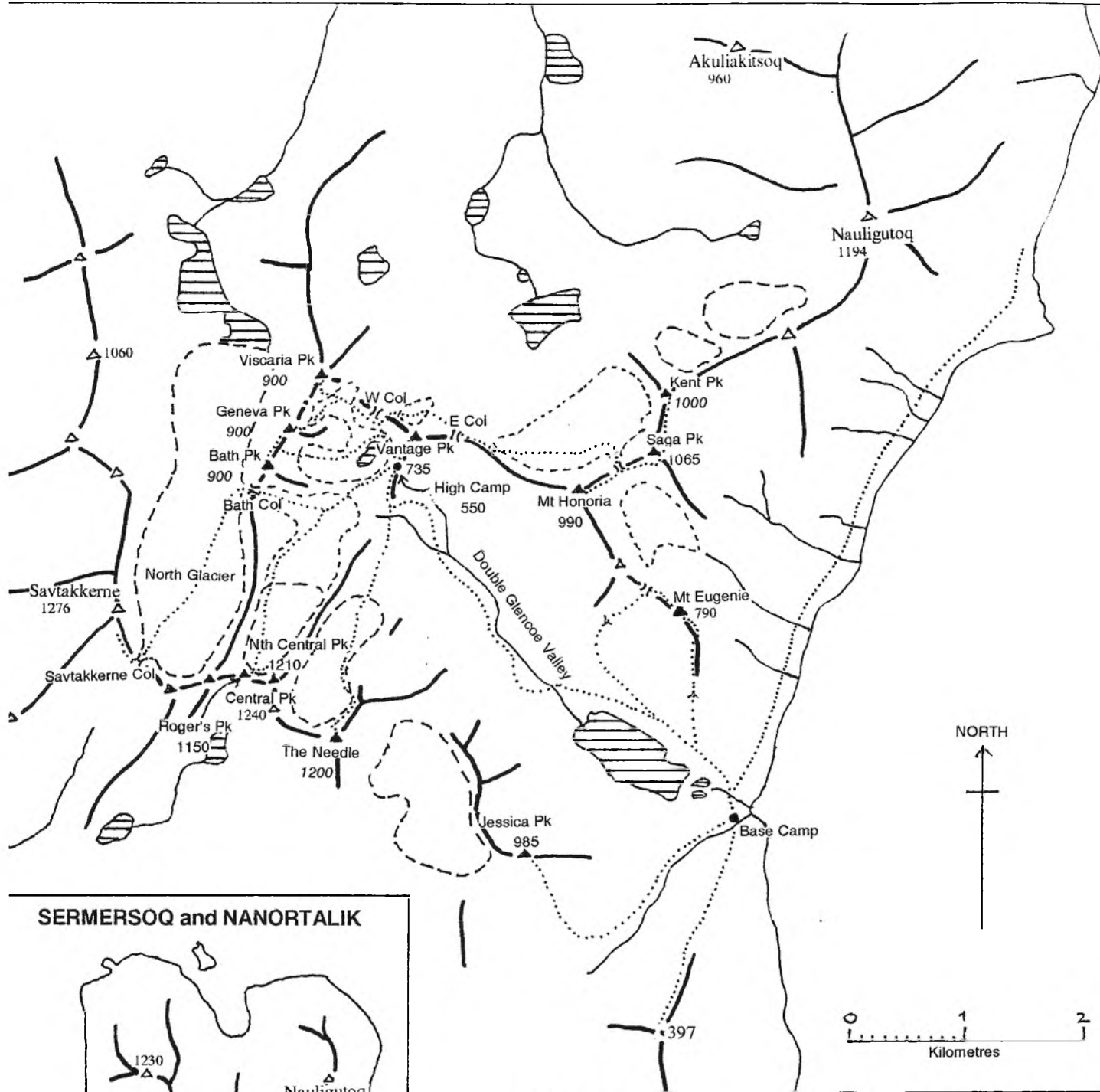
BRITAIN

Mike Banks

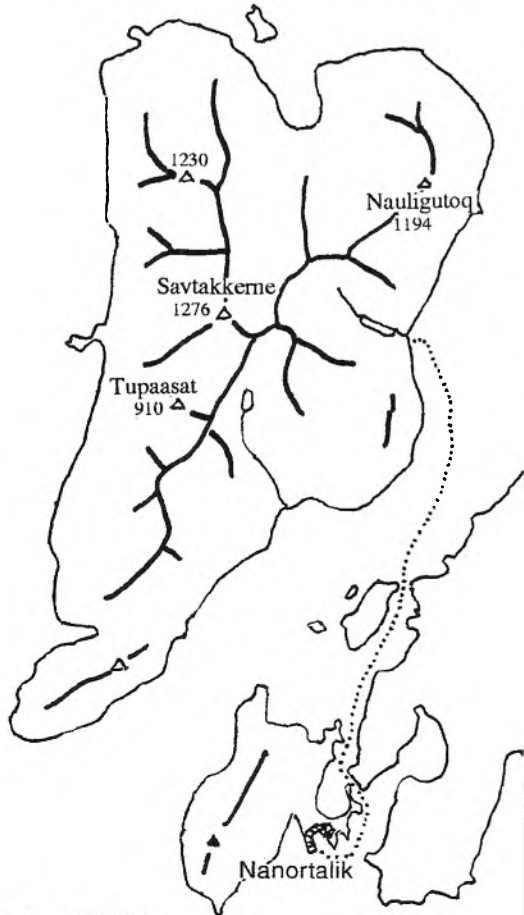
Roger Birmstingl

MEDIA

Geoff Axbey, Art Director of Saga Magazine, accompanied the expedition to Base Camp.



SERMERSOQ and NANORTALIK



Scale: 1:250,000

GREENLAND



PART of SERMERSOQ
to show
ROUTES and CLIMBS
of the
Saga Magazine Greenland Expedition
July-August 1993

Scale: 1:50,000

Key:

- Savtakkerne 1276 Names and heights from 1:250,000 map
- Jessica Peak 985 Expedition names
- 900 Heights by Aneroid
- 900 Heights from contours
- Expedition route and camps
- Edge of glacier
- - - - - Edge of snowfield



Back Row L to R: M. Banks, J. Lynam
Front Row L to R: B. Hannon, R. Birnstingl



Savtakkerne from the North west



Kent Peak (L) and Saga Peak (C) from near ABC
(All photographs by Joss Lynam).

SAGA GREENLAND EXPEDITION 1993

EXPEDITION NARRATIVE

by Mike Banks

THE BACKGROUND

The distinctive feature of this expedition was that its membership was restricted to "Golden Oldies" - mature climbers between the ages of 60 and 70. It was also the third in a series of expeditions sponsored by Saga Magazine, part of the Saga travel company which caters for the over-60s.

Mike Banks (70) thought up the idea. He is an old Greenland hand having spent two years on a major exploratory expedition in north east Greenland from 1952 to 1954, including an 800 miles ice-cap crossing. He subsequently returned repeatedly to Greenland leading dog sledging and hiking tours. In the summer of 1977 while he was sailing past uninhabited Sermersoq island, near Nanortalik in south west Greenland, he was struck by its mountaineering potential. He climbed an easy mountain on the island which gave him a fine view of an array of jagged rock peaks of around 1200m rising from the glaciers at its northern end; ideal country for exploratory mountaineering. When the tour was completed he stayed on in Greenland with his tour partner and old time expedition friend, Commander Angus Erskine.

Together they spent 10 days on Sermersoq, climbing five moderate peaks and investigating the north end of the island. They did not have the equipment to tackle the more challenging peaks. They were also unaware at that time that a Climbers' Club party had climbed one peak in 1957 and that an expedition from St Andrew's University led by Phil Gribbon had climbed some of the easier southern peaks in 1971. Mike Banks resolved one day to return.

Having originated two Saga Magazine sponsored Himalayan expeditions in 1989 and 1991, he saw the opportunity of taking a third Saga expedition to Greenland in 1993. It would be his twentieth visit to Greenland. This was duly achieved and once again he teamed up with his friend, Irishman Joss Lynam (69) who had been joint leader with him on the earlier Saga expeditions. This most agreeable practice of making it an Anglo-Irish project was thus maintained. Joss Lynam was no stranger to Greenland having taken part in two mountaineering expeditions to Tasermiut Fjord, just across the channel from Sermersoq.

It was considered that a party of four would be ideal; pleasantly compact yet just big enough for safety considerations if anything were to go amiss.

Joss Lynam invited fellow Irishman, Bill Hannon (63), a retired civil servant, to join the expedition. Mike Banks recruited Roger Birnstingl, the "youth" of the party at 60. Roger is an eminent musician who plays first bassoon in the renowned *L'orchestre de la Suisse Romande*. Neither had visited Greenland before.

The team was complete; the Golden Oldies were again in business! Sermersoq presented an ideal objective. There were plenty of accessible unclimbed peaks of just about the right height and difficulty. The logistics were sensationally simple. There were scheduled flights to Narsarsuaq in south west Greenland with connecting helicopter services to Nanortalik where food and fuel could be bought and a boat hired.

TO SERMERSOQ

The party flew from London to Narsarsuaq on July 19th, 1993, accompanied in the opening phase by Geoff Axbey, the adventurous art director of Saga Magazine. There was a convenient helicopter flight the following day to Nanortalik. Luckily the pilot, Chris Farmer, was an old friend of Mike Banks and, to give them a good look, he agreed to fly tight in to Savtakkerne (1276m), the highest peak on Sermersoq - a sheer and formidable rock tower. This he duly did and it was a riveting experience as the sheer mountain walls slid by, close to the windows.

In Nanortalik, from beginning to end, the expedition met with nothing but friendliness and help from the local Danes. They were met by the Tourist Officer, René Neilsen, who whisked them off to the pleasant hostel beautifully situated on a headland with views out to the offshore pack-ice. Much help and a mass of surplus BSES food was given them by Steen Madsen who is also compiling a comprehensive record of expeditions to south west Greenland. They were entertained by schoolmaster, Paul Raahauge, whose Greenlander wife, Kristine, was the newly-elected mayor. A charming German and long-time Greenland resident, Nico Hansen, also married to a Greenlander, agreed to take them to Sermersoq in one of his boats. Provisions were bought in a choice of excellent supermarkets. Even the weather was perfect!

On July 22nd gear was loaded aboard Nico Hansen's speedboat and for forty minutes they sped across the calm water easily threading between small, scattered icebergs. Nico nosed up to a convenient rock at the mouth of the same valley used by Banks and Erskine in 1977. A site for base camp was found a few hundred yards above the beach, Geoff Axbey took his last

photographs and then they were waving good-bye as the boat sped home through the loose ice.

By the time the tents were up and the first brew was being sipped they had become all too closely acquainted with the locals; clouds of mosquitoes and midges which were to pay them constant attention unless a fresh wind kept them grounded.

The first task was to find a site for an advanced base camp (ABC). The valley was dubbed "Double Glencoe Valley" because of its resemblance to the Scottish original, but with beetling cliffs on both sides. Getting to the head of it was a puzzle. There were sundry fields of boulder scree and willow thickets. Eventually a reasonable route was worked out which minimised the difficulties. A flat camp site was located on a col at about 550m just south of Vantage Peak - which was then climbed without difficulty.

The following day Roger Birnstingl and Bill Hannon made the first ascent of Jessica Peak (985m) at the seaward end of the southern wall of the valley. It was a long slog involving some steep grass and slabs.

ROCK AND RAIN

On 25th July the whole party moved up to ABC with the intention of attempting Savtakkerne. Banks and Erskine had gained a footing on this peak in 1977 but had stopped short of the real difficulties.

A snowfield was followed to Bath Col from which an easily inclined glacier led to Savtakkerne Col at the foot of the SE Ridge which was to be the line of ascent. The pedestal rocks were climbed to the foot of the ridge which was initially too steep and smooth to contemplate. It was therefore outflanked on the left via the south face. They climbed in two ropes: Banks and Hannon; Birnstingl and Lynam.

Banks led six pitches of more or less ascending difficulty which totalled 122m. The second rope took a top rope gladly on pitches of V or above. Banks' final pitch was a fierce vertical crack, the exit from which was blocked by a capstone (VI). His offer of a good pull on the rope was readily accepted by the other three! However, the SE Ridge above this point seemed to lead towards blank walls. It was by then 5.30pm and they were less than half-way up. It was decided to call it a day and they abseiled off.

Because no feasible route up Savtakkerne had been discovered, it was decided to enjoy some exploratory mountaineering, climbing sundry peaks accessible from ABC.

On July 27th three tops were attained. Banks and Birnstingl climbed Bath Peak and Geneva Peak, the latter offering a couple of pleasant rock pitches. Both were first ascents. Lynam and Hannon climbed Mt. Viscaria only to find a cairn on the summit. This jogged Banks' memory who had to admit, somewhat to his embarrassment, that he had climbed the peak with Erskine but had forgotten exactly where it was!

Banks' embarrassment was compounded the following day when, again, a cairn was discovered on the summit of North Central Peak. This time Banks had a transcript of his 1977 diary with him and duly confirmed that it was another Banks/Erskine cairn. Roger Birnstingl, who represented not only the youth but the energy reserve of the party, promptly climbed a nearby rock tower which was the culminating point of a long rock and snow ridge. It was appropriately called Roger's Peak.

There now followed seven days of intermittent rain and low cloud which put paid to any serious climbing prospects. The time was passed making re-supply trips to base camp, tinkering bad-temperedly with MSR stoves which objected to the gungy paraffin bought in Nanortalik and reading the substantial literature that is customarily brought on an expedition. The selection this time included the complete works of Oscar Wilde, a Jane Austen of course, and the substantial 800 pages of Jung Chang's fascinating *The Wild Swans* which was hacked into three to make for lighter reading!

On August 5th the weather showed signs of relenting and three peaks east of ABC were climbed on a steadily improving day. An approach across snowfields in bad visibility led to a cloudy col. Turning right, the first summit, Mt. Honoria, was climbed via a long ridge which offered pleasant alpine climbing as rock towers emerged from the mist. Again a cairn was discovered on the summit. On this occasion Banks' categorical denial of any involvement was accepted (after scrutinising his diary)! It remains a mystery who the first ascensionists were.

Returning to the col, the central peak of the three, Saga Peak, was guarded by a formidable gendarme which was initially climbed then outflanked across some very loose rock. The mist cleared and a sunny scramble led to the (cairnless) summit. It was called Saga Peak in recognition of the expedition sponsors. Banks and Birnstingl then descended from the far side and ascended screes to the final peak of the trio, Kent Peak. An excellent Greenland day.

Having failed on the daunting rock tower of Savtakkerne, eyes were turned to its rival as far as dramatic appearance was concerned: The Needle. This was a superb spire of rock with a wonderfully tapering summit. It had been climbed in 1957 by Godfrey Francis and Tom Fletcher who likened it to the Ago di Sciora. They used one piton and graded it V. On the 6th August, in sporadic rain, Banks and Birnstingl reced the glacier approach.

The following day they set out again, leaving their ice gear at the foot of the NE Ridge. The ridge started easily but steepened progressively. After several hundred feet they were stopped by a rock tower above which the bristling ridge seemed to threaten difficulties galore. Time was now running short so Banks explored out onto the somewhat unpromising north face. To their surprise, zig-zag ledges connected across the sheer face and eventually landed them high on the NE Ridge below the summit tower.

Rock of no more than V Diff led to a smooth, vertical 10ft wall just below the summit. Roger Birnstingl held Mike Banks' rock boot hard into a shallow scoop while he made a thin pull-up onto better holds and then easily to the summit. It was then 7.30pm. A long series of abseils led down the north face and the NE Ridge. They got back to ABC just as darkness was closing in at 10.30.

While Banks and Birnstingl were climbing The Needle, Lynam and Hannon were attacking the East Ridge of Geneva Peak, which had attracted them when they had been on Mt. Viscaria. The approach was in whiteout, but Lynam had fortunately recced the approach the day before, and his footsteps were still visible on the approach snowfield. Once on the ridge they climbed a succession of pitches of grade III and IV, mostly chimneys to the right of the ridge crest. The whole climb was in the cloud, but they emerged into sunlight about 5m below the summit, where there were fine views of Savtakkerne, The Needle and other peaks, islands in a sea of cloud. The descent was mostly by abseil, and was a little too exciting. While Hannon was abseiling, a hefty slab fell and after hitting him a glancing blow on the thigh, fortunately without causing serious injury, went on to sever the abseil rope.

Time was now running short so ABC was evacuated on August 8th allowing just enough time on August 9th to attempt the fine rock peak which towered above Base Camp at the seaward end of the north containing ridge of Double Glencoe Valley. The approach was direct from Base Camp up the screes of the rounded SE Ridge. The peak consisted of a main summit buttress and a detached SE rock tower which would need to be bypassed. A delicate traverse was made round the base of the rock tower into a gully which produced two varieties of problem. It was blocked in a number of places by sections of steep rock or by huge lodged boulders; and it was filled with lethally loose rock.

The climbing problems were surmounted by a number of entertaining rock pitches at grades III/IV. With four people strung out in the gully, the loose rocks provided several frightening moments. On one occasion a whole shower of big ones came roaring down. Joss Lynam coolly checked that he would probably not be hit and then flicked the rope out of their path. Bill Hannon, last man in the party dodged the rocks, only to have Birnstingl land on top of him a few minutes later when a hold broke.

The gully led to a dramatic brêche from which easier climbing led to the summit. The peak was called Mt. Eugenie and was the last (7th) first ascent. An easy descent was made down the NW Ridge to a col and then down the SE face to Double Glencoe Valley. The mountaineering programme was now completed.

A day was spent packing gear and tidying up in preparation for the arrival of Nico Hansen and his boat on the morrow, 11th August. On the trip back to Nanortalik a pleasant detour was made to visit the interesting disused graphite mine at the south of Amitsoq island. Despite it being Friday 13th the helicopter back to Narsarsuaq arrived on schedule. Three nights were spent at the comfortable hostel at the airport and a visit was made across the fjord to Brattahlid, the site chosen by Erik the Red to establish the first Norse settlement in 985 in the newly discovered land which he called Greenland. The expedition flew out of Narsarsuaq to the UK via Iceland on August 16th.

A total of twelve peaks had been climbed, of which seven were first ascents. The aims of the expedition to carry out exploratory mountaineering had been fully achieved. Furthermore the expedition had proceeded according to plan - without even a hiccup. This was an uncanny experience for the two hardened expedition veterans, Joss Lynam and Mike Banks. Until then they had held implicit faith in the great Tilman's dictum that "*no plan of action survives contact with the enemy*"! Or was it just that when you get very old you get very crafty?

Climbs on Sermersoq July - August 1993

Climbers: Mike Banks (MB)
Roger Birnstingl (RB)
Bill Hannon (BH)
Joss Lynam (JL)

- Notes
- All climbs from high camp (550m) unless otherwise noted
 - Unofficial names have been given to features which are not named on the 1:250k Saga map sheet 1
 - Gradings are UIAA standard

Vantage Peak 735m. F.

Easy scramble from high camp

Party: MB, RB, BH, JL. 23 July, second ? ascent (First ascent 1977 by MB and Angus Erskine)

Jessica Peak 985m. PD.

From Base Camp. Pass through gap between Jessica Peak and Point 347 and climb the south face on scree, steep vegetation and slabby rock.

Party: RB, BH. 24 July First ascent

Savtakkerne 1276m. ED?

Unsuccessful attempt from Savtakkerne col. Scramble up R for 100m on broken rocks to reach the horizontal section of the SE ridge. Traverse L, descending a short awkward chimney to reach obvious grooves on steep S face.

- 28m (III). Climb the grooves taking the least line of resistance
- 28m (IV). Connect steep walls and cracks with a longer, less steep crack with a wall on its R. This brings you to a wide bay level with top of dark rocks on L.
- 20m (V) Climb the easy slab at the back of the bay to a steep wall. Climb this by an awkward mantleshelf and move L to a ledge. Climb the steep wall above.
- 6m (V) Climb the awkward comer on the L.
- 20m (III) Traverse R and climb a short chimney to the crest of the SE ridge in the first gap above the initial steep bastion.
- 20m (VI) Climb diagonally L from the ridge and go up an awkward scoop to a broad ledge. Climb the vertical crack in the comer and surmount the capstone with difficulty.

Above, the walls on the L did not appear to be climbable at our standards. On the ridge a single line of holds led round to the R but there seemed little prospect beyond (confirmed by view from glacier afterwards) The high point, just before the second gendarme was reached in 5 hours from the horizontal section, and was approximately one third of the way to the summit. Subsequent viewing suggested that the W. ridge and adjacent faces might be the best route to the summit, but that the climbing would be both hard (VII?) and sustained.

Descent by rappel

Party: MB (who led all the difficult pitches) RB, BH, JL. 26 July

Bath Peak 900m app. F.

Walk up to col north of peak. Climb north ridge easily to summit.
Party: MB, RB. 27 July. First ascent

Geneva Peak 900m app.

(1) **South Ridge** PD+.

From col (as for Bath Peak) follow ridge which has two deep notches. The second notch may be descended in the ascent by a rappel, and it is advised that the rope be left for the return as the re-ascent is IV.

Party: MB, RB, 27 July. First ascent.

(2.) **East Ridge** AD.

Climb hump back slabs from south side of the Vantage West Col to snowfield. Cross this diagonally L and follow first horizontal snow tongue then boulders to East ridge, which is joined just below first solid rock.

1 10m. (II+). Climb a groove with flakes above to easy ground. Easy scrambling on scree and vegetation to the foot of a wall.

The rest of the climb takes an open gully R of the ridge crest.

2. 18m (III). Climb over a 1m. detached flake and up a scoop. Above, easier ground with some loose rock leads to a second wall.

3. 20m (III). There is a double chimney in the wall. Climb a slab on the R and step L into the RH chimney. Climb to easier ground and continue to the third wall.

4. 20m (IV) Another double chimney. Climb a steep slab R of the chimneys, step L into the top of the RH chimney and continue more easily to the final steepening.

5. 12m Move out R and climb short walls diagonally back to the summit (1 1/2 hours from start of rock)
Descent by abseil.

Party: BH, JL, leads shared. 7 August. First ascent of the route.

Note: *Beware of falling stones!*

(N.B. JL climbed the "bump" between Geneva and the Geneva-Viscaria Col in a few minutes from the snow tongue - "Conor's Tooth").

Viscaria Peak 900m app. F

To snowfield as for East Ridge of Geneva Peak. Straight up snowfield to south col, then scramble up boulders of S. Ridge. Final block is by-passed on R (east) and climb completed by easy-graded N. Ridge.

Party: BH, JL 27 July. Second? ascent

(First ascent 1977 by MB and Angus Erskine - route not known, probably from north)

North Central Peak 1210m. NW face. F.

Climb the glacier and snowfield of the NW face. The upper glacier/snowfield is reached up a snow couloir on the R (West). Diagonal L (small crevasses) to the W. ridge. Follow this for a short distance to a rock wall, then traverse diagonally L up a snow bay to reach the N. ridge a few metres below the summit.

Party: MB, RB, BH, JL. 28 July. Second? ascent. (First ascent 1977 by MB and Angus Erskine)

Roger's Peak 1150m approx. East ridge. F.

From W. ridge as reached for North Central Peak scramble up easy rocks to reach the summit in a few minutes.

Party: RB. 28 July. First ascent

Mount Honoria 990 m. NE ridge. PD.

From Vantage East Col climb W. ridge for a short distance then gain snowfield (scree?) and first climb diagonally L, and then traverse L to reach snow tongue leading R to col between Mt Honoria and Saga Peak. Climb the NW ridge, which is easy - angled but has two awkward steps, to the summit.

Party: MB, RB, BH, JL. 5 August. Second? ascent (Cairn found, but not known who the climbers were)

Saga Peak 1060m. SW ridge. PD.

From col (reached as for Mount Honoria), pass the gendarme awkwardly on L (loose), gain ridge and climb scree diagonally R to scramble up easy rock from SE to summit.

Party: MB, RB, BH, JL. 5 August. First ascent

Kent Peak 1000m. approx. S ridge. F.

This was climbed over Saga Peak (which see). From summit of Saga descend by easy scree to col and climb more easy scree to summit.

Party: MB, RB. 5 August. First ascent.

The Needle 1200m approx. Lower section of NE ridge and North Face. D.

Gain the glacier and ascend upwards and to the L to reach the foot of the NE Ridge. Scramble and climb for about 100m until difficulties commence at a steepening. Climb up 3m easy rock, traverse R and step onto a steep slab with good finger holds and continue up to gain a terrace.

Continue along easy terraces on the N. face almost to the glacier. Cross a number of parallel terraces until a leftward and upward traverse brings you back to the crest of the NE ridge. Climb a number of short walls on the NE Ridge and N. Face to the summit. The final 3m wall (V) is climbed on a small holds. (4 hours from foot of rocks)

A more rapid ascent could be made by following the glacier below the N. Face to its highest point and starting the climb from there.

Party: MB, RB. 7 August Second Ascent. (First ascent: G Francis, D Fletcher, 1957)

Mount Eugenie 790m. SE Ridge by SW gully. AD.
(Climbed from Base camp)

Climb the grass and scree of the SE Ridge followed by easy rock to the foot of the detached SE lower summit. Descend into the SW Gully by a delicate traverse L. Ascend the gully to the brèche, surmounting a series of short obstacles (III/IV). *Loose stones in the gully require particular care and make this route unsuitable for descent.*

From the brèche turn L across slabs and ascend an easy gully leading back to the crest of the ridge. Climb a flaky crack and continue to the summit by the easiest line. (3 hours from start of descent into gully)

Descent: down the NW ridge to a col and descend either side.

Party: MB, RB, BH, JL. 9 August. First ascent

General Notes

* All climbs on granite except *Eugenie*, *Saga* and *Kent* which are on gneiss.

* Climbs are described as found. In other years and earlier or later in the season scree and boulders may be under snow or vice versa.

* On the accompanying map, two peaks are shown as having been climbed between Savtekkerne Col and Roger's Peak. These were both climbed in 1977 by MB and Angus Erskine. Height not known.

* In case of query, contact Joss Lynam, 7 Sorbonne, Ardilea Estate, Dublin 14, Ireland. Tel: +353-1-2884672. Fax: +353-1-2831993.

EXPEDITION DIARY

- Mon 19 July Flights: UK to Iceland and on to Narsarsuaq, Greenland.
- Tue 20 July Helicopter flight from Narsarsuaq to Nanortalik.
- Wed 21 July At Nanortalik.
- Thu 22 July By boat to Sermersoq.
- Fri 23 July Recced site for advanced base camp (ABC). Whole party climbed Vantage Peak.
- Sat 24 July Birnstingl & Hannon made first ascent of Jessica Peak.
- Sun 25 July Move up to ABC.
- Mon 26 July Attempt on Savtakkerne.
- Tue 27 July Banks & Birnstingl made first ascent of Bath and Geneva Peaks, Lynam & Hannon climbed Mt. Viscaria.
- Wed 28 July Whole party climbed N Central Peak. Birnstingl made first ascent of Roger's Peak. Descended to Base Camp.
- Thu 29 July Party at Base Camp. Rain started.
- Fri 30 July At Base Camp. Rain.
- Sat 31 July Party returned to ABC.
- Sun 1 August At ABC. Rain.
- Mon 2 August Low cloud. Traverse round Vantage Peak.
- Tue 3 August Re-supply trip to Base Camp and back to ABC.
- Wed 4 August At ABC. Rain.
- Thu 5 August Initial bad visibility. Whole party climbed Mt. Honoria and made first ascent of Saga Peak. Birnstingl & Banks made first ascent of Kent Peak.
- Fri 6 August Sporadic rain. Birnstingl & Banks recced Needle Glacier. Lynam recced approach to East Ridge of Geneva Peak.

Sat 7 August	Banks & Birnstingl climbed The Needle. Lynam & Hannon climbed the East Ridge (new route) of Geneva Peak.
Sun 8 August	Party returned to Base Camp.
Mon 9 August	Whole party made first ascent of Mt. Eugenie.
Tue 10 August	At Base Camp. Preparations for departure.
Wed 11 August	By boat to Nanortalik.
Thu 12 August	At Nanortalik.
Fri 13 August	Helicopter flight from Nanortalik to Narsarsuaq.
Sat 14 August	Boat across Tunugdllarfik (Erik's Fjord) to Qaqssiarsuk to visit Brattahlid and return.
Sun 15 August	Local walk, Narsarsuaq.
Mon 16 August	Flight: Narsarsuaq to Iceland.
Tue 17 August	Flight: Iceland to UK. Disperse..

SPONSORSHIP

This was the third expedition, composed of veteran mountaineers, to be most generously sponsored by Saga Magazine. The magazine is part of Saga Holdings which provides a whole range of services for retirees. Their best known and core activity is Saga Holidays, providing vacations for the over-60s.

The members of the 1993 Greenland expedition would like to express their very deep gratitude to Saga Magazine for their unstinted support and generosity. Our very warm thanks go, in particular, to the Editor, Paul Bach. It seems that a pattern of biennial expeditions has taken shape and, on each occasion, the magazine Art Director, Geoff Axbey, has accompanied the expedition on its opening phase, taking highly professional photographs - as would be expected of an ex-Fleet Street photographer. His participation has always been warmly welcomed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The expedition members would like to express their very sincere gratitude to the following for their generous support:-

The Mount Everest Foundation
The Foundation for Sport and the Arts
The British Mountaineering Council
The Mountaineering Council of Ireland
Merrell Footwear of Bristol
Les Turnbull and the British Schools
Exploration Society for the gift of provisions
Great Outdoors, Dublin for equipment

The members deeply appreciated the friendliness and assistance they received in Greenland:

In Nanortalik:-

Paul and Kristine Raahauge
Steen Madsen
Nico Hansen
René Neilsen

In Narsarsuaq:-

Chris Farmer of Grønlandsfly
Arctic Adventure APS

LOCAL INFORMATION

Government permission

Apply in the first instance to the Danish Polar Center, Hausegade 3, DK-1128 Copenhagen K, Denmark. The more remote the area you choose, the more regulations will apply and the more expensive it will be.

Greenland information

Available from the Greenland Travel Bureau, GL. Mønt 12, PO Box 130, Copenhagen K, Denmark.

Maps and air photographs

Available from the National Survey and Cadastre, Rentemestervej 8, DK-2400 Copenhagen NV, Denmark.

Expedition information on SW Greenland

A record of previous expeditions is being compiled by Mr Steen Madsen, Box 13, 3922-Nanortalik, Grønland, via Copenhagen, Denmark. Fax +299 - 33033. He is very knowledgeable about mountaineering in SW Greenland.

Accommodation

Comfortable hostel accommodation is available at Narsarsuaq and Nanortalik. Inquire via the Tourist Office of either place. Advanced booking is prudent.

Provisions and fuel

There is a good general store in Narsarsuaq and there are elaborate supermarkets in Nanortalik. The paraffin from the roadside pump in Nanortalik was found to be dirty. A cleaner fuel appeared to be available from the supermarkets.

Air baggage in Greenland

The personal allowance on helicopter flights is 20kgs *including* hand baggage although this latter provision is not always rigidly enforced. If significant excess air baggage is being carried, it should be booked well in advance.

Distress communications

A small handheld VHF radio-telephone, with rechargeable batteries was used. After 3 weeks on Sermersoq, without use, the set had flat batteries. A better solution would be a similar radio-telephone, but with the possibility of using standard replaceable batteries. The channels to use in this area were the usual Distress Channel 16 (156.8 MHz) and for communication with Nanortalik, Channel 6. We also had a Jotron Emergency Distress Beacon whose signal when activated, is picked up at a Centre which can locate the Beacon and direct a rescue helicopter to the site.

FLORA

The most obvious item of Greenlandic flora is the Northern Willow. We literally tripped over it in Double Glencoe. The 0.5-1m high stems go horizontally (to trip you) and then curve up vertically.

The next most obvious is the Glandular Birch, which is much lower, so that you can generally walk *on* it instead of *through* it. It was common at all altitudes (the willow gave up below ABC).

Later, round Narsarsuaq we found birch that definitely wasn't dwarf, it forms the nearest approach to a forest in Greenland, twisted trunks of Hairy White Birch growing to 3-4m in height (a few imported planted conifers can be seen amongst the birch, achieving 1.5m after 10 years!).

The above shows that Erik the Red wasn't simply doing a PR exercise when he called the place Greenland; the climate was warmer in 985AD, so the vegetation was perhaps even denser.

We saw plenty of flowers, identified with the help of *Flowers of Greenland* published by the Greenland Botanical Survey. The seeing was done mainly by Roger and myself, and by the end of the trip there was a certain amount of covert competition.

We saw the following flowering plants (in the order they appear in the book):
[S = Sermersoq, Nan = Nanortalik, Nq = Narsarsuaq].

Fir Club Moss	<i>Huperzia solago</i>	S
Stiff Club Moss	<i>Lycopodium annotonium</i>	S, Nq
Alpine Club Moss	<i>Diphasiastrum alpinum</i>	S
Common Horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	S, Nq
Male Fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	S
Common Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	S, Nq
Northern Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus affinis</i>	S, Nq
Three-toothed Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla tridentata</i>	S, Nq
Lady's Mantle	<i>Alchemilla glomulerans</i>	S, Nq
Alpine Lady's Mantle	<i>A. alpina</i>	S, Nq
Roseroot	<i>Rhodiola rosea</i>	S, Nq
Starry Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga stellaris</i>	S
Livelong Saxifrage	<i>S. paniculata</i>	Nq
Handsome Mountain Ash	<i>Sorbus groenlandica</i>	Nq
Beach pea	<i>Lathyrus maritimus</i>	S
Broad-leaved willowherb	<i>Chamaenerion latifolium</i>	S
Fireweed	<i>C. angustifolium</i>	S, Nan, Nq

Common Mares Tail	<i>Hippuris vulgaris</i>	Nq
Arctic Poppy	<i>Papaver radicum</i>	Nan
Hoary Whitlow Grass	<i>Draba incana/labella?</i>	S
Angelica	<i>Angelica archangelica</i>	S, Nq
Herb-like Willow	<i>Salix herbacea</i>	S
Northern Willow	<i>S. glauca</i>	S, Nq
Arctic Marsh willow	<i>S. arctophila</i>	S
Glandular Birch	<i>Betula glandulosa</i>	S, Nq
Hairy White Birch	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Nq
Sheep Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Nq
Mountain Sorrel	<i>R. oxyria digyna</i>	S
Long-stalked Stitchwort	<i>Stellaria longipes</i>	S
Red Alpine Campion	<i>Viscaria alpina</i>	S
Moss Campion	<i>Silene acaulis</i>	S, Nq
Thrift	<i>Armeria scabra</i>	Nq
Large-flowered Wintergreen	<i>Pyrola grandiflora</i>	S
Mountain Heath	<i>Phyllodoce coerulea</i>	S
Arctic Blueberry	<i>Vaccinium uliginosum</i>	S
Crowberry	<i>Empetrum hermaphroditum</i>	S
Small Gentian	<i>Gentiana nivalis</i>	Nq
Marsh Felwort	<i>Lomatogonium rotatum</i>	Nq
Arctic Thyme	<i>Thymus praecox</i>	S, Nq
Alpine Speedwell	<i>Veronica alpina</i>	S
Woolly Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis lanata</i>	Nan
Boreal Yellow-rattle	<i>Rhinanthus borealis</i>	S
Alpine Bartsia	<i>Bartsia alpina</i>	S
Arctic Eyebright	<i>Euphrasia frigida</i>	S
Common Butterwort	<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>	S, Nq
Common Harebell	<i>Campanula gieseckiana</i>	S, Nq
Norwegian Cudweed	<i>Gnaphalium norvegicum</i>	S
Alpine Hawkweed	<i>Hieracium alpinum</i>	S
Lacerate Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum lacerum</i>	S, Nan, Nq
Small White Orchid	<i>Leucorchis albida</i>	Nq
Arctic Cotton-grass	<i>Eriophorum scheuchzeri</i>	S, Nq

EXPEDITION ACCOUNTS

by Joss Lynam

RECEIPTS

Grants:		
Mount Everest Foundation	650	
British Mountaineering Council	500	
Foundation for Sport and the Arts	650	
Mountaineering Council of Ireland	200	
Personal Contributions - see note 2	1348	
	<hr/>	3348

EXPENDITURE

Insurance	834	
Distress Beacon	175	
Maps & air photographs	49	
Part air fare Geneva-London	100	
Excess Baggage	130	
Food for Sermersoq	261	
Gas and kerosene	21	
Cooking gear etc in Nanortalik	36	
Boat hire Nanortalik-Semersoq & return	210	
Boat trip to Brattahlid	84	
Accommodation Nanortalik & Narsarsuaq	465	
Meals, drinks, on journey & at Nanortalik, Narsarsuaq	270	
Buses, taxis	37	
Replacing lost personal equipment	40	
Report	153	
Other expenditure	483	
	<hr/>	3348
		<hr/>
Balance		£000

NOTES:

(1) All costs in stg£. Costs in Danish kroner have been converted at DK9.51 =stg£1

(2) Personal contributions do not include the very considerable amounts spent on personal equipment. All tents, stoves, ropes etc were also bought individually by team members.