
Liverpool Land

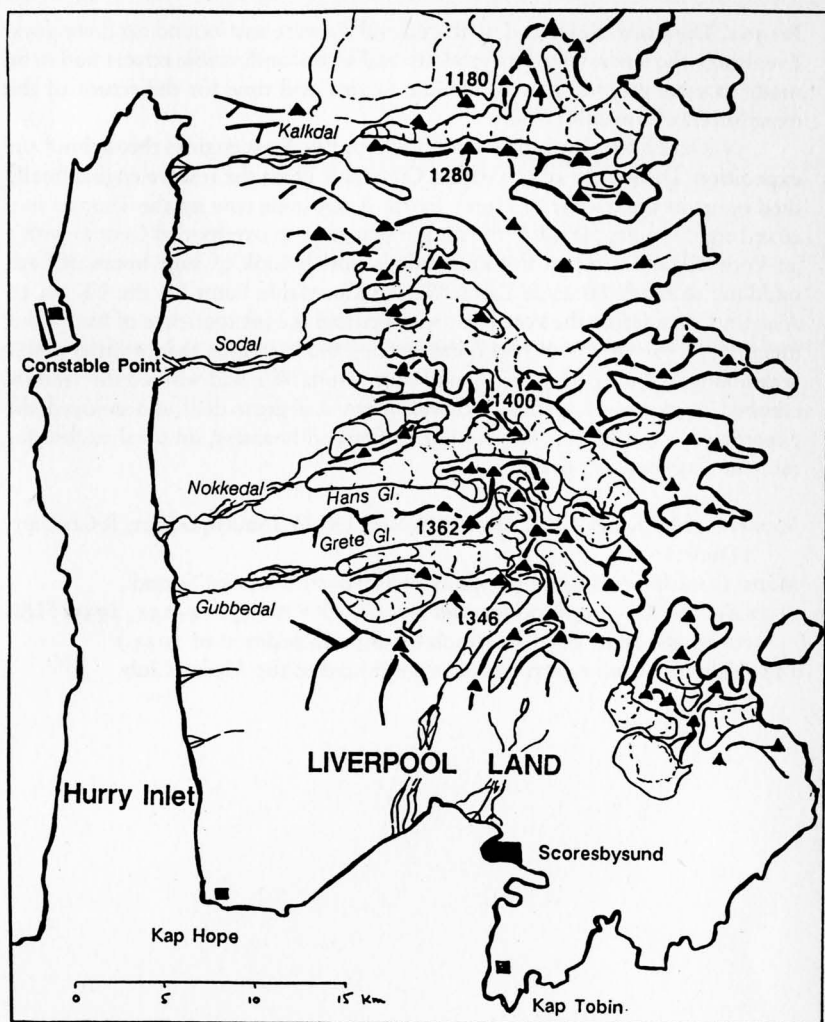
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Liverpool Land lies north of Scoresby Sound in East Greenland, between latitudes $71^{\circ}25'N$ and $71^{\circ}58'N$, and is almost severed from the mainland by the thin north-south fiord known as Hurry Inlet. It has not attracted much attention from climbers mainly because, until Mestersvig closed, the more obvious delights of the Staunings Alps provided an irresistible pull. Now that the Arco Oil seismic survey has opened up Constable Point airfield, Liverpool Land is a few hours' boating away. Although the terrain is rugged, the mountains are much lower than the Staunings and for the most part technically easy. In summer boats can be used to ferry men and stores to any point on the W and S coasts. For a party of mixed experience, as we were in July 1989, with limited time to spend on long approaches, it was an ideal area for a training expedition.

We landed at Constable Point on 17 July. There were eight of us; five Army, one Royal Marine and two civilians. After two days of barging through the pack-ice in Hurry Fiord we pitched our first shore camp at Pytelv. A day's march brought us to the head of Kalkdal. The weather was disappointing. We were obviously too far south and east of the Arctic Riviera to avoid the Gulf Stream influence, and almost half of our month's journeying was to be done in poor weather. In the first week we climbed five of the northernmost peaks, notably Points 1262 and 1180. The latter had received two previous ascents, one by Bertram, Lack and Roberts in 1933 and the other by Edelston, Ralph and Chapman in 1976. Colin Bertram says that they approached from Hurry Inlet. The note left by the 1976 party said, 'NW Fiord to Scoresbysund', presumably involving a traverse of Jameson Land from the South Staunings: a long undertaking.

Our plan to traverse the central (north-south) spine of Liverpool Land from Kalkdal had to be abandoned because of the bad weather and our next peak was climbed from a camp at the head of Sødal. This was Korsbjerg or Pt1400, approached by a long ridge that bordered the true right bank of the Hans glacier. There were no signs of a previous ascent. John Muston's altimeter recorded a height of 1396m. We were unable to judge with certainty whether our peak or one of similar height a mile to the east was *the* Korsbjerg, and so we distinguished between them by using 'west' and 'east' suffixes.

By now we were half-way through the time available to us and moved base to Gubbedal. Here we made ascents of Pt1040 and Pt1362, on either side of the Grete glacier. In the summit cairn on the latter peak were further interesting notes. The first two were placed in the cairn by Kurt Bungi on 20 July 1933. Bungi was a member of the Akademische Alpen Club, Bern, and an assistant of Lauge Koch on his coastal survey of 1933. The other inscription was by Grame Niels -- (Nielsen?) of the Danish Geodetic Institute in August 1969.



To complete our movement southwards we traversed the col between Skåldal and Nissedal and walked out the 24km or so between there and the Scoresbysund settlement. If Ejnar Mikkelsen could see it now! On our return, five of us completed the circumnavigation of Pt 1346 via the unnamed glacier at the head of Jaettedal and the col between it and the Grete glacier.

A day later two members climbed Pt 1346 from the Skål-Nisse col. It had a cairn but no record. Malcolm Slesser may have climbed it and it was almost certainly a station for the 1969 survey. Our final sortie was to the highest point on Liverpool Land: Pt 1430 or Tvillingerne. This looked like being the most interesting climb from a technical point of view, but during our approach up the Grete glacier we were hit by a storm and forced to bivouac in a corrie beneath

Pt1362. The storm continued unabated and we were tent-bound for three days. Eventually the tents started to break up and an uncomfortable retreat had to be made to safer ground. It was now 12 August and time for the return of the expedition to Constable Point.

We had had serious problems with our two boat engines throughout the expedition. During the return trip to Constable Point the reserve engine finally died on us in the middle of Hurry Fiord. A two-mile row up the Thames in a coxed eight is quite pleasant: the same distance in an overloaded Gemini with a 30-knot sidewind over a five-knot tide is not! It took us four hours of hard paddling to reach Jameson Land. We left Constable Point for the UK on 16 August. Considering the very poor weather and the inexperience of five of our members, some of whom had done nothing more serious than a little winter scrambling, we were very happy with our results. We had walked for 360km, climbed 21,500m of vertical interval, learned a great deal and enjoyed the experience – and left ourselves some unfinished business, an ideal excuse for returning as soon as possible.

Members: M T King, A J Muston, D O'Neil, I Kidd, I Smith, D Bore, R Crawley, I Drew.

Maps: Danish Geod Inst 1:250,000 Sheet 70-01 Scoresby Sound.

1933 Report: *Geographical Journal* Vol LXXXV No 3, 234-251, 1935. (This covers the Scott Polar Research Institute Expedition of 1933.)

1989 Report: A full report has been submitted to the Alpine Club.