

# **The Scottish 2003**

## **Lemon Mountains Expedition**



The Chisel Group from the Frederiksborg Glacier

**13<sup>th</sup> June – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2003**

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction .....                                  | 3  |
| 1.1. Members.....                                      | 3  |
| 1.2. Training.....                                     | 3  |
| 1.3. Goals .....                                       | 3  |
| 1.4. Summary of successful routes/tours.....           | 4  |
| 2. The Mountains & Glaciers .....                      | 5  |
| 2.1. Outward Journey .....                             | 5  |
| 2.2. The Acolyte.....                                  | 6  |
| 2.3. The Hedgehog glacier .....                        | 7  |
| 2.4. The Matron .....                                  | 9  |
| 2.5. 'Pulk Fiction' .....                              | 9  |
| 2.6. East Ridge of The Mitre .....                     | 10 |
| 2.7. Traverse of the Neapolitan & Ripple glaciers..... | 10 |
| 2.8. Hell and damnation.....                           | 11 |
| 2.9. The Reverend.....                                 | 12 |
| 2.10. The Altar and Altar Boys .....                   | 12 |
| 2.11. Return to RV .....                               | 13 |
| 3. Sponsors .....                                      | 14 |



## **1. Introduction**

This report details the activities of the Scottish Lemon Mountains Expedition 2003, including a definitive list of first ascents and glacier traverses, in and around the Laebaeltet and Hedgehog glaciers.

### **1.1. Members**

There were ten expedition members who primarily worked together in five teams of two; there were several occasions when teams would combine, or members of one team would join another, but the fundamental support structure, for eating, sleeping, climbing and moving together was in the original teams:

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Alison Calum  | Claire Stein  |
| Andy Lole     | Graham Stein  |
| Andy Saxby    | Jago Trasler  |
| Brian Moretta | Phil Reynolds |
| Iain Hall     | John Sanders  |

Only one member of the party had previous expedition experience, everyone had some alpine experience and varying levels of competence on skis.

### **1.2. Training**

All team members met several times before the trip to facilitate planning, crevasse rescue training, attendance at first aid courses and joint climbing trips, mainly in Scotland, during the winter of 2002/2003.

### **1.3. Goals**

The main goals of the party were as follows, in order of preference:

|                                 |                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| New Ascent of an unclimbed peak | Previously Unclimbed (PU) |
| New ascent of a climbed peak    | New Route (NR)            |
| Exploration of new glacier      | Glacier Traverse (GT)     |
| Repeat of previous ascent       | Repeat Ascent (RA)        |

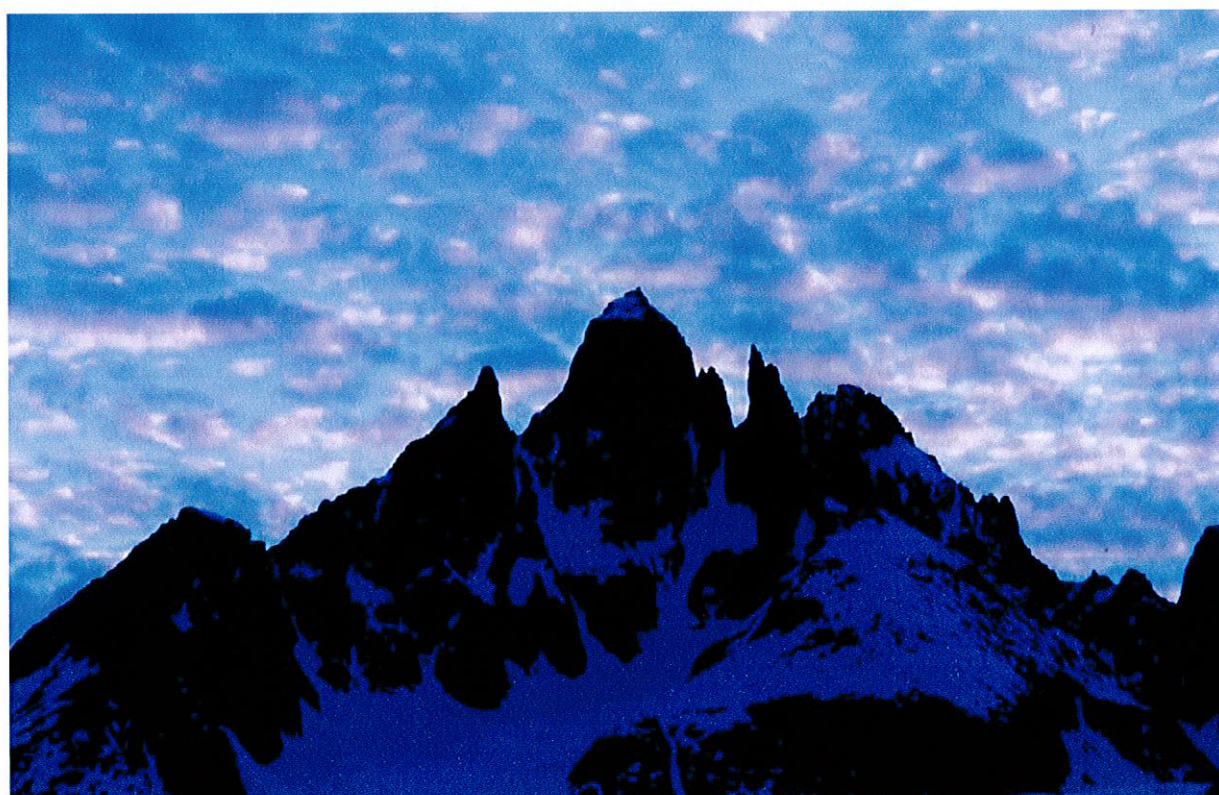


Each member of the team aimed to climb at least one PU Peak.

#### 1.4. Summary of successful routes/tours

| Team                          | Activity/Mountain                         | Route              | Key    |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------|--------|
|                               | The Pulpit (Subsidiary peak of The Mitre) | E.Ridge            | PU     |
| Saxby/Trasler                 |   |                    | PU     |
| Hall/Reynolds/Calum/Moretta   | The Cornetto                              |                    | PU     |
| Hall/Reynolds/Moretta         | The Altar Boys                            | 2 tops             | RA (2) |
| Hall/Sanders                  | The Acolyte                               | N.E.face           | PU     |
| Hall/Sanders/Reynolds/Moretta | The Reverend                              | N.face/traverse    | PU     |
| Lole/G.Stein/C.Stein          | The Choir Boy                             | Pulk Fiction'      | PU     |
| Lole/G.Stein                  | The Altar                                 | S.Ridge            | PU     |
| Moretta/Reynolds              | The Matron                                | N.Face             | PU     |
| Hall/Reynolds/Moretta/Calum   | Ski Tour                                  | 2 glaciers         | GT     |
| Callum/C Stein                | Pterodactyl point                         | Hell and damnation | PU     |

A total of 8 previously unclimbed mountains, 2 repeat ascents, and the exploration of 2 new glaciers.



From left to right: Pterodactyl Point, The Choirboy, The Bishop and the Bishops Finger.

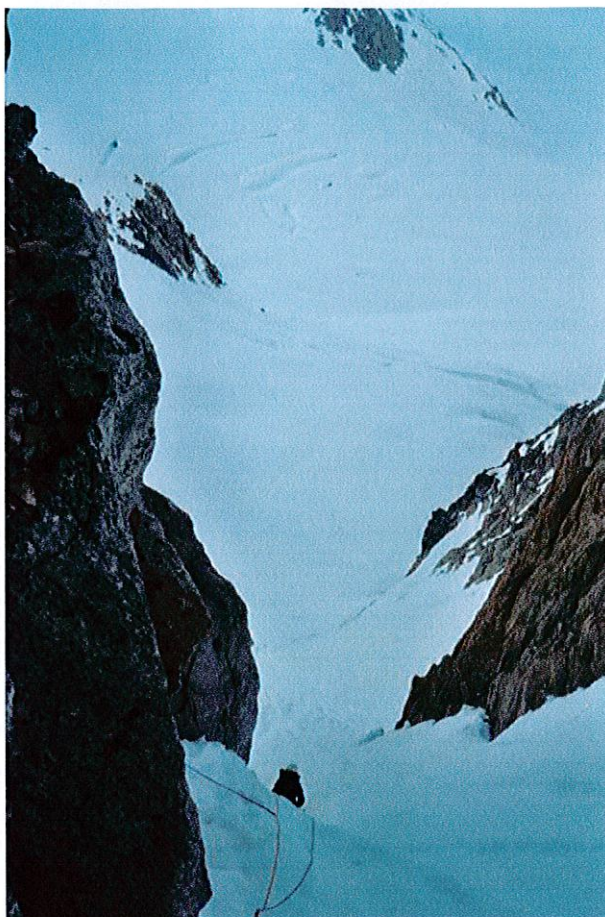


## 2. The Mountains & Glaciers

### 2.1. Outward Journey

The party travelled in two groups, the first from Glasgow to Isenfiord via Rekjavik, on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June, the second from Luton to Isenfiord, via Rekjavik, on the following day.

The first group consisting of Claire and Graham Stein, Alison Calum and John Sanders rested on the Friday night in Rekjavik, travelled to Isafjord on the Saturday. They took the Twin Otter to Greenland the following day, landing at map reference N 68° 44.73' W 031° 34.64', at 13.00 Iceland time. The first group took the majority of the gear to allow the second, larger party to travel in one go. The second party spent the



First attempt on the 'The Choirboy'

Saturday night in Rekjavik, before transferring to Isafjord early Sunday morning and arriving by the same Twin Otter at the later time of 17.00 that day. Once the gear was sorted onto the Pulks, the five teams set off Southwards for the Hedgehog glacier. Because of poor snow conditions, due to very warm weather, the pilot had deemed it unsafe to land on or near the Frederiksborg glacier, therefore we had been dropped some 35 kilometres from our destination. The snow was slushy and deep, and despite the slight downhill gradient (there is a loss of 1000m from our drop-off to the Hedgehog), the going was hard with heavy Pulks.

The plan was to travel down the Laebaeltet glacier to the Frederiksborg, which we must cross diagonally, and then up the Hedgehog to the 'Nob', a prominent buttress of rock beneath the 'Three Witches'.

The party of Hall & Sanders decided to stop at N68°.37.07' W031°.33.08', on the Laebaeltet glacier, at 04.00 on the Monday morning, beneath a group of



stunning looking mountains to the West, the other parties electing to push on, and subsequently also stopped to rest at the junction of the Laebaeltet and Frederiksborg glaciers at position N 68° 36.15' W 031° 33.24'. Both parties slept through the day of Monday 16<sup>th</sup>.

## 2.2. The Acolyte

During the night of Monday Hall/Sanders made a successful ascent of the 'Acolyte' at N68.38 W31.35 via the North East Face; the route was an easy snow slope up to 40 degrees, except for 2 linked pitches of Scottish grade III climbing at about 1800m. The summit was traversed and a descent was made down the North face, via a series of abseils from hanging Seracs. This was the only solid ground to be found; the rest of the snow slopes carried a very high avalanche risk. 650m – 9 hours.



Gear sorting at the drop-off

The other parties spent the night travelling the final leg to the Hedgehog glacier.

### 2.3. The Hedgehog glacier

The pattern of climbing/travelling at night and sleeping during the day was now established, and therefore during the night of the Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup>/Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup>, the Hall/Sanders party skied to the Hedgehog, the four parties already there reconnoitring the glacier and the surrounding mountains. During the night of Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup>/Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> the expedition undertook the following:

- Hall/Sanders attempted two lines on 'The Nunnery', both quickly beaten by dreadful snow conditions, both loose and dangerous; avalanches, rocks and Seracs were regularly sloughing off the mountain.
- Calum/C.Stein made an epic attempt at the spire on the S.E. ridge of 'The Bishop' known as 'The Choirboy', through poorly consolidated snow to the ridge, followed by 13 pitches of rock, up to British 5a. They retreated after 28 hours due to desperate snow conditions, believing that they were some 150m below the rock spire. They finally returned to Base on Friday morning.
- Moretta/Reynolds retreated from an attempt on an unclimbed peak at N68.31.2 W31.34.5, which they called 'The Matron', again due to avalanche conditions and rock fall.
- Lole/G.Stein retreated from the East ridge 'The Cauldron' due to danger from rock fall and appalling snow conditions on the summit ridge .
- Saxby/Trasler retreated from the North face of 'The Three Witches' due again to poor snow conditions and high avalanche risk.

During the night of Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>/Friday 20<sup>th</sup> the teams either rested or reconnoitred the surrounding hills. We were awaiting anxiously the return of Alison & Claire from their epic on the Bishop.

The following night 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> the weather was beginning to break-up with weather fronts coming in from the East. Hall/Sanders decided to rest and subject to weather, attempt a daytime ascent of the East Ridge of 'The Actress' on the 21<sup>st</sup>; Calum and C.Stein elected to join them.



Saxby/Trasler made a second attempt on the North face of the Three Witches, but were again repulsed by avalanche prone slopes; the rock climbing was good to British grade 4c.

Lole/G.Stein attempted the East Ridge on the Bishops Finger, the prominent spire to the North of the Bishop. They successfully gained the rock band via desperate, soft, steep, snow, and encountered 5 pitches of good climbing up to British 5B, Graham taking a fifty-foot fall during the 4<sup>th</sup> pitch; the climbing became harder above and they retreated from the top of the 5<sup>th</sup> Pitch. Once again the descent was subject to avalanches, and rock fall.



Andy Lole on 'The Bishops Finger'

Due to the unusually warm weather we decided to change tactics, and therefore early on the morning of Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> the team of Hall, Sanders and Calum, C.Stein attempted the East Ridge of 'The Actress'.

The temperature at 03.00 was hovering on zero and by 05.00 the approach slopes were soft and sagging. The party moved together up 250 metres of soft snow to a minor summit



on the ridge, where one pitch of VD rock climbing was encountered; above was another open snow slope, which had been exposed to direct sunlight for some hours. The party chose at this point to retreat.

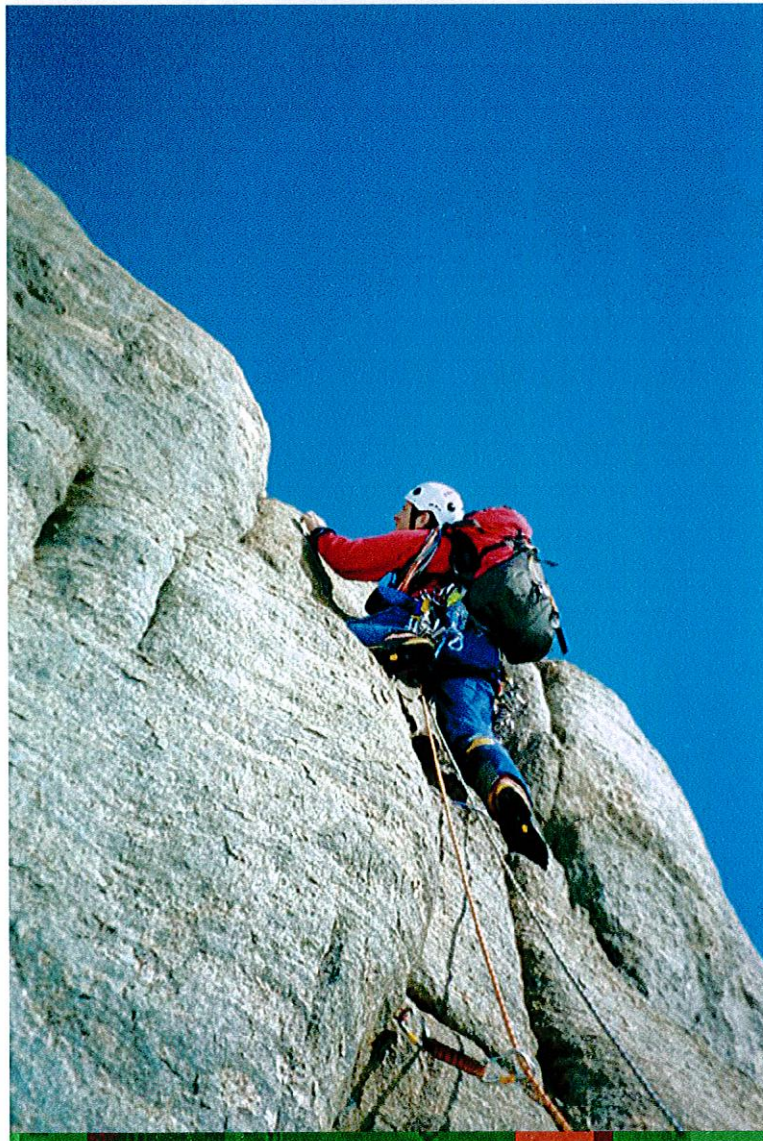
#### **2.4. The Matron**

During the night of 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> the party of Moretta/Reynolds made a second and successful attempt on 'The Matron' via the North face. Pd – 600m

#### **2.5. 'Pulk Fiction'**

On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>, Hall/Sanders attempted a daytime ascent of 'Church Door Buttress' above the East side of the Charlotte glacier. The rock was poor and the party retreated from the second pitch, when the technical climbing went above British 5a.

During the night of the 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> C.Stein joined the team of Lole/G.Stein for a successful attempt of 'The Choirboy', which took the party 26 hours, (1100m). The route took a steep gully on the East face below the ridge for 350m (Scottish II), followed by 6 pitches, up to 4c, on good rock to another gully. The party were amazed to find good Neve in a second gully for



Graham Stein on the top section of 'Pulk Fiction'



150m (grade II) before more rock was encountered to the top, up to British 5a, with two points of aid (A1) being used (Small wires and a Quadcam 5) The moves were climbed free on second by Andy Lole, who estimated the difficulty at 5b. They named the route esoterically 'Pulk Fiction'.

## **2.6. East Ridge of The Mitre**

On the same night the Saxby/Trasler party approached the East ridge of the Mitre via soft snow slopes, for a successful direct ascent to the subsidiary top. 910m – 23 hours. The route included 8 good pitches of rock up to British 4b. The descent was via multiple abseils, and the traverse of poor snow slopes.



Iain Hall & Ali Calum on the East Ridge of 'The Actress'

## **2.7. Traverse of the Neapolitan & Ripple glaciers**

A team which included Calum/Hall/Moretta/Reynolds left on the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup> to complete a 2 day ski tour of two glaciers to the East of the Frederiksborg. They began from the camp on the hedgehog and travelled through the following points:

- 1) N68 29.8' W31 34.5' 1191m
- 2) N68 28.9' W31 33.1' 967m
- Bivi) N68 28.6' W31 32.0' 911m
- 3) N68 30.9' W31 24.7' 853m



- 4) N68 32.4' W31 27.2'1755m
- 5) N68 32.6' W31 27.7'1528m

This included an ascent of an unclimbed peak, 'The Cornetto' at 1191m.

We can find no record of any previous parties having toured on these glaciers.

The glacier running due East from the Frederiksborg was named the Neapolitan, and the high level traverse from the end of this glacier to the Laebaeltet was named the Ripple.

The party returned to Base Camp on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> in bad weather, which was worsening, and the next three days were spent Tent Bound, due to high winds, sleet and *rain!*

The weather began clearing on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> and by the evening conditions had improved enough for the parties of Hall/Sanders and Moretta/Reynolds to move camp. The decision was taken to return up the Laebaeltet glacier to a point just North of 'The Acolyte', where a number of fine looking mountains were grouped together.

The party travelled from the Hedgehog glacier to the junction of the Frederiksborg/Laebaeltet glaciers the first night and then onto map reference N 68° 36.15' W 031° 33.24' on the night of the 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> June.

Of the three remaining parties on the Hedgehog Glacier, Lole/G.Stein and Saxby/Trasler made an attempt on 'The Screwdriver' at the back of the Hedgehog, but were turned back yet again by unconsolidated and dangerous snow conditions.

## **2.8. Hell and damnation**

Callum/C Stein spotted a quality looking line on the highest point South of 'The Choirboy', which they Christened 'Pterodactyl Point'. The line succumbed to 10 pitches of good rock climbing and some ridge scrambling, up to a technical difficulty of 4c.

The remainder of the team left the Hedgehog glacier to follow the other party on the night of Monday 30<sup>th</sup>.

## 2.9. The Reverend

On the night of the 30<sup>th</sup> June/1<sup>st</sup> July, the Hall/Sanders/Moretta/Reynolds team made a successful ascent of the mountain next to 'The Acolyte', which was further along the glacier that they named 'The Tabernacle Glacier'; the camp was set up at reference N68°.37.07' W031°.33.08', the summit of 'The Reverend' being at N68°.37.05' W31°.35.04'. The route followed a gully for 4 pitches to a col, between the two hills. A stunning, traverse then led to the summit slopes. 700m – pd, 9 hours. The descent was to reverse the traverse, and then down by multiple abseils from good rock anchors, across avalanche prone snow slopes.

The party had just returned to camp when a storm broke and we were again tent bound, this time for 24 hours. The other party were trapped by the storm on the Laebaeltet Glacier. A full 10 inches of snow fell in 6 hours, making Pulking an interesting challenge.

## 2.10. The Altar and Altar Boys

To the West of the camp was a fine rock tower which we named 'The Altar', and behind this was four distinctive, but smaller hills, with a fifth hidden behind these; this group we called the 'Altar Boys'. Two of these 'Altar Boys' at least,



Ali Calum & Claire Stein with 'The Acolyte' and 'The Reverend' behind



had received ski ascents during a previous expedition, but we could find no reference to a name. There is a third impressive summit behind and North of 'The Reverend', which we named 'The Disciple'. The three peaks forming a semi circle to the South-West of the camp, comprising of The Acolyte, The Reverend, and The Disciple, we collectively called 'The Alabama3'.

During the evening of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> the weather began to clear and a party consisting of Hall/Moretta/Reynolds made a ski tour of two of 'The Alter Boys', summits as follows:

|           |                     |       |
|-----------|---------------------|-------|
| Summit 1: | N68 40.0' W31 33.6' | 2087m |
| Summit 2: | N68 40.1' W31 32.2' | 1951m |

Sanders stayed at Camp with a radio in case the weather failed again, and to have contact with the second party who were now moving up the Laebaeltet glacier. This party arrived early on 3<sup>rd</sup> and the Lole/G.Stein team immediately climbed the South Ridge of 'The Altar' to the Southern top. They moved together except for 2 pitches of British 4a. 3 hours 50 mins.

During the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Calum and C.Stein climbed a new route of 2 pitches on the face of 'The Altar' at VD, to a small subsidiary peak, which they named 'Chemb Peak'. 4 hours.

## **2.11. Return to RV**

We were due to be back at the RV on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>, and because we still had 15 kilometres of distance and about 600m of height gain still to go, the decision was made to travel over two nights; we therefore broke camp and set off on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> at 01.00. We camped during the day at N68°41.03' W031°28.08', Hall and Moretta ascending the small summit to the West.

The final leg was completed on the night of 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> but due to bad weather we were not picked up until Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **3. Sponsors**

The expedition would not have been possible without the funding and sponsorship of the following organisations, whose assistance is very much appreciated

**Mount Everest Foundation**

**Mountaineering Council of Scotland**

**British Mountaineering Council**

**Gino Watkins Fund**

**Polar Research Institute**

The expedition members would also like to thank the following companies for their support with equipment

**RAB**

**HB**

**High Places**

**Real Scared**

**Valvona & Crolla**

