previous two years but free-climbed the 15 independent pitches above the *Andrich/Aste* common start with his two brothers at IX, VIII obl. There is little in-situ protection.

A few days later Bau made only the third ascent, but first solo, of *Captain Skyhook*, a hard route up the steep compact wall between the *Aste* and 1931 *Comici* routes. First ascentionists Paulo Crippa and Dario Spreafico climbed the route in 1987 at VII+ and A2. On the second ascent in 1992, Roland Mittersteiner redpointed it at IX- (F7b+). After one failed attempt Bau completed the route at the original grade with just one bivouac (and liked it so much that he was back in March 2010 with Nicola Tondini to make the first winter ascent – in a 28-hour round trip from the hut).

On the **Torre Trieste** Andrej Grmovsek and Lukic Kranj made the third free ascent of the 750m *Donna Fugata* on the SW face. The Slovenian pair climbed this route, which takes a direct line though the friable yellow overhanging rock on the lower central section of the wall between the 1959 *Piussi/Redaelli Direttissima* and the classic 1934 *Carlesso/Sandri*, in one day on their first attempt. It has a hard crux pitch of F8a.

In the less frequented Feltrine Group, Jenny Lavarda and Marco Ronchi spent two months working on Maurizio 'Manolo' Zanolla's highly exposed 2006 route *Solo per Vecchi Guerrieri*, a four-pitch line above a very steep approach on the N face of **El Colaz**. The crux is the final pitch, a thin crimpy wall at F8c/8c+, a grade confirmed by the second and third ascentionists, Mario Prinoth and Riccardo Scarian. The route has obligatory climbing of F7c/7c+.

Finally, on the famous **Cima Scotini** in the Fanes Group, Florian and Martin Riegler made only the second redpoint ascent of *Zauberlehrling*, a 23-pitch route on the SW face put up as long ago as 1990 by Christoph Hainz and Oswald Celva at F7c. The brothers spent all day on this 550m route, finding some pitches psychologically demanding due to friable rock.

DEREK FORDHAM

Greenland 2009

In 2009 weather and snow conditions on the Inland Ice were particularly bad. Twenty-eight applications were made for permission to attempt the crossing between east and west coasts and of the 11 who started from the east eight had to return or be airlifted out, indicating either the severity of the conditions or a general lack of preparedness.

One of the first parties to cross from **east to west** was Ian Hall and Alistair Shawcross (UK) who started up the Hahn glacier on 7 April and reached point 660m (the normal point of arrival and departure for parties heading to or from Kangerlussuak on the west coast) on the 1 May after 25 days on the ice. The weather was a problem and poor visibility and large sastrugi slowed progress for much of the journey. The pair spent two days tent bound due to high winds and 'white-out' and both suffered from minor frostbite. The exit off the Russell glacier at Pt.660 was found to be relatively easy and gave good access to the waiting 4x4 taxi from Kangerlussuak Tourism! On 23 April a Swiss team of Moritz Hermann and Sonja Meier left Nagtivit heading for Ilulissat. They encountered strong easterly winds and experienced delays due to unusually warm temperatures which gave rise to poor snow and visibility. They altered their destination to Kangerlussuak but after discovering their Norwegian telemark boots were not warm enough they decided to abandon their trip and return to Tasiilaq. In early May a Tangent Expedition group crossed from east to west in 27 days but no further details are available and later in the season Norbert Pokorski and Rafal Krol (Poland) crossed from Nagtivit to Pt.660 in 27 days, starting on 17 August and finishing 12 September having experienced no delays or problems.

One of the first expeditions to start from the **west coast** was a six-person Finnish team led by Timo Stenros who left Pt.660 on 28 March. After four days one member had to be evacuated by helicopter and the remaining five continued in windy weather with temperatures down to -44°C. After leaving DYE2, the abandoned early warning station on the Inland Ice, on 14 April it was necessary to evacuate another member of the team and only four continued, enduring two days tent bound before breaking a ski some 100km from the east coast and repairing it with the aluminium frying pan – 'no pancakes any more' as their diary records. The weather and travelling conditions were much warmer as they neared the east coast towards the end of April. The west coast was not without its failures. Christophe Periard with a companion started from Kangerlussuak on 21 April but after one week his companion was taken ill and both men were airlifted out. Hvitserk, the Norwegian expedition group made a crossing between 8 May and 4

June encountering more snow than usual on the first few days. Two clients were evacuated due to hypothermia on 24 May. Australians Chris Weyers and Phil Hannam, as the Ice Wings 2 Expedition, left Kangerlussuak on 29 May with the aim of achieving a double crossing of the Inland Ice with the aid of power kites. After the failure of their satellite phone shortly before the halfway point they headed south-west to DYE2 where they were able to advise their base that they were in good shape. They then kited back to Kangerlussuak having been out for about a month and covered 500km. Described as, 'a cold trip and very full on!'

An expedition which never reached Greenland is worthy of mention for its aims if not its achievement. The Carbon Neutral Expedition under Raoul Surcouf set sail from Portsmouth on 19 April with the intention of sailing to Umivik and from there making a double crossing of the Inland Ice and sailing home again. Unfortunately they were struck by a force 11 storm in the Atlantic and capsized three times before being picked up by an oil tanker. It makes the Inland Ice seem quite tame! Danes Fleming Lund and Sverri Warm using tractor kites and ski sails left Narssaq in south Greenland on 28 June and reached Qaanaaq on 31 July after spending 29 days skiing the length of the Inland Ice. They covered 200km per day at speeds of up to 75 mph, encountered no problems and after their month on the Inland Ice felt 'ready to re-join the rat race'.

In the **Staunings Alps** a strong five-man team from the French Federation of Alpine Clubs (GUMS) led by Anthoine Melchior made a fine north – south ski traverse which commenced with gaining access to the Skjoldungebrae from Alpefjord and continued to Nordvestfjord, finding an alternative to the difficulties of the Col Major. The total traverse was 335km and took 34 days including crossing 16 passes of which two were totally new and five were crossed on ski for the first time. A few summits were climbed but access was generally limited by adverse weather and poor snow conditions. The expedition started from Alpefjord on 11 April and during the first week enjoyed fine weather and temperatures between -20°C and -30°C. The weather then worsened with much cloud and 2 metres of snowfall slowing progress and increasing the avalanche hazard. They reached Nordvestfjord on 7 May and the airfield at Constable Pynt on 15 May.

To the west in Nordvestfjord in August a four-man team from Imperial College London led by Dominic Southgate planned to climb peaks in **NW Renland**. The expedition's start was delayed by the non-arrival of some of their equipment but once underway they reached by boat a point on the north coast of Renland from where they set up a base 1.5 km inland. Both the main glaciers of the area were explored as well as access to the ice cap and having solved problems of crossing glaciers and rivers the party climbed four peaks between 1636m and 1950m. An attempt at an additional route on one of the peaks was turned back by deteriorating snow conditions.

Also on Renland but at Skillebugt in the south-east was a four-man Dutch party from 8 August to 30 August. Niek de Jonge and Jelle Staleman hoped to make the ascent of a 900m pillar known as **The Cenotaph** and Martin Fickweiler and Gerke Hoekstra aimed to make a big wall style ascent of a direct line on a peak called **Shark's Tooth**, which subsequently proved to be inaccessible due to impassable rivers. De Jonge and Staleman were turned back on The Cenotaph after 600m (UIAA VII) where to continue would have required extensive bolting. They then joined the others and made a free ascent of a line of least resistance on The Cenotaph. Two further peaks of 2000m and 1000m were climbed from the Apusinikajik glacier. Both were of mixed terrain and the higher gave a grade of TD/TD+.

On the west coast, Bob Shepton and four companions continued his Tilman-type boat based explorations. In August they sailed from Scotland across the Atlantic, first to the **Akuliarusinguaq peninsula** at Lat 71' 50"N in west Greenland. Here they located a prominent cirque not previously explored on the south-west of the peninsula and made the ascent of 10 unclimbed peaks before pursuing the main thrust of the expedition which was the exploration of **Northumberland Island** at Lat 77' 23"N. They made ascents of nine peaks, six of them via a technically difficult ski mountaineering traverse by Tom Howard and Andy Prosser along almost the full length of the island. They survived two big storms and finally the boat was left in Aasiaat after winter had arrived early.

Also travelling by boat, but on the east coast was the *Jonathan IV*, an ex BT Challenge yacht with 10 people on board. On 24 August they left Longyearbyen in Svalbard to explore the Fjord region of north-east Greenland. With various trips ashore they sailed through Kejser Franz Josephs Fjord and Geologfjord, slowly working south to Ella Island and Kong Oscar Fjord. They reached Scoresbysund on 8 September and left for Iceland on 13 September.

Responsibility for Greenland expeditions has from the beginning of 2010 passed from the Danish Polar Centre to the Greenland Home Rule Authorities in Nuuk and this seems like a good time for me to pass on the baton of these notes. In preparing the notes I have noticed an increasingly casual attitude to expedition organisation, particularly some of those planning to cross the Inland Ice. It has been more and more common to find groups setting off too early, relatively poorly prepared and relying heavily on other people and technology to get them out of the inevitable problems. This contrasts with the level of preparation and self-reliance normal some years ago, as exemplified perhaps by my journey across the Inland Ice in 1971, and other expeditions of that period, when we had a small radio for time signals only, navigated by sextant and 7-figure log tables, and were for three months totally out of contact and independent. My consuming enthusiasm for Greenland and the Arctic, where I have taken part in many happy expeditions of my own remains undiminished and I trust the *AJ* will be well served by my successor. I send my grateful thanks to all who, over the years, have generously responded to my requests for information. I have thoroughly enjoyed being party to your achievements!

[Editor's note: Derek has been reporting on Greenland and Arctic exploration and adventure in the Alpine Journal since 1969 – a most impressive feat]