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Khrebet Kyokkiar Expedition 2002

MEF 02/30

10th August - 8th September 2002



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+733

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If you are considering a trip to the ranges mentioned or to the wider area, feel free to get in touch.

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1.0 Summary

1.1 Introduction

The Gory Sarybeles and Khrebet Kyokkiar are two relatively small ranges of limestone mountains on the Kyrgyz-Chinese border, discrete from the main Kokshaal-Too, being separated by the Ak-Sai river running into China. They are of a lesser altitude than other ranges in the area, such as the Borkoldoi, Kokshaal and At Bashi, reaching a maximum height of c.4800m. Despite this there are faces up to c.1000m in height, predominantly on rock, but with many fine mixed lines and classic routes of a European alpine nature. The smaller Gory Sarybeles can be accessed by truck, where approaches to routes are 2 – 3 hours, whereas the Kyokkiar requires a day on horses, and some load carrying, to be able to access the main valley from where high camps can be made.

1.2 Previous Activity

David Gerrard visited the area with John Allen, Peter Berggren, Hilda Grooters and Tim Riley during August/September 2001, when they completed five first ascents, one in the Kyokkar. This is believed to have been the first visit by mountaineers to these two ranges. See British Western Kokshaal-Too Expedition 2001 report MEF 01/37.

1.3 2002 Objectives

First ascents of mountains in the Khrebet Kyokkiar, using knowledge gained in the 2001 expedition and to explore areas of the range not visited the previous year.

1.4 2002 Achievements

Seven of eight ascents completed by this expedition are believed to be first ascents. Due to poor weather on arrival it was not possible to access the Kyokkiar immediately and the expedition drove further to the Gory Sarybeles, where four ascents (three firsts) were made, before returning to the Kyokkiar.

Gory Sarybeles

Peak Privet, FA 17th August 2002, K. Baker, D. Gerrard: W. Ridge, PD.

Cloud Peak, 2nd Ascent, 19th August 2002, K. Baker, D. Gerrard: W. Ridge, F.

A south to north traverse of the following two peaks was made from Cloud Peak; AD.

Chisel Peak, FA 19th August 2002, K. Baker, D. Gerrard:

The Thumb, FA 19th August 2002, K. Baker, D. Gerrard

In addition J. Cuthbert and G. Sutton attempted the left of the two most prominent peaks in the Gory Sarybeles, reaching a highpoint on the ridge to the north of the peak.

Khrebet Kyokkiar

Peak Icarus, c.4630m; FA 25th August 2002, K. Baker, D. Gerrard; RH gully on the W.Face, PD+. Descent by the south slopes.

Peak Janus, c.4760m; FA 26th August 2002, K. Baker, D. Gerrard; from glacier to col then west ridge to summit. PD.

Peak Centaur, c.4550m; FA 26th August 2002, K. Baker, D. Gerrard; traverse from Peak Janus, AD. Descent by NW face, D.

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Pt. Da Svedanya , c.4600m; FA 29th August 2002, K. Baker, D. Gerrard; W. ridge from cwm. PD.

In addition J. Cuthbert and G. Sutton attempted a line on a 4600m peak above the basecamp, explored a glacier at the end of the main valley and attempted rock routes on the south facing buttresses of the main valley.

2.0 THE EXPEDITION

All necessary arrangements, truck hire, border permits, were made by email in the months prior to departure through a tour operator, ITMC, in Bishkek. Tickets, including two nights in the posh Pinara hotel, were purchased from Facts Travel, London, for £625. Baggage allowances were strictly adhered to at Heathrow and we only just struggled inside the weight limit with a 5kg excess, generously granted by British Mediterranean, the airline with which we flew.

On arrival at Bishkek Manas Airport, we were met by Ayana, our contact at ITMC, who looked after our welfare during our stay in the country. She had arranged comfortable accommodation for us in the Bishkek School of Management for two days of preparation before departing for the mountains.

After a few hours' sleep and breakfast of laghman and plov on the mainstreet of Bishkek we arrived at ITMC to confirm paperwork and travel arrangements with Ayana. We had an upgraded truck, the 6WD Zyl, which could seat about 16 people or five people and a whole load of watermelons.

Two frantic days of shopping, where all necessities were bought either at the Osh bazaar or the western style supermarket, Beta Stores, and we were ready for the mountains. Sasha the driver made an suitably grand exit as we drove through the streets of Bishkek in a vehicle, which could quite easily have driven straight over the smartest BMW in the city.

Sasha drove us eastward out of Bishkek, stopping only to load up with fruit and vegetables at roadside stalls, continuing through the arid hills to arrive in Naryn for early evening. Four hours later and we were at the border post watching the soldiers check our passports and papers in the incessant drizzle. Another hour of hard driving down dirt tracks, another checkpoint and we stopped at the first yurt we saw in our headlights and pitched the tents at 2:00am.

The next morning we were woken by the staccato chatter of three scruffy children, as they peered in through the tent door to view their strange neighbours. Invited in for breakfast of bread, butter and cream, we were told that the clouds and rain had been there for the past week. We explained that we wanted to climb in the Kyokkiar and the offer of horses was made. The next day, Graham and I rode with Sasha and Satesh, the grandpa of the yurt family, to look at the river we would have to cross to get into the range. The water was black, deep and fast flowing and Satesh was unhappy to attempt it, so we decided the next day to drive around to the nearby Gory Sarybeles, a range we had visited the year previously. By the next afternoon we were packing rucksacks for the next day's climbing. The arrival in the evening of some hospitable locals, a goat and plenty of vodka almost put a stop to it, but early the next morning Karl and I were heading toward an easy looking peak which would give us good views of the range.

Our stomachs were still digesting goat on the approach slopes and as we reached the ridge our pace slowed in the knee-deep snow. We balanced our tracks between cornices on the left and straying too far onto the potentially avalanched prone slope on the right until we reached the rocky fin of the summit. Threatening clouds sped our descent, but we arrived back at the tents, without the storm breaking, for an early night.

While John and Sooty headed off early the next morning. Karl and I packed and left the tents in the afternoon to a high camp for an attempt at traversing two peaks on a ridge we had reached the previous year.

We woke at three to uncomfortably warm temperatures, but as the sky was clear we set off, wary of surprise storms. Following the route I remembered from the previous year we gained the col on the main ridge. The skies still being clear we had perfect views over the range to the south and down into a remarkable hidden valley, cut off by the lake Kul-Su, surrounded by fantastic limestone walls.

From the top of the first peak, which we had climbed the previous year, the ridge continued over straightforward, but interesting, snow and rock and we reached the next summit about an hour later. Strong haze had formed over China by now, but the clouds were far away, so we carried on, first abseiling, then roping up for an awkward descent into the col at the foot of a prominent rock summit.

Here the clouds caught up with us, thick and black, and we knew we had to get a move on. The storms we had experienced the previous year, though short, could be electrifying. Deciding the best escape was over the next summit, we ran out the rope, then moved together up easy ground to the top. We snapped a quick photo, with a background of ominous cloud, then looked for a quick way down. Half a pitch of downclimbing a narrow chimney and we started to abseil, reaching the col three half ropelengths later with the onset of a hailstorm. Electricity was in the air and our axes were starting to buzz, so we dragged our metalware along the ridge on the end of two eightfoot slings, bypassing the next top to descend to a col. Coiling the rope we descended the 50 degree slope out of the storm and down the valley back to our tents.

Over dinner John and Graham told us how, despite initially heading up the valley, they had been irresistibly drawn to the left hand of the two most prominent peaks in the range. A somewhat late start had been slowed even more by an arduous approach over scree and soft snow, but they reached the main ridge, and enjoyed some excellent views across the valley face of the peak, while topping up their suntans.

We packed and returned to Bash-Kaiindi the next day, with enough time to sort out the necessary food in preparation for the following day's horseride. By ten the following morning, Satesh had grumbled his way through tying our bags onto his horses and we had fought each other for the most benign looking animals and set off. As we rose off the valley floor into the foothills of the Kyokkiar, the horses slowed and were glad of the rest when we descended to the river. It was still high and threatening, so Satesh ferried each of us separately, towing the horse behind his own. A long, steady uphill slope caused the horses to stubbornly halt a few times, only encouraged on with a swift smack on the backside. From the top of this rise we got our first good views of the range, before sitting ourselves tenderly back into the saddles and continuing on. Another three hours up and down steep hillsides and we were feeling as tired of the approach as the horses. As we neared our intended camp, on a col overlooking the main valley, Satesh motioned for us to be still, as he had spotted a Marco Polo sheep. He crept off with his rifle and ten minutes later we heard a shot, but he then reappeared, looking disappointed and signalling that he had failed to fell it.

The tents pitched, we cooked a meal of supernoodles and handed them around to be enjoyed with as much uncertainty as we had eaten at Satesh's table.

The next day started grey and the boys were away soon to leave us humping our 30kg loads under heavy skies. The threat of rain wasn't an idle one and it began to soak us as we neared our chosen basecamp site. The spare tent pitched, we started back as the heavens opened, swelling the rivers running down the main valley. A fine evening lifted our spirits and gave us hope of the next day being warm. We weren't disappointed and "enjoyed" completing the load carry under perfect blue skies. With

the few spare hours in the day I walked up a tributary valley to check out a possible approach to one of the high cwms.

We were now camped on a flat area of grass, close to a river, just after leaving the outwashed rocks of the main valley. The big, continuous rock walls of the range, summitting at 4400m, were now further back down the way we had come. The part of the valley we were now in had rock walls to the north, featured with towers and corners, while the peaks to the south rose to 4600m. Four cwms, with steep, north facing walls up to 1000m, spewed steep scree down to the flat grassy bed of our valley. One small glacier squeezed between the summits, before a wall of slabs shut off the valley. Above this barrier lay another glacier and the highest peaks in the area. We had descended the slabs the previous year, retreating from an aborted attempt on one of the high peaks, and had had a good view of some of the interesting looking routes to be done.

The next day, Karl and I were wobbling and sliding our way up the awkward slabs, climbing four short pitches with heavy sacks, to reach the upper glacier. We found a perfect site for the tent just as the glacier levelled out and brewed up a massive pot of pasta stew as the sun set.

Four the next morning and we were on our way, heading toward a broad gully on one of the first peaks. The snow was only just firm, the temperatures being a shave under zero and but we were soon roping up for the steeper upper section of the couloir. We exited onto a short section of ridge before ascending the final snow slopes in the morning sun. The final summit crest of steep powder was peppered with large eagle footprints and we would have been glad of a pair of wings as a safety net on the unprotectable ridge.

We took some quick snaps of the surrounding peaks and checked out the ascent of the highest peak in the area for the following day, before speeding down the easy descent slopes back to the glacier for an afternoon of snoozing in the sun.

Four the next morning and we were on the way again, heading for what on the map looked the highest peak, at 4960m. The bergschrund below the col proved easy to cross and we were soon on the ridge to the summit, which arrived two hundred metres sooner than expected. An early summit in the bag, we returned to the col and decided to continue the ridge, one foot in China and one foot in Kyrgyzstan. Periodic hoofprints showed us that we had probably been outclassed by an ibex, but by midday we were on the next top eating chocolate and watching the eagles circling above us.

Descending from the summit to where we judged our route to be, we were surprised to see the slope dropping steeply out of sight to the glacier, five hundred metres below us. Glad to have brought icescrews, we started downclimbing, moving together until we'd run out of gear before belaying. Climbing relatively slowly, we reached the glacier four hours later.

The next day we had a relaxed, midday start, descending the slabs for an evening practising our chip frying skills at the tents.

Midmorning John arrived, wild eyed and enthusiastic from an attempt on a couloir on one of the more challenging faces in the area. They had climbed seven pitches of Scottish IV up the striking line, before being forced to retreat as the afternoon sun triggered rockfall. Still madly keen, he had returned for more food and to replace some of the gear they had used on the abseil anchors. After sharing a brew, Karl and I moved to another high camp in the cwm we had first checked out, camping on the flat, stone covered glacier. The bottom of the face was a mess of seracs which we passed early the next morning, before gaining the straightforward slope which lead to the ridge. This broad ridge formed a continuous spine along the south of the range,

linking all the summits up to the end of the valley. Once gained it was an easy ascent to the highest point, 4600m, from where we could look down the steep walls into the cwms above the main valley.

We now felt in need of a rest day of washing, shaving and more fish and chips. This set us up for a day of cragging, as we decided to have a go at a fine corner behind the camp. Three hundred metres of perfect rock, at around British grade severe, led us to a scree cone below a more intimidating corner. Karl led this, sheltered from the rain that had blown in by the tremendous overhangs above, while I sat out in the shower. This pitch of good, but dirty HVS climbing brought us to the top of the buttress, from where we abbed into a gully, leaving the multitude of pinnacles and buttresses above for other climbers. A thunderstorm caught us tiptoeing down the unstable scree in our rockboots, drenching us before we reached the tents.

The next day continued poor, so we got some load carrying out of the way, before John and Graham caught up with us the following afternoon with tales of exploration. At the end of the last day's load carrying, we were relieved to see Satesh and Sasha as we had agreed, particularly as the weather had taken a turn for the worse and snow was rapidly falling.

By the next morning six inches of snow had settled and the horses found the going tricky underfoot, but the cold temperatures meant that the river levels were low and easy to cross. The return journey went much quicker and five hours later we were back at the truck, packed and speeding on our way to R&R on the shores of lake Issy-kul, with some very satisfying climbs behind us.

3.0 ORGANISATION

3.1. Languages

The national language is Kyrgyz, but Russian is spoken by almost everyone. All the people at ITMC spoke perfect English, but amongst the population at large few people spoke English, mainly younger people who were studying at college. One is unlikely to find a driver who speaks good English.

None of us spoke any Russian, but we picked up crucial words as we went along, with the aid of a dictionary and phrasebook. Undoubtedly there would be more to gain being able to speak Russian, particularly in learning about and understanding what life was like for the people who lived in the border regions, but complex miming routines and sketches on paper got our message across in most cases and amused people no end. If situations did not resolve themselves as planned, we had only our shortcomings with the language to blame.

3.2. Support in Kyrgyzstan

There is a choice of travel companies in the capital, Bishkek, listed in the Lonely Planet Guide to Central Asia. They offer a variety of services to assist mountaineering and trekking trips in the country.

The firm ITMC had been recommended to us and I had used their services twice before. We had always found them to be very helpful and professional and although prices can seem expensive compared to general costs in Kyrgyzstan, paying a premium for reliability can be vital for success. We had communicated frequently by email in the preceding months and they had organised in advance our visa invitations, military permission for climbing in a border area, local police registration, city accommodation and taxi transfers to and from the airport. This meant that after arriving in the country we only had to sort our shopping and collect the paperwork before setting off for the mountains. They also gave much friendly advice while in the city on such things where to shop, eating out and accommodation. The police in the city are not the most honest and can try it on with innocent travellers. ITMC prepared a document for us in Russian, to show to the police in the event of being approached, explaining our purpose in the country and to contact them if there were any concerns. Any valuables, or unnecessary gear can be left with them while in the mountains.

3.3. Transport and logistics

We drove to the mountains in a truck hired from ITMC accompanied by one of their drivers, Sasha. We had explained our intentions with him through Ayana, at ITMC, before leaving, so he was able to help us in our discussions with people in the area.

From our trip the previous year, we were confident to be able to find people living in the vicinity of the Kyokkiar who could provide us with horses. Each spring many families move out to this area with their animals to graze on the steppe, returning to the nearest town over winter. There were more families in the area than last year and there was no difficulty in finding people willing to guide us into the range with horses.

Wheels

ITMC had confirmed with the military that roads in the area were in a “normal” state and navigable by 4WD. We had a six-wheeled “Zyl”, although the four-wheeled GAZ66, which we had used the previous year, was also suitable for the tracks in the

area. Virtually all the driving was along established and regularly used tracks, possible even for normal saloon cars in good conditions, but the possibility of rain turning the roads into mud or the potential desire for further off road exploration justified taking the extra beef of a big truck, which was necessary also for its load capacity.

Hooves

Our experiences the previous year had made us confident of finding people in the area from whom we could hire us horses for access to the Kyokkiar. High camps in the Sarybeles can be gained within two hours walk from where the truck is parked and the use of horses was not necessary, although there are horses available.

Approaching from Bash Kaiindi, one has to cross the Kyokkiar river to access the range. This year we were delayed by the recent poor weather having made the river crossing impossible, even with horses. We had intended to attempt to gain the main valley of the Kyokkiar range by following the river downstream, but again the high water levels prevented this. Instead we followed a similar route to the high level approach we had taken the previous year, but extended it to save us two hours of load carrying, being dropped off at a col immediately above the main valley. In a year when the water levels are low, it would an advantage approaching along the main valley with horses, enabling a basecamp to be set up without having to load carry. The only concern would be in the event of the rivers rising during the course of the stay in the mountains to a level that would prevent the horses gaining the valley for the pickup. The only possible approach would then be over the hills, from which a load carry would be necessary to gain the horses, as the valley sides are too steep for horses to descend.

People have plenty of working horses, fit enough to carry heavy loads. We had six to carry all out gear and six people. This was perhaps heavy going for the horses and given the opportunity seven or eight would have made for a more comfortable journey. Horses are crucial for the livelihood of the people and we felt them to be well treated and healthy.

Prices (45som = \$1 2002)

In 2001 we agreed on 3000 som for five of us with gear to be taken into the hills. In the event, due to missing our arrangement in a storm and the men having to overnight in appalling conditions with no tents, we gave them more.

In 2002, we went with a different man, Satesh, who took us further, via a more arduous route, requiring him to overnight with us. Through misunderstanding we found ourselves having agreed to 6000 som, with any renegotiation likely to delay the trip. Although a small part of the overall costs, Sasha felt that Satesh's attitude did not warrant this payment and 4000 som would have been a better price.

Many factors will affect the agreed prices. We tried to be fair and strike a balance between generosity and not appearing too affluent, aware of the effect on possible future visitors. Hunters of western origin appear to have visited the area and paid \$100s, distorting the local view of westerners' wealth. Better to agree a hard price and tip for a good service at the end.

In general, half a day's horse ride which would leave a day or more to load carry would warrant 3000 som, while a full day's horse ride to a suitable basecamp would be worth 4000 – 5000 som. In the event of the main valley being accessible, the journey would probably be easier, but the value to the climber far more.

We would recommend the services of a family who lived in a yurt usually pitched as far as possible down stream along the Ak-Sai as it flows toward China. They were good-natured, hardworking and reliable. We felt Satesh to be somewhat greedy and bad tempered, although the money was going to fund his daughter's study in Bishkek, rather than any vodka habit.

Feet

Wanting to explore the further ends of this range meant that we had to establish a basecamp reasonably far up the main valley, from where highcamps could be reached within few hours walk. Our chosen spot was a grassy level as the valley narrowed, above the outwashed riverbed. From here the cwms of the main ridge were two to three hours walk and the top glacier, above the slabs, was about five hours away. It took two, two to three hour load carries between where the horses dropped us and the basecamp.

3.4. Local People

2001 Notes

The areas we visited were populated by Kyrgyz. They tend animals (sheep, cows, horses) on the "steppe" during the summer months and spend the winters in the towns. In addition, there are military outposts, zastava, in the area. All people were friendly and inquisitive, including the soldiers, and many offered invitations to visit them in their homes. They were generous with their food: mainly bread with cheese, butter (masleh), cream (smetana), yoghurt (airan) and kymyz (fermented mares milk). Although rather anxious of the effects of the kymyz on our bowels we were soon quaffing bowlfuls without ill effects.

We felt that in most situations, reciprocating generosity in kind was most appropriate and did so as much as our supplies would allow. We were well aware of the fact that we were the first Europeans and climbers in the area and we wanted to create a good impression, striking a balance between being generous for services without appearing an endless source of wealth

2002 Note

This year we took extra fresh fruit and vegetables, which can be bought cheaply by the crateful on the roads from Bishkek and piled the truck high with watermelons. These were always good as greeting presents and to reciprocate the offers of food.

We also took a cheap Polaroid camera and spare films. Instant photos of the people we met were very much appreciated and we often found ourselves providing a family portrait service.

Although a sensitive border region, the soldiers we met were happy for us to take photographs, although one of our visits to a checkpoint coincided with the arrival of the local top brass, when we were told by Sasha to hide our cameras and photos.

Travel in the area will inevitably involve meeting local families and simple, useful items which can be bought cheaply in Bishkek, will be gratefully received, especially by children; e.g. paper and coloured pens, toys, footballs etc. Post trip items such as plastic containers, polypro rope, plastic sheeting are also useful.

3.5. Food

We bought all food in Bishkek, bar a number of packets of dried potato, which we took with us. A lot of food can be bought cheaply in the Osh bazaar, with the remaining items available from western style supermarkets, such as Beta Stores.

Our carbohydrate came from pasta, rice, noodles, potatoes and flour (chapattis). Pulses and barley are also available, but less was bought because of their longer cooking time. We bought tinned fish, but found no good tinned meat, buying instead some excellent preserved salami from Beta Stores as our main protein, which lasted very well. A variety of shrink wrapped hard cheese from Beta Stores was also excellent and lasted well. For main meals we added a variety of vegetables; garlic, onions and carrots lasting to the end.

For hill food we bought black bread, which lasted about ten days from purchase, to be eaten with cheese and salami. The usual selection of chocolate bars was purchased and dried nuts and fruit were bought by the kilo in Osh Bazaar.

We drank coffee, tea and dried fruit juice. Surprisingly, no powdered milk was available in the supermarket this year, where we noted some items to be in short supply, but we bought instead by the kilo in the Osh bazaar. Tomato puree was the staple sauce, although an evil chilli/garlic poison was also bought, relished by Misha, hated by us. Any number of herbs and spices could be bought by the measure in the bazaar.

3.6. Equipment

Medical and Emergency

The truck could have returned to Bishkek in a long day of driving from Chatyrtash.

Radios can be hired from ITMC, with a quick lesson in their use. One was kept with the truck for Sasha to carry out the twice-daily routine call with the office and other expeditions in the area. This year there were three other expeditions in the valley, although spread over a distance of about 150kms. In this situation if any vehicle has difficulties, others can be called to assist. Due to the lightest radio available from ITMC requiring a 30' aluminium mast and car battery to function, we took an "Iridium" satellite phone, which functioned well in the mountains and was light and compact enough to carry easily.

ITMC are closely connected with the rescue services and are able to arrange helicopter rescue, although there appears to be only one available helicopter in the country. This can be periodically commandeered by the president of Kyrgyzstan, when it becomes unavailable. It is important to provide ITMC with copies of insurance certificates for them to confirm that payment will be due in the event of an emergency. They have had disagreements in the past with insurance firms, so it would be advisable to talk this through with them.

From the previous year's trip we had a comprehensive medical kit prepared by the expedition doctor. See 2001 report MEF 01/37 for details.

This year, having no medically trained members, we relied upon common sense and amateur medical experience. Thankfully, no medical emergency occurred which exceeded our expertise. A thorough approach to medical preparation for an expedition to Kyrgyzstan can be found in Paul Deegan's report for his 1999 Motorola Pamirs Expedition, written by Dr Rick Albertyn.

Climbing

Full racks were taken for rock and ice, including snowstakes and icescrews, with enough spare rack to cope with a retreat and still have enough to continue the trip. We all took two short ice tools and double 60m ropes. Telescopic skipoles were very useful for balancing with heavy loads and crossing streams.

Glaciers were negligible apart from the easy glacier in the upper basin of the Kyokkiar.

The area offers climbing of many varieties. In the event, we climbed most of our summits by straightforward alpine routes, which required only light racks. There is however, much potential for harder routes requiring a full compliment of hardware.

The rock walls were very featured with towers, pinnacles and corners. The rock was mostly very sound and abundant with natural lines protectable without the use of bolts.

Clothing

Normal alpine clothing was taken, with light duvets worn for the evenings. If it rains, it can come down in torrents: take a waterproof. Stetson and spurs optional.

Navigation

Compasses and altimeters were taken.

Camping

We took three tents, lent to us for the expedition by Terra Nova: a roomy three person Hyperspace and two, two person tents, a Solar 2 and a Voyager. This gave us one tent to remain at basecamp and two packable tents for highcamps. The two man tents were also used at BC for sectioning snorers or other antisocial behaviour.

Cooking

We had a double gas burner to use in the truck, provided by ITMC and a variety of gas and petrol stoves for the hills. We took two MSR XGKs and a Whisperlite multifuel stove, which functioned perfectly on unfiltered petrol from the petrol station. We also took refilled butane gas cylinders that worked well. New propane-butane cylinders can be bought, although very expensive (\$7).

Domestic

We bought the following useful items in the Bishkek, either at the Osh bazaar or Beta Stores:

- Polypro rope for tying sacks onto the horses.
- Heavy gauge plastic sheet for protecting food and equipment left outside the tents. (We experienced no rodent trouble).
- Large woven plastic sacks for carrying gear on horses.
- Plastic food containers.

3.7 Weather

This year's trip ran two weeks earlier than in 2001, as we aimed to try and avoid the onset of winter which seemed to arrive early to mid September. The weather this year was much warmer than the previous year and glaciers at 4000m were only just frozen at night. Whereas last year we had hailshowers down to 3000m, this year we experiences some heavy rainstorms which turned the crags to waterfalls and flooded the rivers. At the end of the trip the temperatures dropped and four inches of snow

settled at 3500m, demonstrating again that winter can come suddenly. This was at the very beginning of September. Last year, on the nineteenth September, half a metre fell in twenty-four hours. In summary, it seems traditional to climb in the area in late summer, with colder and more stable weather, but this brings the increased risk of being caught by the first snows of winter, which can be very heavy. The two ranges visited miss the worse of the weather, which can affect the area due to their lower altitude.

3.8 Water and health

Water was taken from streams all the time (no snow melt) and was either boiled or purified with iodine before drinking because of the presence of animals and the worry of giardia. Because of the high rainfall, many streams were cloudy and although we did not feel that we suffered directly from sediment in the water or contamination, mild diarrhoea was with us periodically throughout the trip.

3.9. Information sources:

- The Lonely Planet Guide to Central Asia – very useful prior reading for a visit to Kyrgyzstan.
- The travel company ITMC, Vladimir Kommissarov, Director and also President, Kyrgyz Alpine Club, email: itmc@elcat.kg
- American flight navigation maps.
- Locally bought soviet maps (c.1970)

For a flavour of mountaineering in this region of Kyrgyzstan:

- High Mountain Info 182
- Article by Pat Littlejohn – High 210, May 2000
- MEF Report “Anglo-American Kokshaal-Too Expedition 1997”, Lindsay Griffin.
- MEF reports from the 2002 expeditions to the Borkoldoi and Kokshaal-Too.

Maps

American Tactical Pilotage Charts (TPC) (1:500,000 – large area, from Stanford’s) give a good overview of the country, while soviet maps of some vintage (late sixties) and of some scale (1:200,000) give a better appreciation of local topography.

With respect to geography we found the Russian maps we bought in Bishkek to be good, although their accuracy was masked somewhat by the scale, 1:200,000 being the best scale we found. The maps are old, the roads marked may or may not be there and could be in any condition, not always navigable even with a 4WD. Settlements marked on the map may not exist anymore.

4.0 EXPEDITION ACCOUNTS

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
MEF	£900	Flights 4 @ £625	£2500
BMC	£1500	Logistics in KS	£800
Personal contributions	£1200	Food	£300
Total	<u>£3600</u>	Total	<u>£3600</u>

5.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to the following groups or individuals, who assisted the expedition and made valuable contributions. Their help and support was very much appreciated and eased the fraught and complicated task of organising the expedition.

British Mountaineering Council

Mount Everest Foundation

Ayana Khamisova, ITMC

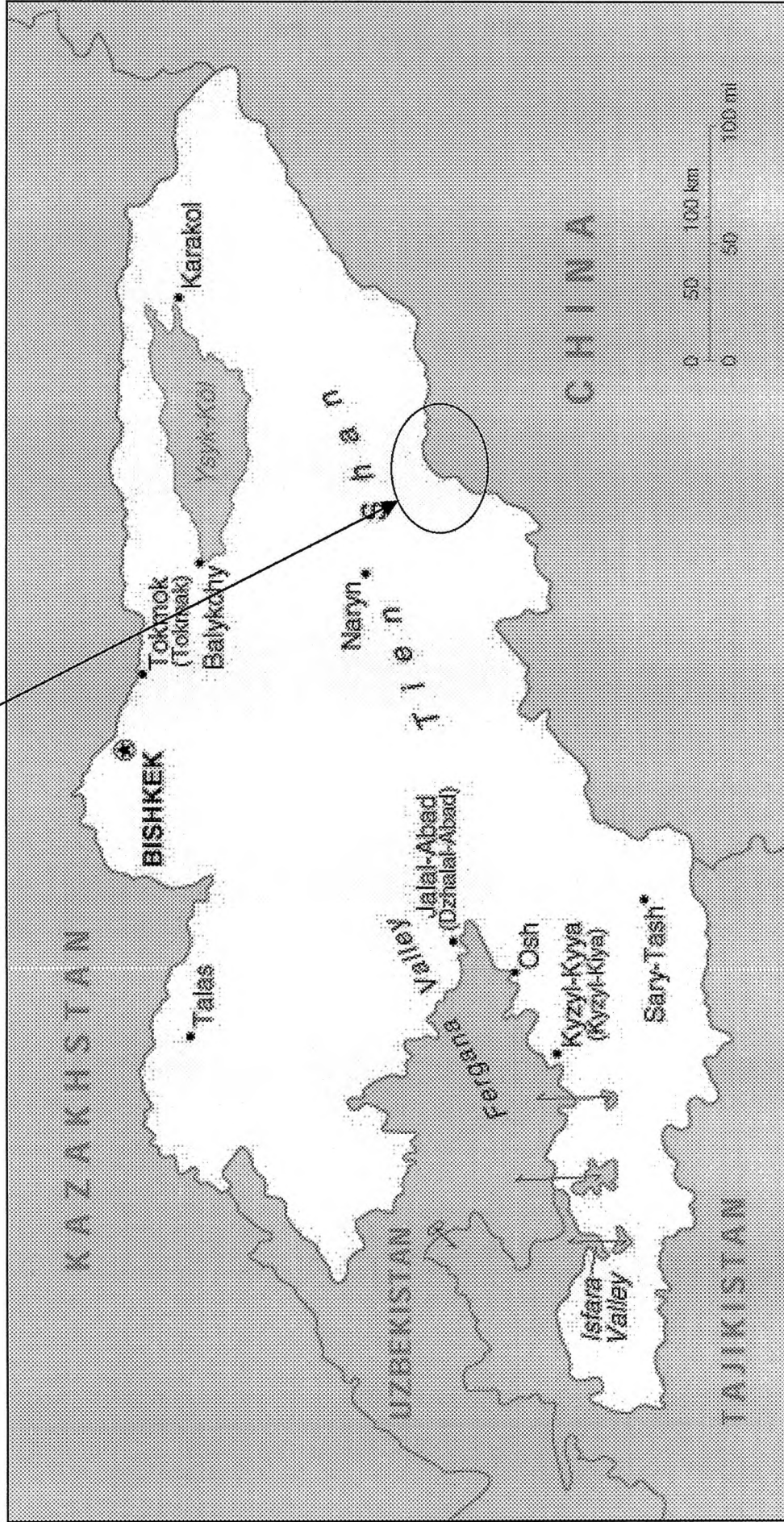
Joelle Watkins, British Mediterranean Airways.

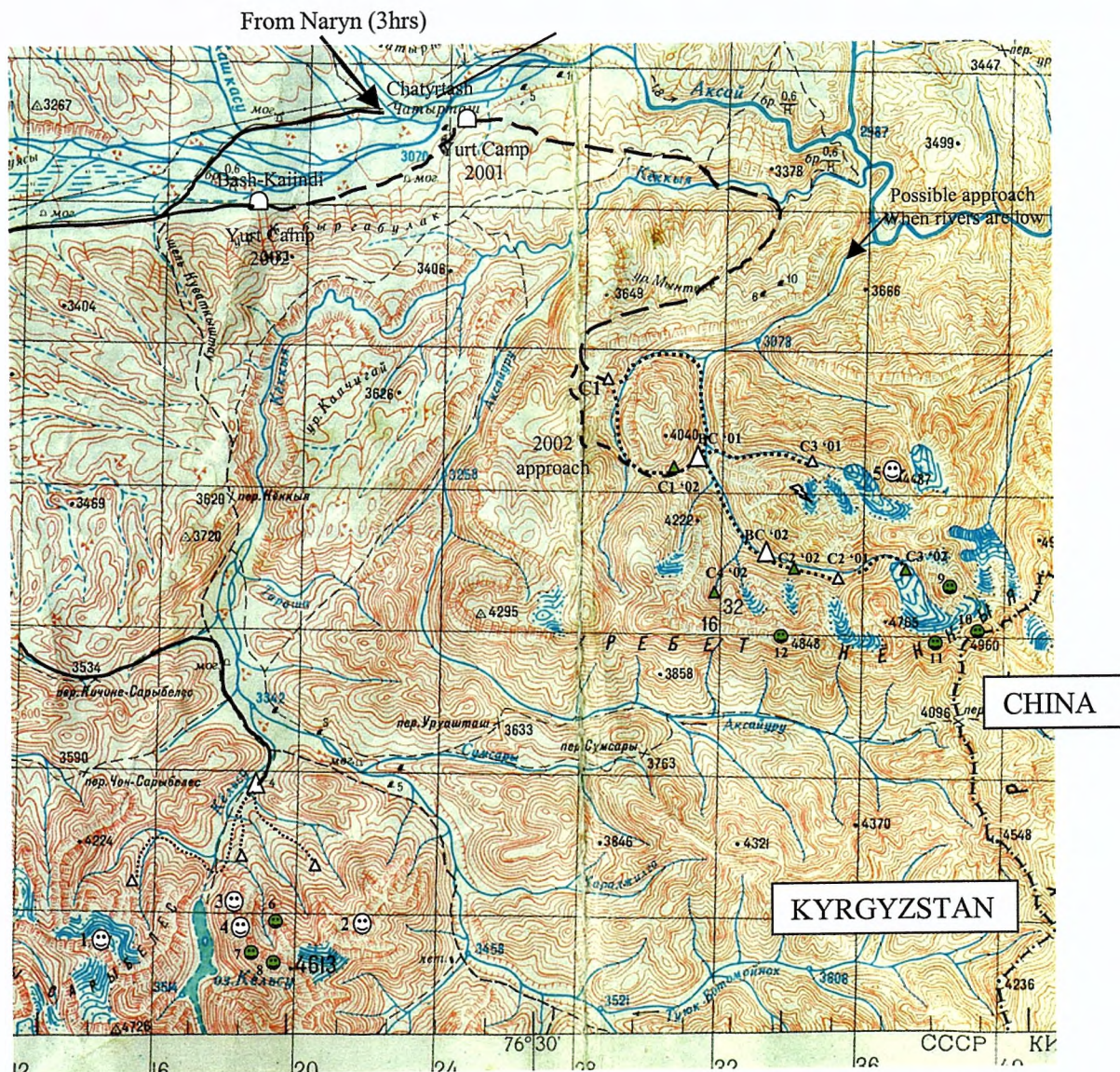
Rab Down Equipment

Sasha, ITMC

Terra Nova

Area visited by expedition.





Key:

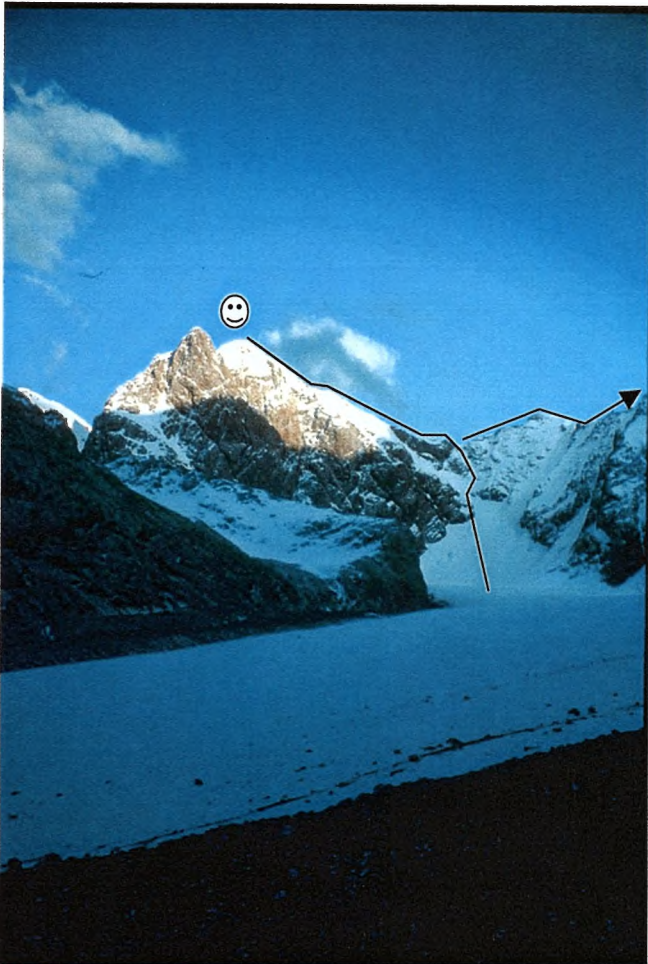
Travel	by truck	—————	Summit climbed	'01	☺	'02	☺
	by horse	- - - - -	Route climbed		☺		☺
	on foot					☺
High camp		△					
Base camp		△					
1	Horizon Peak		7	The Chisel			
2	Cat's Ear South		8	The Thumb			
3	Peak Kul-Su		9	Peak Icarus			
4	Cloud Peak		10	Peak Janus			
5	Pawprint Peak		11	Peak Centaur			
6	Peak Privet		12	Peak Da Svedanya			



1. Cat's Ear South – FA Peter Berggren, Tim Riley, 2001.
 2. Peak Privet – FA. Karl Baker, David Gerrard, 2002.
 3. The Thumb – FA. Karl Baker, David Gerrard, 2002.
 4. The Chisel – FA. Karl Baker, David Gerrard, 2002
 5. Cloud Peak – FA. David Gerrard, Hilda Grooters, 2001.
- Cloud peak approached from right, just out of photo.

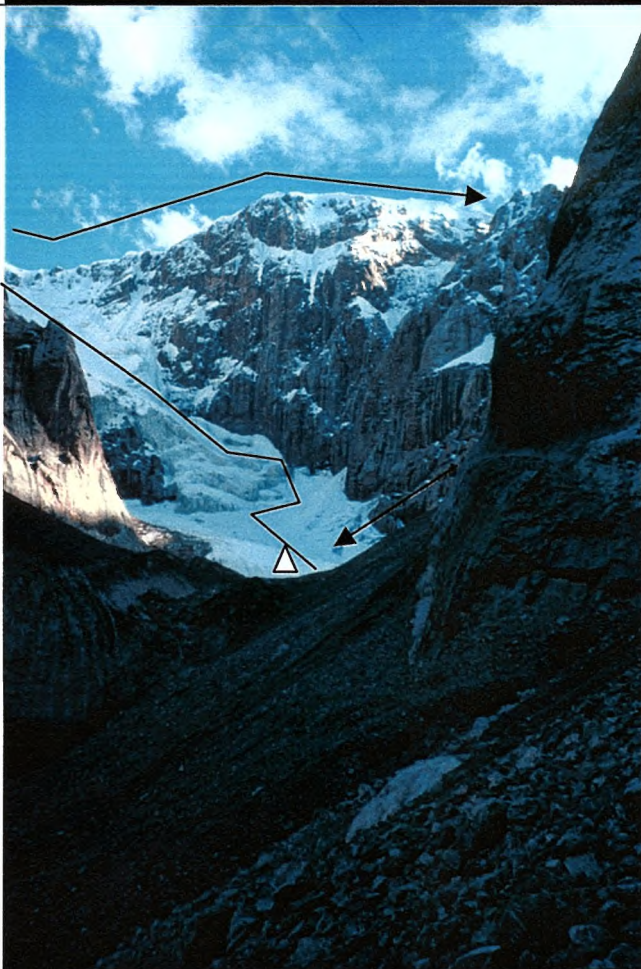


Peak Icarus (FA. Karl Baker, David Gerrard, 2002) showing line of ascent. Photo taken during attempt on a neighbouring peak during the 2001 expedition.



Left, Peak Janus with the ascent route marked and below, the traverse to Peak Centaur with the descent route marked.





Above, view of the main valley on the approach with site of BC and Peak Da Svedanya shown. The ridge was gained by approaching up the valley indicated and ascending to the ridge, left, from a highcamp.

In descent the route was reversed, then the ridge traversed as indicated and a steep glacier descended to regain the camp from the right (arrow).

In the above photo the site of basecamp is also marked.