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Kyrgyzstan 2008-10

This report covers developments taking place in Kyrgyzstan during 2008-10, excluding all peaks of the Pamir Alai. The report has been compiled with the assistance of the Alpinist newswire, American Alpine Journal, BMC International News, Climbing.com news, mountain.ru, and russianclimb.com.

From 20-29 2009 August, Russian climbers Vitaly Gorelik and Gleb Sokolov made the first ascent of a steep 2400m buttress on the N face of Pik Pobeda (7439m). On the route they encountered very hard ice and a shattered band of yellow rock with thin ice, both of which made for slow progress. They reached the top of the buttress on 27 August and continued over Pobeda West (6918m). During the climb, they experienced high winds and temperatures around -17°C.

In August 2010, Alexander Kirikov and Gleb Sokolov made the second ascent of the little-known 1982 *Ukrainian Route* on Khan Tengri (6995m). This follows a logical line up the SW face between the standard *Pogrebetskogo 1931 Route* (F5a) up the west ridge and the 1964 *Romanov Route* up the SSW or *Marble Rib* (F6a). Also in the Central Tien Shan, on 28 August 2008 Denis Urubko, Gennady Durov and Boris Dedeshko completed an F6a, 33-pitch new route alpine style on Eight Women-climbers Peak (6110m). The mountain appears to have been untouched since its first ascent in 1974, which was by the S ridge.

In July 2010, a UK/US party climbed in the almost-unexplored Djangart region, south of Karakol and close to the border with Xinjiang. Virtually the first recorded climbing visit to this range was by the UK team of Ingrid Crossland and Graham Sutton in 2004 (*see AJ 110*). In 2008, a Moscow team climbed Pik 5291m. The 2010 team approached via the border post at Uch-Koshkon and the Kaichi valley, and two days with horses from the usable road-end took them to the Djangart river near the outflow of the Akoguz glacier. From the Djangartynbashi glacier, Dan Clark, Matt Traver, and Mike Royer climbed Pik 4766m (41°37' N, 78°51' E) via a 700m icy couloir on the NW face which they named *Horseman's Horror* (D+, 80°) after discovering their horse team had cut 20m from one of their ropes. They propose naming the summit Pik Howard-Bury, after the British explorer who visited the Tien Shan in the early 20th century. From the same glacier on 27 July, Traver and Royer climbed Pik 5048m (41°35' N, 78°52' E) via the N ridge and NE face at AD+, 650m, proposing the name Peak of Illumination for the summit. From the N2 glacier, they climbed the E face of Pt 5080m (41°39' N, 78°59' E), which they christened Pik Sutherland, via the southernmost couloirs at TD-, 700m, retreating from just below the



169. Pik Howard-Bury (4766m), Djangart region, showing the line of the first ascent via *Horseman's Horror* on the NW face. *(Michael Royer)*

summit due to high winds.

In 2009, Pat Littlejohn, Adrian Nelhams, Vladimir Komissarov and party made a return trip to the Kuilu range, which they first explored in 2000. From a base camp on the N side of the Kuilu river, they made the first ascent of Ak Sakal (5020m) via a snow shoulder at 4500m, of the more technical Bakshi (4434m), and of Pk Koopsyz (4755m).

A number of parties have continued exploration of the central part of the Western Kokshaal-Too. In July 2008, a team of Slovenian mountaineers climbed from the Fersmana glacier, having approached the area via Naryn. At the head of the glacier, Arne Jeglic and Anze Cokl made the first ascent of Pik Zastava (5070m), via *FAT Couloir Direct* (VI/4, 600m) on the N face. They descended to the west with eight abseils on Abalakov anchors. On the unclimbed Pik Byiely (Grand Poohbah, 5697m), Arne Jeglic and Jaka Ortar attempted the S ridge and couloir with difficulties up to V/3-, ending above all notable obstacles but 300m below the summit. Jaka Ortar, Jani Skrinjar and Janez Rutar climbed the face of Pik 5230m, reaching 5017m via a route they called *Missed* (50-60°, 350m). Bor Sumrada and Janez Rutar made the first ascent of Pik 4905m, which they named Pik Plaza, via the west couloir and north ridge (80°/40°-60°, 350m). Two separate groups reached the summit of previously unclimbed Pik Anin (4805m) via the N face. Jeglic and Cokl with Tadej Orazem climbed *Bloody aurikelj* (V/5, 350m), while Ortar and Sumrada, Skrinjar and Rutar climbed *Waterfull*

(IV/4, 300m). The party also made a number of ski descents, including of the lower summit (5130m) of Pik Neizvestniy (5230m), and made the first ascent of Pik 4627m as acclimatisation.

In August 2009, the Polish climbing party of Rafal 'Waldorf' Zajac and Michal Kasprowicz made the first ascent of Pik Granitsa (5370m), taking a line towards the R side of the N face that they named *Nordic Walking* (AI5/5+, M4/5, 800m+). They descended the centre of the face on Abalakov anchors. Earlier, the same party climbed a new ice route *Z-K* (600m, 60-80°) on the NW face of Pik Plaza (4905m). Also in August 2009, from the adjacent Sarychat glacier, the UK party of Martin Jones, Edward Lemon, Gareth Mottram and Jacob Wrathall made five first ascents after a long moraine approach: Pik Lyell (4864m GPS), Pik Thornes (5014m GPS; 4989m on maps), Pik Katherine (4840m GPS), Pik Sylvia (4910m) and Pik Hilarie (4928m). The last two of these link via a snow ridge to still-unclimbed Fers III (5210m), which the team did not have time to attempt. A little further west, in 2008 Pat Littlejohn, Adrian Nelhams, Vladimir Komissarov and team made several first ascents from the Kotur glacier basin. Different groups climbed two variants on the previously unclimbed S ridge of Pik Judith-Brian (4986m) at PD+ and AD+, and made an ascent of adjacent Pik Pyramida (5140m).

The Kyzyl Asker glacier was the venue for a strong Minsk-based party in August-September 2009. The troika Sergei Nilov, Mitya Golovchekno and Sergei Mikhailov attempted a new route on the SE face of Kyzyl Asker (5842m), climbing from 22-29 August and reaching 5560m before retreating in the face of prolonged severe storms. The team of Stas Shabunya, Nikolai Golovchenko, Alexander Lukyanov and Ludmilla Gaidukovka made the first ascent of the summit Babocha (Butterfly, 5300m). Nikolai Bandalet, Sasha Malakhovskiy and Tanya Frolova climbed a new route on Panfilov Division (5280m), finding the summit note left by the Yu. Popenko's first ascent party in 1980. Earlier, on 17 August Bandalet, Nilov, Malakhovski, Golovchenko and Mikhailov reached the summit they named Verniy (Faithful, 5250m by GPS; also known as the Tien Shan Petit Dru or Sabor, meaning Cathedral) via its remote central NW wall at 6B, 700m, 80-90°. The team spent four nights on the wall. Also in the area in August 2009, Dave Gladwin and Tom Stewart made the first ascent of the N ridge of the N summit (c 5500m) of Kyzyl Asker at ED2/3, VI WI3/4 M6+/7, 2000m, from 24-26 August. They descended the unseen W face, and subsequently named the summit Sculptura Chokursu. On the NNE face of the c4800m summit between Piks Zuckerman and Carnovsky, Gladwin and Stewart climbed a new route *Sarah's Daddy* (ED2 WI5, 500m), with some ground in common with *Beefcake* and *Fire and Ice*. Tom Bide and Carl Reilly climbed Pik 5046m via the W face and S ridge at TD/TD+. Bide and Urpu Hapuoja climbed the N ridge of Pik 4863m at AD.

Finally, in August 2010 a party of Polish mountaineers including Tomasz Owerko explored the neighbouring Dzhirnagaktu glacier basin at the far western end of the range. They climbed a number of peaks, including Night



170. North face of Pik Granitsa (5370m), showing the line of first ascent via *Nordic Walking* (solid line) and the abseil descent line (dotted). *(Michael Kasprowicz)*

Butterfly (5056m) from the S, Raven Peak (5370m) via the N face, and Rock Horse (5186m) by the W ridge. The latter summit, and other smaller peaks on the eastern side of the glacier, may have been climbed from the Kyzyl Asker glacier by Kazbek Valiev's 1985 team.

Further west again in the Torugart-Too range, in July-August 2010 John Proctor and Robert Taylor made the first ascent of a peak they named Mur Samir (5008m on Russian map; 5035m by GPS), via the NE ridge at AD. Taylor with Adam Russell then climbed Pk 4820m immediately north of Mustyr (5108m) via the N ridge at PD+, naming it Karyshkyr. Proctor and Russell also attempted Pik 4850m from the Teke-Lutor glacier, finding an AD snow/ice route to a subsidiary summit. Meanwhile, Mark Weeding, Misha Sukhorukov and Glenn Wilks made first ascents of Pik 4470m (40°37'58" N, 74° 31'45" E), Piks 4510m and 4616m (40°39'10" N, 74°28'54" E) along the same ridge, Pik 4318m and Pik 4378m, all accessed from the Karakol river. In the same range in August-September 2010, James Monypenny, Sam Leach and Tom Nichols made a further three first ascents: Toroloc (4870m) via the N face at D, 600m; Free Tibet (4700m), PD; and Peak Abu (4495m), F. They also climbed a new route *Diligent Epiphany* (TD, 900m) taking a couloir on the N face of Mur Samir.

Also in the Naryn region, in 2010 Pat Littlejohn's ISM teams made a

number of new ascents from the S side of the At Bashi range. In August a group climbed from the Mustabbes river, climbing peaks Stefan (4480m, PD), Bashnya (4690m, AD), Darshana (4570m, AD), and Beersh Berkut (4600m). Another group in September from the Kensu valley climbed 11 new peaks/routes including the S ridge of Sumashedshaya (4510m) at D+, the E ridge of Pik Ara (4595m) at AD, the N ridge of Ekilik (4496m) at AD-, and a new route on the highest peak Kensu (4757m) via the S ridge. Active in the same range in August 2009 were Sally Brown, Eddy Barnes, Sari Nevala and Vanessa Wills, climbing from the Kaeyndi valley. The party made probable first ascents of Dove Peak (4311m), Crow's Nest (4155m), Chook Mountain (4063m) and Icarus (4537m), all at PD- / AD+. They also climbed the new ice route *Wills-Brown Couloir* (D, 70-80°) to the ridge between Shark Peak (4249m) and Crocodile Peak (4352m).

An interesting recent development in this part of Kyrgyzstan is alpine rock climbing in several accessible venues, all explored by Pat Littlejohn and Adrian Nelhams with various teams. Prominent amongst these is the Son Kul canyon, which has limestone routes potentially up to 900m, with around 20 routes climbed to date – up to 8 pitches and British E2. Routes reported in 2009 include the N ridge of the main 3450m summit, with steep HVS sections, and *Manaschi Rib* on a smaller subsidiary peak, also at HVS with 14 pitches plus 150m of scrambling. The 600m ridge to the right of this yielded *Friendly Buttress* at V-. Shifting to the unexplored east side of the canyon, over the river, Pat found *Eastern Spine* with some 5a pitches. The hardest route was in another canyon further west – *Striker* (E2 5c), climbed by Pat with John Vlasto. Geoff Hornby and David Barlow also visited the Son Kul area in 2009 and report climbing a 650m HVS, a 100m E2 and a 200m VS.

Littlejohn's parties have also explored two further alpine rock venues. The Nomad Domes area near Arashan has seen a number of 3-pitch routes developed. The Tash Rabat valley north of the At Bashi range also appears to have good potential; the 2010 ISM party climbed five limestone routes up to 500m and HVS standard.

Elsewhere in Kyrgyzstan, in August 2008 Mikhail Kleslo's Czech team made the first ascent of Korumdy East (6384m) in the eastern Zaalay Pamir.

DICK ISHERWOOD

Pakistan 2008-10

Thanks are due to Lindsay Griffin, and to several of the climbers mentioned below, for assistance with these notes.

2008

One of the most notable ascents in Pakistan during 2008 was an alpine-style new route on the Rakhiot (NW) Face of **Nanga Parbat**. Italians Simon Kehrer, Walter Nones and Karl Unterkircher first acclimatised by climbing two subsidiary peaks on the NE ridge of **Chongra South** (6448m) and **Chongra Main** (6824m), the latter via a new route to make only the second ascent of the mountain. They then embarked on the Rakhiot Face by a line up its centre below the Silver Plateau. After some steep ice climbing they reached a snow shelf at 6300m where Unterkircher, searching for a tent site, fell 15m into a crevasse carrying the party's only rope and satellite phone in his sac.(How many of us have come close to doing this?) His companions found him dead, and managed to retrieve the rope and phone, though not his body. As they were feeling relatively good themselves, they decided, after a conversation with Unterkircher's agent in Italy, to continue. They reached the Silver Plateau at 7500m and descended the 1953 Buhl route, with some variations, partly on short skis, which they had carried up the climb. They were eventually rescued by helicopter from 5400m. Their 3000m route was graded IV-V, M4+, with ice up to 70-80°, and was named for Unterkircher, a very experienced Himalayan and Karakoram climber.

On **K2**, the weather in July was unusually bad so expeditions were backed up and things became crowded on the Abruzzi Spur route above the Shoulder, with no less than 10 groups hoping to reach the summit at the same time. There seems to have been some confusion over the fixing of ropes up to and through the Bottleneck, largely done by Sherpas and high-altitude Pakistani porters, but in the end 18 climbers from six parties reached the summit on 1 August. An avalanche then removed most of the fixed rope. Several people died in falls and another sérac fall claimed four more. In all 11 climbers were killed, the worst year for fatalities on K2 since 1986, when 13 died.

The Russians Valerie Babanov and Viktor Afanasiev climbed new routes on both **Broad Peak** and **Hidden Peak**. Their route on Broad Peak followed a steep buttress well to the left of the original route, through a steep sérac barrier at around 7000m, and traversed to join the original route in its upper part. Their climb on the SW face of Hidden Peak took a new