



On the ascent of Koh-e-Rank, with the Tajik Pamir in the distance. (Pat Deavoll)

In the big Pamir, Americans Ben Mitchell, Cecelia Mortenson, Dylan Taylor and Danny Uhlmann attempted ascents and ski descents during May. Their venue was the **Koh-e-Wakhan**, where they accessed the mountains in a two-day walk up the Issik valley above the village of Ptukh. They were turned back 100m below the summit of **Koh-e-Seh Aspe Safed East** (6040m) in white-out and heavy snow, and after climbing a striking 1000m couloir towards the left side of the south-west face of **Koh-e-Pamir** (6320m/6288m), searched in vain for a safe line up the north-east ridge to the summit. Their final attempt was on an aesthetic-looking un-named 5538m peak on the ridge east of **Koh-e-Zemestan** (6092m), but once again rotten snow stopped them, this time only 50m below the top of the north-east face. There are several fine unclimbed 6000m peaks in this region, including the main summits of Seh Aspe Safed and Zemestan. Koh-e-Pamir was first climbed in 1971 by guidebook author Carlo Pinelli.

DICK ISHERWOOD

Pakistan 2012

Dick completed these notes shortly before his death in February 2013. His obituary appears on pages 392-396.

Perhaps the most significant event in Pakistan in 2012 was the first complete ascent of the Mazeno Ridge on **Nanga Parbat** by the British climbers Sandy Allan and Rick Allen, supported by Cathy O'Dowd and Sherpas Lhakpa Nuru, Lhakpa Rangdu and Lhakpa Zarok. This ridge, nine kilometres long with eight subsidiary summits, arguably the longest ridge on any 8000m peak, had been the subject of many attempts over the years, including three by Doug Scott.

They left basecamp on 2 July and spent 11 nights on the mountain, traversing the complete Mazeno Ridge to a bivvi at 7160m above the Mazeno Gap. From there on the 11 July all the team began a summit attempt, with Lhakpa Nuru and O'Dowd turning back at round 7am and returning to the bivvi camp at 7160m. The other four pushed on but were unable to reach the summit by their chosen line and reached around 7650m before giving up and returning to the bivvi camp by darkness. On 13 July, the Sherpas and O'Dowd, all debilitated, descended via a line based roughly on the Schell route and arrived at the foot of the mountain on the evening of 15 July. Sandy and Rick rested one day at the 7160m bivvi on 13 July and began another summit attempt on the morning of the 14th, where they overnighted in a snow cave at 7720m. They reached the summit of Nanga Parbat on 15 July at 6.12pm and returned to their snow cave by darkness. Over the next three days they descended the Diamir face, which had been unclimbed for two years, and arrived safely at the Diamir basecamp on the morning of 18 July. The pair rated the route IV/4 and Alpine ED – it clearly justified the latter.

Adam Bielecki and Janusz Golab of Poland made the first winter ascent of **Gasherbrum I** (8068m) on 9 March, by the Japanese Couloir, above the Gasherbrum La. Three other climbers, Austrian, Swiss and Pakistani, disappeared in high winds only 250m below the summit on the same day. They were seen by Bielecki and Golab on their descent, but an extensive search by other climbers and two military helicopters failed to find them.

A Russian attempt to make the first winter ascent of **K2** was abandoned in early February when Vitaly Gorelik died, apparently of heart failure, at basecamp. Gorelik and partners Valery Shamalo and Nicholas Totmyanin had made it to a highpoint of 7200m on the SSE spur (the Abruzzi Ridge). Gorelik was a well-known high altitude climber who had reached the summit of K2 in 2007 with the large Russian expedition that made the first ascent of the west face.



Will Sim with K7 (directly behind); Link Sar on the right. (Jonathan Griffith)

Denis Urubko and Simone Moro attempted the first winter ascent of **Nanga Parbat** by a variant of the *Kinshofer Route* on the Diamir Face, but were forced to retreat from around 6600m in early February due to heavy new snow and very high winds.

American climbers Kyle Dempster and Hayden Kennedy had a productive summer in the Karakoram. On the east face of **K7** (6934m) in the Charakusa valley, they completed an 1800m steep mixed new route in a 49-hour push with Slovenian Urban Novak, a line they had attempted in 2011. They estimated the standard at M6/AI5. Dempster, Kennedy and Josh Wharton then climbed the south face of the **Ogre** (7285m), a line attempted by a French party in 2011 and involving a long traverse on very poor rock to reach the upper south-west ridge. This was a 2700m route which they graded M6, 5.9, AI3.

Frenchmen Mathieu Maynadier, Bletton Antoine, Pierre Labbre and Sebastien successfully climbed a new line up the south-west face of **Latok II** (7108m), between 2 and 5 June at a standard of M5, ED-. This was the fifth route up the peak.

Britons Jon Griffith and Will Sim spent almost six weeks in the Charakusa valley, attempting the north face of **Link Sar** (7041m). They reached around 6200m on this so far unclimbed peak between K7 and K6. They made an ascent of **Sulu Peak** (6050m), north-west of K7 West, by its own north-west ridge, a route of around AD+ which had almost certainly been climbed before.

Russians Sergey Nilov, Dmitry Golovchenko, and Alexander Lange successfully climbed a difficult new route up the north-east buttress of the **Mustagh Tower** over 17 days, fixing very little rope. They descended by a largely snow and ice line to the west of their ascent route, making it back to their base camp in 24 hours from the summit, with no food or fuel left.

Rick Allen's report of the Mazeno Ridge climb appears on page 3 and the Polish Gasherbrum I winter ascent report is on page 15.

HARISH KAPADIA

India 2011-12

India 2011

A total of 40 foreign climbing expeditions visited India in 2011 of which 21 were to easy and routine peaks. Of the total 57 Indian expeditions about a third were of an order that warrants inclusion here.

SIKKIM

Zemu Gap (5861m) stands out as a sharp V-shaped notch east of Kangchenjunga before it links up with Simvu. John Hunt and Bill Tilman are among those who have prospected here. While there have been several ascents, including a complete crossing of the Zemu Gap from the north, there remained uncertainty as to whether this cleft had been ascended from the south. Anindya Mukherjee and Thendup Sherpa successfully answered this challenge in December 2011, descending from the Guicha La to the Tongshoyang valley before tackling the icefalls below the Gap¹.

UTTARAKHAND

A Swiss team led by Roger Schäli attempted the **Arwa Spire (6193m)** via the steep north face in May. All four members reached 5700m, but due to bad weather could proceed no further. Americans Conrad Anker, Jimmy Chin and Renan Ozturk climbed **Meru 'Shark's Fin' (6450m)** in the Gangotri glacier area. They spent 11 nights in bivouacs on the climb, reaching the summit on 2 October. On **Shivling (6543m)** in early October, an Anglo-Australian team led by Simon Yates reached 6000m on the traditional route but avalanches forced a retreat.

An 18-strong team from the Indo-Tibet Border Police, led by Vishal Anand, was successful on **Rajrambha (6539m)**, near the Panch Chuli group. After establishing a base and advance base camp they made two more camps. Following the east ridge, eight climbers reached the summit on 13 June and another 10 on the 14th.

Bhartekhunta (6578m): An IMF team proceeded from the Gangotri glacier at Gaumukh to make a base camp at Khada Pathar on left bank of the glacier. Two further camps took them to the foot of the east face of Kirti Stambh. Starting at midnight on 29 May, they climbed the east slopes of Bhartekhunta; in six hours team leader Kavita Burathoki, Soni Shah, Shanti Rai, Pooja Jangam and Ribanish Rympei reached the top with guides Chandra Bahadur and Pratham Singh Powar.

Nilkanth (6597m): A seven-member IMF team led by Ram Singh Salthia

1. Mukherjee A. 'Zemu Gap From The South', *AJ116*, 114-123 (2012)