

Muz-Tok (5,066m) lies at the head of the Jiptek Valley on the Kyrgyz-Tajikistan border. The southwest ridge, which forms the right skyline, has been climbed, but the north face is virgin. *Graham Zimmerman*



An unnamed and unclimbed peak of ca 5,000m, north of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border on the west side of the Schurovkova Glacier. It lies just west of Pt. 4,050m on the Soviet Military Map, toward the head of the Jiptek Valley. *Graham Zimmerman*

we spent two days carrying our 500 kg of equipment to a base camp at 4,050m on the moraines of the East Kyzylsu (Kyzilsy) Glacier, below the northern flanks of Kurumdy. No porters, no donkeys, just human power—it helped with acclimatization. After an initial snowfall, the weather improved over the next 10 days until another spell of bad weather hit the area. By that time we were on our way out. Fixing the initial section of Kurumdy East's north rib, we found the shattered crest had many dangerously loose blocks. Above, a section of snow-covered scree led to a flat area on the rib at 4,900m, where we placed Camp 1. (By the time we finished the route, the snow had melted to its underlying ice sheet, making the climbing much more serious.) Above Camp 1 the ridge was almost horizontal, snowy and narrow, until it reached the crux, a one-pitch, 80° wall of ice and frozen rubble covered with light powder. Above, a 150-meter section of ridge, made of the same material, continued to a large cornice that provided

hardened sufficiently to be climbable and we simul-climbed 300–400 meters to steeper ground, where we pitched. A crevasse one pitch below the ridge proved one of the route's cruxes, capping a wonderful climb.

Arriving on the crest of the east ridge, we were greeted by the large storm clouds. Knowing from Paul that from this point the summit was one to two hours of easy walking, we decided to forgo it and head down. This proved to be a good decision, as the descent of the south face proved tricky, with downclimbing on poor, slabby rock, with no rappel anchors available. We made the bottom of the face just as snow began to fly. We named the route *Stegosaurus Spur* (1,400m, V 5.10 AI4 M4).

In the remaining 10 days weather thwarted further attempts. We left knowing that the Jiptek holds many excellent possibilities for technical first ascents, generally on steep ice. We give huge thanks to the New Zealand Alpine Club and the Mount Everest Foundation for their support, without which our trip would not have been possible.

GRAHAM ZIMMERMAN, AAC and NZAC

PAMIR

Zaalayskiy Range, Kurumdy East, north rib. Our team of 11 Czech and Slovak climbers approached the Eastern Zaalayskiy Range by six-wheel-drive from the settlement of Sary Tash, on the rough Osh-Kashgar road near the Tajik border. When we could drive no further,

just enough room for Camp 2 (5,200m). All this section was fixed.

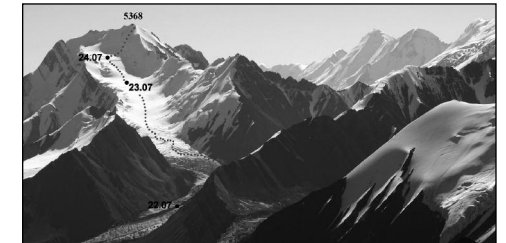
Above Camp 2 we climbed alpine style at UIAA III–IV on generally mixed ground, with only a few good protection points on each pitch. We dug a site for one tent, Camp 3, into a steep snow bank at 5,700m; this served the summit team for two nights. On August 2 at 3 p.m., after plowing through knee-deep snow, Jan Dolezal and Tomas Ehler reached the 6,384m summit of Kurumdy East, which according to Russian information sources was the highest unclimbed peak in the Pamir [Editor's Note: Kurumdy I, the highest summit in the range, at 6,613m, was first climbed in 1932 by Timashev and party].

MICHAL KLESLO, *Alpine Club TATRAN HAVIROV, Czech Republic*

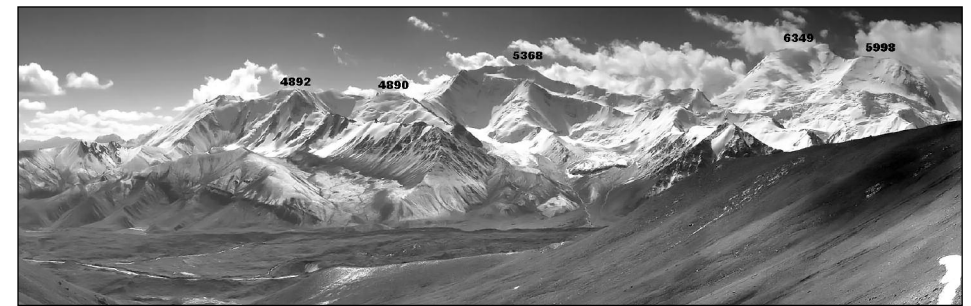
Eastern Zaalayskiy Range, Pik Alexander Gybaev. On July 24, 2008, a group of climbers associated with the Moscow Aviation Institute made the first ascent of Pik 5,368m in the Eastern Zaalayskiy Range. This peak is the highest point of a sub-range branching north from Zarya Vostoka (6,349m, first ascent 2000, see *AAJ 2001*), and is situated between the Nura and East Kyzylsu (Kyzilsy) glaciers. From the summit there is a fine view, particularly toward the



The northern flanks of the Kurumdy group, the highest peaks in the Zaalayskiy Range. The north rib of Kurumdy East, climbed by the Czech-Slovak expedition to make the first ascent of the mountain, is marked (R). The peak marked Kurumdy West (Chorku) is actually Kurumdy West (6,564m); Pik Chorku (6,283m) is off picture to the right. *Michal Kleslo*



Pik Alexander Gybaev (5,368m) from the west, showing the location and dates of the three camps used during the alpine-style first ascent. The small scree summit left of the approach glacier is Pik Molly (4,748m). *Dmitry Shapovalov*



Looking southeast into part of the Eastern Zaalayskiy Range. Pik 5,368m is Alexander Gybaev, climbed in 2008. The ridge falling from the summit toward Pt 4,890m was attempted by Spanish to 5,000m in 2006. They refer to 5,368m as Pik Tarka (see *AAJ 2006*). Pik 6,349m is Zarya Vostoka (a.k.a. Eastern Sunrise), first climbed in 2000 via the north face. Other marked peaks are unclimbed. *Dmitry Shapovalov*

Alay Valley. Despite the feeling of visiting a relatively remote location, almost every night we could see a stream of lights in the Alay: trucks carrying goods from China and returning with scrap metal.

After acclimatizing on straightforward Pik 4,713m, situated above the true left bank of the East Kyzylsu, our team approached Pik 5,368m from the northwest, following the first left (eastern) fork of the East Kyzylsu Glacier. It took us two days to get to the base of the steep, icy, northwest face of Pik 5,368m, from where only four hours were needed to reach the summit. From our top camp we snowshoed to the bergshrund, and then climbed five pitches of 50° ice straight to the snowy summit ridge. Eight of us reached the summit: D. Komarov, A. Lebedev (leader), Y. Maximovich, A. Timoshenkov, O. Yanchevskiy, A. Zharov, I. Zhdanov, and I. We rappelled the ascent route. With agreement from his family and Kyrgyz authorities, we named the peak after Alexander Gybaev, the first ascensionist of nearby Kurumdy Sharqi I (6,235m), II (6,192m), and III (6,086m), all in 2001, who disappeared in July 2004 on K2.

DMITRY SHAPOVALOV, AAC

TIEN SHAN — TORUGART-TOO

Jumar Tau and Bar Tau; peaks east of Naryn, Naryn Tau. With Dave Molesworth and Misha Sukhorukov I made my second visit to Kyrgyzstan's mountains, this time exploring the Torugart-too (Khrebet Torugart), which lies close to the Torugart Pass into China. Discovering that Pat Littlejohn's ISM expedition had visited the area in 2007, we moved our primary goal away from the highest peaks climbed by ISM (*AAJ 2008*), and focused on the western extension of the range, which we believe was previously unvisited by mountaineers.



The northern flanks of the western extension of the Torugart-too, seen in spring. (A) Bar Tau (4,720m) and (B) Jumar Tau (4,743m). This part of the range had not been visited by mountaineers until 2008. *Mark Weeding*

We acclimatized in the At Bashi range, which still has a myriad of hard, unclimbed peaks of ca 4,800m. We then drove off-road for more than 30km across a huge flood plain at 3,200m; extracting Misha's Lada Niva from numerous snow-filled drainage channels proved some of the hardest work of the trip. An access valley took us to a hunting lodge, where visitors pay \$25,000 to shoot Marco Polo sheep. The caretakers said we were the first climbers they had seen. We selected two distinctive peaks above, our first attempt failing on a long pinnacled ridge. We turned to the next peak west and climbed it via an easy plod. There was no evidence of it having been climbed previously, and we named it after our host at the lodge, Jumar Tau (4,743m altimeter reading; N 74°49'40", E 40°32'12" Google Earth coordinates). For this our host rewarded us with a cow-dung-fired sauna.

We returned to the first peak and climbed through a glacial bowl to reach the west ridge, which gave a fine route through tottering towers, up a steep couloir, and steep scrambling on shattered rock. The summit, marked as 4,743m on the Soviet map, we named after the poor beasts hunted below, which I can only hope are protected in some measure by the exorbitant value people place on shooting them: Bar (Marco Polo) Tau (4,720m altimeter; N 74°47'45" E 40°32'24" Google Earth).

We moved on to peaks nearer Naryn, for no better reason than we fancied a couple of beers. Again, there is no record of ascents east of town. After driving for an hour, we came to a track leading into an idyllic wooded valley. At its head we were spoiled with choices, with many 4,400–4,500m peaks visible. Our first foray misfired on an impossible-looking ridge, but Misha and I returned next day to what appeared to be the highest peak in the area. We climbed it via the east ridge, which while not technically difficult, was steep, with loose, avalanche-prone snow. From the top it was apparent that the map was highly inaccurate, both in terms of height and the location of surrounding mountains, which is unusual for the Soviet Military series. My altimeter read 4,505m at the summit. This corresponds with the highest peak marked on the Soviet map, but in the wrong place. An American military map puts the high point at 4,620m, and Google Earth at 4,200m. We named it Naryn Tau (ca 4,500m; N 76°27'30", E 41°21'00" Google Earth). It is the highest summit at the head of the Kandy valley, which rises from the village of Imeni Kalinina.

We visited these areas in late April–early May and experienced Scottish spring conditions: four seasons every day and heavy snowfall once a week. We had assumed it would freeze every night above 3,500m, but it didn't. However, this was another great trip to a remote, enchanted land. If you go with a local mountaineer—not as qualified guide but as companion and fixer—you'll have a great time.

MARK WEEDING, U.K.

WESTERN KOKSHAAL-TOO

Unnamed valley, Pik Margesson, Pik St. George, Shining Tor, Pik Nantucket, Pik Heliya, Pik Jessica and Jeremy, Pik Stapledon, Pik Sally; Pik 4,705m, attempt. In August David Jorden, Chris Lloyd, Tom Sutherland, Ben Sutton, and I traveled to Kyrgyzstan to climb in the eastern Borkoldoy. However, on arrival in the Ak Sai Valley we discovered that the track had been damaged by floods, and we could not get close enough. Our backup plan, exploring the Djangidjel Range, also proved impossible; we were stopped at the Kubyurgy Pass by Russian hunters barring entry into the valley. We settled on a cirque in the Western Kokshaal-Too, 14km west of Kyzyl Asker. This was a fortuitous find, and we made several first ascents.

On August 23 we established base camp at 3,500m near the head of the valley that is four main valleys west of Kyzyl Asker, rising to the Chinese border (N 41°06'24.9" E 77°10'55.1", GR 835544 on the Soviet Military map). Our first summit was Pik Margesson (4,526m) on the western side of the valley. Shattered rock made bypassing gendarmes tricky (PD+). The peak just to the southeast of base camp, named Pik St. George (4,496m), was straightforward (F+).

We then moved up valley to establish an advance camp on the eastern side of the cirque. From here we climbed Shining Tor (4,607m, F) from the south and Pik Nantucket (4,600m, PD). On Pik Heliya (4,660m, PD) we scrambled up a scree face onto the northeast ridge near the summit. We attempted Pik 4,705m, which dominates the head of the valley, but the snow—which fell frequently and never consolidated—did not allow us to cross the large crevasse field at the base. However, from the bowl below Pik Heliya, Pik Jessica and Jeremy (4,600m) and Pik Stapledon (4,600m) proved relatively accessible (both PD-). The highest peak in the valley, Pik Sally (4,818m), dominated the eastern rim. We climbed it via a direct route from the cwm immediately east, reaching the northeast ridge just below the summit (PD). Weather and rock were limiting factors on our trip. We had several heavy snowfalls with minimal consolidation. The rock, a finely layered and shattered siltstone, was extremely poor; narrow crests were highly unstable.