

Climbing the west ridge of Pik Alpinistka (4,959m, D) in the Central Borkoldoy during the first ascent. Pat Littlejohn

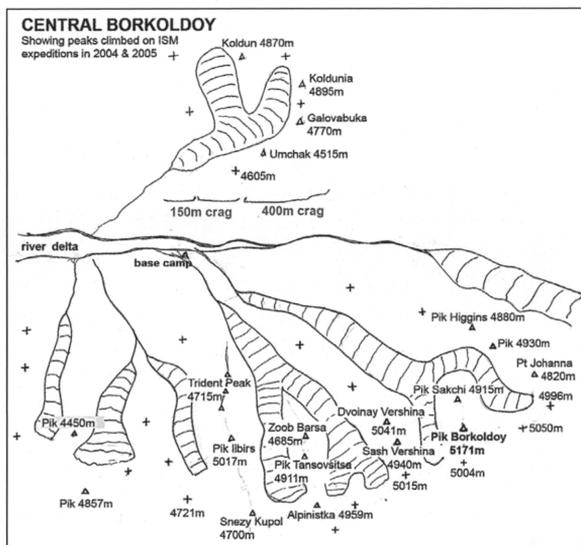
river delta quickly, then drive easily for another 20km to base camp at 3,570m. From there glaciers radiate like spokes of a wheel, approximately eight being within easy walking distance. As each is surrounded by great peaks, this is an exceptional expedition venue.

We established advanced base at 4,240m on Ilbirs Glacier West, from where Nelhams, Samuels, and Thompson climbed the north ridge of the big peak on the left (east) side of the glacier, Pik Tansovsitsa (4,911m, Alpine AD). Higher up the same glacier Box, Bruton, Whitmore and I made several attempts and then finally succeeded on the west ridge of Alpinistka (4,959m; D).

After a spell of rock climbing on the 150m limestone crag above base camp, Nelhams, Kemble, Komissarov, Samuels, and Thompson turned their attention to the previously untouched “Hid-

Central Borkoldoy, Pik Tansovsitsa, north ridge; Alpinistka, west ridge; Pik Koldunia, south ridge; “Pik Borkoldoy,” south ridge. The central area of the Borkoldoy Range in southeast Kyrgyzstan is a collection of superb alpine peaks, which are well defended on every side by chains of slightly lower mountains. While it has been visited by a few trekking groups in recent years, the only known mountaineering expeditions have been a Russian attempt on the highest peak (5,171m) in 2003 and our party from the International School of Mountaineering (ISM) in 2004.

ISM returned in September 2005, the team comprising Ben Box, James Bruton, Peter Kemble, Mark Samuels, Bill Thompson, and Dr. Jane Whitmore, with guides Vladimir Komissarov, Adrian Nelhams, and I. In 2004 we had to work hard to re-open an old geologists’ track in order to access the area by 6WD vehicle. This year we were pleased to find our work intact and were able to reach the broad



den Glacier” north of base camp. Over the following days they climbed four fine peaks, the highest and most difficult being Pik Koldunia (4,895m), by the south ridge, at AD+.

The main objective for my team was Pik 5,171m, on which Box, Bruton, and I had been turned back the previous year at 5,000m on the north ridge (*AAJ 2005* p. 339-340). This year, in better snow conditions, we were able to try the snowy northeast flank, picking the safest line through big seracs. We reached the south ridge at 5,000m and followed it on perfect névé to the summit. Though very arduous, the route was technically straightforward at PD+. We gave the peak the name “Pik Borkoldoy,” as it is the highest in the range. Clear weather on the summit gave stunning views of the Western Kokshaal-Too and unexplored peaks in the eastern sector of the Borkoldoy, some of which look very inviting.

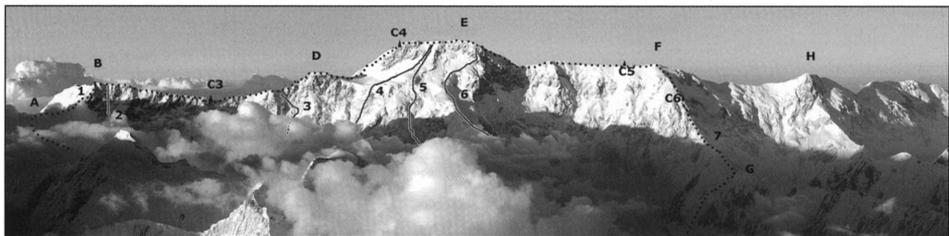
The trip was rounded off with a brief stay at Lake Issyk-Kul, where the swimming was still pleasant in late September, and our stone-walled hotel gave good training for the keen rock climbers in the team.

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TIEN SHAN

Pik Pobeda, first solo traverse. From August 16-23 Gleb Solokov made the first solo traverse of Pik Pobeda (7,439m) from the Chon-Toren Pass in the east to the Dikiy Pass in the west. [This traverse was first completed in 1970 by Riabukhin’s expedition—Ed.] Solokov had previously attempted this traverse on several occasions. In addition, in 1993 he made a high-speed solo ascent of the mountain, via the Standard Route from the Zvezdochka (Little Star) Glacier to the summit and back again, in a record roundtrip of 20 hours, a feat that has not been attempted since. In 2003, as leader of a large team, he made a difficult (6B) new 2,000m route towards the left side of the north face, reaching the east ridge close to Pik Armenia (7,100m) before traversing the main summit.

In the summer of 2005 the weather was generally bad, with frequent heavy snowfall. It was only in mid-August, when conditions started to improve, that teams began major ascents. Sokolov first acclimatized with an ascent (his 20th) of Khan Tengri, spending three



The massive north flank of Pik Pobeda seen from Khan Tengri. (A) Chon-Toren Pass, (B) Pobeda East (ca. 7,050m), (D) Pik Armenia (7,100m), (E) Pobeda Main Summit (7,439m), (F) Pik Pavel Pshavel (Pobeda West, 6,918m), (G) Dikiy Pass (5,800m), (H) Pik Nehru (6,742m: first climbed by Ivanov’s expedition in 1970). (1) East Ridge (5B/6A, Erokhin, 1958), (2) Pobeda East, north face (6A/6B, Khrischaty, 1984), (3) Pik Armenia, north face (6B, Sokolov, 2003), (4) Pobeda, northeast face (5B, Zuravliov, 1990), (5) Original Route (5B, Abalakov, 1956), (6) North face (5B, Smirnov, 1986), (7) Standard Route (north spur to west ridge, 5B, Medzmariashvili, 1961). Gleb Sokolov made the first solo east-to-west traverse of the mountain in 2005 via routes 1 and 7. The skyline ridge is the border between Kyrgyzstan and China; C3, C4, C5 and C6 mark Sokolov’s third to sixth bivouac sites on the mountain. Anna Piunova and www.mountain.ru