

were rewarded with an amazing sight: snow leopard tracks crossing the col! Some of these even continued to the summit. We have seen snow leopard tracks on just one other expedition. That settled the name for the first human ascent of the peak: Pik Bars, 4,800m (*bars* is Kyrgyz for “snow leopard”).

The priority now was to get down to BC and do something with Pete, who had recovered somewhat but had now suffered a retinal hemorrhage in one eye, causing a disconcerting blind spot. Despite this he had explored the glacier above BC and found a possible route up the big peak at the head of it. So in the morning we persuaded Natasha, our cook, to make a very early breakfast, and by 6 a.m. Pete, Max, Barney, and I were heading for the peak we later named Pik Kumay, 4,830m. It was a great effort by Pete. The summit was covered in footprints, which baffled us until we saw what had made them: a massive vulture!

There were wonderful-looking limestone crags above base camp, and we debated staying to climb for a day, but the lure of the next area, At Bashi, proved too strong and we were soon on the road again. [The At Bashi report is below—Ed.]

A list of first ascents in the Torugart-Too made by Max Gough, Helen Griffin, Barney Harford, Leif Iversen, Vladimir Komissarov, Pat Littlejohn, and Peter Mounsey:

Pik Shumkar (Falcon, 4,925m): northwest flank to north col, ridge to summit, PD, Iversen-Komissarov.

Pik Helen (4,710m): snow/ice couloir on west side to south col, steep couloir up buttress to summit, AD+, Gough-Griffin-Harford-Littlejohn.

Mustyr (Peak of the Snow Pasture, 5,108m): long couloir on west side to base of south ridge of south summit, long traverse north at ca 4,800m to snow/ice, AD, Harford-Littlejohn.

Pik Bars (Snow Leopard, 4,800m): to northeast col from Teke-Lutor Glacier, then snow/ice slope to easy summit ridge, PD+, Griffin-Komissarov-Littlejohn.

Pik Kumay (Vulture, 4,830m): from Ayutor gain northwest col, then snow ridge to first rock summit, second (highest) summit gained with more difficulty, PD (first summit), AD+ (second summit), Gough-Harford-Littlejohn-Mounsey.

PAT LITTLEJOHN, *Alpine Club*

Little Sister (4,206m), Middle Sister (4,341m), Big Sister (4,492m), Zeus (4,747m), Daisy (4,239m), Snow King (4,580m), first ascents; Rock Dragon (4,597m), attempt. Andy Barret from the U.K. and I from Cyprus arrived in Kyrgyzstan on September 23, hoping to explore the far west corner of the Western Kokshaal-Too Range, a region that climbers had not visited. But when we meet with our logistics provider in Bishkek (ITMC), we learned that there was no way to know if we would find horses when we reached the end of the 4x4 road, three days' walk from the valley we wanted to visit.

We spoke with Vladimir Komissarov, the president the Federation of Alpinism and Rock Climbing of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as being president of the Association of the Central Asia Tour Operators. He had just returned from the first expedition to climb in Torugart-Too, on the border with China [see Pat Littlejohn's report, above]. He gave us lots of useful information about this range. We didn't want to spend too much of our limited time carrying gear to base camp, so we changed our plans to Torugart, with its easier approach.

Next morning, armed with an old Russian map (the only map of the area) that we borrowed from Vladimir, we loaded our powerful Russian 4x4 van with loads of food, gear, and



Base camp in the Torugart, with Mustyr on the left and mostly unnamed peaks. *Constantinos Andreou*



Looking from the west, from left to right: Little Sister (4,206m), Middle Sister (4,341m), and Big Sister (4,747m), all climbed in October. *Constantinos Andreou*

vodka, and left the capital with our good driver Alexander. After 30 minutes of driving we had our first breakdown, but Alexander didn't look worried, repaired the van in an hour, and had us on the move again. After three days and a cocktail of breakdowns, off-road driving, river crossings, dust, bad weather, and a big navigation exercise, we drove our 4x4 van up to 3,652m in a big valley on the north side of the range, with beautiful views of the Torugart peaks.

The weather was bad the next day, so we took the opportunity to acclimatize and plan our climbs for the next few days. Although the range is 35km long, only the glaciers in the center of the range had been explored by the previous expedition. This left the east and west sides untouched, with lots of unnamed and unclimbed summits to have a go at. Next morning we woke to a perfect blue sky. We grabbed our gear and walked up a peak close to BC on the east side of the valley. We went up the lower west slopes to get on the north ridge, which was a nice snow-covered ridge (up to 40°) running down from the summit of Peak 4,206m, which we named Little Sister (PD).

Full of energy from our first success, we made an attempt the next day on the north face of Peak 4,597m, west of BC, but we underestimated the difficulties, and after reaching 4,200m, turned back, as the climbing was getting harder than what we were ready for.

On October 1 we did a fast traverse of two peaks southeast of base camp. After crossing the frozen river on the east side of the valley, we climbed the west face of the first one, which was hard work in deep snow (40°). We reached the end of the north ridge that runs between



The north face of Rock Dragon (4,597m), which was attempted twice, reaching the 4,300m level on the north ridge. *Constantinos Andreou*

Little Sister and this peak. From this point we climbed the last rock section to the 4,341m summit of Middle Sister (AD). Despite clouds and wind, we then raced over to the summit of peak 4,467m, Big Sister (AD-).

After a much-needed rest day, on October 3 we walked to an unnamed dry glacier southwest of BC. On the east side of the glacier we discovered rocky peaks with amazing limestone formations, and at the head we found a beautiful snow-

covered mountain that was waiting to be climbed. We started up a big 40°–50° gully running down the north ridge, and then worked our way up rock, snow, and ice, to 50°, to the summit of 4,747m Peak Zeus (AD). From this summit we had views west and south that unveiled a sea of unclimbed peaks.

A big storm consumed the next three days. During the storm we spent most of our time holding up our cheap Chinese tent, using our bodies to stop it from breaking in the strong winds. On the afternoon of October 6 the weather improved, and Andy left tent-holding duties to me, while he made a fast ascent of a 4,239m mountain close to camp that he named Daisy (F).

The next day the weather improved, and we went east into a big unnamed valley and then south into a small valley, with Little Sister and Middle Sister on the west side and Big Sister at the south end. On the east side was a nice snow peak with a long north ridge. We found a big gully that took us to 4,000m on the ridge, which we followed to the summit of Snow King, 4,580m (PD). From the top we had views east into an unnamed valley that was full of superb snow peaks.

On October 8 we made another attempt on the 4,597m peak looming over base camp, which by now we had named Rock Dragon. This time we attempted the north ridge. A 40° gully led us to the ridge at 4,100m. We tried to climb the ridge to the summit, but bad limestone got worse as we moved higher. The climbing was not hard (VD-S), but loose and unprotectable. We reached 4,300m, before deciding that the remaining ridge was too dangerous. We then said bye-bye to the amazing Torugart Range and left for the bars and cuisine of Bishkek.

CONSTANTINOS ANDREOU, *Cyprus*

AT BASHI

Topoz (Yak, 4,600m), Inek (4,560m), first ascents. On the drive from the Torugart-Too [see Littlejohn report, above] to At Bashi, we visited one of the most important historic sites in Kyrgyzstan: the Tash Rabat Caravanserai, a fortified “castle” high in the mountains. I was surprised to discover that it is located beside the most spectacular cliffs (up to 400m) I have yet seen at