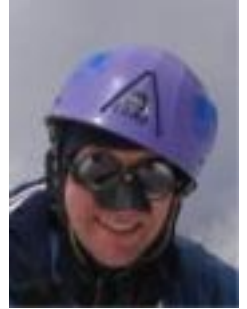


# THE MEMBERS OF The Zaalayskiy Ridge Expedition 2004

**Ken Findlay;** D.O.B. 20/01/57 (46); College Lecturer; British; Experience 9 Expeditions to the greater ranges including Pakistan, Bolivia, Tien Shan, Peru, Greenland, Argentina and Mongolia. These expeditions have included First ascents and many First British ascents. 18 Alpine seasons 10 Scottish Winter seasons Member of the FRCC, Alpine Club and the Leeds MC.



**Paul Hudson,** 8/2/1949 (54), Art Teacher, Leeds; seven expeditions to remote mountain areas, first ascents in Pakistan, Tien Shan, Peru, - first UK ascents in Bolivia, Mongolia. Alps-Jungfrau via the Silberhorn; FRCC, AC, LMC, FRGS

**Susan L. Jensen;** 31/12/1967 (36) ; Data analyst-Royal Bank of Scotland. American,(residing in the UK since 1998 ~ Edinburgh). Rock climbing since 2000, leading up to HVS. One Scottish winter season climbing (2002-3) and Ice climbing leading up to grade III. One Alpine season (2003), Monte Rosa by the Dufourspitz and the SE Ridge of the Zinal Rothorn; trekking in Slovenia's Julian Alps. JSMC, LMC FRCC



**Paul Lyons;** 25/10/73 (30); Software Engineer; British; Experience 2 Scottish Winters, 3 Alpine Seasons, with ascents of Tour Ronde, Castor, Pollux, Weissmies; Climbing to HVS; Leeds MC

**Will Parsons;** DOB 15/7/1975 (28); Computer Systems Administrator -University of Leeds; British; Experience- 4 Alpine seasons since 1998 including: Alphubel via SE ridge, Weissmies, Aig du Tour. Attempts on Aig du Tacul, Aig D'Argentier, Aig du Moine. Rock climbing since 1995. Leading Severe; 0Leeds MC

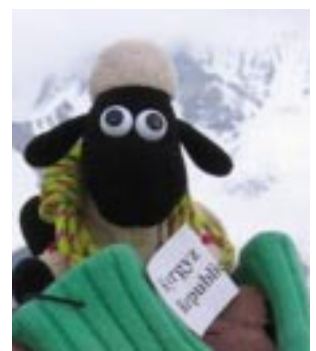


**Ian Arnold;** 02/10/1956 (47) ; British; Schoolteacher; 2004 Aconcagua [Horcones route], 1998 Kanchenjunga via NW face reached 7000m, Expeditions to Karakoram to unclimbed 6000m peaks [2000, 1995, 1992, 1989]. 3 Expeditions to Nepalese trekking peaks [2001, 1988, 1986], Ascent of Diamond Couloir and Ice window routes on Mt. Kenya. [1990], 15 Seasons in European Alps., 30 years worldwide rock climbing and British Ice. 35 years sailing. Offshore yachtmaster., Solo cycling tours [trans USA, trans Australia] Huddersfield to Kathmandu solo motorbike trip., Keen fell-runner and Mountain biker.



Susan and Rustan the cook

Shaun the Sheep



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# The Zaalayskiy Ridge Expedition 2004

Expedition Reference 04/38



Mount Everest  
Foundation



Paul Deegan for the maps and pacience

Malcolm Tinning  
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London

**North Cape Gear**  
ANDY LEWIS <andylewis@rammon.com>

**Mountain Equipment** <Duncanm@ronhill.com>  
(<http://www.mountain-equipment.co.uk>).

**RAB** Neil Mcadie, Steve Bridges

**Outdoor Designs** Liz Finlay

**Primus [Sweden]** Rune Ohle'n

**The Cross Pharmacy** in Inverkeithing

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**Wellbeck College**  
**and Tom Avery**  
quality information

**Thanks to all the firms, organisations & people who supported the Expedition**

Thoughts on a first trip to the Greater Ranges.  
Will Parsons - a first timer.....

When I was first invited on the expedition I was somewhat taken aback. I'd done a few Alpine trips with mates from Uni days, but never with any great success, and didn't have great confidence in my abilities to deal with expedition climbing in the "Greater Ranges".

However, I'd known Ken and Paul H for a few years, and was happy to defer to their judgment on whether I was competent & capable for such a trip.

The months preceding the trip were a mixture of eager anticipation and stress. The major cause of my anxiety was the Foreign Office advisory notice against traveling to the area we were headed for. Having not experienced traveling in Central Asia before, I didn't know what to expect – would there be gangs of bandits roaming the countryside brandishing AK47's? Thankfully I realised that to pass up on the trip would be to miss the opportunity of a lifetime, so put my concerns aside and got on with the preparations.

During our time in the mountains, I was very glad to be in the company of experienced mountaineers. My confidence increased through the trip, as hints, tips and encouragement were shared. This was probably where I gained most from while on the trip. Being able to study a mountain, and have a sound idea as to which routes might be within reach is a good feeling. With no guidebooks, grades, or pre-defined routes, I found the climbing very liberating. Combined with the complete lack of other people for 10 miles in any direction (and a lot more in some!), and the whole experience is on a different plane to the Alpine trips I'd done before.

Looking back, I think the trip would have been hard to beat for a first expedition. We achieved plenty, enjoyed favorable weather conditions, and all came home safely. I don't think it'll be too long before I'm hankering after another fix of remote mountains...

=====

# Quick Story

A team of five chaps, a girl and a sheep visited part of the Pamir chain of mountains near Peak Kurumdy for 4 weeks over July and August 2004.

We flew from Heathrow to Almaty and then travelogue by road to Bishkek. The Biskek to Osh bit was in a light plane and just took a couple of hours. Asia Mountains. looked after us in Kyrgyzstan.

We arrived at base camp on the 30th July. Advanced Base Camps were used all through the expedition as the Bascamp itself was too far away from the mountains to be really useful. A fault of organisation.

From ABC1 we climbed five summits, three being 1st Ascents and the others being first British/American ascents.

On the 8th August we moved to ABC2, which lay west of ABC1. Three peaks were climbed in the first few days, two 1st Ascents and one 1st British Ascent. On the 14th August the team visited a side valley and established ABC3-bivi on the 15th. From this camp three further peaks were climbed, one being a first ascent and the other two first British/American Ascents,

We have named all the peaks ascended as we have no other names for them (excepting Krazha and White Top Rock). Evidence of previous ascents was by small piles of rocks, research has not yet uncovered written evidence in the UK about who made earlier ascents..

Shaun the Sheep raised money for the charity "Alpine Fund", climbing all the hills except one.

We returned to the UK on the 25th August

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| From ABC1 | 'Whaleback I' (1st Ascent 4451m - Facile);<br>'Peak of the Long White Cloud' (1st Ascent 4452m - PD);<br>'Krazha Peak' (3rd Ascent [1st UK/US ascent 4592m - PD] ),<br>'White Top Rock' (2nd Ascent [1st UK/US ascent 4347m - PD-] ).<br>'Charity Peak' (1st Ascent 4982m - PD/AD);<br>'Krazha Peak' new route (4th Ascent [2nd UK/US ascent 4592m - PD-]),<br>'Whaleback II' (1st Ascent 4456m - Facile); |
| From ABC2 | 'Cold Feet Peak' (4550m 1st Ascent - PD-); ' '<br>'Marmot Hill' (1st ascent 4005m - F/walk),<br>'Professor Peak'* (1st British Ascent 4840m - PD).<br>'Fossil Peak'** (1st British/US Ascent 5116m - PD),<br>'Karena Peak' (1st Ascent 5052m - PD+).<br>'Cold Sunrise Peak'** (New Route; 1st British/US Ascent 5505m - PD+/AD).   |

While I have found, as yet, no written evidence for previous ascents of any of the peaks excepting Krazha and White Top Rock, the asterisks show which tops had evidence of previous ascents, \*\* clear evidence, \*less clear evidence. We took the evidence as small cairns left on the summits, On Professor Peak it was unclear if the stone pile was man-made or could have been a natural effect of weathering.



## *On behalf of the “ALPINE FUND” Thanks to*

### **Royal Bank of Scotland**

The generous employees of Royal Bank of Scotland,  
and all Susan’s many, many other sponsors.

The Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland,

The many sponsors of Ian Arnold

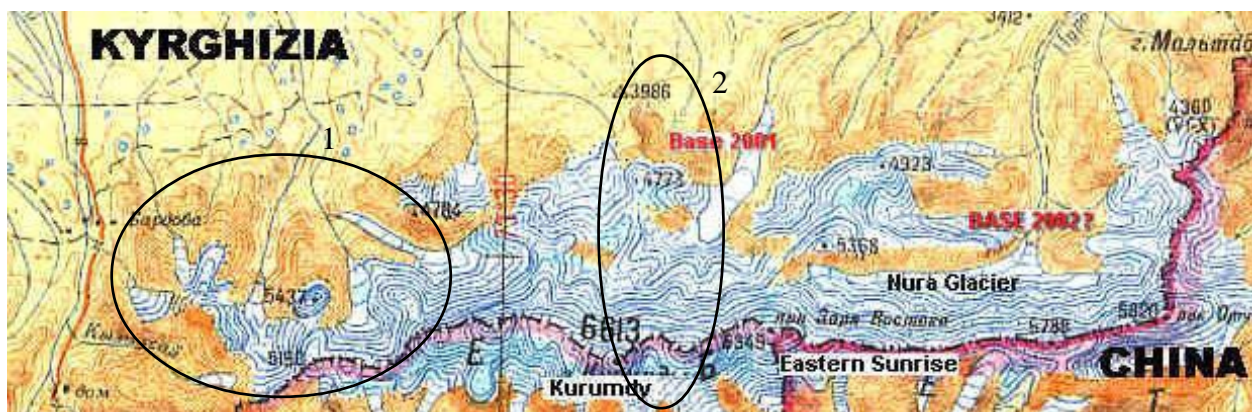
A number of members of the Leeds Mountaineering Club and  
some of the Fell & Rock Climbing Club friends

Will’s sponsors;

Adrian Ellison  
Adrian Wheway  
Alison Leach  
Alyson Campbell &  
Charles Dexter  
Barbara Wright  
Bill Davidson  
Brenda Cobb  
Carl Pearson  
Caroline Bell  
Chris Simenton  
David Li  
David Parsons  
Delma Jackson  
Elida Purba  
Emma Farnworth  
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Jitesh Rathod  
John Ruddy  
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Paul Cundy  
Phil & Hanna Amos  
Philip Edelin  
Ray Powell  
Rob Cundy  
Robert & Liz Parsons  
Robert Sansam  
Sarah Woodford  
Steve Chidlow  
Steve Foster  
Susan Porritt  
Tim Jones  
Tony Cobb



Maps showing some early ideas about where to explore and the general area



## ***Introduction:***

The Kyrgyz Republic, commonly referred to as Kyrgyzstan, became an independent country on 31 August 1991. The head of state is President; since independence, the president of Kyrgyzstan has been Askar Akaev. The main religion in Kyrgyzstan is Islam.

Kyrgyzstan is landlocked and about the same size as the U.K, it has an area of 1,999,000 square kilometres. Largely a mountainous country in Central Asia it is bounded on the east by China, on the north by Kazakhstan, on the west by Uzbekistan and on the southwest and south by Tajikistan. From north to south, Kyrgyzstan measures 425 kilometres; from west to east, it measures 900 kilometres. Its northern latitude is 43°16' close to Rome's; its southern latitude is 39°11', near Sicily's in Italy.

Kyrgyzstan has sharply continental climate, with hot summers and moderately cold winters. In summer, areas from 800 to 1700 meters see average temperatures of 26–30°C, winter temperatures in the lowlands average -5°C. The country has 1,923 mountain lakes and about 40,000 streams and rivers. However, only 7% of the land is arable, of which 68% is irrigated. Kyrgyzstan's three major rivers are the Naryn (535 kilometres), Chu (221 kilometres) and Chatkal (205 kilometres).

The altitude ranges from 401m to 7,437 m above sea level. 90% of the country lies above 1,500 metres and 41% is above 3,000m. Kyrgyzstan also has 1,923 lakes taking up 4.3% of the total land area of the country. It is also home to one of the largest glaciers in the world, the Inylchek glacier in the central Tien Shan, which is over 62 kilometres. 85% of Kyrgyzstan consists of mountains: there are two main mountain ranges, the Tien Shan and the Pamirs

Kyrgyzstan has a large variety of plants, possessing over 1% of all known species in just 0.13 % of the world's land mass. There are also over 360 recorded species of birds including a wide range of raptors.

The total population is approximately 4,832,612 people with majority of Kyrgyz, Russian, and Uzbek. In Kyrgyzstan there are about 80 ethnic group some of them like the Tatars, Dungan, Uighur, and Tajik counting approximately 1% each of the total population. Kyrgyzstan has a density of 22 people per square kilometre, with over half the population living in the Fergana valley, just 15% of the total area of the country.

Capital of Kyrgyzstan is Bishkek. Bishkek is the biggest city and alone represent about 20% of the total population of the country. The highest point in the country is Pobeda Peak (meaning Victory Peak in Russian) at 7439 meters. The lowest point is at the western end of Naryn River, about 500 meters. Lying close to the middle of the country is the Fergana Valley a fertile breadbasket area whose boundaries, set by preceding Soviet authorities, are a source of incessant conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

The industrial sector is dominated by mining and metallurgy, which are two of the main contributors to GDP. Gold mining and refining is by far the most important activity in the mining sector. Kyrgyzstan has more than 400 deposits of precious and semi-precious stones. In addition 44 kinds of gem quality stones have been recently identified. These deposits include diamonds, sapphires, rubies, emeralds and topaz as well as aquamarine, amethyst, turquoise, rock crystal, nephrite, malachite, jasper and agate. Reserves of coal are estimated at 2.9 billion tonnes in four major coal basins. There are ideal conditions in Kyrgyzstan for the manufacture of polycrystalline silicon. The wool, cotton and silk industries are dominated by a number of large enterprises in the industrial centres, typically employing thousands of workers each.



## ***STARTING May/June 2003***

It all began when looking around for some other people to join me in setting off for yet another exploration of less frequented mountains. Susan Jensen an itinerant Alaskan who had briefly stopped off in Leeds on her journey through the UK was the first and for a long time the only person who was definitely interested. She however had restrictions. Unlike those in education who can wander off over the summer for up to six and a half weeks Susan working in the banking services was restricted to a maximum of four weeks and was lucky to get that!

The question was, where to choose that would offer 'easy' access so that the four weeks gave us maximum time in the hills. The Alpine Club had run a seminar about Canada showing that using air transport one could be in the wilds on an unclimbed peak in a matter of a couple of days after leaving the UK, that was one possibility. In 1995 I had organised a trip to the Tien Shan where we had helicoptered in to the Kaingdy Valley just south of the Inylcheck. The journey had taken longer than it should that year as it had been complicated by a death (Alan Davy) in the same valley. I checked up on the costs of the helicopter on the internet and of course they had risen, now the cost for a small group was becoming prohibitive so I put that on hold despite the really fantastic hills lying around the Kaingdy and still awaiting first ascents.

Searching the internet for other Kyrgyzstan options I found that there had been trips to a number of places. After some efforts I contacted Guy Robertson, he had been out in Kyrgyzstan and the idea would have been to join forces for the travel and then do separate things when out there but nothing came of that.

Further research eventually led us to the idea of visiting the Zaalayskiy area where Kurumdy rises to 6613m on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. A little further along the ridge the three borders of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and China meet.

Through some thorough internet I then exploration found that Wellbeck College, Paul Degan and Tom Avery had visited this area as well as a number of undocumented commercial trips. Most people are willing to share information about where they have been, what they have done and what there is still to do and this was so when I contacted individuals, the commercial firm however declined to share any information.

Part way through my investigations I came across information about a charity that had been set up by an American Garth Willis to help the orphans of the Kyrgyz Republic. In the past we have raised money for Elephants, Mobility, Respite centres as well as trying to leave something behind in the community we visit, in the Chitral area we left a donation for the school with the community of Shagscram Village. This Kyrgyzstan charity for children looked a good one to support as it also used the outdoors to instill a belief and self respect in the children. In contacting Garth he confirmed that he had had good reports of the climbing to be had in the Kurumdy area and suggested a company that could be of assistance.

One bane was that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO had decided that the whole of the area south of Sary Tash was too dangerous for UK citizens to visit, their notice Board said so and that made it VERY difficult for us to find any insurance cover.

Below is one of the early e-mails that went too and fro.....

**Dear Paul**

***In regard to your query about travel to Kyrgyzstan we are currently advising against all travel to the south & west of Osh and the Ferghana Valley Region.***

***Please note that while insurance companies may refuse to offer insurance for travel to countries to which the FCO advise against this is done through choice.***

***<http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel>***

***Travel Advice Unit***

***Consular Directorate***

***Foreign & Commonwealth Office***

***Consular.fco@gtnef.gov.uk***

***Tel: 0870 606 0290***

I tried to pin the FCO down as to what was meant by South and west of OSH as we were going to be just east of the town but they declined to respond helpfully saying that their advice was an inexact 'science' In the eight trips I have organised we have never had to call on the insurance but if the FCO say NO then so do most insurance companies. The Foundry and the BMC insurers both declined along with a couple of others. We had decided that the team would go there anyway and just take the risk on board. Then we managed to find **Anthony Kaye** of CAMPBELL IRVINE who were willing to take our money (six members = £1776.00) and give us peace of mind.

Then came the Visa saga... I had sent three Passports to the Kazakhstan Embassy for some of transit visas to be on the safe side on the 20th May, nothing had happened for some time and then about the 8th July Ken Findlay had had a phone call from the embassy about some problem .

On the 13th July I sent a note to Malcolm Tinning as we were due to fly out on the 24th and three passports were still somewhere in the Kazakhstan Embassy. Paul Lyons knowing that three passports were 'missing' strangely sent his off to the same place around the 10th July. Thus 4 of the team were without passports and the flight date was getting rather near.

*Dear Malcolm,*

*Well we are nearly ready for the off. Thanks for all your help. I'll send a post card to let you know how things went and say if you would like a report when I have done it.*

*When you speak to the Kazakhstan Embassy people you could try to get them to update their Visa services. I am sure that it can be made simpler, than the rigmarole that is in place at the moment. (I am worrying as they still have our passports at the moment.)*

*Paul Hudson*

*Dear Paul*

*What is the problem with the Consulate? We have a good relationship with hem; perhaps I can speak to them for you?*

*With best regards*

*Malcolm*

*Hi Malcolm,*

*It is just their procedure really*

*1 You send the form and passports*

*2 They send you a paying in slip for the HSBC Bank for the amount due*

*3 You pay locally then send them the receipt slip*

*4 They return the passports*

*I thought that this might be simplified.*

*had e-mailed recently about the lack of communication from them but got no reply. Today I rang and found out that because I had requested two transit visas for each of three of us I need to send two application forms, one for each visa application. Anyway I will get that organised and can, in this case, send a cheque for the £78.00 with the new applications so that will short circuit the situation a bit.*

*Thanks for you interest in our problems  
Best wishes  
Paul*

*Dear Paul*

*Our messengers are out at other Consulates at the moment. I have asked hem to call into the Kazakh Consulate if they have time today before they close. If not, then I'll get one of them to go there tomorrow.*

*Typically, the Consul General that I know went on leave back to Kazakhstan this weekend!*

*With best regards  
Malcolm*

*Dear Malcolm,  
Just a further note.*

*I have eventually managed to speak to someone in the embassy who says that the passports will be returned tomorrow, however that may not be the case if the past experience is to be gone by.*

*If you are sending anyone round to the Kazakh Embassy I would be grateful if you could check that they have been processed and either collect them or express the urgency of the situation now. I know Paul Lyons has tried to make contact seeking your help with his application.*

*Below are the Passport details in case they are needed.*

*19/7/2004*

*Dear Paul*

*Our messenger will go tomorrow morning. If we can collect them for you we will. Perhaps you could drop the Consulate an email to say that you want us - Kazakhstan Travel Centre (this is how they know us) - to collect them.*

*With best regards  
Malcolm*

*20/7/2004*

*The passports were couriered to us by Malcolm for the 21st July!*

## ***THE JOURNEY OUT - 24-25 July***

The Journey from Leeds was straightforward enough, leaving the city at midnight meant that there were few cars on the road. The flight with Astana had been due to leave on Saturday afternoon 24th but had been delayed by 12 hours a few days before. Just after 4am Paul L and I dropped off the team at terminal 2 Heathrow and headed off towards his fathers house in Addlestone. By 5.15 Paul's father had returned us to the airport and the group were all ready to move through the various formalities that now dog the air traveller .

*Ken's Diary 'Left Leeds at midnight, still feeling a little groggy and tired. Tried to sleep for a few hours, but I was too restless'.*

It is always a worry if you have been granted excess baggage even when you have the letter that states it so it was with some trepidation we gathered in front of the checking in desk with luggage oiled high around us. Earlier I had given the tickets to Paul L and Will had collected the Passports. When our turn came I sat with the hand luggage and It others get involved with the formalities of the baggage weigh in. Paul L and Will seemed unable to get sorted so Ian stepped in and gathering up the tickets and passports he moved to the front and got all the baggage weighed and accepted. Our hand-baggage was okayed and off we went through the various x-ray machines and passport checks

The flight left heathrow at 10.30 having suffered a further 2 hour delay on the Sunday morning.

*Ken's Diary 'Flight delayed for over an hour. The Airport is busy with travellers, only spotted one other expedition. Feeling excited about the whole thing. Good flight, watched 'Timeline' film and an episode of Mr. Bean'.*

Cloud covered much of the land we crossed on the seven hour flight to Almaty. Despite the vegetarian meals not being on the flight for Will and I the food was received well by the omnivores and drinks were offered with pleasing frequency. Mr. Bean and Napoleon accompanied the flight to the amusement of some.



## **KAZAKHSTAN - KYRGYZSTAN 25- 27th July**

At Almaty we collected the luggage and headed for the exit. Susan was looking out for a notice “ASIA MOUNTAINS” but she could see nothing of that sort, the only one that might have been for us read “Mr. HUNSAN” which was near to Hudson but I dismissed it when she reported back. It was for us and so we met Dmitry who I had been in E-mail correspondence with over the last 6 months.

Before leaving the airport I got Dmitry to confirm our return flights at the Astana office and mention the requirement for vegetarian meals. As we were unsure if we would be able to contact the airline at the end of the trip within the 48 hours before the flight, this seemed a good safety net. Suddenly people needed the toilet so a couple of us loaded the van while they were away and then we were off into the night.

The roads of Almaty soon gave way to more uneven surfaces. I had not slept since waking on Saturday morning so much of this journey was spent catching up on that. I woke occasionally to hear tell of the ‘forest’ road and the terrible state of the surface and how slow the driver had to go. We had a morning tea stop at a roadside cafe around 4am and we could have been in Pakistan as the surroundings were just the same, carpets to sit cross-legged on and green or black tea by the pot-full. While the rest tucked into Ravioli Will and I had bread and a small cucumber each, donated from the driver’s lunch box.

At 5.30 we crossed from Kazakhstan to The Kyrgyz Republic and joined the queue to be checked over. Leaving Kazakhstan took a bit more time than I would have expected and entering The Kyrgyz Republic much shorter. Everyone now seems to be using cameras to take pictures of ‘visitors’ . Well Kazakhstan did anyway but the K Republic did not bother with such formalities and just looked at the passports.

It was about an hour to the Manas airport on the outskirts of Bishkek. As we neared the city PaulL looked out of the window and was astounded to see a line of snow covered mountains, I looked but to me they were just a line of clouds. As the sun rose the clouds were mountains and thus it was a joke about me from then on.

It was just after 6.30am when we unloaded at the airport for the internal flight to Osh. On the journey from Almaty we had indicated about our requirement to have the Base Camp moved from the Kurumdy site to the west and asked Dmitry to make sure that the people in Osh knew of this asking Dmitry to phone ahead.

The baggage for the internal flight was weighed and we obviously had well over the 15k allowed for each person. I had pre-warned Dmitry about our 40k baggage allowance and had asked him if that would be a problem on the internal flight. All he had said in reply was that the baggage would be OK, well I suppose it was! We just had to pay the excess of \$106 for our 210K overweight which was half a Som per kilogramme. It was fortunate that the charges were small!

*Ken’s Diary ‘Charged \$105 for excess baggage, but we saw other teams go through with lots of gear and not get stopped by the officials. Good flight, small propeller plane and the journey took around 40 minutes. Checked into a Hotel, (if I can use that word), the usual standard with a black and white T.V with only one channel working, dripping wash basin, leaking shower and hard bog roll’.*

The plane to Osh was a twin engined propeller plane and I think it was the first one of that type some of the team had been on. I had flown in a Decota back in 1961 from Portsmouth to Jersey and more

recently across part of Australia in a similar small plane. The flight was smooth and we gazed out of the windows at the ever changing scenery. Tiny hills with only the remnants of snow, rivers and lakes passed beneath us.

Upon our arrival at Osh we were met by Lorissa a young lady and interpreter and a young chap. They were surprised by the amount of our luggage and had to hire an extra van for that. While most on the team travelled in the one they had brought I joined the luggage. The Hotel we were taken to was mentioned in Will's book as one of the better ones in Osh, not that there were that many. The XXX was near a main road but set far enough back so that noise was not a problem. It was around 10.30am.

Our minders saw that we were settled in and left saying that they would be back at 2ish to be taken out for lunch. Lunch was in a rather nice place and people enjoyed their first meal in this new country.

Post lunch we wandered round Osh to change money and made our first visit to the large market there. In the Market Ian was in his element as he loves intermingling and getting to 'know' the locals..

On our drive back to the centre of Osh just after lunch we had called to get a metal gerry-can for transporting petrol for the stoves on the mountain,, so Ian also went off in search of a funnel which after quite a lot of looking was located and purchased by him and Will.

At the post office buying stamps took some while even with an interpreter. As the transaction proceeded others in the group also decided that they would like some stamps as well so it became quite a complex operation, Lorissa coped with all our demands admirably. She was not local and had some difficulty in answering our questions about Osh. At home she was a teacher of Russian and had taught herself English by listening to tapes. Her English was really good but she would not really believe this.

.At the post office counter we were also instructed on how and what to write to write on the envelope or post card in Russian it had to say "From Osh" as well as 'England' in the Cyrillic script. It was also important to write "Par Avion" on the front as well! (All that said my first letters and cards sent in July made it back to the UK but the ones sent in August at the end of the trip seem to have lodged themselves elsewhere and few if any ever arrived.)

We made a short visit to the market where I bought some light shoes for 'around town', at 150 Som (around £2.00) they were a good buy and put me in fashion, or at least the most fashionable I have been for the last ten years, Ken said!

All that done we headed back to the hotel for a shower, rest and some quiet before being picked up for the evening meal. We had not expected all this attention to be honest and while some people liked it others would have preferred to have left to explore the town on their own. The open air Cafe that was chosen was a bit of a disaster and one of the locals blamed it on the 'Mad' waitress that was seeing to us, the food was not that good either. One of the Russian speakers had his meal completely missed off the order! A cup of tea ended the evening after Ian, Susan and I had e-mailed home from an internet cafe.

What happens next is all down to someone called Vladimer who was not in Osh today. We need to make sure that Base Camp is put in the place we would like it rather than where it has already been set up.

We had hoped to see Vladimer early in the morning and make an early start to the mountains. Eight o'clock came and went and so was that opportunity. Around 10ish Lorissa and a Russian guide came to discuss base camp. It seemed that there was a good place for a base camp at the eastern end of this area which according to the guide had not been visited much. Susan started the negotiations and did quite well for a while but part way through seemed to lose the plot and seemed not to be listening to

what was being said. PaulL tried to interject but was told off. Fortunately he persisted and progress was made. It was agreed that we could move the base Camp and that we would remain in Osh for this day so that larger transport could be organised. We would set off at 6am the following morning.

During this meeting it came out that Dmitry had phoned Osh from the airport but instead of saying about us needing the base camp moved all he had said to the Osh people was that they should take us directly to the Kurumdy base camp already set up without any discussion. So much for his professionalism and reliability. It seems he would lie at any opportunity.

At the end of the meeting I was told by Lorissa that I needed to phone Bishkek to discuss the half payment we had made, it sounded as if they would have liked it all up front. When I did manage to phone, Alana asked what the problem was so I explained about the sudden setting up of the Base camp when it was not settled where we had wanted it. I said that all the messages I had sent to Dmitry would be on my computer and that some could be retrieved from here. Alana said that the e-mails would be on their computers as well and I think she believed that we were spinning a yarn and had decided to be awkward at the last moment. She said she would speak to Dmitry and check through the E-mails. I told her that Dmitry had been untruthful in the story he had told her about us saying that Kurumdy BC would be OK. She phoned back late in the evening she said that she was sorry we had been messed around and that she had found where we had pointed out the various Base Camp area we were interested in and accepted that the error was theirs.

I assume that she found the e-mail that read:

*Dear Paul.*

*Thank you for the letter. We are very glad that your planning of the trip going on. Concerning your questions.*

- 1. You may pay in \$US by arrival in Bishkek. It is the best variant for us.*
- 2. Concerning your planning of the base camp. What range, you may inform us also by arrival.*
- 3. The vehicle will not stay in the base camp. It will be working with other programmes.*
- 4. Concerning nutrition. There will be fresh products in the Base Camp. Fruits and vegetables, meat and so on. The car will be delivering for you the fresh food.*

*I hope to hear from you soon,*

*Best Regards,*

*Dmitry.*



In the end there was no mention of the other part of the payment. It was agreed that the transport would be ready to take us early in the following morning.

*Ken's Diary 'Ill, stayed in bed during the afternoon and evening. Took some tablets, felt a bit better'.*

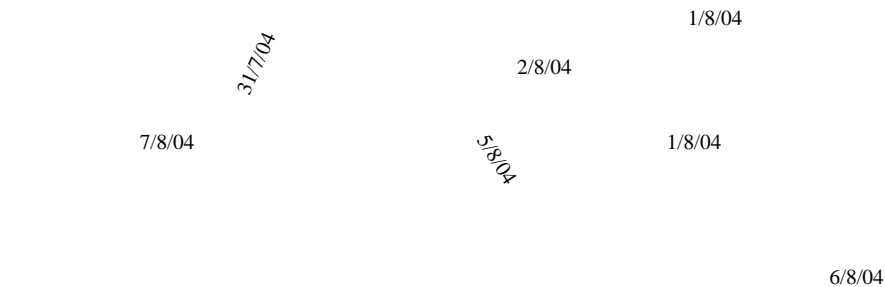
Another day was thus spent in Osh. Ian went off to make friends with the metalworkers in the market and the rest of us wandered to the post office, market and tea shops. We found the sweets area of the market and I bought 3k of boiled sweets for the hills only to turn round to see Ken had bought even more and was carrying a huge bag of soft centred sweets. Needless to say there were quite a few left over at the end of the trip which were left in the Osh hotel. In the evening Susan went off on her own to see Sulaman's Rock and Ken stayed in. Ian PaulL, Will and I went off for a small dinner as we had persuaded Lorissa to have the evening off from keeping us company.

It had been arranged that Lorissa would call us about the arrangements for the following day or leave a message at the hotel. When we arrived back there at 9.30ish we asked about any messages but there had been none so we began to fear the worst and thought that we would be in Osh for yet another day. Then at around 10.30 a phone call came through for Susan and it was Lorissa telling us that the truck would be with us at 5 in the morning, setting our alarms we all fell off to sleep.

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Journeys from ABC1 and the site of ABC2		
Whaleback A	31st July	1st Ascent (British/American)
Peak of the Long White Cloud	1st August	1st Ascent (British/American)
Explore	2nd August	
Krazha and White Top Rock	3rd August	1st British/American Ascent Partly New route
Charity Peak	5th - 6th August	1st Ascent (British American)
Whaleback B	7th August	1st Ascent (British)

to ABC2



## *Journey 28th July*

*Ken's Diary 'Up at 4am and ready and packed for 5am The transport was a big Soviet truck. We all got in the back and arranged ourselves with the gear. The journey was bumpy and very dusty. The dust seeped in through the windows and got into everything. The countryside was very much like Mongolia, vast amounts of open space mixed in with grass valleys passing Yurts on the way.*

*Arriving at the Kurumdy Base Camp we had tea there and then went off to establish our own Base Camp. This took forever with the driver unwilling to stop at various points. I kept a low profile and let the rest of the team sort it out. After various discussions we finally reached a spot where we had previously visited an hour before. As soon as we unpacked the mosquitoes came out. Welcome to the Pamirs'*

We were all up at about 4am and with the bags moved out we sat on the steps of the hotel awaiting the lorry. It was about ten past five when a large six wheeled vehicle drew up in front of us. The bags were stashed at the front of the cabin, which as usual for ex Russian Army vehicles was perched on the back of the lorry, and in 30 minutes we were on the road. There was a short stop to get some petrol for the vehicle and for our stoves and we were on our way.

The road south was good compared with the Almaty-Bishkek route so reasonable progress was made. It was around nine when we passed the 145kl post and then pulled over to stop for breakfast, sausage, egg and chips. PaulL had taken immodium for the journey as his stomach had been playing up all the previous day. We felt we had been delayed in Osh too long due to Dmitry's awkwardness and lying.

The journey continued on this paved road all the way to Sary Tash. Switchback curves led us over hills and we could have been in Switzerland as we climbed up and over a range of high Alps. While the main road continued south to Tajikistan we turned left onto the road that led towards China and the village of Nura. This road was much poorer in its quality and often we were travelling alongside a broken tarmac surface on the dusty plain. This was reminiscent of Mongolia where there were long stretches of new road but no-one was allowed on it so the traffic used rough tracks by its side.

Part way along this road the driver pulled over and our guide asked us to point out where we wanted the basecamp to be. We got out the copies of the maps lent by Paul Deegan and tried to make sense of the line on snow and rock in front of us. PaulL seemed to be able to relate the two and with Will identified a mountain that was easily identifiable and in the right place. This chosen we moved on towards Kurumdy Base Camp.

At some point we left the uneven and dusty 'Chinese' road for a smaller uneven and dusty road that led at an angle towards the mountains. Harsher ups and downs followed with people leaving their seats occasionally and heading for the roof. Eventually tents hove into view, not a thing one often sees these days. We had arrived at KBC.

On our arrival the news about moving the Base camp was given to the crew there and we waited around while they decided which bits of the camp to dismantle and which to leave for the current residents who were out on a day trip. When lunch came and it was obvious that Dmitry had not passed on the information about there being two Vegetarians in the team. After the lunch we dismantled two large and three small tents, accumulated boxes and crates of supplies, a stove and three large cylinders of gas. All this had taken over two hours, a delay that we were to regret later.

It was mid afternoon when we set off from KBC to seek ut our new site, before we regained the ‘main’ road the lorry suffered a problem with its hydraulics and also a puncture. This delay meant that dusk was already in the air as we eventually set off again. Two hours later we were travelling in circles as the guide looked out for the track to take us towards PaulL’s Mountain. PaulL was in the front cab now having moved there due to feeling sick in the back. He had taken the maps we had but it seems that all was confusion. We tried ‘road’ after road but none were right. One took us to an area by some lakes which was high above the river we had briefly stopped at earlier. Even this area was further away from the mountains than we would have liked and it was rejected as it had no running fresh water only the lakes.

Darkness and rain was threatening as we piled back into the van. In the end we returned to an earlier spot that we had looked at. It was by a stream but the hills looked quite far away. With the camp unloaded it was hastily put up before darkness overtook us, the lorry left.



## ***BASE CAMP AND ABC1 29th - 31st July***

As we had put the camp up the previous evening we had all been attacked by mosquitoes and the insect repellent had been put to good use. The camp was amongst some really long grass which did not help. The next day dawned fine and sunny. When I got up Susan was returning from an early morning walk, she had been up for two hours already and had explored some distance towards the hills to the south,

Rustan the cook was not really happy with the placement of the camp and had been looking around to see if there was a better site nearby. Walking along the river for about 70 yards he found a much better place where the grass was short and the area much bigger. Thus while Ian, Will and Susan were sent off to explore the area towards the mountains Ken, PaulL and I helped to relocate the camp. I moved Susan into the three man tent as she had indicated that she did not want to be 'left out' and find us all gone one morning without telling her. I took over the smaller 1/2 man tent even though I did not really like being on my own - I enjoy the company of others.

The exploration went well but Ian did not. He could only manage an hour walking out of camp with it taking twice as long for him to make the return trip, having to rest every few minutes. Will and Susan went a lot further and spied out two sites for advanced sites. They also saw lots of heavy vehicle tracks as well as four geologists. On their return they indicated that it felt a bit crowded compared with their expectations of a complete wilderness. In truth the tracks did cover much of the area but there were few other people to be seen after this except for two Chinese doing a GMS river survey and some local haymakers at the end of the trip.

At 6pm the rain came with thunder all round but never too near. Thunder had in fact begun a couple of hours earlier, rolling all round the valley we were in.

On the following day everyone and Lorissa set off to establish ABC1. This journey was all new to PaulL, Ken and I as we had stayed on Base that day before. We ascended the side of the valley to reach its rim and then headed south along its edge towards the snowy peaks in the distance. Ken, Susan and Will carried personal gear and PaulL, Ian, Lorissa and I carried group supplies. We separated and joined together as the journey passes. Ridge, river the rolling hills are the main features then river bed and a climb to a little 'meadow' with wild onions growing behind it in a dry water course.

*Ken's Diary 'Sunny morning, all the team frantically packing gear for our move up to establish ABC 1. A long hot walk, during which I lost a clip from one of my ski poles. After much searching, I had to make do with using micro pore to fix it together. Arrived at ABC1 dog tired, the last leg up the riverbed was knackered'.*

Ken and I were the last to arrive and PaulL, then Ian and Will came down the valley a bit to assist us. I recall when I arrived at the Solu base on my own and how no one came to assist though me and the guide could be seen for about an hour before I eventually got there. Being helped is always nice.

While Susan, Will and Ken settled in for the night the rest of us set off down toward base. Lorissa had been a good help as she had taken an amount of Susan's stuff when it became obvious that Susan had overpacked her sack. PaulL and Lorissa went back together with PaulL learning some Russian colours, numbers and directions. I had chatted to Lorissa earlier in the journey when I encouraged her to speak in English to me. Ian and I tried the stream bed back to camp, he quite liked it I did not.

The following day we woke to rain at Base Camp so we happily slouched around amongst the tents for some time. At 1pm we thought we needed to make some decision and as the weather looked a little

brighter we decided it was time to go. Goodbyes to Lorissa and Rustan and soon we were out of site of them. Ian was always in the lead and arrived at the camp first and encouraged a Ken and Will to pop down to assist PaulL and myself; we were grateful again!.

*Ken's Diary 'Up at 6am had porridge and a couple of brews. Weather awful, low cloud and a drizzle accompanied us up the track leading to the dry stream bed below the ridge. Zero visibility. Followed the ridge up to a snow basin before going up the snowy North ridge to the summit. No views. Rest of the team arrive at ABC 1, I share a tent with Paul H, rained during the night'.*

## ***Sunday August 1st ABC1***

A poor start to the day. At 6.30 cloud was surrounding the tents but had the look of starting to dissolve so I started the breakfast and got people out of their tents. By 7.30 I thought it looked to be improving and ready to give us a good clear day. Jostling the last few campers from their sleeping bags we wee soon off and heading for an unclimbed peak of 4784m. We followed the stream bed behind the camp and made steady progress upward to the edge of the hill we were ascending and also to the edge of the cloud that had decided to hang around.

Ian, Susan and Will led off on one rope while PaulL, Ken and I made up another. As we moved up the slope into the cloud it was obvious that my enthusiasm had been misplaced. Some thought we might get above the clouds, we never did though once or twice near the top the sun became evident as the cloud got warmer and the light a little brighter.

The climb started with a scramble up loose but large pieces of rock which gained us the ridge and snow. Continuing upwards our group followed the others gradually losing them in the white as they moved ahead. Our Journey was one of movement and rest. PaulL was still not well and he needed to

have rests at opportune areas of any rocks that broke the surface of the snow. I did not mind this a I was going slowly too. The ridge wound its way over and down some minor bumps and past occasional rocks until the slope steepened to 40 degrees then 50 as we approached the summit.

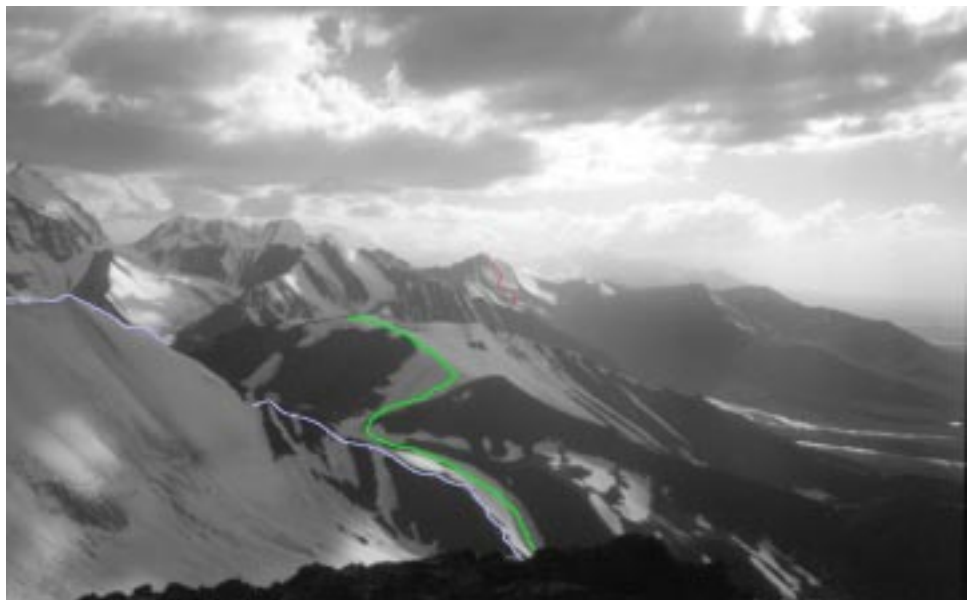
The others had been there some while when we arrived and we were greeted with sheep sounds from Ian and the shadowy figures of the advanced group. In this whiteout we might have been anywhere and it reminded me of a recent hill above Avimore where the conditions were similar.

The 'Peak of the long white cloud' had been climbed by all the team but it had not enabled us to appreciate what other possibilities lay around us or help us understand the geography of the local area.

The decent was as the ascent with group 'A' taking the lead and disappearing into the mist before us. We three followed taking their new line in decent to a snowy col used to ascend 'Whaleback Peak' (this was not actually



ascended until PaulL and Ken went there on Aug. 7th in clear weather to find that the top lump had not been reached previously). We descended the slope glissading and sliding down it and camp was reached in due course. Dinner was spoilt by showers of hail and wet snow. As soon as that was over it was quickly to bed.



*Ken's Diary 'Lots of low cloud this morning and to make matters worse it started to snow and*

*the wind got stronger. The mountains have fresh snow on them and this is a cause for concern. A typical Scottish winter's day.*

Blue = part of the ascent route of the 'long white cloud'  
Green = the later ascent of Professor Peak

*We set off in deteriorating weather and soon find the ridge, while adding on layers of clothing. Paul H is struggling a bit, he is finding it difficult, before long he is at the back, his pace becoming slower.*

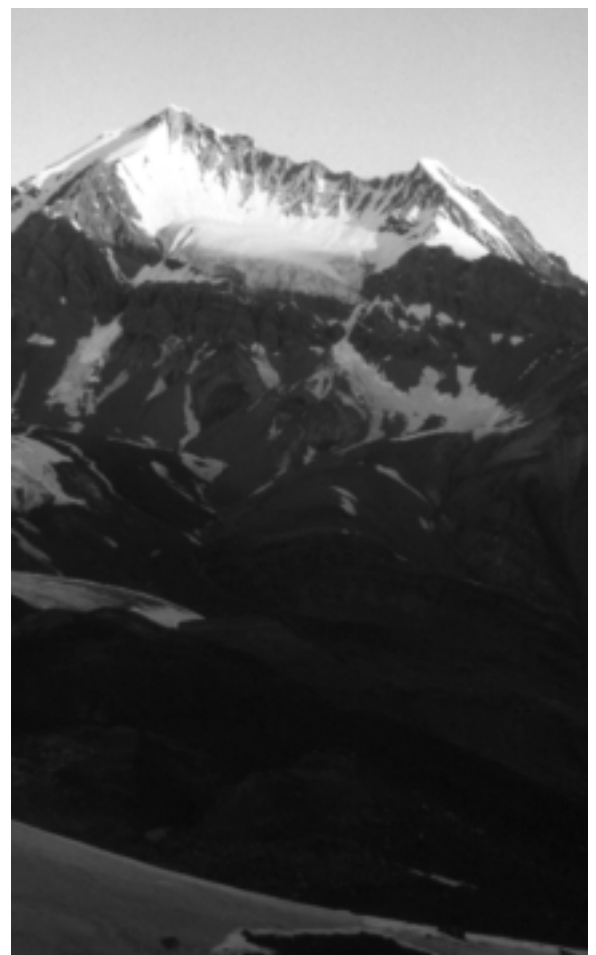
*Ian and Susan are in front while Will, Paul l and me are on another rope, Paul H follows alone as the snow and hail bite into our faces.*

*The summit is reaches as the wind picks up and we get some views but not enough to comment on other possible routes. As usual the weather improves as we descend and get great views all around. Already I am thinking of other projects'.*

## ***Monday August 2nd.***

After a really wet night the cloud mostly cleared away at dawn, leaving bits and pieces on the hilltops. The team rose at separate times and when all were up a fuel and food assessment was made. It was decided that a Base Camp run was in order, a list was made and Ken Will and Susan set off to the lower valley area.

While PaulL used the time to catch up with his diary, get some photos from around the camp area and later attempted to improve the drinking water collecting pool in the glacier stream, I went off to the other side of the valley towards the ridge that led to Krazha and White Top rock. Ian used the day to re-pitch his tent on flatter ground and improve the cooking area. On my foray I looked at the approach to the ridge and at one point



thought about going on along it to reach Krazha. The exploration however took more time than I had imagined and I started down a nice scree slope without reaching the ridge itself.

The 'shoppers' returned laden with food and fuel and amongst rain and hail I delivered an evening meal to the various tent occupants.

## *August 3rd*

A leisurely start to the day exasperated 'Susan the everready'. Susan was invariably the first up and had often been for a good morning walk before anyone else had risen. Today after some cajoling and then complaining she set off alone at 8.30am. Ian followed shortly afterwards catching her up as she ascended towards the first snow. The other three and I set off when we were ready and I led them along my exploration path of the previous day but moved left along the subsidiary ridge towards a snow slope that led to its top nearer the main ridge. This turned out to be an interesting little climb as the slope steepened as we neared the top section and gave some good sport. When Ken and Paul neared the top they broke away from our steps to take their own line. At some point here Ken needed an emergency stop which resulted in him climbing underpants for the rest of the day. From his previous stories this is the way Ken climbs for about 50% of his time anyway.

Above us, ever in the lead, Susan and Ian reached the main ridge first having ascended my route of the day before but not without incident as earlier Susan had slipped off at one point being held by Ian as they moved over an awkward part of the icy crest.



Looking towards WTR from the summit slopes of Krazha

On the main ridge I did not feel 'together' and found the ropes really annoying. In the end I just sat down and said I was not up to it, thus the others continued in two roped parties. After a short rest I felt better and without the annoyance of the rope felt able to continue. I followed the steps leading the way along the ridge and joined the others on the summit shortly after their ascent. This was the first hill we had ascended that had any views so we enjoyed the scene and it also allowed us to look at other hills worth a visit. Ian and Susan in particular spotted an interesting line up a face just South East of Krazha.

The descent was made in two parties, Susan and Ian again in the lead dodged down a snow slope before the small sub ridge we had used to ascend to the main North-South line but the rest of us decided to pay a visit to the White Top Rock. Like Krazha it had already been climbed but the day was nice and I felt a lot better now. The trip along the ridge was easy and almost level with just a few ups and downs to amuse us. The White Top Rock Peak certainly lived up to its name, the place was composed of a sort of Talc that could be crushed in one's fingers with a bit of force. The top was quite worn and jagged as too was the possible descent ridge that lay to the North. Being the first at the top I was the first to look around for a descent route. The ridge looked too crumbly and had big drops every so often on very suspect rock. To my left was a scree slope that seemed to offer an

alternative. It was not clear if there was a continuous line but the prospect looked good so I started down some very fine sand making my way to a large rock outcrop calling for the others to follow.

Sometimes close together and at others dangerously strung out, we made our way down a 600m scree descent, there was one incident when PaulL slipped but other than that the descent was made in good order and we were soon back at ABC1 with Ian and Susan getting the tea for us.

Wild mushrooms had been collected by the Base Camp group on their way back and mixed with the onions that grew in the gully behind camp we had the start of a delicious meal. PaulL was not feeling too well though and did not partake.

*Ken's Diary 'Snowed last night, woke up to a cloudy morning. Much discussion this morning, a decision had to be made. We eventually agreed to climb Krazha Peak by different routes. Ian and Susan took a ridge line, while myself and Paul H, Paul L and Will went up a gully and climbed two different lines. I climbed with Paul L and we front pointed for most of the second section. The final ice wall was around 70%, we called this line 'Hybrid' after Paul L's favourite music. Once on the ridge I had to go to the toilet and unfortunately had no toilet paper, hence why we called this ridge 'Boxer Short Ridge'.*

*'From here we climbed the snow ridge, which led to the corniced top. Some good views and we spotted out next objective in the next valley.*

*We came down to the ridge then myself, PL, PH and Will went across to White Top Rock 4347.5m and then took a scree run for 600m down to the valley.*

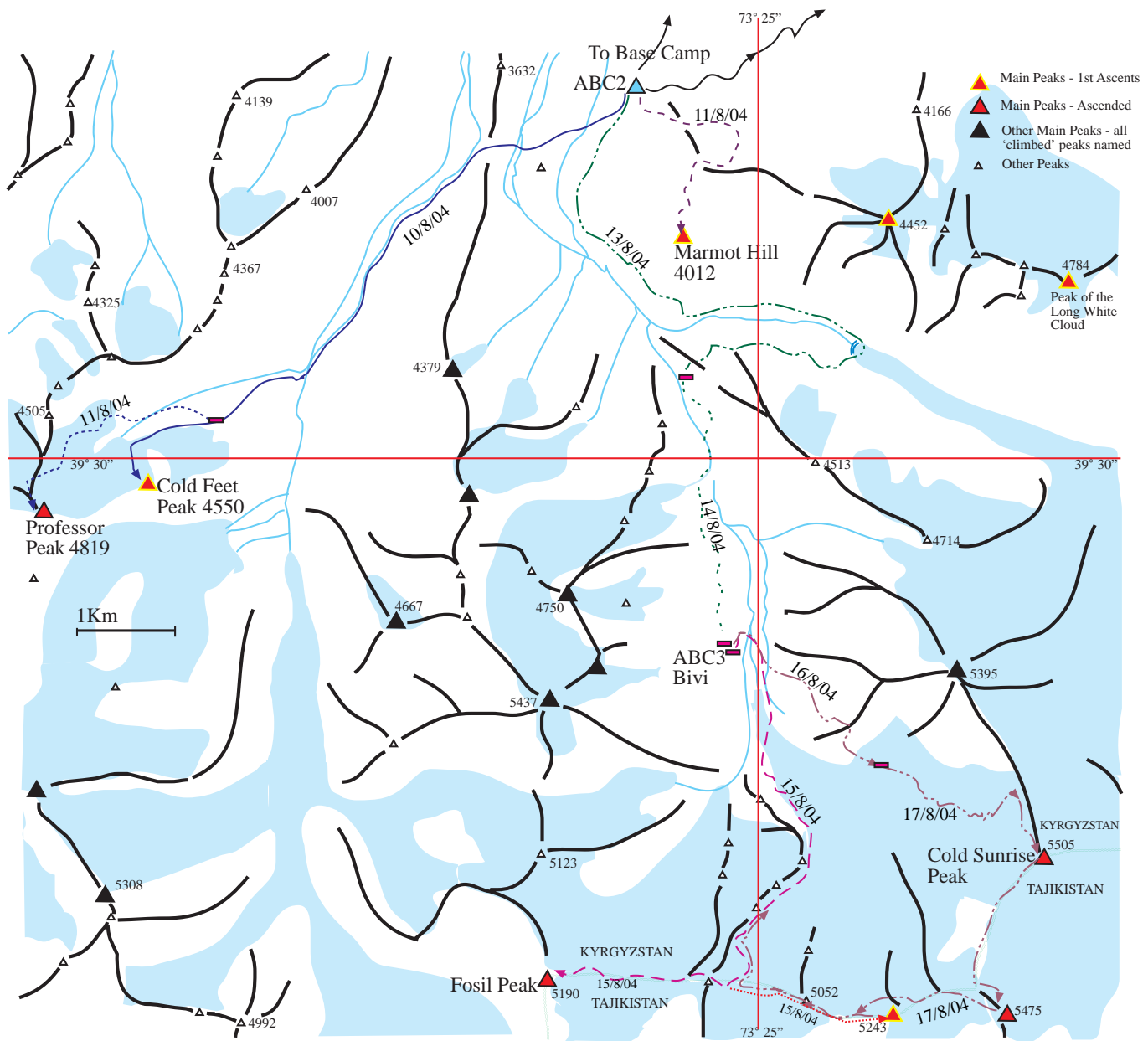
*Back down at ABC1 Paul L not feeling well, has the runs'.*

## **Wednesday 4th August.**

With a rise in atmospheric pressure the day dawned fair and stayed that way. This was designated a rest day so that is all that happened. Ian made pancakes for breakfast with the dried egg and that was very welcome and tasty. Ian and Susan had chosen their line on the hill they had seen and seemed to have that organised with no invitations to anyone else. PaulL who had felt unwell yesterday still felt off colour, he had also had a poor nights sleep, and decided that a couple of days at Base would do the trick. Some care and attention was what he craved for so he set off with Will to accompany him part of the way and return on a mushroom hunt. Ken disappeared alone with his music to find some time and space.

In the afternoon it was decided that the whole group would go and look at this new hill, I certainly thought it a good option and worthy of a team effort. I declined mushrooms at the evening meal as the night before after some other mushrooms I had the most alarming dreams and put it down to the





### Journeys from ABC2

Peak of the Cold Feet

Professor's Peak

Marmot Peak

Explore to Ian's Valley 1

Explore Ian's Valley ABC3 bivi

Fossil Peak

Karina Peak

Peak of the Cold Sunrise

10th August

11th August

11th August

13th August

14th August

15th August

15th August

17th August

1st Ascent (British)

1st British Ascent (1st Ascent ?)

1st Ascent

1st British/American Ascent

1st Ascent (British)

1st British/American Ascent

hallucinogenic effect of the wild catch.

*Ken's Diary: 'Paul L went down to Base camp, I really feel for him, he is finding it hard to acclimatise. Hope it doesn't put him off high altitude climbing'.*

### **5th August Thursday.**

While this was not a rest day, as we were setting off for our bivi in the afternoon, it rather seemed like one. There was the inevitable reassessment of the gear and food to be taken, several

times. A day of brilliant sunshine with the sun scorching any exposed skin, so suncream was lavished over faces and arms as we set off in the afternoon for a bivi at the col south of Krazha summit.



**Ian** *"While on the summit of Krazha [4592m] on 3rd August we were blessed with perfect visibility. This gave us the opportunity to look closely at possible climbing and approach routes for further projects. One of these possibilities was to become a reality in the form of Andy's route."*

Setting off on a really good day always brings me a feeling of apprehension about tomorrow and the likelihood of a change in the weather for the worse. Would the spell of fine days extend to three I wondered as we set off along the river bed passing below Krazha's summit.

PaulL was back in base Camp getting some antibiotics and rest so it was just five of us that followed the water towards its various sources higher up the valley. The river always became more difficult in the afternoon so there was some exploration to spy out the best place to cross, those with ski poles had an advantage but all managed it dry and safely. We moved up onto the snow where an easy angled slope gained a higher flatter area of rock. I caught Susan up here as she decided that crampons were in order but soon she was off again overtaking me and following Ian onto the incline that led to the steeper slopes up to the col.

**Ian;** *Nothing is ever easy, two days later we found the approach to our bivi was testament to this. We had the option of repeating an ascent of Krazha and descending the North ridge to a col and potential bivi site or, ascending the col direct from the valley below. We chose the direct ascent from the valley in the hope that this would save unnecessary height gain. We hadn't bargained on the dreadfully loose scree and boulder field that formed the final headwall. With luck and careful footwork we all arrived at the col [4450m] intact but, used a lot of adrenaline in the process.*

Never being one to just follow I decided to take a different line and instead of the fine scree and loose boulders of Ian, Ken and I chose a rocky one. The boulders were large in most places and rough enough to stay in place as we passed. We watched as occasional boulders threw themselves at Susan or Will as they ascended. We had our difficult places too but all went well and we finished our ascent with a snow line and traverse to where the other three had begun to set out their bivi places.

Will was not too good when he reached the bivi site and seemed to be a bit greenish in colour. Ian noticed this and looked after Will feeding him tea and a boil in the bag vegetarian meal. Feeling unwell Will started the evening in a cocoon of Thermal undies, fleece salopettes and pullover, fleece liner, down bag and a gortex bivi outer; apparently this turned out to be a bit on the warm side so at various times all the fleece layers became discarded achieving a more acceptable and comfortable temperature.

**Ian** tells the story; *"The weather was very kind to us once more and we had superb views of the*

*surrounding peaks at sunset. With no light pollution the sky was clear throughout the night and we had a superb display of meteorite clusters burning-up above us.*

*After a brew and other foods at 0430 the following morning, we descended very fine, steep, loose scree to the glacier floor. This was new territory to us and after such a steep descent we knew that we would have to re-ascend the same route at the end of the day in order to return to ABC 1. Not a great prospect!*

*From the viewpoint on Krazha summit in recent days, we had seen a possible ascent route of our mountain but were unsure of the descent route. For this reason we split into 2 parties, with Susan and myself going further along the glacier to view the unseen face that might yield an easy descent. The other party of Ken, Paul H and Will set off up the projected route as planned.*

*The unseen face proved far too dangerous to contemplate in descent. With 3 sets of hanging glaciers and numerous seracs in the fall-line it seemed sensible to retreat via the original planned line of ascent.*

*However, as we had gone past the original line being attempted by the others, it seemed feasible to take a more direct ascent route from where we were, in order to join them higher up the face. This would initially involve some objective danger from above and was much steeper. It also looked to contain sections of hollow ice as it followed the edge of a truncated hanging glacier.*

*Laziness dictated our route choice as it meant we didn't have to retrace our steps to begin the original route, now a long way to our right. We also took the decision to leave our sacks behind in order to speed up our ascent. A decision we regretted later.*

*Setting off up the bottom slopes was good, with just the occasional section of rotten ice. We were spurred on by the objective dangers above and breathed a sigh of relief when we moved rightwards out of the fall line. From here onwards we could follow a vague snowy rib leading up to some mixed ground and then on to the final cornices.*

*With Ian and Susan disappearing off round some far corner to tackle an overhanging ascent full of potential dangers. The slope (original route) that took my fancy which had looked really steep from across the valley leant back as we neared it and almost invited us onto it pleasures. After an initial soft avalanche area, that Ken had struggled up, the neve became beautifully crisp and the crunch of ice under the crampon points said it all; safe and hard. I took over the lead enjoying the delicate stepping up with no need of front pointing or of kicking steps.*

*Very soon the other group joined our line and looking down I could see the other party converging with my line of steps from below. We would continue the ascent from here as a single line of ants on one big sugar cube.*

*Progress was steady [for steady, read slow] and we were entertained with a couple of tricky sections in the upper 200 metres. The first use of ice screws and ice-stakes was evidence that we were taking it seriously. There was also a hint that the weather might close in on us, which I took to be a punishment for leaving the sack and extra warm gear at the bottom. Fortunately it remained only a threat and the worst we encountered was a strengthening of the wind."*

*At one of the tricky sections which Ian had lead on the left, Ken tried an alternative route looking for a classier ascent to the right. This however only led him into the 'abyss' area and he quickly discovered some giant holes, which he nearly fell into, lurking beneath the nice looking snow. Saved by a rib of ice which caught him a-chaval Ken re-grouped and led back left to surmount the obstacle.*

**Ian** *"The final pitch was a surprise as having burrowed and hacked through a substantial cornice,*

*the summit was only metres away. I had expected to see a ridge going off into the distance, so this was a much nicer option."*

Susan followed as soon as she had extricated herself from the snowfall caused by Ian's ascent.

**Ian** *"We were soon all on the summit, checking the altimeter readings, taking photos and preparing a big snow-mushroom to descend on."*

From the summit we all stood gazing at the range of mountains all around us. Eigers, Silberhorns and Matterhorns, lay one behind the other, stretching from us to the high ridge south and east; to the west ranks of hills stretching as far as the eye could see led in the distance to the highest peaks of the Pamirs. Enjoying the best views of the trip we all had our photographs taken, visitors in a pristine world. Then we were descending from 'Charity Peak' (1st Ascent 4982m).

**Ian** *"As the last of the party made their way along the crest to the 2nd summit, we began abseiling from the mushroom in order to begin rigging the descent."*

*The original route up was certainly the best descent line. Economical use of a snow stake and another ice-mushroom allowed us to get down safely with minimal loss of gear. In our keenness to get down, Susan and I overshot the junction of the two ascent routes and had to re-ascend 100 metres to get back online. That'll teach us!*

*It took a full 5 hours to return from the summit to our dumped sacks, having only taken 4 hours to ascend. The extra dogleg involved felt very hard work and the soft glacier surface made the walk back to the base of the bivi col very tedious indeed.*

*A different line of ascent to the bivi col was used and this proved to be less steep. Bearing in mind what we had done in the previous 24 hours this was very much appreciated. Although loose, the gentler slope angle made the ascent far less Kamikaze. It was 1700 hours as we warmed up a ration pack meal at the bivi site in readiness for our return to ABC.*

*Loath to descend the awful scree of the previous day's ascent we all chose to ascend the ridge to the summit of Krazha for a second time. This allowed for a steadier descent to ABC with a variety of options for all concerned.*

*We arrived back at ABC as the last of the sun was disappearing from view. The final sting in the tail was the river crossing to get to our tents. Being so late in the day the water was at full flow and needed long detours upstream or very wet, brave gymnastics to get across. Paul L had returned to camp and administered copious brews and TLC where necessary. We were all agreed that we'd had a fantastic couple of days of adventure.*

*[FOOTNOTE: In 1990 a friend of mine from Huddersfield, Andy Bennett, was killed in a climbing accident in the Alps. As someone who always enjoyed an*



*adventure to the full, he would have appreciated our 2-day epic, as it was very much “in his style”. This one’s for you Andy!]*”

*Ken’s Diary ‘The snow is good at the steep first section of the face. I lead off the neve welcoming each strike of my ice axes. The calves start to ache as we front point up for around 100m, reaching a protrusion of rock the first belay goes in. Will and Paul H follow up as we aim for the ridgeline on our left. It takes around ten rope lengths before the sun greets us on the ridge. Here we meet Ian and Susan who had taken a line on the other side of the ridge. Now we are a group of 5 making out way up the deep snow. The first cornice Ian overcame after some scurrying, snow disappearing under his boots as he launched up and over the top. Susan followed and went more direct as ice splintered all around her as she hacked to the left and right, cursing as she got over the soft collapsing snow. I crossed the steep slope and traversed right away from all the debris, as I got higher the snow collapsed below me, quickly I banged in an ice screw and perched precariously on front points on two bits of rock whilst digging out a trough to launch myself upwards. The ice higher up was good and I managed to get over the top and secured myself to a snow stake. From here the route stayed fairly steep surmounting a couple of rock walls before climbing the final cornice. We abseiled off a snow mushroom and made our way back down the ridge as the weather started to change. It was a long trudge back down to the bottom before having to gain the ridge where we bivvied and go back up Krazha and down to ABC1. A really good day and my favourite climb so far’.*

This two day trip was a delight with the mountain fulfilling its promise of snow and ice. That was unlike Mongolia in 2002 where a winter photograph from space had encouraged me to think that there was more snow and Ice than there turned out to be. It was also more ‘organised’ with no forced bivis unlike the trips to South America in ‘93 and 99 where Ken and I had slept in a number of ‘interesting’ situations snuggled up to one another. As well as Ken’s dice with ‘death’ at the hollow mountain area he also amused Will by trying the ‘self inflicted wound’ as he pulled himself on to the summit by hitting himself in the face with his special ice axe, the axe remained undamaged.



## ***7th August Saturday***

The chance to sleep late was denied to Will when the roar of the Primus broke into his slumber. Susan was probably the first up though it might have been Ian. Pancakes from 'Mrs. Ian's Cookbook' gave us a good start to the day which had been designated a REST day so there was much lounging and journal writing, tea drinking, sorting of gear and even sunbathing. Again Ian was busy in the kitchen and with the midday soup came parathas (fried unleavened bread).

As the day wore on Ken became fed up with sitting round so he took PaulL up for a walk to Whaleback. This was a good idea as they returned telling all that the first trip had not reached the summit at all. In the whiteout they had in fact fallen short by about 200 yards and at least 17 feet!

In camp the four of us turned to discussing - what next! After some discussion it was decided that this area was all but exhausted so another ABC needed to be chosen. Instead of going deeper into this area, which would have made a lot of logistical difficulties, we chose to try an alternative to the west below PaulL's peak. This was the original place that we had spied from the road. Will and Susan, on their exploration day, had thought it looked a good option. The reorganisation began.

## ***8th - 9th August Sunday***

Packing up always takes longer than anticipated and this time it was no different. By the time all had been sorted into sensible bundles, leaving enough for a sensible second trip for four, the sun was up and gaining height in the sky. All of us set out with our personal belongings to reach PaulL's peak area. The plan was that when Ian, Ken, PaulL and I were to return to ABC1 for all the group gear, Susan and Will would set off to Base for some extra supplies of fuel and food, returning the following day.

We arrived above the giant river bed nearly together and spied out the possibilities of the area. From above there seemed to be a good site round to our left where a small stream came out of some hills and joined the main river bed. The site was grassed over and looked delightful.

Pitching the two tents we had brought and stowing all the gear we had some tea and after some discussion about the next venture separated as we had planned.

ABC2 was situated next to a wide river bed, much too wide for the water it had in it and much too wide for even the biggest spring melt one could imagine. I surmised that over time the changing route of the river had carved out this extensive course through the undulations on the plain. Opposite ABC2 lay an interesting area that all had their eyes on.

During the second run from ABC1 to ABC2 I decided it was time for a mix-up of the sleeping arrangements. I thought the group might become to paired off so initiated the change by moving in with Ian. ABC2 was not as good as the brochure had promised, the water from the local hill was very sulphurous and the grass was host to innumerable mosquitoes that thought all their Christmases had come at once with all the free meals of blood arriving in the area. It was just endurable though and we made the best of it.

The plan had been to go off and explore the hills across the main river on the day after Will and Susan returned. On the allotted day Will was the only one to return as Susan had been feeling weak and poorly but was going to return to ABC2 the day after. I was concerned that Susan should not feel left out of the group so decided to wait for her to arrive on the following day and hopefully follow after the main group as a pair. The glacial river that had to be crossed even at 'low tide' was a bit of a trial and it would have been too dangerous for a lone person to attempt.

**Ian** *"All attempts at finding an easy crossing point for the main river in the valley at ABC 2 had failed. To go further up the valley to the peaks and corries of the South would involve a long detour via a subsidiary valley and glacier snout. To go West would either involve an epic swim, acrobatics on an aerial runway, exciting rubber-rafting or semi-comatose stupidity in the form of early-morning wading.*

*We were fortunate to have a surplus of the important ingredient for the latter, which is why we could all be found at 0600hrs on the riverbank on Tuesday 10th August.*

*Previous recces had suggested that we were at the most suitable point of the river, for an attempt at wading across. A few tentative steps into the torrent proved that this would only just be possible and, we would have to be very careful.*

*Stripped upwards to the waist and wearing just plastic outer boots we leaned on our ski sticks, facing upstream to create a human tripod, and edged our way across a very rapid, brown, icy-cold river. There was no real way to use a rope and group tactics would only have over-complicated the issue. The flow rate of the river was just low enough to allow us across before it began to rise again with the early morning meltwater from the glaciers above. The last person to cross noticed a distinct rise in levels in the time between the first tentative attempts and the last successful crossing. This would only have been 30 to 40 minutes duration showing that timing had been crucial to our success.*

*Once across we waved goodbye to Paul H on the other bank as he was going to wait for Susan's return to ABC 2 that day. He looked as relieved as we were that we'd all managed to cross safely.*

*Our feet were very numb as we put on our dry inner-boots and set off to find our way up the West River valley. It was only after our first rest stop and major foot reincarnation that we all managed to feel our feet properly after their icy plunge.*

*We still had various bits of river to cross but these were much easier than the main valley. In fact our progress up the true left bank of the river was steady and we were able to look ahead to plan our route up the side valley leading to our prospective peaks.*

*After an hour following the river upstream and a slog up a grassy spur at right angles to the main valley, we arrived at a small knoll at 4400m with meltwater close by. Being loath to carry gear further than absolutely necessary we chose this as our bivi site.*

*Our very early start from ABC 2 had given us a large helping of daylight, allowing us to consider a recce or possible attempt of the nearer of our two prospective peaks that same afternoon. After reviving with a couple of brews and numerous biccies we headed uphill with as little technical gear as possible*

*Will had obviously been donated a magic pair of boots from a water-nymph at our earlier river crossing as he motored ahead, kicking steps for us all to follow. It was actually quite hard keeping up with him and I for one almost ran out of credible excuses as to why we needed to take regular rests during the ascent. Paul and Ken on the other rope did try to overtake at one point but soon realised the error of their ways and were content to drop back and let Young Will "jack-hammer" the steps for them to follow. While the climbing was nowhere technical, it was hard enough considering what we had already accomplished in the day. Just 3 hours after our arrival at our Bivi site we were standing on the summit of the first of our West Valley Peaks, at 4550m*



## PACING THE CAGE

Daily lives taken up with clocks  
Deadlines ,targets and tables  
We stumble through each week  
Expeditions are what we seek  
Faraway thoughts of mountains  
Glaciers and shimmering rivers  
Apprehension in the exploratory age  
Here I am pacing the cage

Double-check the gear  
Our intentions are clear  
From the cold light of day  
Into the rain and hail  
Like a caged tiger we feel restricted  
Some areas are not permitted  
But our team is committed  
We all have to pace the cage

To climb new peaks and routes  
Maps will be adjusted and changed  
Our lives have been rearranged  
It's hard not to feel the change  
It becomes harder each time we return  
But nothing can stay the same  
No matter how it's written  
You find yourself pacing the cage

KF

*The views in all directions were stunning. To the east were the larger peaks of the Zaalayskiy group topped by Kurumdy at 6613m. Here we could also see, in the foreground, one of the ridge routes that we had salivated over at ABC2. Unfortunately our new view showed it to be a rotting pile of choss that would be best substituted by another objective. To the West our eyes were drawn to the never-ending Pamir range extending to the far horizon, with the road to Tajikistan in the valley immediately below. To the North we could now make out all the details of various approach routes that we could have used when we arrived in the truck. Hindsight is such a frustrating thing!*

*Lastly, to the South, we could see a number of small peaks, like the one we were standing on, and “more robust” possibilities behind them. The most disconcerting feature of this summit was the loud roar and constant churning that we could hear from the river in the valley immediately to the South. If we could hear it that well, from that distance, what would it be like to cross in an approach to the peaks there? We had learned very fast that morning that rivers need as much respect as the mountains above.*

*Pleased not to find a cairn already on our summit, we built one of our own and then began to retrace our steps along the summit ridge. The strange nature of the mountains in this region was reinforced by our view of a perfect snow slope and “alpine feel” to the North side of the ridge and a bare, rocky, scree-covered “lunar landscape” on the South side.*



*Aided by gravity, rather than Wills’ magic boots, we returned rapidly to our bivi via a more direct traverse line than we’d taken in ascent. This took us across some extremely unconsolidated scree sitting on even less consolidated ice. Adrenaline levels were quite diminished by the time we finally arrived back at our bivi. We had to agree that, all in all, we’d not done badly for a day’s work!*

*We were very lucky to experience dry conditions once more. Food, brews, warm sleeping bags and a clear, starry night were our rewards for such a busy day.*

*Wednesday’s alarm had us back in action at 0545. After brews and porridge we returned uphill via a similar route to the previous day. We had to go quite a bit further over a large boulder field to reach a long, gently-sloping glacier, which gradually steepened on its way up to our second prospective peak.*

*Paul L was in charge of the “magic step-kicking boots” for the day and, spurred on by Ken, he led us up the approaches. Part way up, however, there was a technical fault with the boots and Paul suffered considerably as he had to switch to human mode. The knock-on effect was disastrous and caused him to be very unwell, suffering both sickness and the deleterious effects of altitude. It was not deemed bad enough for him to retreat, but it did considerably slow down the rest of the ascent. Ken “I’m a Paramedic” Finlay kept a good eye on him for the rest of the day. We were very fortunate that the cloud cover at this time protected us from direct sunshine, which would have made matters far worse on such a big glacier. Without the cloud we would have been burnt to a frazzle.*

*Estimating distance ahead was difficult and the route turned out to be many more rope-lengths than we had first imagined. The gentle slopes at the start of the ascent had considerably foreshortened the actual route length. Towards the top of the first half of the route the angle of the snow increased sharply so we diverted to spend some time ascending a scree arete in preference to the vertical snow and ice next to it.*

*After 100 metres of scree we returned to the upper snow face and plodded our way upwards on good snow with no surprises or major difficulties. We had some long rests and waits for Paul to catch us up so that we could all do the final sections to the summit together.*

*Progress slowed considerably as we began to feel the exertions of the previous 36 hours. However,*

*we managed to negotiate the twisting sections of hollow snow of the final ridge, reaching the summit at 1230hrs. Our altimeter readings gave an average of 4840 m. Views were a repeat of those from the day before with one exception. We had considered it possible to climb both of the West River Valley peaks in one trip by climbing the ridge that linked the two. From our new perspective this was another project that would be erased from the drawing board.*

*°Pleased with yet another successful ascent, our only minor disappointment was the existence of what appeared to be a cairn on the summit, meaning this probably wasn't a first ascent. Never mind you can't win 'em all! We were elated at having had yet another superb day in the mountains with bivi-friendly weather.*

*Our descent was rapid and Paul seemed to come round increasingly as we hit the higher oxygen levels. At our bivi we ate most of our supplies and had as many brews as we could while applying some restraint to leave some for later.*

*We knew we would be unable to return all the way to ABC 2 in the day, as the river levels would be too high. We opted instead to return as far as possible down the valley and to camp on the riverbank, in readiness for an early morning assault the following day. Having packed away our gear it was a full 2 hours back down the main valley to a suitable site overlooking our crossing point. Despite some enthusiastic, if not desperate attempts we were unable to cross either of the rivers between us and ABC 2, so the morning plunge would have to be a double crossing. Eek!!*

*Another clear, starry night was enjoyed by all, although the constant roar of the river was a reminder of what lay in store for the morning.*

*It was frosty at 0400 on Thursday morning as we got our stiff bodies and fingers to pack away our gear. The cold meant that our first river crossing under headtorch was relatively straightforward, as the meltwater was minimal. The main river still proved "interesting" though, and it was with great relief and, barely aware of our slowly-reviving, cold feet, that we stumbled back into ABC 2 at 0630.*



*Hot brews and Marmite parathas have never tasted so good!"*

**Ian Arnold**

*Ken's Diary: 10th 'It was flowing fast and with it being 6a.m. it was very cold. The team were all stripping off, we had to, had no choice, and we had to cross the river. The water was cold and it took my breath away as I gingerly stepped into the water and used my ski pole to stop the current from taking my legs away. I could hear the rocks underneath shuffling in line, the current was very strong. There was a lot of silt and this crept in between my toes and deep into my boots. Relief on the other side was met with very, very cold feet. I spent the next 15 minutes, trying to breathe new life into my cold and*

*View across from above ABC2 towards "Paul's Peak" (Unnamed and in the end unattempted)*

*frozen feet. We stopped a couple of time to dry our feet and rinse our socks out. The approach to our hidden valley was very enjoyable, the azimuth of rich green lilies and grass was a welcome sight in this harsh terrain. After a couple of hours we reached a bivvy spot above a grassy spur that would be home to us for the next 2 days.*

*After a break we went up this small valley and approached the nearest mountain, Will teamed up with Ian, while I put Paul L on my rope. The snow was OK considering we were at the bottom of the North Face at midday. It only took us just under 2 hours to reach the rocky summit and we had some great views'.*

*The evening was warm and clear, I saw quite a number of shooting stars, what a wonderful place to be'.*

With the team reunited food became the order of the day and Parathas, fryups, chocolate and drinks filled the rest of the day and it was a heavy group that retired to their tents that day

While the 'Group of four' had been off on their jaunt Susan had been recovering further and though she had been unable to follow the Stream group now felt much more back to her normal everready self.

On the day before the team returned, while they had been ascending Professor's Peak I went off on a little jaunt of my own, partly to evade the mosquitoes and partly that I needed to do something. Above the camp the ground rose back to the ridge that we had come on when moving from ABC1 and then up again, it seemed to be linked to the soft rock area just south of our encampment, but it was not clear.

Packing my sack with a few sweets and a small amount of water I set off to explore. The way was of course easy and up the grass slopes I gradually made my way, drifting from interesting clump of grasses and flowers to another. Above the first ridge the earth steepened and that made me slower than before but there was no pressure in keeping up with anyone as I was on my own. Alpine plants soon began to appear as little clumps amongst the grasses but then the grasses became shorter and the flowers took more of a hold. To my delight I found that this was a good area for the small alpine that I had christened 'Moon Flower' they were a most beautiful grey-blue almost metallic silver. I took some photographs hoping that they would turn out. Then it was a narrow crest before I was on the lower slopes of a small rounded hill with Marmots all around whistling and keeping a lookout. As soon as any more than my head showed to them the Marmots were off into their burrows.

The top of the hill gave excellent views into the main glacier valley and into "Ian's valley" which lay off the main valley just south of PaulL's Peak. Both of these valleys looked really interesting and worthy of more exploration, if only we had more time left but we did not. I spent a wonderful couple of hours enjoying the views and waiting for the clouds to clear the peaks in the main valley which of course they never did.

When we were all together again it was decided to give the side valley we were all now calling "Ian's Valley" a go for the last few days of the expedition. Thus on Friday 13th August we set off up the valley to explore. On his return from the river crossing peaks Ian's fingers had been in a bad way with cracks cutting into his skin. Late on the 12th he decided to do a quick return to the Base Camp where some superglue lay in his personal medical kit, That would help his fingers mend and protect them while they did so. Just as we were setting off, Ian arrived back from Base. Knowing that he could catch us up easily we started off while he made a refreshing brew for himself.

Ian and I had been this way before as on one afternoon we had decided to explore this valley a little way and I had continued nearly to the glacier snout. In preparation for the cross river trip Ken and Paul had spied out any crossing places where a drenching could be avoided. The came up with none. Thus we were setting off up the valley this time with full sacks aiming to cross the river at the snout of ice that marked the start of the glacier in the main valley. As ever Susan and Ian were out in front and

crossed it just ahead of Will and I. Above s on the hillside they watched as we and then PaulL and Ken made our ways towards them. At one point out of our view, PaulL had a nasty fall cracking his head on a rather hard boulder. We all rested to give him a chance to feel better and then progressed back towards ABC2 but of the other side of the river and at a higher elevation.

With the somewhat late start and the heavy sacks we did not make the progress we had expected so as we rounded the lip of the watercourse that led into the side valley the team decided that a stop would be called for. Thus we spent the first night just hundreds of yards from ABC2. A small pool gave us the water we needed and we settled down for a good nights rest with the boom of the waterfalls filling the air.

## *14th August Saturday*

Somehow I got into the lead and with Will made my way up a boulder field and across to the stream. Following it on the left for a short distance I decided to cross its fast deep waters by means of an old snow bridge. Once across Will and I followed the stream for a little and then found a gully, well really a scoop in the mud walls, that provided a route to the top. Not far behind the others followed and we assembled by a large rock. We could now look along the valley for the first time. I was surprised by its length and the high mountain peaks above us. I felt very dwarfed by the hugeness of the area, and this was just a side valley!

I chose a line that stayed on the north of the stream and continued up and down and up again along its rough and undulating surface. Fine sand gave way to flood 'plane' areas and then to ice followed by boulder fields. At one point we were feeling a bit tired and we nearly made camp but Ian and Will decided to look ahead and from that excursion we decided that a better option lay about a mile ahead where the valley opened up and we would be nearer its head.

Just after an ice/snow bridge that gave easy access to the other side of the valley we found a flattish area with a small stream close by. We stopped.

Will and Ken went for a look around a bit higher up and seemed to be disappearing up to the hilltops but in the end did not, returning with descriptions of how the land lay.

PaulL (dry stone waller), Ken and Will decided that their stay needed a substantial building and so they set about constructing a two foot wall enclosing an area twelve foot square, it had a door away from the river. I helped a little and tried it for the first night but found the noise of the river too disturbing and found other accommodation for the other nights.

Straight ahead at the 'head' of the valley lay a straight forward domed shaped peak and what looked like an easy access. By following a natural rake we could reach the crest easily and then plod along its crest to the top - this seemed like a good excursion for our first mountain day. It was decided to rise early.



## 15th August Sunday

It was 4.30 and dark, Ian had set his alarm again and soon we were breakfasted and off. Leading Ian and Susan I made good progress across the broken earth and boulder terrain to the glacier but as Ian, Susan and I made height up the snow my legs began to work at a slower pace. As the sun rose I realised that I was in the wrong group. Despite protests I untied from the rope and urged Ian and Susan to keep up their superior pace, make the ridge in good order and do some real exploring on the ridge that lay right and left. I had already delayed the pair and felt quite guilty about it. They made off quickly, quickly producing a widening gap between us while I continued to struggled along in their tracks.

Ian and Susan got to the ridge at least fifteen minutes before me and moved a little to the left, east, towards a rather nice looking peak but then stopped and seemed to be frozen in discussion. Thus they were still on the ridge when I reached them.

For Will, PaulL and Ken, starting early made them forgetful and realising that a rope might be a useful item, Ken had to return to ABC3-bivi to collect one.

Joining Ian and Susan I could not work out why they were still on this part of the ridge but sensed some disagreement had taken place. Susan had commented earlier about wanting more than a snow plod and Ian was usually up for a bit of action! Susan I believe was uneasy about the dangers of the peak to the left (East) which looked the pick of the options.

In the end the whole team of seven made it to the Westerly peak and posed on its rocky outcrop full of fossil shells - 'Fossil Peak' (1st British/American Ascent 5116m). From this vantage we looked down into Tajikistan and along the Pamir chain to the West and somewhere Pic Lenin. To the East the border ridge ran off curving round, peak following peak. Sary Tash could be seen across the plane and the road from Tajikistan passed below us running towards it.

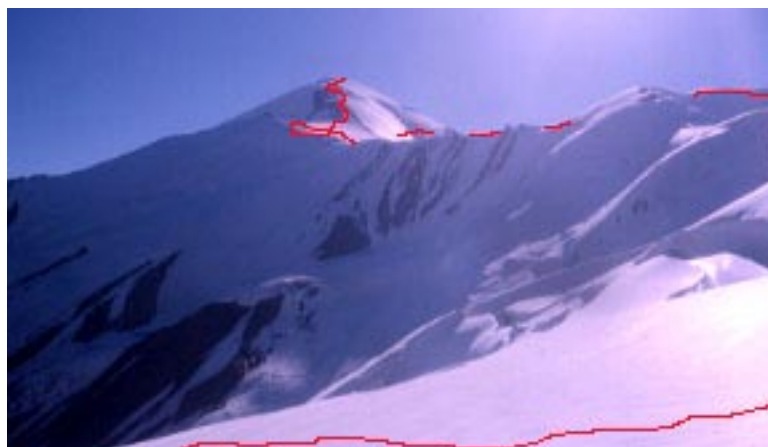
Back at the col Ken, after a slow start in the morning, had at last found his 'mountain head' and in this mood was ready for something extra. Asking if anyone was game for another summit only Will and Shaun took the challenge and they made off for the attractive eastern peak, 'Peak Karina' (1st Ascent 5052m). Ken, Shaun and Will thought this ascent the best of the expedition, but I bet they are just saying that!

*Ken's Diary ; 'It was a great sight seeing all the group in front making there way up the snow slope towards a big snow dome. The glacier was easy to cross and we were making good time. It was mainly a snow plod and soon we were on the summit, the views were fantastic.*

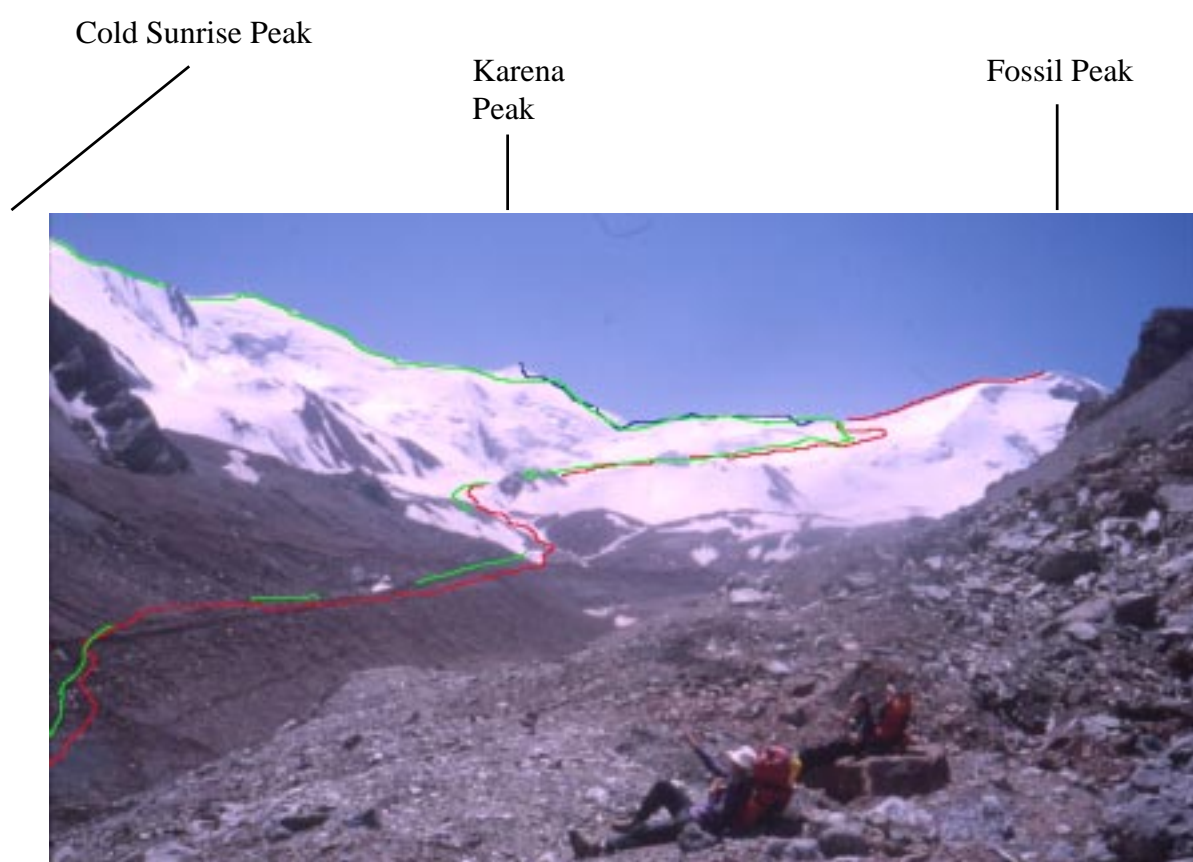
*From the col, Will and me went onto the next mountain, I was surprised nobody else fancied it.*

Fossil Peak, Ian and Susan await our arrival





Karena Peak ascent route



Red = ascent of Fossil and Karena Peaks. Green = the descent from Cold Sunrise Peak

*We had a bite to eat before going up the corniced ridge. Because of the nature of the snow we had to keep going from one side of the ridge to the other. It was a great experience just the two of us on this climb. Two small chimneys had loose rock in them and I managed to find belays on both to bring Will up. The snow was good but I knew that on the way down it would be very soft. We could see the others descending the glacier below us. We reached the top in 2 hours and the whole of Tajikistan opened up beyond us. There were just mountains beyond all tempting us with ridges and faces. A superb sight to end a great days climbing’.*

## ***16th August Monday***

The plans were in flux somewhat with a trip to the local sharpie on the boards for most when PaulL came up with that idea of attempting something a little higher on the slopes south of the camp. I decided that I would go with that if PaulL thought two would be enough but before long it was the whole team that were planning for the same route.

A restful morning and a double dinner with triple pudding ( a mistake for me) gave way to an afternoon start towards a high bivi on a rocky outcrop below the main ice wall. The group split up choosing their own variations and all arriving at the site before me, I was feeling definitely under the weather, too much food and tired.

At the bivi I told the others that I might descend from here in the morning if I did not feel any better than I did at this point. It was a cold night and I mistakenly removed my boots putting on an extra pair of socks for warmth but they were not enough. I woke in the “morning” with very cold toes which never did recover and by the end of the day discovered that I had frost nip on all the toes that took three months to recover.

I think Ian has been on too many Alpine holidays, and he had us up for 12 midnight. I found the sky rather dark and as we edged our way upward amongst the ice and rock outcrops the planning of yesterday seemed to be lost as we also lost our place amongst the dark slopes. Will seemed to know where he was going however and made good progress between ice falls and rock.

At 4am Will, Paul L and Ken took a rest as Paul L needed a break to avoid the Ken Syndrome of ‘underpant rejection’; Sue, Ian and I carried on up towards the ridge. PaulL had a most interesting time struggling to find bareness beneath layers of clothing all having different fastenings and his actions brought Ken and Will to their knees with laughter.

### ***Will:-***

*To reach the necessary state PaulL had to.....*

- (1) Remove Climbing Harness - this unclipped and folded down from the front*
- (2) Undo Sprayway waterproof Salopettes - Entry to those was via a cunning zip which went between the legs, starting at the fly.*
- (3) Now the Mountain Equipment Ultrafleece Salopettes - these had zips down the sides thus PaulL could pull aside that bit out of the way*
- (4) Underpants.*
- (5) Fall over*

*All the various fleece layers needed to go in different directions and with only two hands that was VERY difficult. After a couple of minutes it all became too much for Ken and I and we started to giggle, once started we never stopped. Even Paul began to see the funny side of it but that WAS tempered by his overwhelming urge!*

That done PaulL’s team started off again following our footsteps and lights. After a short while PaulL started to ask for more and more rests. On more than one of these rests PaulL began to fall

uncontrollably asleep even while standing. It dawned on Will and Ken that he was suffering some sort of altitude problem and that they needed to get him down. At this point a shouted and sometimes confusing conversation took place between the two parties and eventually it was agreed that the two 'healthy' climbers below could adequately deal with the situation on their own leaving those up above free to continue.

*Ken's Diary 'Up at midnight, it was cold and the wind had picked up, hope the weather holds up for at least today. We set off up the glacier head torches lighting the way. Two groups with Paul L leading the way and doing a good job in avoiding the seracs and crevasses.*

*Around 2.30am Will took over the lead and it seemed as though we had made no impression on the gigantic face. It began to get steeper and soon we were on our front points, just the noise of the crisp snow to keep me company in the darkness. At around 5.30 pm. Paul L started to feel the altitude and he needed to make brown snow. He had a real job in working out how to take off his clothing while staying attached to the rope and balance himself on the 70% face. After this comical stop we carried on up the face, but Paul was not feeling well. Whenever we stopped he started to fall asleep and wanted to stop more and more. Then he felt sick and weak and was getting slower and slower. By now the other team had reached the ridge and were waiting for us. I made the decision that we had to get Paul down, to go on would be far too dangerous for us three. We quickly dug out a platform and waited for daylight. By 6 am. we started to descend, with Will going down first as I belayed him, then Paul would abseil down the rope before I down climbed. The sequence was then repeated until we reached easier ground.*

*It was still cloudy by the time we got down to the bivvy, but relieved because Paul had sufficiently recovered from his ordeal.*

*The rest of the team did carry on and climbed another mountain before having to endure some tough conditions on the way down.*

*That evening the weather changed and we had lots of snow and we became the 'prisoners of gortex'. A damp wet night in my bivvy bag.*

I began to realise yet again that I was on a rope with super humans and was continually dragged along much to my annoyance. For their part Ian and Sue were going as slow as they dare while just managing to keep themselves warm. From time to time the slope steepened and became more interesting but I never needed more than one axe to keep going, though there were a couple of times that I would have appreciated a second one in use but then I was too far back on the rope and did not feel able to stop to get the other off the rucksack.

This was the longest climb I have ever been on, 'top' after 'top' loomed ahead only for each to disappear into the continuing slope. The sky began to lighten, the cold became more intense as I became even slower. At some point the angle lay back but that was of little help as the snow became deeper making it more difficult! Eventually as the sun rose we gained the final line and much to my relief we soon stood on the summit of 'Cold Sunrise Peak' (1st British/American Ascent 5505m). This was our last peak of the expedition.

Our return along the ridge which should have afforded us fantastic views and interesting new summits was affected by thick cloud. This had the effect of reducing our way finding to a crawl and stealing time from ascending any other peaks.

Ridges should be straight forward! You just follow the highest line and you end up further along it. Ridges do not know this unfortunately so they have developed what they think of as interesting bits

where directions are mixed up and without the blessing of views humans are easily lost. At one point we nearly descended into Tajikistan but that averted we continued round the crest up and over some interesting sections. Just after point 5405 we engaged upon the most interesting section of the route, I was leading towards a rock outcrop and not liking the look of a snow arret decided to use its left hand side where there was a 'footpath' and axes could be used for balance on the lip. The going was good and when I was about 50 yards from the rock I found the rope taught between Susan and myself. It seemed that Susan was not at all keen on following me and had decided that I would need to change route if she was to follow. I was a bit annoyed as I thought seconds usually followed the leader. Crossly I climbed over the lip and onto the snow slope that I had not liked and thus achieved the rock I had been aiming for. We rested at the rock before climbing down and round it to get to the other side and the ridges continuance. The snow ridge continued and had we been fairies we might have skipped across its insubstantial surface, being heavier we could not.

We were on one rock outcrop and about 50 feet away lay another. Ian was pushed into take the lead. Down climbing a few feet Ian started a traverse where the snow looked more secure and possibly substantiated by rock somewhere beneath it. The snow was deep and soft so bucket steps were slowly kicked as he moved right, an ice screw gave him a little more security as he began to make a move up towards the next buttress. While it had not been too bad moving horizontally the vertical path was nowhere as easy as one foot hold collapsed into the lower one. Slowly Ian did make height and a second screw in a nice piece of ice enabled him to move onto the cotton wool snow to achieve the top. Susan followed and I made it three on a rather short section of rope between us.

The ridge lay ahead and below but the descent was easy and we soon reached Pic Karina that Will and Ken had ascended earlier. The weather had been poor all day and the wind was stronger now so we decide to give the peak a miss and skirt round its eastern flank. The Mist got thicker and we soon became disoriented almost deciding to go for a descent there and then but I was not at all sure that that was good idea so we kept going on a traverse line.

Making the ridge again we were fortunate to have a break in the clouds on two occasions the first gave us a sense of where to look and the second enabled us to confirm where we should aim for.

With more descent came light and then the sun broke through. Soon we were on the descent route from Fossil Peak and then back home with the others. As we descended we began to think about the other team a bit more and just hoped that they would be there. As soon as the camp came into sight we stopped to see if we could see movement, there was and we were all relieved. All was well back at the bivi site and PaulL had recovered as soon as he had lost height.



The 'Commander and  
Leader of the team sets the 'cool quotient'.

## *18th August Wednesday*

It was decided to get an early start so with the sun still only on the highest nearby peaks we rose and breakfasted and then commenced the final packing up procedures. The sun just reached our bivi spot and we were off. The cold crisp air was a delight and as we travelled down the south side of the main river on a moraine bank we made good progress. Throughout this expedition I had been depending on the others to do anything, my level of fitness was rather poor as a back strain about three months before we set off has stopped me doing much at all and I have always been the slowest. Again I managed my own stuff and a little more while the rest of the team shouldered more than their share of the weight. The trip down the valley was really nice and we made good progress seeing some different areas of the valley this time. Lower down there was an excellent camping site, though it also seemed to be Marmot city! Just before we reached the lower bivi at the out fall of Ian's valley we had to do our penultimate bit of mountaineering when we had to cross a nasty slushy bit of snow/rock slope high above the river. That achieved we rounded the corner to the previous bivi site. After a short rest we set off in two parties, Will and I chose a high line like the one we had taken on the way in while the rest chose a lower one. Their secret plan was to check once more if that pesky river might be crossed near ABC2 rather than trekking up to the glacier snout.

It says much for Susan's and Ian's fitness that even though they took the lower route, looked at possible river crossings and had to re-climb the height to the glacier snout they were the first to reach it. Will and I were not far behind and Ken and Paul came last at a leisurely pace.

Back at ABC2 we decided that it would be a good idea to continue to Base Camp. Thus with heavy sacks we continued as individuals, well differing pace saw to that. We all enjoyed the grasslands once again and a chill in the air seemed to exclude the mosquitoes that had been so troublesome earlier in the month.

Ken caught up with me after Paul has achieved a sudden burst of speed and left him behind so we did the last couple of miles together. The meal was a bit odd as we could not tell what to expect in the way of courses and the end came without a warning while we sat expecting something else. It was good but sad to be back. There was one last ABC2 to Base carry to do on the following day.

Our last journey was done on a good day, Will and Ian set off to reach the river and walk up it while I went to spyglass hill to get some photos not realising even then that one camera and one lens were not working properly. Paul and Ken had formed a bond by now so they waited for each other and were the last to leave. Susan stayed at base ready for the rest. It was a really nice day out, saying goodbye to the hills we had just got to know.

Washing and sorting was the order of the next day, the breeze was cold but the sun did its best to warm us up a little and dry the washing



A last view of the mountains from ABC2

The last Base Camp day was a slow one and we only started to dismantle the camp mid morning. Rustan had arranged for some of the local grass cutting chaps to come along and assist us in moving the camp to the access point and were paid off in various bits and pieces no longer needed. We saw Sary Tash for the second time but were soon through it. Rustan tried to phone ahead to Osh from there but there were no lines available. Up and over the Alpine roads again, with drops and views round every corner. The truck had arrived late in the day at the Base camp so it was dark when we arrived at the rest and food stop. Punctures had stolen more time on the journey and we had to wait for another of the wheels to be attended to before we set off for Osh.

In Osh we were put into a big hotel complex in three rooms on two floors. Getting all our stuff up there was not too bad as there were lifts so it was up in and bed. We spent two days in Osh where I sent lots of people cards from the expedition few, if any, of which ever made it back to the UK.

Sight seeing and visits to the cultural bits took one day and the a last visit to the market.

The flight to Bishkek was straight forward and we looked forward to getting back to the UK now that the expeditioning had finished. Asia mountains had booked all the flights for us and that made it easy, in fact they got us back to Bishkek a day early in effect. I think the Osh lot were pleased to have us off their hands.

In Bishkek we were picked up by Dmitry Petrov and a driver and were taken off to the Asia Mountains headquarters, a plush 'Mountain Hut' on the outskirts of the city with its own swimming pool. The rooms were really nice and we appreciated the quality. Showers and then food. It was all looking and feeling really nice. Just as I was going up to bed a girl told me to go downstairs to see Dmitry. It felt like I had been summoned. Ian and I had already discussed what we thought needed to be said about the various mix-ups that had taken place and the oversights that should not have happened. I collected Ian and we went down. Dmitry was not interested in anything we wanted to say about his attitude and careless organisation as all he wanted was the remainder of the money. Ian and I decided that we needed to get some points across to someone else in the organisation and said we were not handing over the payment there and then. Dmitry then phoned his boss and of course we have no idea what he reported but it seemed to us that all he said was that we were refusing to pay any more. The result was that we were told by Dmitry that we were to be out of the house by eight o'clock the following day.

We left and informed the rest of the group that we seemed to have a problem. Ian was all for complying with the demand that we be off the property by eight but I said we should all just stay put. I left a phone message for the Honorary British Consul in Bishkek in case the situation took a turn for the worse. We also looked at the ease of getting to Almaty and that did not look too difficult.

The next day we rose, had breakfast and then sat around. I asked if the boss of the outfit was due in today and we were told that he was due in to see us at ten. I think it was a little later that we were told he was ready to see us. We had no idea what he was expecting and Ian thought he looked both aggressive and nervous as we entered. We explained to an interpreter that we wanted to make some points about the organisation and so we began our discussion. Ian and I went through the points we had written down and all were listened to, some accepted some argued over.

At the end of the hour we had put all our points across and were satisfied that they had listened, something Dmitry seemed unable to do. We paid the outstanding amount and were then transported to the city centre for Ken to get his next 100 CD's. What should have been a nice end to the expedition was really spoilt by Dmitry.

Shopping done we headed back to the 'mountain hut' for our last evening in Kyrgyzya. Again we were fed and watered and then finally packed up weighing our various bags and barrels for the flight home.

## *August 24th; Leaving - possibly*

We had been told that we would be setting off around 7.30 in the morning which I at least thought a bit late. Thus it was an early start as we ate our breakfast, carried all the gear downstairs and waited for the transportation to Almaty. At around 6.45 a minibus came and went off again, returning just after 7. At 7.30 Dmitry arrived and we set off through the streets of the Capital towards the border.

The road to the border was good so it did not take too long to reach it, then came our first delay, we all got through the formalities but for some reason the minibus caused problems, there were forms for the driver to fill in promising not to sell the vehicle in Kazakhstan. Forms that took at least 40 minutes to process. After that wait we set off along a Tarmac road only to be stopped with in the hour by a policeman who did not agree that the van was covered by its insurance in Kyrgyzstan. There was lots of discussion and heated exchanges. The police always have the last word so it was nothing doing unless as we found out later some fine was paid. After sitting around for about another 40 to 50 minutes Dmitry asked us for about \$20 in the local currency which we raised from Will and Susan. Off we went again!

The roads became less and less finished and for much of the journey we were on rough tracks lying next to the road building that was taking place. Ian keeping his eye on the time began to notice how our flight time was creeping nearer and nearer. Eventually we reached the outskirts of Almaty and the traffic was really bad. A breakdown on one route made for slow progress and then another on the ringroad made the driver do a U-turn and head off in another direction to get to the airport.

Ian was now very concerned, we arranged that Ian would rush into the airport to secure our places on the plane while Paul and Ken would find the nearest toilet before they burst. Susan and Will were to get trolleys and transport the luggage that the driver and I had unloaded.

As soon as we came to a stop Ian was gone. Ignoring a security guard who told him to stop as the gate was closed he just made it to the flight gate and quickly explained that we were all here and ready to board. Fortunately for us Ian's determination and the fact that a couple had had some difficulty about their booking for the flight got us accepted just in time. If this had been any European airport we would have had to sort out new flights for the UK, overnight accommodation and had lots of difficulties in doing this. With Ian winning through we were VERY fortunate and the good will of the flight dispatcher was strained to the full when just as we were about to go through the procedures for leaving the country and head for the plane the whole computer system went down! Another 20 minutes went by with the flight dispatcher continually on the phone looking more and more stressed.

The computers come on line again and we were through, I heard a real sigh of relief as we all sat down on the plane we WERE heading home! All thanks to Ian and none to Dmitry.

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Looking back now we all see the overall care that Asia Mountains put into the excursion and it was only the outlandish behaviour of Dmitry that left the bad taste in our mouths. Asia Mountains seem a good outfit but I would recommend that anyone using them refuse to deal with Dmitry Petrov.

The team was raising funds for the "Alpine Fund" while climbing the mountains and Shaun who was sponsored raised around £1200.00 for the Kyrgyz charity

This was a great place to visit and is **recommended** to anyone else looking for solitude and unclimbed peaks of all difficulties. There are lots of areas that need exploring and peaks that await your footfall

Thanks Kyrgyzstan, we'll be back.



## *Appendices*

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Also maps of the area includes in the copies for MEF.

These go to     The Alpine Club,

BMC Offices,

Royal Geographical Society and

Sheffield Library [Sports - Alan Rouse Memorial Library]

# Itinerary

Ken Findlay/Paul Hudson/Paul Lyons

- 24/7 Leave the North and travel down to London Heathrow Airport.
- 25/7 Fly from Heathrow to Almaty. Bus from Almaty to Bishkek.
- 26/7 Fly from Bishkek to Osh. Novo Hotel
- 27/7 Buying provisions in Osh market.
- 28/7 Leave Osh and reach Base Camp (3,600m)
- 29/7 PH, KF & PL sort out Base Camp. IA, SJ & WP reccy up the valley. Rained through the night
- 30/7 .All the team go up the valley and establish ABC 1 (3857m). KF, SJ & WP stay at ABC 1 while the rest of the team go down to BC.
- 31/7 KF, SJ & WP ascend Whaleback Peak (4451m) Facile. Rest of the team carry provisions up to ABC 1. All stay at ABC 1. Rained through the night.
- 1/8 Low cloud. All the team climb Peak of the Long White Cloud Peak (4,800m) Graded PD-. Snowed during the day. Total whiteout. Rained at night.
- 2/8 Sunny. KF, SJ & WP go down to BC and carry back to ABC1. PH reconnoitres the opposite side of the valley. IA renovates kitchen area. PL makes water filter pools.
- 3/8 Fresh snow on the peaks. Cloudy morning. All team goes up Krazha Peak (4,592m) by different routes, KF & PL forge a route called 'Hybrid' PD/II and then onto Boxer Short ridge. PH, WP, PL & KF go on to White Top Rock (4347.5m) Facile, then down the Red Scree to ABC 1. PL not feeling well.
- 4/8 Sunny day. PL goes down to BC. Rest of the team chill out. Sunny evening
- 5/8 Warm day. Sorted out gear for a bivvy tonight. All 5 leave at 5p.m. Bivvy (4,000m) on the ridge below Krazha Peak. Starry and clear night.
- 6/8 All climbed the Charity Peak (4930m) by various routes. KF, PH & WP go up the North Face/ Ridge (Crash Landing AD/III). All go back up to the bivvy and over Krazha Peak (4592m) and then back to ABC 1. Windy night. PL arrives at ABC 1.
- 7/8 KF & PL go up Whaleback and measure all the tops, (4451m, 4444m and 4455m) Facile. Rest stay at ABC 1. Rains during the afternoon.
- 8/8 Move ABC 1 to another valley ABC 2 (3568m). WP & SJ go down to BC. Sunny day.
- 9/8 Sunny day. KF, PL. PH & IA all scout for potential climbs.
- 10/8 KF, IA, PL & WP cross the river and set up bivvy (4150m) then climb Cold Foot Peak (4550m) PD-. PH at ABC 2 to wait for SJ to come back up from BC.
- 11/8 PH goes up the mountain (Marmot Hill 4000m) above ABC 2. KF, IA, WP & PL climb Professor Peak (4819) PD/II, pack up bivvy and camp near the river. Dry but cloudy.

12/8 All cross river safely and back to ABC 2. Sunny day. IA goes down to BC.

13/8 Sunny day. IA comes back up from BC. All team go up the valley and camp in a meadow (4000m).

14/8 All move the bivvy up to the head of the valley just below the glacier (4224m). Sunny day.

15/8 All the team go up Fossil Peak (5153m) Facile, KF & WP then climb Peak Karena (5203m) PD+/II. Sunny day.

16/8 Sunny day. All team go up and bivvy high (4224m)

17/8 IA, PH & SJ go up to ridge and climb top Cold Sunrise Peak (5150m) AD. PL suffers from altitude and so KF & WP descend with him. Snowed through the night.

18/8 Pack up bivvy and go down to ABC 2. All do a carry to BC and stay the night.

19/8 All go up and strip ABC 2 then back down to BC. Sunny day. It rains during the night.

20/8 Sunny day. Pack up the gear. Truck arrives at 4p.m. 200km drive to Osh.

21/8 Arrive in Osh at 3a.m. The day is spent sightseeing, visiting museums and the Mountain of Suliman.

22/8 Visit the markets. Fly from Osh to Bishkek.

23/8 Sunny. Shopping in Bishkek.

24/8 Drive from Bishkek to Almaty. Made Airport with 40 minutes to spare but traffic caused us to arrive at the airport after the flight had been closed. Commando action by Ian got us aboard!

25/8 Home in Leeds for 12.15a.m. (Paul H sick on the way home).



One of the possible areas that were looked at. This was visited by Welbeck College, we ended up at the other end of this small range (west)

## People who helped and how

### Malcolm Tinning

Great travel arrangements and getting passports back from a hole in the Kazakhstan Embassy  
BSI (UK) Ltd  
9 Mandeville Place  
London  
Malcolm Tinning <malcolm@bsi.uk.com>

### Paul Deegan

Report and Maps of the whole area which were kindly lent to us.  
<paul@pauldeegan.com>

### Bill Ruthven

Helpful - as ever  
Hon Secretary ^ Mount Everest Foundation

### Stuart Ingram

Information  
Information Coordinator  
British Mountaineering Council  
177-179 Burton Road  
Manchester  
M20 2BB  
Reports and information

### Mirlan Arstanbaev,

Information  
Consul Kyrgyzstan  
www.kyrgyz-embassy.org.uk

### Mike Atsoparthis

Information and help in general  
British Honorary Consul  
Bishkek  
Fatboy's <fatboys@elcat.kg>

### Garth Willis

www.alpinefund.org  
Help in choosing the area and information

### Lindsay Griffin

Assistance in tracking down people and info  
Mountain INFO Editor  
HIGH Magazine  
2 Top Sling  
Tregarth  
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### Tom Avery

Report and comments  
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### Andy Lewis

Gear  
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### Ian Williams

Food  
<ianfcef@btinternet.com>  
MOUNTAIN FOODS: <http://www.expeditionfoods.com> <<http://www.expeditionfoods.com/>>

### Anthony Kaye

Insurance  
CAMPBELL IRVINE  
Registered Insurance Brokers  
Tel: 020 7937 6981 Fax: 020 7938 2250  
www.campbellirvine.com  
Anna Hayes  
Travel Department

### Films

<http://www.7dayshop.com/>

### Info

Daniel Waugh <dwaugh@u.washington.edu>  
stuart.gray@fonterra.com  
Nick Stopford

### On the minus side....

Insurance cover not available from  
Harrison Beaumont Ins Services  
2 Des Roches Square  
WITNEY  
OX28 4LG  
Tel: 0870 1217590/ 01993 862111  
Fx: 0870 1217592  
&  
The foundry <info@foundrytravel.com>

### Klaus Schwarz

(No reply ever received)  
Craigend Cottage, Kilmun, Argyll, PA23 8SE  
01369 840528

# Travel People in Kyrgyzstan.

## **ITC "Asia Mountains"**

### **A Great Company**

Any conceivable excursions in Central Asia.

**Dmitry Petrov.** (someone not to deal with)

1, Lineinaja Str., 720021, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Tel.: +996 312 694075; +996 312 694073

Fax.: +996 312 694074

e-mail: **aljona@mail.elcat.kg**; **asiamountains@mail.ru**

<http://www.asiamountains.co.uk>; <http://asiamountains.free.fr>

We also looked at ...

Vladimir Dudin

Manager assistant

Kyrgyz-British Joint Venture "Dostuck-Trekking" Ltd

18th Linea St., 42-1, Bishkek,

Kyrgyz Republic, 720005

Tel: +996 (312) 545455; 427471; 540237;

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E-mail: **dostuk@elcat.kg**

<http://www.dostuck.com.kg>

ITMC <[itmc@elcat.kg](mailto:itmc@elcat.kg)>

Elena Ryazapkina

Programme Manager

Inoculation list for Kyrgyzstan 2004

POLIO

HEPATITUS A

TYPHOID

MENINGITIS

ENCEPHALITIS JAPANESE\*

[internet suggests far East of the Russian Federation]

ENCEPHALITIS TICK-BOURNE\*

[internet suggests for Forests of the Russian Federation]

DIPHTHERIA

TETANUS

HEPATITIS B

RABIES\*\*

NB.

\* These were recommended for the ex-Russian states as a job lot and I am not sure that we do need them. Ken was the only guinea pig for these

\*\*Rabies has a poor % inoculation cover!

## Comments from Susan

Until only a few weeks before the trip began, we were unable to get any insurance coverage for the trip. We had resolved to go in spite of this, and having volunteered to do the “medic” coverage for the trip, I decided to err on the side of caution in terms of being able to deal with any medical difficulties in a remote situation.

In addition to having BASP (British Association of Ski Patrollers) first aid training and a medical kit that could do all but cure cancer, I attended a residential Expedition Medicine course run by Orion Training, and hosted by the Brathay Trust. I highly recommend the course, held over three intense days, and included actually giving and receiving injections (of saline) – “better to get past that initial psychological barrier here than in a stressful emergency situation” – and a full-blown scenario out on the hill, culminating in getting a stretchered injury down a steep hill in the Lakes.

Fortunately, I had no occasion to use any of that except as points of discussion. The worst ailments were the usual loose bowels, with Paul L and myself suffering the worst. Paul L carried a bug around for most of the trip, and I was completely laid out for a couple of days and rather lacking in energy after that. Speaking with a local climbing doctor on my return, I heard that about 1 in 3 comes back from that part of the world with some kind of intestinal parasite, so that is probably what we both suffered. Paul L took a course of Metronidazole, but it is unlikely it had any impact except to frighten his intestinal flora.

The medical kit contents were broken into a mobile kit for carrying up to advanced camps and hills, and a base camp kit for refills and more extensive treatments. The contents are listed in an appendix.

As it turned out, even though we had secured insurance coverage for emergency evacuations, the radio for contact with the outside world, promised to us as Base Camp kit, didn’t materialise. If something had happened the only way of getting contact with the insurance company or evacuation would have been about a 20k hoof from advanced base camp to the nearest small village Sary Tash, which had a telephone. It wasn’t always a working telephone, as we found when we stopped to try to use it on our way back to Bishkek at the end of the trip, and the next telephone was probably several tens of kilometres beyond that one. So it’s just as well we were prepared to deal with drastic emergency medical situations.

# Medical and First Aid Kit – LMC Expedition to Kyrgyzia, 2004

Sterile Gadgets	Quantity	Notes
Mediflex Infusion set	2	
IV value-set (needle)	1	
Syringes, 5 ml	5	
Syringe, 10 ml	1	
Needles, 21G 0.8 x 40mm nr 2	6	
Vascular catheter needle 1.3 x 44mm 18 ga	1	
Isoprep sachets	4	
Venflon IV cannula 18ga 1,2 x 45 mm 80 ml/min	3	
Gadgets	Expedition Quantity	Mobile
Sterile forceps, large	1	
Disposable Scalpel	1	
Cordillette, m	1	
Thermometer (non-mercury)	1	1
Dressings		
Stretch crepe bandage 5cm x 4.5m		1
Stretch crepe bandage 7.5 cm x 4.5 m		1
Stretch crepe bandage 8.5 cm x 4 m	2	
Stretch crepe bandage 15 cm x 4.5 m	1	
Ambulance dressing No 2 15 cm	3	
Ambulance dressing 8 cm		2
Triangular bandage	7	2
Safety pins	8	5
Tubular support wrap 6 cm x ca 1.5 m	1	
Mepore adhesive dressing 9 x 15 cm	1	1
Melolin dressing 10 x 10 cm	20	10
Melolin dressing 5 cm x 5 cm	1	1
Paraffin gauze dressing	20	
Waterproof film dressing	2	
Dressing strip plaster	3	1
Misc Elastoplasts of various sizes	2 boxes	
Steri-strip wound closures 6 mm x 75 mm	3	
Steristrips 3 mm x 75 mm 12 in pack	4 packs	1 pack
M3000 wound closures 6cm x 7 cm	4	
Histoacryl wound closure glue stick	1	1
Fabric adhesive dressing strip 4 cm x 1 m	1	
Transpore tape, roll	1	
Micropore tape, 4.5 cm roll	1	
Micropore tape, 1.5 cm roll		1
First aid tape (strappal), roll		1
Miscellaneous gauze and gloves, non-sterile	1 pack – 10 prs	5 prs gloves
Scissors	1	1
Antiseptic wipes	50	20
Pencil	1	1
Piece of paper	5	1

## Medications

### Skin

Olbas oil	1	1	
Flamazine silver sulphadiazine cream, 50 g tube	1	1 30g tube	Burns, pressure sores, fingertip injuries
Tinc Benz	20 ml		
Vioform Hydrocortisone	1 tube	1 tube	

### Antihistamine

Piriton	25	25	
Pseudephedrine	25	25	

### Eyes, Ears, Dental

Clove oil, 10 ml bottle	1	1	
Chloramphenicol Eye Ointment 4 g tube	2	2	
Optrex eye soother drops	50	10	
Gentisone ear drops 10 ml bottle	1	1	
Antiseptic throat drops	24 tblts	24 tblts	

### Altitude

Diamox diuretic	20	10	Prophylaxis for AMS,
Dexamethasone	25	25	Cerebral oedema
Nifedipine	25	25	Pulmonary oedema

### Antibiotics

Cefuroxime tables 250 mg	40	20	Respiratory tract, urinary tract, Lyme
Klaricid clarithromycin 250 mg tablets	60	24	Respiratory tract, mild to moderate skin
Metronidazole 400 mg tablets	40	20	Respiratory, Giardia, Entamoeba
Betadine	100ml btl	100 ml btl	
Ciprofloxacin	50	50	Broad-spectrum antibiotic
Diflucan	4		Thrush, systemic fungal

### Analgesics

Paracetamol 500 mg tablets	104	50	
Ibuprofen 400 mg tablets	33	10	Anti-inflammatory
Tramadol 50 mg capsules	50	40	Next best thing to morphine
Diclofenac tablets 50 mg	50	50	

### Gastrointestinal

Rehydration treatment sachets	50	10	
Gaviscon Antacid tablets	100	20	
Buccastem 3 mg tablets	28		Nausea
Sennokot tablets	40	20	Constipation
Diareze 2 mg capsules	90	10	Diarrhoea
Anacal	1 tube	1 tube	Piles

**This list was printed, laminated and copies stuck in with the base and mobile med kits**

<b>Altitude</b>	<b>Dosage</b>	<b>Use</b>
Diamox 250 mg	Half-tablet daily or 2x daily	Prophylaxis for AMS, diuretic
Dexamethasone 2mg	8mg at once & 4mg six hourly for 24 hours	Cerebral oedema
Nifedipine 10 mg	20 mg every 6 hours for 24 hours	Pulmonary oedema
<b>Antibiotics</b>		
Cefuroxime 250 mg	2 tablets, 2x daily for 10 days	Respiratory tract, urinary tract, Lyme
Klaricid clarithromycin 250 mg	2 x daily for 7 days	Respiratory tract, mild to moderate skin
Metronidazole 400 mg	1 tablet 3x daily for 10 days	Respiratory, Giardia, Entamoeba
Ciprofloxacin	1 tab whole (don't chew) 2x daily	Broad-spectrum antibiotic
Diflucan	1 tablet	Thrush, systemic fungal
<b>Painkillers</b>		
Paracetamol 500 mg		Analgesic
Ibuprofen 400 mg		Anti-inflammatory
Diclofenac 50 mg	1 tablet 3x daily	Good painkiller
Tramadol 50 mg	1 tablet 4x daily	Next best thing to morphine

## July

- 25 Night - No rain
- 26 Sunny day, som cloud
- 27 Fine sunny day
- 28 Fine
- 29 A fine morning at BC and nearest peaks visible but further away peaks in cloud. In the afternoon a squall of rain and thunder lasted an hour the it was fine for the evening.
- 30 A fine morning at BC and nearest peaks visible but cloud about 500m above summits. Again a thunder storm developed in the afternoon about 3pm, rain came at 4 and lasted about 4 hours.
- 31 Rain and low cloud in the early morning, continuing until 11am. Cloud then lifted and sun out on the plain, cloud on all the hills south.

## August

- 1 Light rain started the day with low cloud all round, this persisted until 4pm. Thick cloud on hills but did break latish when we started our descent - vies into next valley.
- 2 Wet throughout night and low cloud began to rise in the morning. Broken skies fora mainly fine day. Rain and hail returned at 5.30pm
- 3 Low cloud to start the day but bright and warm in the afternoon. All clouds cleared by 6pm.
- 4 Fine all day, light clouds on the higher peaks
- 5 Fine all day although a long ridge of cloud in the north looked threatening in the afternoon.
- 6 A clear morning but cloudy in the afternoon. No rain.
- 7 Cloud cover all day until 4.30pm then the heavens opened for hail, snow and rain.
- 8 Some cloud and a few drops of rain.
- 9 A fairly sunny day but not too hot
- 10 No rain at all but a general scattering of cloud
- 11 Cloud cover extensive but it remained high. Visibility on the peak good. Clouds all over higher peaks
- 12 A fine day
- 13 A fine day with high cloud
- 14 High cloud with breaks sun out fully in afternoon
- 14 Again a fine day with good views
- 15 Dry fine day with cloud on higher peak
- 16 Dry fine day
- 17 Cloud on ridge until we descend all clear around 4pm, then cloud again and rain at 6pm
- 18 Fine day
- 19 Sunny Day, rain overnight.
- 20 Sunny Day
- 21 Hot sunny day
- 22 Dry day with some cloud cover
- 23 Sunny in Bishkek
- 24 Drive to Almaty in good weather
- 25 Rainy at Heathrow

Because we were not sure of what type of climbing we would experience while out in Kyrgyzstan, we decided to take the following equipment to cover all eventualities!

Each person took the following equipment

Ice Axe  
Ice Hammer  
Crampons  
Helmet (Camp Rock Star)  
Harness (Alpine Bod)  
Head Torch plus spare batteries and bulbs  
Screwgates x2  
1 Rope  
4 Ice screws  
Climbing slings (various sizes x 4)  
Belay device

Abseil device

Prussic Loops

Equipment per pair

Set of wires (5 of various sizes)

Pegs 2

Snow stakes 2

Extenders 12 with Karabiners (24)

Roll of tape for tat

Group equipment

Tent x5

Pan sets x3

Stoves x4

First Aid Kit

## Ken's Personal Clothing and equipment list

Baseball Cap / Legionnaires Hat (For the sun!)

North Cape Balaclava

Sunglasses / Goggles

Rock and Run Ski Poles

Boots (Solomon Mountain Superlite)

Socks x6

Rab trail pants

North Cape power stretch tights

North Cape rhovyl thermal top

North Cape Zip turtle Thermal

North Cape coolmax long sleeve thermal x2

Rab peak smock

Rab technical smock

North cape active jacket

Red Fox Duvet

Lowe Alpine Jacket

Phoenix Over trousers

North Cape over mitts

North cape liner gloves

North cape gripper gloves

Outdoor designs cycle flex gloves

Outdoor designs stuff sacks

Sleeping bag (Rab 1000)

Rab Sleeping Bag liner

Rab (Pied d'elephant)

Therma Rest

Rab Bivvy bag

Sunscreen

Olympus Camera + Film (For Non-digital users)

Polaroid Digital camera

Personal Kit (Optional)

Penknife

Whistle

Compass

Books

Journal

Personal Stereo + Batteries & Tapes

(Unless you can listen to "Hybrid" solidly for 4 weeks!)

Travel Games / Cards

Ken Findlay

### ***North Cape Gear***

Rhovyl Zip Turtle	Kept us warm and didn't smell after wearing them constantly for three weeks. The long sleeve thermal shirts had the added advantage of keeping mosquitos away - we needed that! SJ
Zip Turtle Thermal	Both these thermals were very good. Great at wicking away the moisture from the body, these thermals were very comfortable to wear. The fit was right and the material did not irritate the skin like some of the products can. Lightweight, which again for our trip was of paramount importance. The fabric stood up to lots of wear and tear. SJ/PH
Glove Liners	Fantastic as always. often just two pairs of these were all that were needed for even the coldest conditions. In extremis one pair under another thicker glove were more than adequate. PH
Windblock Glove	Great., one of the few items to compare with the Dasstein mitt quality of warmth. Hardwearing and comfortable. PH
North Cape Balaclava	A good fit that did not ride up and dried well after use. Lightweight and packs away into almost nothing. KF
C/max U/wear	Warm and comfortable. PH
Power Stretch Tights	These tights were windproof and oh so warm. The fit was perfect and retained their shape. A lightweight material and these packed up very small. KF
Active Jacket	This jacket was warm and windproof, especially on the last bivvy section of the expedition. It is both hardwearing and comfortable to wear. This jacket had enough pockets and with zips. Some jackets on the market these days just don't get it right. But I am glad to say the North Cape have done justice with this garment. KF

### ***Rab Gear***

Rab Trail Pants	A lovely cut with pockets in the right places, these pants were comfortable and not restricting in the slightest. Windproof and shower proof, these dried very quickly if wet. I found them very durable, when scrambling over rocks or up chimneys, well worth the price. Excellent value. KF
Technical Smock	This was a great help especially on the first couple of peaks when we had driving snow and very little visibility. The smock is windproof and kept the heat in, whilst the outer layer is shower proof and kept the rain and snow at bay. The fabric was robust and coped well with the scrambling we did, any scrapes against the rock did not result in any rips or tears in the fabric. This smock is thoroughly versatile, in that you have zips to open when you are hot and has its own detachable hood. KF
Rab Silk Liner	Fantastic, added warmth, easy to wash. Non smelly. PH

- Rab Trail Pants** A lovely cut with pockets in the right places, these pants were comfortable and not restricting in the slightest. Windproof and shower proof, these dried very quickly if wet. I found them very durable, when scrambling over rocks or up chimneys, well worth the price. Excellent value. KF
- Sleeping bag** The Rab 1000 sleeping bag was “too” warm. It was really comfortable bag to be in and did not feel restricted like some bags do. It packed down to a good size and did not fill my rucksack. This bag was thoroughly comfortable and a joy to sleep in. KF
- Rab 600. This was really good my version has a covering for use in high mountains. The weight to warmth ratio is just right. Used on three expeditions now PH
- Ken used a Rab Pied d’elephant. This was used above Base Camp and it worked well. The benefit of kit like this is that you can leave your sleeping bag at BC and take this lighter version up to the high camps. You must however supplement it with a good size duvet. Myself being 5ft 6inches could shuffle down in it and bring it over my shoulders. Having a duvet as well made sure my shoulders and neck were kept warm. Having said this it did feel a little restricted with all my gear on at the bivvy. But I found it a good bit of kit and would certainly use it again. KF
- Stoves** We took the best stoves we could for this trip and they were used for all the cooking above base camp. Thus they were in continuous use for the 20 or so days we were out and about in the mountains. The best stoves are the Omni Fuel stoves from Primus. There were excellent and burnt without a hitch every day!
- Food** Expedition Foods were taken from the UK and we used a combination of ‘Army’ boil in the bag meals well supplemented by items from MOUNTAIN FOODS: <<http://www.expeditionfoods.com>> These meals were freeze dried and we took large portion bags of :-

BEEF AND NOODLES, CHICKEN IN CURRIED RICE, CHILLI CON CARNE, NOODLES IN SOYA BOLOGNAISE , **WILD MUSHROOMS AND SOYA RAGOUT WITH NOODLES, VEGETABLE RISOTTO, CARROT SOUP, CHOCOLATE MOUSSE, CREAM OF HERBS SOUP BLUEBERRY FRUIT SOUP, WHOLE EGG POWDER, PERONIN & GO-BARS** (Bold items are particularly recommended)

### **Rock and Run Ski Poles**

These were used during the first few days before one of the clasps dropped off and I had to use micro pore to piece it back together. I would not recommend these and I found the Camp Artic ones a lot better and more comfortable when handled. KF

### **Boots (Solomon Mountain Superlite)**

These were very good, lovely and comfortable and very hardwearing. I use these boots all the time whether on the Lakeland hills or in the Alps. I have not had a more comfortable boot in my life. KF

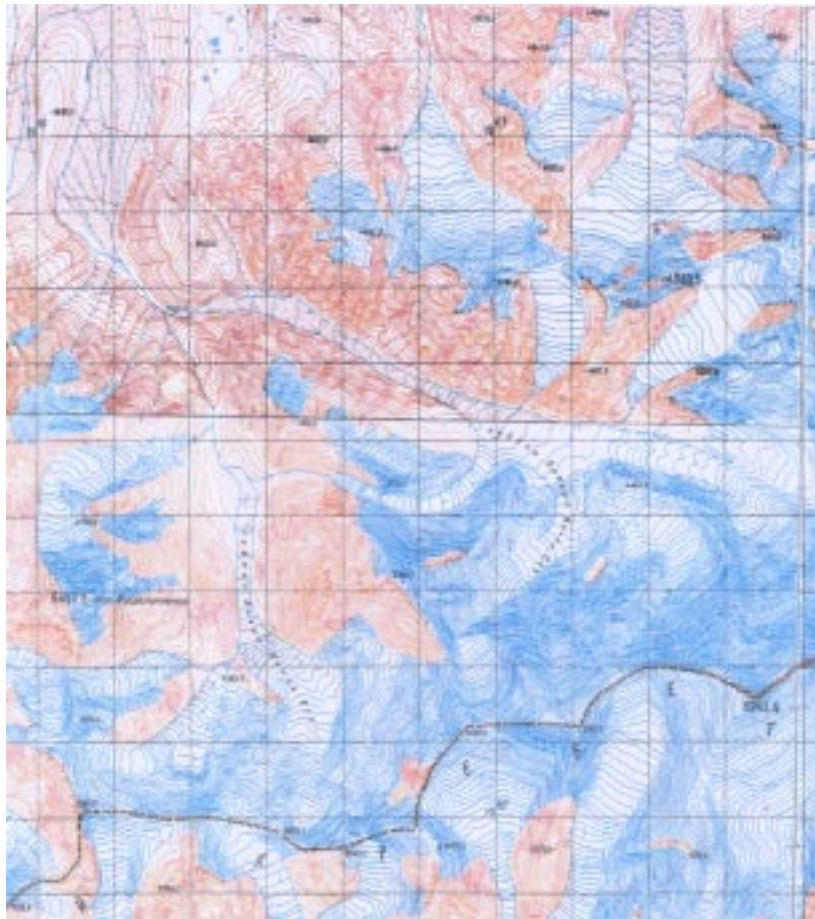
The expedition food people who made such yummy dried food, can't remember the name.

### **Outdoor designs cycle flex gloves**

These gloves were very good and work well with the North Cape Overmitts. These gloves have little pads on the palm, which gave a good grip on the ice axes. Again these were very functional even when wet. A good buy. KF

### **Outdoor designs stuff sacks**

These were very good and came in a variety of sizes, which helps when you are storing bits gear at base camp. The outer shell is tough and stood up to lots of wear especially when on the bivvys. KF



The area we visited

## Funds

### Expenditure

<b>£2,491.80</b>	<b>Flights</b>
<b>£ 179.00</b>	<b>Medicine</b>
<b>£ 184.18</b>	<b>Paul expences</b>
<b>£ 276.61</b>	<b>food-meal</b>
<b>£ 87.00</b>	<b>food-snacks</b>
<b>£ 23.50</b>	<b>Equipment</b>
<b>£1,776.00</b>	<b>Insurance</b>
<b>£ 140.00</b>	<b>Medical Training SJ (50%)</b>
<b>£2,000.00</b>	<b>\$600p/p In country</b>
<b>£ 18.00</b>	<b>Phone etc</b>
<b>£ 95.00</b>	<b>Gear/Maps</b>
<b>£ 100.00</b>	<b>Miscellianious Expences/Money exchange</b>
<b>£ 50.00</b>	<b>Report</b>

**£7,421.09**

**Other expenses include Visas, inoculations, UK travel, lost gear~ one piece.**

### Income

<b>MEF</b>	<b>£275.00</b> (£300 refunded to MEF funds at the end of the exped)
<b>BMC</b>	<b>£900.00</b>
<b>Members</b>	<b>£6246.09 = £1041.02 each</b>





## The Future

I really enjoyed the trip, the mountains were good, not technically hard but very pleasant. There is so much potential in this part of the Pamirs, not only in terms of mountaineering but also just trekking from one valley to another. Access for some areas will be a problem and would need some pre-planning by the firm you employ in the country.

There is a map in this report showing all the peaks where I could locate them on the maps. This will give some idea about the activity up to 2004. There has obviously been more ascents than I found as shown by the “cairns” on some of the hills we visited.

The whole of this area is waiting for more visitors and anyone going there should have a great time. The area seems quite stable both in a physical and political sense.

Paul Hudson