

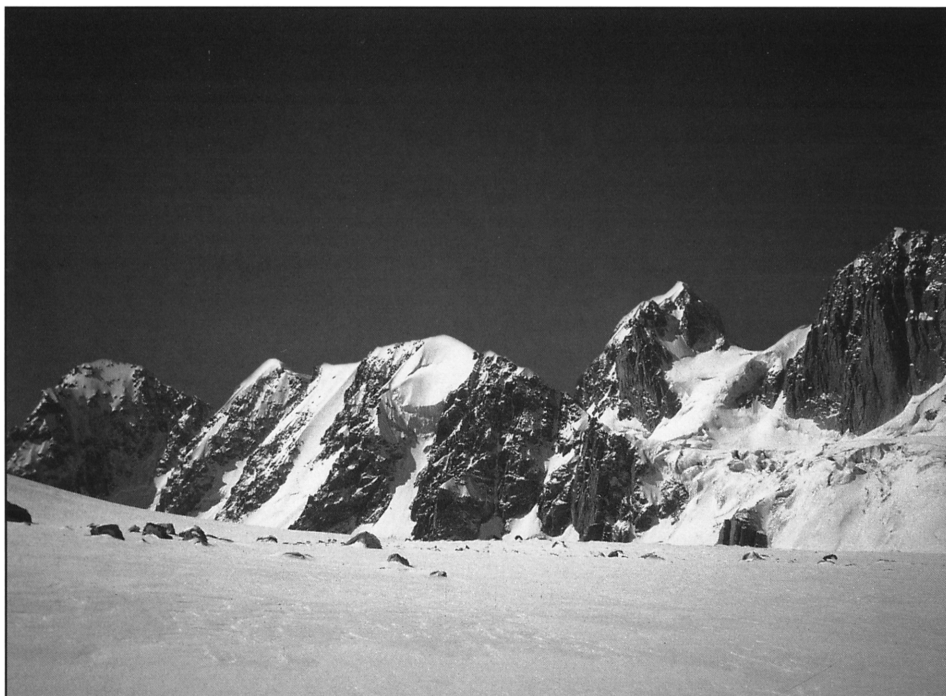
unnamed others had attempted Chon-Tura-Su via a pillar on the north face, where a very corniced summit ridge prevented them from reaching the top. Romanov, Shimohin, Smirnov and Stgarostin made the first ascent of Peak Trapez (5240m) via a 5B route on the southeast face. Team members also climbed the previously ascended Maron (4900m).

In 1997, a 15-member guided expedition headed up by Pat Littlejohn (U.K.) traveled to the area in the second week of September. They started their activity with a warm-up on a 4785-meter peak southwest of base camp, which they named Sabaday, finding two and half pitches of 45-50° hard ice on the northeast ridge. Peak Zhenit was climbed by the east ridge (55°, AD+). Peak de l'Entre Aide was ascended by a new route up the east ridge (AD), which gave eight pitches of hard ice overlaid with slabby snow. A third group made the possible first ascent of a 4910-meter peak immediately north of Peak de l'Entre Aide via a snow/ice couloir on the southwest flank followed by an exposed narrow ridge of poor rock to the summit. It was named Peak Serpentine, and descent was made by climbing directly down the south flank. (*High Mountain Sports* 182)

*West Kokshaal-Tau, Various Ascents.* I traveled to Kyrgyzstan in August, beginning my trip once again in Ala Archa National Park outside Bishkek, the capital. The area offers a perfect chance to shake off jet lag and get one's mountain boots banged around a bit, which I managed to do in the company of Lindsay Griffin (Britain), Matthias Engelién (Germany) and Garth Willis, an American ex-pat living in Bishkek. After 12 days of climbing we returned to Bishkek, where, on August 31, we were joined by Nick Green and Brian Davison (Britain). We left for the West Kokshaal-Tau on September 3, arriving September 6 to begin our exploration. All research indicated that we were the first climbers to visit our area, which is one valley to the right of Peak Kizil-Asker (5842m) at the confluence of the three prongs of the Komorova Glacier (the mountains around which we called the Moonshadow Mountain group). We also believe we were the first climbers to enter through the western end of the range since Kazbek

*The Dankova group, West Kokshaal-Tau. From left to right: Peak Zhenit, Peak Molodyozhny, Peak Alpinist, Peak Dankova, Peak Dzhalda. The glacier is the Essledovateley Glacier. RUSSIAN MOUNTAINEERING FEDERATION*





*The Moonshadow Mountain group. Peak Jerry Garcia (ca. 5083m) is the nipple left of center; Peak Unmarked Soldier (ca. 5335m) is the pointed peak center right.* CHRISTIAN BECKWITH

Valiev in 1985, and the first non-C.I.S. climbers to climb in the western end at all.

Lindsay and Brian had both contracted viral illnesses, and spent the first days acclimating up some easy walk-ups. Lindsay netted the first mountain of the trip via the easy north slopes of Peak Lyev (ca. 4600m). Meanwhile, Matthias, Nick and I made the first ascent of Peak 52 Years of American Duct Tape (ca. 5225m) via the western slopes and north ridge before reaching the summit via the west face of the summit gendarme (5.9 AI3). We descended that night only to find that Brian had contracted pulmonary edema and been evacuated by helicopter.

The remaining four of us established ABC at the head of the West Komorova Glacier on September 14, from where we all climbed to the summit of Peak Jerry Garcia (ca. 5083m) via its 40° western ice slopes. We had hoped to continue on up the west ridge of a beautiful pyramidal peak just to the southeast but did not due to indecision in the group. We returned to ABC, then, the next day, with Lindsay again down due to illness, Nick, Matthias and I made the first ascent of Peak Unmarked Soldier via the northeast couloir (ca. 5335m), roping five pitches of ice (65°) then soloing the remaining 500 feet up the eastern summit slopes (40°) in a storm that wreaked havoc on ABC. We stopped short of standing on the summit a meter away, as it was a precarious cornice. We downclimbed and rappelled the way we had come and made it back by dark after a 17-hour day.

After another day's rest in Base Camp, Nick, Matthias and I returned to our ABC to attempt the pyramidal peak one last time. This time we soloed the 500-meter west face ice slopes (55°) and north ridge of Peak Jerry Garcia, but by the time we reached the summit ridge a storm had consumed our objective. We called off our attempt and returned to Base Camp the same day, then departed the West Kokshaal-Tau on September 23.

CHRISTIAN BECKWITH, *The Wayward Mountaineers*