

camp at 4,000m on the Trango Glacier. On July 14, two days after arriving at base, they spent six hours reaching the foot of the tower via the standard approach couloir, then climbed and fixed two pitches (7a+) of the Slovenian Route. On the 15th they climbed 10 pitches to the Shoulder and set up camp, fixing the first three pitches of Eternal Flame (7a+) before retiring for the night. The pair started next day at 3:30 a.m. jumaring the ropes then carrying on up a series of excellent cracks. The route continued to be steep and sustained and by midday the clouds were rolling in. At this stage their arms were so tired that aiding the remaining pitches became the only option. They eventually reached the junction with the original 1976 British Route just 80 meters below the top, but by this time night was fast approaching and it had begun to snow. Turning their backs on the easy mixed ground above, they reluctantly decided to go down, reaching their tent on the Shoulder at 11 p.m.

Next day was sunny and, exhausted from their previous efforts, the pair descended to base camp. Apart from the bolt ladder on pitch 10, it is thought that Antoine free climbed the route as far as pitch 20, after which he aided to the top. Tragically, this very accomplished climber (see his feature article in *AAJ* 2003), with many first ascents around the world including Everest without oxygen, was killed in Tibet the following autumn.

From information provided by the late Antoine de Choudens, France

Point 4,400m above the Trango Glacier, first ascent (Sadu). A few days after their climb on Eternal Flame, Antoine and Sandrine de Choudens set off on July 20 for what they hoped would prove a pleasant rock climb on one of the small buttresses above the Trango Glacier. Ten minutes walk from base camp placed them at the bottom of a pointed tower. Starting up the left side of the southwest face, they climbed for 350 meters (seven pitches) to a small subsidiary summit at ca 4,400m. Unfortunately, the cracks were not particularly good and the granite rather gravely, leading to some serious runouts. They reached the small top toward the end of the afternoon and rappelled a couloir on the right side of the face. The first three pitches of the route, named Sadu, were 6b, 6a, and 6c respectively, after which the standard eased a little, rising again to 6b on the final pitch. A few days later they had walked out via the Baltoro to Skardu. According to the Swiss climbers mentioned above, Antoine de Choudens did not think this was a recommendable route.

From information provided by the late Antoine de Choudens, France

MASHERBRUM RANGE

Masherbrum attempt, Charakusa Valley exploration, Haji Brakk first ascent. With Slovenians, Marko Prezelj and Matic Jost, I arrived at base camp below Masherbrum (7,855m) on May 31, after experiencing a difficult approach due to winter snow. We put our camp on the Mandu Glacier at approximately 4,200m. Unfortunately, we eventually realized that to access Masherbrum's North Ridge we first had to get to the Yermanendu Glacier, even though our decision to site base camp on the Mandu was well-researched through discussions with the leader of a previous expedition to the mountain (R. Renzler, Austrian Expedition 1985). Due to different glacier conditions and an abundance of snow, we were to cross a small pass above base camp many times to get to and from the Yermanendu Glacier.