

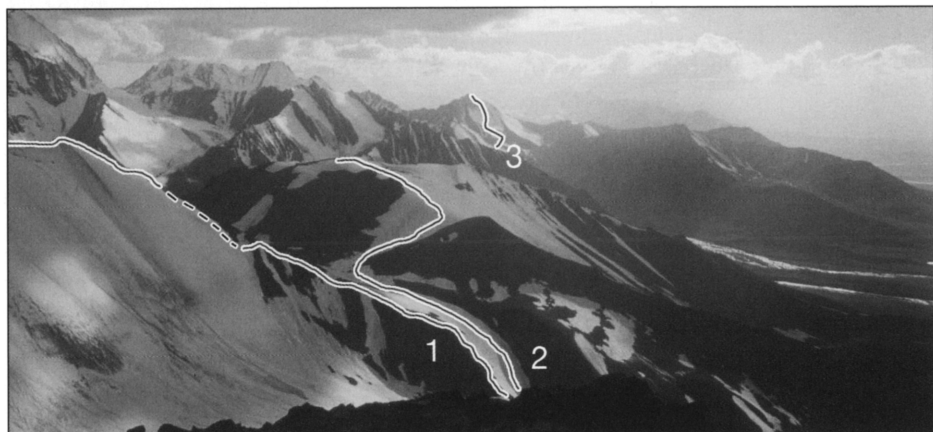
the surrounding walls when we were there too. Haulbags and fixed lines are still hanging up there. Ken and Stewart finished up the climb the next day while I explored the beautiful Ak Su valley alone.

Afterward, the rain fell consistently every day, leaving only afternoon windows of climbable weather. Due to the rain and having one injured climber, we decided to abandon our hopes of climbing Mt. Asan and settle for a smaller, more escapable objective on the Yellow Wall. We decided to try out a line that Ken had spotted on the first day of recon that followed the left side of the wall up a trail of disconnected crack systems and beautiful dihedrals. With about four to five hours a day to climb (if that) we poured all efforts into this route, climbing siege style. We were further encouraged when the Ukrainian National Climbing Team, the apparent climbing authorities of the area, arrived at base camp and told us we were doing a new route. However, we later discovered some ancient pitons on the last pitch. We cleaned it up a lot, and installed two-bolt anchors at every belay. In my opinion, this route should provide a much more enjoyable and aesthetic one-day warm-up route than the Diagonal Route, and will be easy to descend. In addition, any climber who summits the Yellow Wall will have a safe and clear way to get off the wall by following the shoulder from the summit down and west for about four low-angled pitches (easy fifth class; rappels possible) until seeing our last anchor—a bolt and piton (instead of having to downclimb sections like Ken and Stewart did after topping out on the Diagonal Wall). The route: Everything is Normal (1200', 5.10b, A2, Chris Harkness, Stewart Matthiesen, and Ken Zemach).

CHRIS HARKNESS

PAMIR

Zaalayskiy Ridge, exploration, first ascents and new routes. On July 22 a team from the UK, including a US citizen now working in Scotland, set off for Kyrgyzstan. The team consisted of Ian Arnold, Ken Findlay, Paul Hudson, Paul Lyons, Will Parsons (all UK), Susan Jensen (USA) and Shaun the Sheep. Shaun was a toy “Wallace and Grommit” sheep and was on the trip to



Various ascent routes as seen from above ABC1: (1) Peak of the Long White Cloud. (2) Whaleback. (3) Professor Peak.
Paul Hudson

raise money for the Alpine Fund, a charity started some years ago by Garth Willis, an American working in Kyrgyzstan. The Alpine Fund helps disadvantaged and orphaned children make the most of themselves and uses the hills and mountain environment as a tool to make this happen.

The team chose a less frequented area of the Pamir south of Sary Tash and east of the main road leading from south Sary Tash into Tajikistan. A little further east along the range is the triple-border point of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and China. The venue was chosen to fit a one month's vacation, all that half the team could manage. A direct flight from Heathrow, London, to Almaty (Kazakhstan) via Astana Airlines, a drive to Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), and another flight of a couple of hours landed us in Osh. From Osh it was a day's drive to our area of the Zaalayskiy Ridge.

There were some initial difficulties when we found out that the in-country company had placed our base camp in the wrong place and we had to negotiate its relocation. Subsequently, base camp was not quite in the right place and few of us used it much during our stay, spending most of our time at two advanced base camps, designated in this report ABC1 and 2, from where we explored two different valleys. The best venture from ABC1 was a two-day excursion to Charity Peak. After a night spent on a ridge south of Krazha and descent to the adjoining valley the following morning, Susan Jensen and Ian Arnold took a serac-threatened lower route while Will Parsons, Ken Findlay, Shaun, and I chose a lovely hard *névé* ramp. We joined forces higher on the ridge. Named Andy's Route, after Andy Bennett, a friend of Ian's killed in an Alpine accident in 1990, the climb varied between a snow plod and some exciting bits and pieces, where ice or rock jutted out. A grade of Alpine PD/AD seemed appropriate.

From ABC2 the two main excursions were to a pair of hills opposite the camp and a five-day excursion to a side valley that Ian had spotted when he and I took a stroll out on the first day. The two hills across the river from ABC2 were climbed on August 10 and 11. Cold Foot Peak was climbed of the day the team crossed the river and Professor Peak the day after.

The best outings from "Ian's Valley" were a first ascent by Ken Findlay and Will Parsons of Karena Peak, where the soft snow and sections of loose rock gave them one or two moments to think about, and a new route on Cold Sunrise Peak.

On the evening of the 16th we climbed to a high bivouac site in order to access one of the higher peaks in this little cirque. Up at midnight, we edged our way upward among the ice and rock outcrops with only Will seeming to know where he was going. Out in the lead he made good progress between icefalls and rock. At 4 a.m. Will, Paul Lyons, and Ken took a rest, as Paul needed a toilet break. Sue, Ian, and I carried on up towards the ridge and by doing so missed the pantomime of the trip. Paul tried to access his bottom through a climbing harness, waterproof salopettes, fleece salopettes, and underpants. All on a 70° ice slope. It seems that all the various pieces of clothing had to be removed in different directions and Paul's struggles brought Ken and Will to their knees with laughter. After that event Paul L., Will, and Ken started up the slope following our lights and began to close the gap, until Paul began to ask for more and more rests and in the end started to fall asleep resting on his axe.

Will and Ken realized that Paul was suffering from an altitude problem and decided they needed to get him down. A shouted conversation later and it was agreed that the three below could adequately deal with the situation, leaving those up above free to continue. The descending trio started down immediately, but after a few rope lengths Paul recovered enough for them to stop their dangerous descent and wait until first light. Hacking a ledge on which to sit, Will then got them all to start the digit wiggling procedure that so many mountaineers know. Ian

and Susan continued pulling me along and as the sun rose we gained the final section and much to my relief soon stood on the summit of Cold Sunrise Peak. This was our last peak. Fortunately, Paul Lyons recovered as soon as he lost height, and apart from being tired was fit and well. The following day, the 18th, we started our journey back to base camp and finally flew back to the UK on the 23rd.

The team, well Shaun really, was sponsored for each hill he ascended and raised around £1,500 for the Kyrgyz charity. The following ascents were achieved: from ABC1 Whaleback (1st Ascent 4,456m—F); Peak of the Long White Cloud (1st Ascent 4,452m—PD); Charity Peak (1st Ascent 4,982m—PD/AD); Krazha Peak (1st UK/US ascent 4,592m—PD); White Top Rock (1st UK/US ascent 4,347m—PD-). From ABC2 Cold Feet Peak (1st ascent 4,550m—PD-); Marmot Peak (1st ascent 4,005m—walk); Karena Peak (1st Ascent 5,052m—PD+); Professor Peak* (1st British Ascent 4,840m—PD); Fossil Peak** (1st British/US Ascent 5,116m—PD); Cold Sunrise Peak** (New Route; 1st British/US Ascent 5,505m—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. ** signifies clear evidence, while * stands for 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 a natural effect of weathering.

PAUL HUDSON, *United Kingdom*

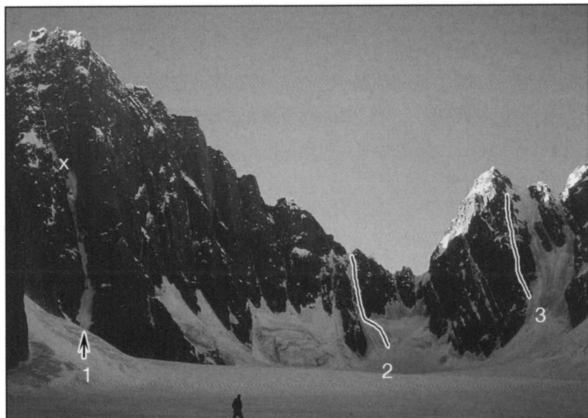
TIEN SHAN

WESTERN KOKSHAAL TOO

Kyzyl Asker, second ascent; new routes on Great Walls of China, Ochre Wall, Panfilovski Division.

Guy Robertson and I returned to Kyrgyzstan's Western Kokshaal-Too in late August, intent on finishing what we had started in 2002 on the unclimbed southeast face of Kyzyl Asker (5,842m). With us we brought extra firepower in the form of Pete Benson, and base camp conviviality in

the form of Robin Thomas and Matt Halls. Matt and Robin planned to climb anything that took their fancy, while Guy, Pete, and I planned to tackle the southeast face as a three. In 2002 the problem had been the line thawing at the slightest hint of sunshine. Although it was colder this time around, thawing still proved a significant problem, and we left without having attempted our intended route. It is difficult to know the best time to attempt this route. You could go in September and get lucky, or you could simply try it in bad



Kyzyl Asker (left) and Panfilovski Division. (1) Robertson-Tresidder attempt (ended at the x, 2002). (2) Pete and Matt's Couloir (Benson-Halls, 2004). (3) Haggis Supper (500m, WI5+, Benson-Robertson-Tresidder, 2004). *Es Tresidder*