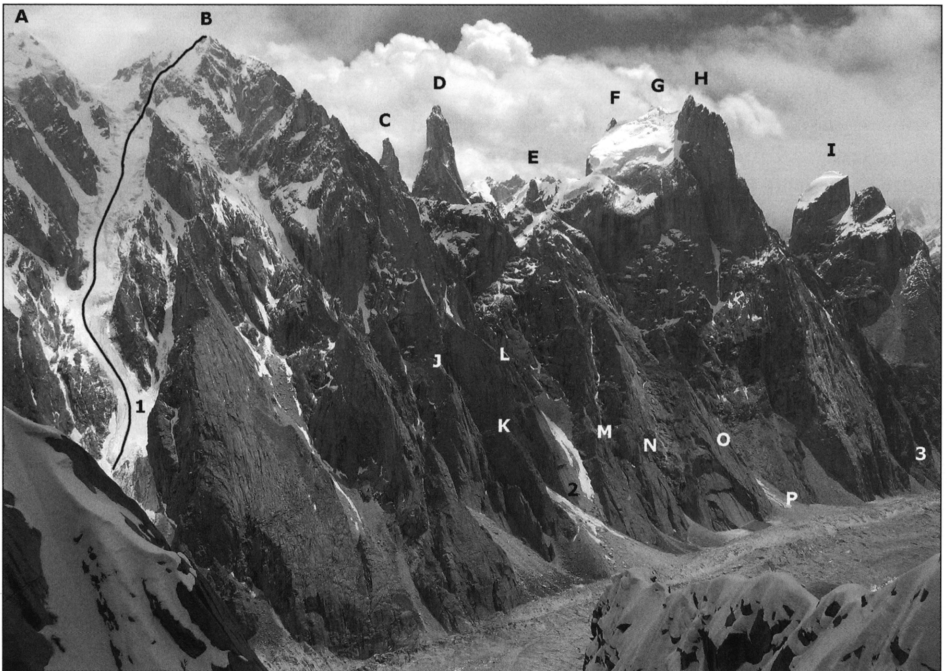


off on difficult run-out terrain, free-climbing his entire first block. I took the lead a few pitches later. The climbing was wide, burly, sustained, and at times loose, leaving me with what I call "that A5 feeling." On July 30, after two and a half days of climbing, we found ourselves on the needle-like summit of Cat's Ears Spire (ca 5,550m) in a snowstorm. We each led and down-climbed the tiny summit block, becoming the second team to stand on it. We called our partial new route, which had 23 pitches, Super Cat of the Karakoram (1,000m, VI 5.11+R A1).

This expedition was supported by an AAC Lyman Spitzer Grant.

MICAH DASH, AAC

Shipton Spire, Women and Chalk, second ascent and first to summit; Trango Tower, Eternal Flame, not to summit; Trango II, second known ascent; Little Shipton, first ascent. In mid-July a five-man expedition from the Austrian Tyrol, comprising Matthias Auer, Karl Dung, Ambros Sailer, and us, spent 40 days on the Trango glacier. We established two possible new routes and repeated a string of existing routes, notably the second ascent of Women and Chalk on Shipton Spire (5,885m).



Looking southeast over the Trango Glacier to the Trango Group. (A) The ridge leading to Trango I (6,363m). (B) Trango II (6,327m). (C) Trango Monk (5,850m). (D) Trango Tower (6,251m). (E) Little Trango (5,450m). (F) Great Trango Northeast. (G) Great Trango (6,286m). (H) Great Trango Southwest (6,250m). (I) Trango Castle (5,735m). (J) Garden Peak. (K) Garda Peak (ca 4,700m). (L) Severance First Tower. (M) Ibex Peak (ca 4,200m). (N) Sadu Peak (ca 4,400m). (O) Base Camp Slabs. (P) The approach gully used to reach Trango Tower and the normal route on Great Trango. (1) West Couloir (ca 1,700m, 55° M5, first known ascent by Auer and Dung, 2006). (2) The start of Severance Ridge, which leads toward the summit of Trango II (ca 1,600m, VI 5.11 A2 A13 M5, no summit, Clearwater-Frimer-Johnson, 2005). (3) The start of Azeem Ridge, which more or less follows the right skyline of Great Trango (2,250m, 5.11R/X A2 M6, Cordes-Wharton, 2004). *Dodo Kopold*

Difficulties ease considerably in the upper section, and Bole terminated his route on the crest. From here eight pitches of predominantly mixed climbing via Ship of Fools lead to the summit.

Although we were the first to climb the route to the summit, we congratulate "Bubu" Bole for his performance. Climbing such an uncompromising line from the ground up in 13 days commands respect, especially since he on-sighted every pitch.

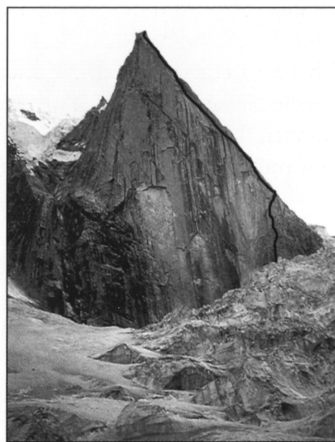
Almost all belays are equipped with two bolts, and there are in-situ pegs. However, repeating the route in complete alpine style may prove difficult, as there are no good bivouac sites in the lower section and collecting water is difficult.

The two of us also made a two-day alpine-style ascent of Eternal Flame on Trango Tower, to the top of the pillar and junction with the British route (28 pitches) but didn't continue to the summit. We climbed the approach couloir above Trango base camp in the morning, continued up the eight pitches to Sun Terrace in the afternoon, and after a bivouac reached our high point in eight hours the following day, negotiating the rock difficulties at 7b and A2.

Elsewhere, Matthias and Karl attempted The Flame via the American route, Under Fire (5.10+X A3 M5 AI 4), climbed by Brian McMahon and Josh Wharton in 2002. However, bad conditions prevented them from reaching the summit. They then climbed the normal route on Great Trango and later made the second known ascent of Trango II (6,327m). Starting early on August 19 and traveling light, the pair climbed the huge couloir on the southwest flank that falls from just north of the summit to the Trango Glacier close to Shipton base camp. At two-thirds height they headed up right through a mixed section to the final summit ice field (55° and M5). The last four pitches proved to be the crux. They reached the summit at 2 p.m. and rappelled and downclimbed their line of ascent partway, before bivouacking for the night. Next morning they made it back to base camp.

[Editor's note: Trango II was climbed in 1995 by Antonio Aquerrera, Ferman Izco, and Mikel Zabalza, via the broad snowy southeast ridge above Trango Monk. Jonathan Clearwater, Jeremy Frimer, and Sam Johnson nearly reached the summit in 2005 after their ascent of the Severance or southwest ridge. It seems likely there could have been other ascents. It is believed the couloir used by the Austrians has been climbed for at least part of its length before.]

Lastly we two made the first ascent of a ca 5,400m tower dubbed Little Shipton. This is the triangular wall to the right of, and just beyond, Shipton Spire. Despite the uninviting appearance of the east face, we found perfect steep rock. The central part of the wall overhangs, and lack of cracks forced us to start toward the right side. After four pitches we traversed right (crux, 7a+, 1 bolt), to focus on crack systems on the ridge. One crack followed another, and after some wonderfully enjoyable pitches (mostly 6b) we reached the highest point. We rappelled the route using mostly flakes and blocks but placing four bolts. We climbed the 550m, 14-pitch Winds of Change (7a+) alpine style in six hours.



Little Shipton (ca 5,400m) showing the line of the first ascent up the east face and northeast ridge: Winds of Change (550m, 7a+, Auer-Scheiber, 2006).
Hansjörg Auer collection