



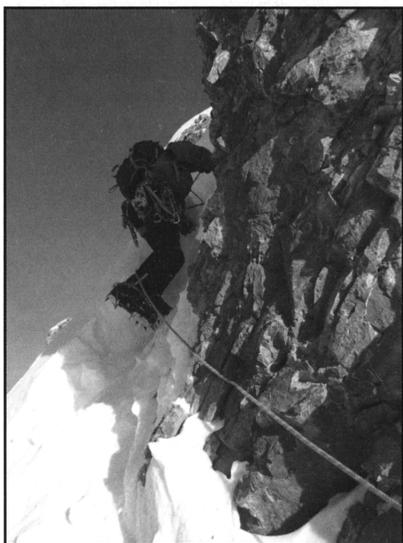
Looking south-southeast during ascent of Pik 4,815m at unclimbed peaks in northern Borkoldoy. *Mark Weeding*



Pik 4,815m in northern Borkoldoy. Ascent ridge faces camera. *Mark Weeding*

Russian map it is given a height of 4,950m, but our altimeter showed only 4,830m. Next day van Beek and Visscher made an attempt on the massive west face but retreated after 400m. On the 6th all four of us tried again, this time climbing 700m before being beaten by a blank section. We feel the Oibala range still has potential for more first ascents.

BAS VAN DER SMEEDE, *Holland*



On ascent of Pik 4,815m, northern Borkoldoy. *Mark Weeding*

## TIEN SHAN

### FERGANA AND BORKOLDOY,

*Various ascents.* The Northern Borkoldoy has a staggering collection of gnarly looking peaks topping out at just under 5,000m. The 4x4 journey to reach them was the hardest I have ever undertaken. The direct back roads from Naryn to Issykul feature dramatic gorges, broken bridges, crumbling single track, and a 3,940m snow-covered pass. We slithered off the road at least once.

Dave Molesworth, Tim Seel, Misha Sukhorukov, and I began my fourth trip to Kyrgyzstan in the Fergana Tau, which I visited in 2010 (*AAJ 2011*). We first climbed a peak at the head of the eastern arm of the glacier, a long slog across scree and glacier

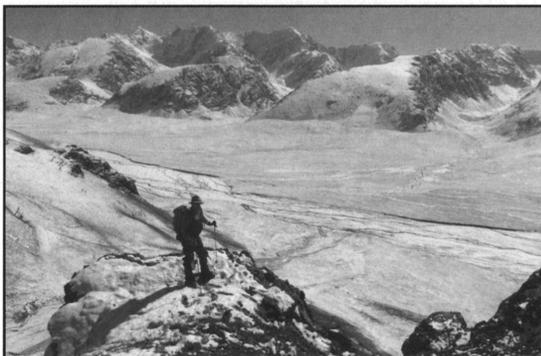
followed by a steep ice face. The final 200m provided all the delights of steep scree and broken rock, and our summit (4,710m, 40°33'07.13" N, 74°37'16.23" E, AD), proved to be part of a long broken ridge, with numerous summits for future visits.

Starting from a camp at 3,400m, we probably overdid it as a first acclimatization climb, so we moved camp higher and from this new location made two climbs. The first involved scree, snow, and a short scramble up the final ridge to a fine summit (4,650m, 40°33'36.57" N, 74°34'55.11" E, F). The second lay east of the main col, on the watershed ridge with Osh Province. Steep snow and ice, followed by a short scramble, brought us to a forepeak, from where we traversed a snow basin to the main summit (4,685m, 40°33'02.58" N, 74°35'15.55" E, AD). Rockfall and hard ice deterred us from descending the same way, so we dropped down scree on the wrong side of the watershed, hoping to reach a glacier we had seen from the col. The farther we went, the worse it looked, and, when we saw our glacier below, we realized the immensity of the relief. All we needed to do now was re-ascend 200m to the col, but Misha wanted to traverse the ridge, which looked like at least eight hours of fun. Aged 63, he's an insatiable lad, but his internal GPS has gotten us into trouble on more than one occasion.

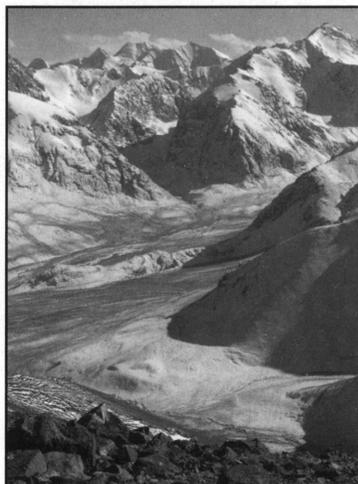
After an unsuccessful attempt on a peak above the Torugat road, we started an epic journey cross-country. Just before the Tosor Pass we saw two peaks that "needed doing." Here we met Ukrainian rafters about to descend the Rishi Naryn. From a high waterless camp, we climbed a steep face and pleasant ridge to bag summits of 4,560m (41°51'12.75" N, 77°04'43.43" E, PD) and 4,630m (41°51'11.58" N, 77°04'21.51" E, PD). I was desperately knackered, thanks to the trots leaving me badly dehydrated. Olec, our driver and cook, finished me off with a traditional cure of vodka and salt.

By the time we reached the northern Borkoldoy, we had five days left and a boatload of peaks from which to choose. A fabulous morning deteriorated into heavy snow and Tim going sick, but Dave and I reached a fantastic viewpoint (4,350m, 41°28'06.60" N, 77°31'50.01" E, F). We began to notice the approach of winter, with night temperatures dropping to -22°C.

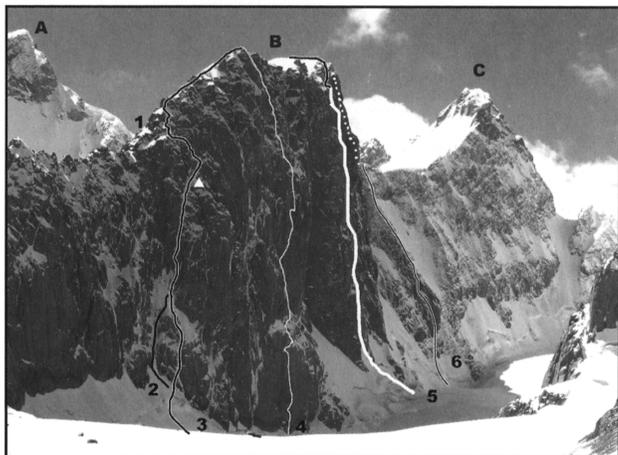
With the return of good weather three of us decided on an ascent of the dominant peak. After a bivouac at 4,000m in biting cold and blowing spindrift, we started up an endless ridge. This led to at least four summits and an overhanging serac to traverse. The final slopes were endless, as we slogged through knee-deep snow and past a couple of unusual circular crevasses. It was 3 p.m. when we arrived on the



Looking east at unclimbed peaks from low on Pik 4,350m, northern Borkoldoy. Pik 4,815m just off-picture left. *Mark Weeding*



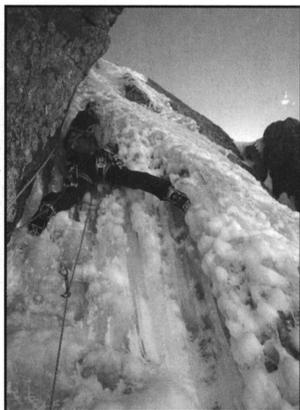
Looking southeast at unclimbed peaks of Borkoldoy from summit of Pik 4,350m. *Mark Weeding*



Looking south-southeast over Kyzyl Asker Glacier. (A) Pik Unmarked Soldier (5,352m). (B) Pik Vernyi (ca 5,250m). (C) Pik Panfilovski Division (5,290m). (1) North ridge (600m, TD+ Scottish 6, Crampton-Fyffe, 2002, repeated in 2003). (2) 2009 Krol-Sokolowski attempt. (3) Cztery Pory Roku (direct start). (4) No Shachlik (700m, 6c A3 M6, Christie-Gal-Gal-Gottfrey, 2010). (5) Belorussian-Russian Route (750m, Russian 6B, Bandelet-Malakhovskiy-Mikhailov-Nilov, 2009). (6) Original 1988 Soviet route—northwest face and south ridge. *Maria Gal*



Sokolowski on pitch seven (M6).  
*Michel Krol*



Krol starting pitch nine. White static rope was left in 2009. *Andrzej Sokolowski*

summit (4,815m, 41°25'05.08" N, 77°41'34.15" E). We reversed the route and just finished the pinnacles when darkness fell. We stumbled down the remaining snow slopes under a full moon. It was a demanding day at AD+, but with another freezing bivouac, a bowl of cold pasta, and a tin of fish, it was overall ED, at least. We had promised to be down that evening, but the promise would be broken. Next morning Dave and Olec were relieved to see us; the tough old paratrooper and Spesnet soldier had tears in his eyes.

MARK WEEDING, U.K.

#### WESTERN KOKSHAAL-TOO

*Pik Vernyi (5,250m), north summit, Cztery Pory Roku.* On August 13 and 14 Andrzej Sokolowski and I established a new route on the north summit of Pik Vernyi. We had attempted this line in 2009, but near the end of the major difficulties, I was hit on the shoulder by a large chunk of ice that damaged ligaments.

In 2011 we traveled as before from Bishkek, but when seven km from base camp, the

vehicle got stuck in a river. After extracting it the driver stated there was not enough fuel to go farther, so we lost a day carrying gear to base camp. After a rest we established an advanced base on the Kyzyl Asker Glacier and the next day climbed the first three pitches of our proposed line, to check conditions and acclimatize. The ice was good. We rappelled and returned to base.

Three days later we started up the face. An initial 120m, 50° icefield led to the face proper and the first ice runnel. In 2009 we had climbed more to the left, but now we were able to make a direct start. Two long pitches of WI4+ and 4 led to the first icefield. This was glassy and although only WI3 made our calves hurt by the time we'd reached the top. Here we rejoined the line of our 2009 attempt. A 30m pitch of WI3+ led to a chimney system. I led the next pitch and sweatily managed to reach the belay (M7 WI5).