



Charlie Evans traversing north ridge toward summit headwall. Sarychat Glacier down to right. Peaks of Borkoldoy Range in distance. *Edward Lemon*

At 4 a.m. on August 5 we set off from high camp for the base of Fers III, where we split into two pairs, Evans with Lemon and I with Hannes Granberg, our Swedish undergraduate medic. Both teams progressed well, climbing opposite sides of a 400m ice ramp on the northeast facet. At the level of the main ridge (ca 5,000m) an overhanging 30m rock step impeded progress. Both teams passed it on the left via a descending traverse to a system of mixed gullies and ledges, which led to the ridge. This section provided the technical crux of the route, with several steps

of M5 and AI4 split by narrow ledges strewn with large loose blocks. The final 300m was the same for both parties, the headwall of the summit ridge rising to 60-65° snow. From the top we reversed the route. Part way down the face, after 20 hours of climbing, ropes became stuck and had to be cut. Both teams arrived in high camp 28 hours after leaving. This led to Granberg and I naming our route 28 Hours Later, while Evans and Lemon named theirs for smoked cheese Evans carried for summit celebrations: Brothers Chechel.

We provisionally graded both routes ED1. Obligatory difficulties rated an alpine TD, but the route was remote and committing, with loose rock and the crux pitches high on the mountain. We have suggested the peak be named Eggemenduluk (which translates as freedom or independence), in honor of the August 2011 20th anniversary of Kyrgyz independence.

The major climbing phase of our expedition ended at this point, though Hannes and I climbed small peaks on the plateau above base camp, reaching Piks 4,631m and 4,685m (both PD- and located near 41°06' N, 77°31' E). We provisionally named these after our understanding girlfriends, Georgina and Annika. We reported our ascents and the provisional peak names to the Kyrgyz Alpine Club.

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Richard Tremellen views route ahead, south along crest to Pik Emma. He is standing on Point 4,769m, almost a summit itself, crossed en route to Emma. Pik 5,318m just off picture to left. *Alex Brighton*

#### DJANGART RANGE

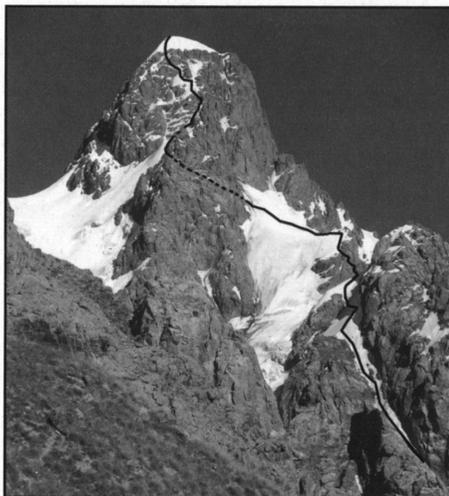
*Pik Emma (4,783m map, 4,803m GPS), north ridge; Pik Laetitia (4,940m map, 4,952m GPS), southwest couloir and northwest face; Pik 5,318m, west face attempt.* Inspired by the 2010 Anglo-American expedition (AAJ 2011), Richard Tremellen and I set off in July for the remarkably unexplored Djangart region. The highest summit, Pik 5,318m, presented the

most obvious goal. Alas, it remains unclimbed. However, we made two first ascents and are richer for the experience of an expedition of this nature. The unknown presented as much of a challenge as anything we faced on the mountains.

Unable to arrange horses to carry over the Djangart Pass, we set up base camp in the Kaichi Valley, two arduous days' walking from the highest mountains. Time on these peaks was limited, as we could not carry supplies for anything more than alpine-style ascents from base camp.

Our first objective was Pik 4,783, which lay above the entry to the eastern Akoguz Glacier, immediately west of Pik 5,318m. We were attracted by the possibility of a summit view toward our intended route on 5,318m, and that 5,318 formed part of a long ridge with no previous ascents of any of its summits. Though the approach to the ridge via the northwest rib was tiresome, due to poor rock (we climbed the flank of Pik 4,561m, without going to its top), the north ridge of the peak itself had a beautiful ambience, and provided interesting, though never difficult, climbing. The ridge began as a broad, gentle crest but narrowed and steepened as we moved south. Soft snow forced us to bivouac several hundred meters short of the summit, but we didn't mind spending the night in such a spectacular location. The final hour of climbing the next morning (July 22) presented mixed ground, a heavily corniced ridge, and a beautiful summit. In the prevailing conditions the grade was around AD. We named the summit Pik Emma (41.69426° N, 78.92930° E) and descended a rather dangerous gully on the west face.

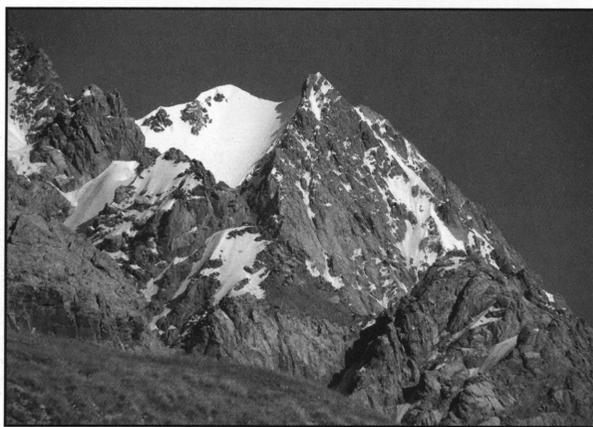
After a rest at base camp and an attempt at Pik 4,940m (see



Pik Laetitia from west with first ascent route. *Alex Brighton*



Pik 5,318m from summit of Pik Emma. Left skyline is north ridge, which team planned to gain just left of foresummit. *Alex Brighton*



Unclimbed Pik 5,041m, between the Kaichi Valley and N7 Glacier, seen from Kaichi to west. *Alex Brighton*



Richard Tremellen making steep traverse at couloir exit on the Phoenix, Pik Laetitia. *Alex Brighton*



Unnamed and unclimbed peak on west side of Kaichi Valley. *Alex Brighton*

below), we returned over the Djangart Pass, taking two days to reach the west side of Pik 5,318m, the trek over the moraines of the N1 Glacier alone taking seven torturous hours. We had taken supplies for only six days, so it was a great disappointment when our first 36 hours were spent in a cramped bivouac, watching snow pour down. With a slight clearing on our fourth day, we edged higher by means of a rock rib, in order to make a bid for the summit once the snow consolidated. The rib proved easy up to 4,750m, where a 60m snowfield separated us from another safe rib. We tentatively moved onto it, but our luck was out. Cracking of the surrounding snow stopped us. There was no need for discussion; this was the end of the climb. Pik 5,318m is achievable; the climbing as far as our high point had not been difficult, and it appeared, given good conditions, to be relatively straightforward above.

A peak that had caught our eye on our first day in the Kaichi Valley was not marked on the map, other than a tiny ring of contours reaching 4,940m on the watershed between the Kaichi Valley and N7 Glacier. Striking in appearance, it became our final project. Attempting a one-day push on July 26, via the southwest couloir and northwest face, we had met soft snow on the summit structure and bivouacked with no gear at 4,650m. We hoped to complete the ascent next morning, but a snow storm forced descent.

However, our August 5 attempt proved successful. The route began by ascending an increasingly steep snow and ice couloir in the most spectacular mountain setting. Above lay a long traverse over 70° ice, the first difficulty of a fantastic route. This was followed by a 100m step of sound rock, at UIAA III/IV, giving access to the summit block. It looked like this final section would go easily, but we were wrong. Two hundred meters of Scottish 5 and 80° mixed terrain led to the top. We named the peak Laetitia (41.64860° N, 78.81608° E) and the route the Phoenix (1,300m, TD), due to it being completed after an initial failure.

During the return home we wondered whether climbing alpine style, as we did, was the most suitable. Our attempt on Point 5,318m, for example, couldn't allow a 36-hour snow storm plus time for consolidation. However, alpine style did allow time for three other climbs, whereas a siege on one objective would not. Either way, our advice to anyone planning a similar expedition would be to expect the unexpected, be flexible, keep on smiling, and you might come home with something to show for it.

For more information visit Djangart Ascents Kyrgyzstan on Facebook.

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