



AAC Publications

Seven First Ascents and High Traverse in Djangart Range

Kyrgyzstan, Central Kokshaal-Too

Tom Bell, Max Folkett, Richard “Reg” Measures, Neil Thomas, Hugh Thomas, and I arrived in Bishkek from the U.K. and New Zealand in early August. On 5th we traveled to Maida-Adyr, and the following morning we took a 25-minute helicopter flight to our base camp at the junction of the Djangart Valley and the N1 and N2 glaciers.

The team split into two parties for the whole trip and spent the initial few days acclimatizing and exploring the area, visiting the Chulaktor, Akoguz, N2, and N1 glaciers. Hugh, Tom, and Neil then made the first ascents of Peak Fotheringham (4,871m, 41°39'30.31"N, 79°0'32.88"E), up the east ridge and down the west, followed by Point Andrea (4,566m 41°40'19.94"N, 79°00'43.70"E). Two days later they climbed Peak Kinmundy (4,950m, 41°39'58.57"N, 79°1'32.80"E).

From the N2 glacier, Max, Reg, and I made the first ascent of Peak MacMillan (5051m, 41°41'43.24"N, 079°0'45.08"E). Our route was an aesthetic line up the northwest face (Frima Face, 900m, D- 45-70° Scottish III). Going light from a high camp at around 4,000m, we soloed 700m of 45°–70° névé to the west ridge—with the altitude this felt punishing. Taking care to avoid the cornices, we made our way to the top and descended the lower angled southeast face.

Two days later, on August 16, we made the first ascent of Peak Vinton-Boot (5,168m, 41°40'30.84"N, 079°1'37.91"E) via a stunning northwest-facing ice gully (Open Misère, 500m, TD Scottish V). Overcoming the bergschrund was awkward, and the pitches then gradually got steeper. The ice had formed over a layer of snow and didn't take screws well, and the rock was quite friable. Reg led the steepest ice, and then Max climbed some mixed to get around a thin, unprotectable section. After nine full pitches the angle eased off and we simul-climbed to the summit ridge. We descended the north ridge and a messy glacier, arriving back to camp after an 18-hour round trip.

On the 19th of August Reg, Max and I made an initial attempt from the N1 glacier on the traverse from Peak 5,274m (Djanghorn) to Peak After You (5,318m), the highest peak in the range, climbed by a U.S. team two weeks prior to our arrival. However this attempt was halted by rockfall, in which Max sustained minor injuries and our rope was cut. Over the next week, spells of bad weather limited activity to exploration and aborted attempts on Peak 5,112m (Sauktor Glacier) and Peak 4,911m (Akoguz Glacier).

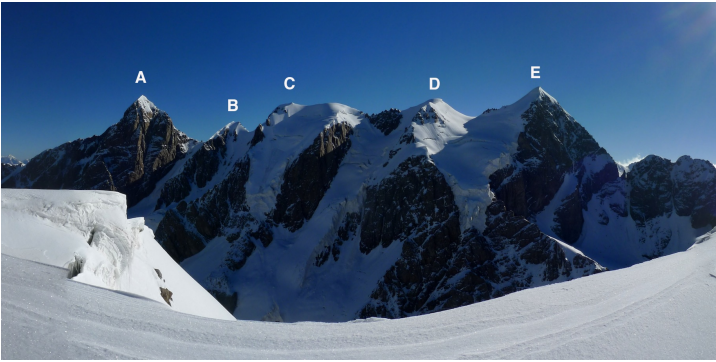
On the 27th of August, Reg, Max, and I were ready for a rematch with the south ridge of Djanghorn (41°40'5.71"N, 078°59'21.70"E) and the traverse to Peak After You. Starting at 1 a.m. from our high camp, we went flat out, climbing as fast as we could through the rockfall danger to col at the beginning of the ridge. Immediately above the col were the crux pitches, which were steep and loose. Max led the hardest pitch in rock shoes. With a mixture of free and aid, he climbed an overhanging corner filled with flakes seemed posed ready to detach—which several did—at HVS A2 (5.9 A2). After seven very time-consuming, awkward pitches and several sections of tricky simul-climbing, we reached soft snow slopes leading to the summit.

We summited at 5:30 p.m. and started the 2.5km traverse of the other peaks. By the time darkness fell we were over the next major summit, making the first ascent of Peak 5,207m. Stopping to melt water and eat, we contemplated biving, but it was too cold with no gear, so we pushed on, completing the second ascents of Peak Buddyness (5,172m) and Peak Betelgeuse (5,100m). Reaching the col

before Peak After You at 1:30 a.m., we took the escape option back to our high camp. At our tent we checked the sat phone and discovered we still had no confirmation that our helicopter pick-up had been moved—meaning the helicopter was potentially arriving at 8 a.m. that morning! With this in mind we reluctantly collapsed the tent and walked four hours back to base camp, ending a 31-hour day. The helicopter didn't arrive until the following day. We would like to thank the Mount Everest Foundation, the Alpine Club, and the Austrian Alpine Club for supporting our expedition.

Timothy Elson, U.K.

Images



The east wall of the N1 Glacier, traversed from E to B (south to north) by Timothy Elson, Max Folkett, and Reg Measures. (A) Peak After You. (B) Peak Betelgeuse. (C) Peak Buddyness. (D) Peak 5,207m. (E) Djanghorn (Peak 5,274m), first ascent by the south ridge.



Scoping the northwest-facing ice gully on Peak Vinton-Boot.



Peak Fotheringham.



Ice climbing on Peak Vinton-Boot.



Dawn Wall from N2.



Climbing on the Djanghorn.

Article Details

Author	Timothy Elson
Publication	AAJ
Volume	88
Issue	56
Page	273
Copyright Date	2014
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions