



AAC Publications

Oibala Mountains, Various Ascents

Kyrgyzstan, Alai

Joep Bovens, Jacos van Zelst, and I visited Kyrgyzstan in July and August of 2013. This was the second Dutch expedition to the Oibala region, where the people are very hospitable and welcoming. (The first was in 2011; see AAJ 2012 report.) After driving from Osh, we established base camp in the grassy valley of the Kok Suu (Suu River). We stayed there for more than three weeks and did not see anybody else.

In the beginning the weather was cold, and then we had more stable, warm weather—so warm that we had to switch from ice and mixed routes to rock climbing. During the last week and a half we had rain almost every day, but still managed to climb our longest route.

Most of the climbing is mixed, with snow on the lower slopes of the mountains and rock or mixed terrain on the upper parts. Pure rock climbing is possible in the upper valley, with rock formations up to 150m. The rock is either very compact, and thus difficult or impossible to protect, or else very loose. The snow slopes are between 30° and 55°. We saw some rockfall and small avalanches, but not on our routes.

We did several first ascents and the second ascent of a peak:

Peak Irroli (4,613m), Middle Aged Man

40°03'37.1"N, 073°53'08.9"E

On July 21 we climbed the west ridge to the northwest ridge (AD), with loose rubble on the lower ridge and more compact but still occasionally unstable rock closer to the top. We descended the northwest ridge and then snow slopes north of the lower ridge line.

Mel's Peak (4,194m), Ice Cream for Lunch

40°08'06.5"N, 073°55'03.4"E

Straathof and van Zelst climbed a beautiful corner crack (6a+) on the south face of this small peak rising out of the valley west of Peak BasBas (4,785m) on July 28. The rock was hard limestone, sometimes difficult to protect.

Pik Marian (4,562m), Double Dutch

40°07'35.8"N, 073°55'29.2"E

On July 29 all three climbers ascended an ice couloir on the northwest face to reach the northeast ridge, which they followed to the top with magnificent views (AD). The ridge was mixed but mostly stable terrain. Due to hot weather, the descent directly down the northwest face was tricky, with fast-melting snow over clear ice. This peak was climbed by the 2011 expedition but not previously reported. [This mountain was called Pik Bröo by the 2013 team, unaware of its earlier name. The 2013

team followed essentially the same line as the one climbed in 2011.]

Little Matterhorn (4,055m), Down the Rabbit Hole

On August 1 we climbed a 100m line on compact limestone, difficult to protect, on the west face (6b).

Pik M (4,472m), Don't Trip, Don't Fall

40°08'23.8"N, 073°50'10.4"E

On August 2 we started to the north of this eye-catching peak and traversed the main ridge line from west to northeast, finding mostly loose terrain (D).

Dragon's Back (4,580m), Our Way

40°03'45.8"N, 073°49'17.5"E

In a 17-hour round trip from base camp on August 6, we traversed the 3km ridge from north to south, starting on the east side. We found mixed terrain, ice and soft snow, and loose rock alternating with hard, compact rock (TD- 6a).

[Download the complete trip report](#) with photos and route lines.

Dennis Straathof, Netherlands

Images



Little Matterhorn.



Mel's Peak.



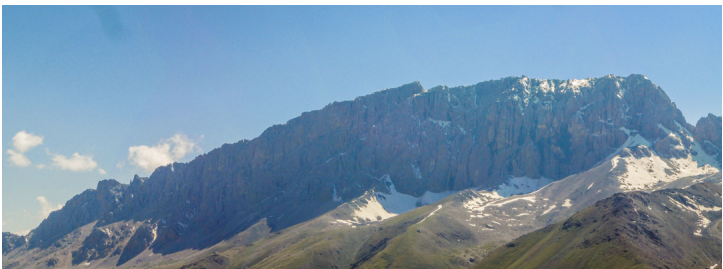
Peak Marian (a.k.a. Peak Bröö).



Peak Irroli.



Peak M.



The 3km ridge of Dragons Back (4,580m), traversed from right to left (TD- 6a) in 2014.

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