



## AAC Publications

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### **Peaks to the East of Suek Pass, Various Ascents**

Kyrgyzstan, Terskey Ala-too

**This year's expedition to Kyrgyzstan was planned somewhat more on the hoof than normal: I only booked flights three days prior to departure. On the morning of September 19, Vladimir Komissarov, director of the ITMC agency, kindly met me to pass on some knowledge and homemade grappa. He pointed Callum Nelson and me toward the Suek Mountains, east of the pass of the same name—a range that, to his knowledge, had seen no previous mountaineering activity. Access was easy from the Kum Tor Gold Mine road, which made it perfect for a quick hit. Experienced mountaineers Luba and Sasha at the Tamga Guest House arranged a cheap jeep to get us to and from the mountains.**

As Callum was one of the few mountaineers (and possibly the last of the season) to summit Pik Lenin, he was much more acclimatized than me, so we spent the first two days slowly moving our base camp up to a glacier in the center of the range at 41.828425°N, 77.849813°E. On September 22 we climbed the north ridge of the central snowy peak between the two forks of the glacier above camp (4,526m, 41.797220°N, 77.852461°E). We traversed the horseshoe rim eastward and descended the north ridge of the next peak, Pik 4,467m, which provided some excitingly loose and occasionally technical downclimbing. Great care had to be taken on short sections of Scottish 2/3.

Next we climbed Pik 4,490m (41.799705°N, 77.837870°E) from the eastern glacier via a hanging glacier on the east face. Not fancying the final 60°, bulletproof ice slope with one axe each, we sneaked around it southward to reach the summit. Here, we found a very large cairn and a decorative horse skull, suggesting that maybe we weren't the first people to be there. We descended the non-glaciated north ridge, before taking a long scree slope down to the glacier.

The weather over the next few days was atrocious, being very windy with quite heavy snow showers. I also developed a fever, so was in need of some tent time. After a reconnaissance of Pik 4,208m (41.823224°N, 77.859699°E), we decided to move base camp farther east to access the highest peak in the range. The morning of the 27th was clear as we moved eastward through a thick blanket of snow to camp at 41.844015°N, 77.884345°E. Here, we were lucky to see Kyrgyz nomads taking their herds to Karakol for the winter.

With the weather remaining stormy, we spent a few days exploring, including a traverse of the rocky ridge east of camp, over pinnacles, to Pik 4,201m (41.826311°N, 77.897233°E). The weather forecast had been consistent that our final day in the mountains would be good. We should have walked out that day, but decided after so much bad weather we couldn't turn it down. We were rewarded for our patience and on the 29th were successful on Pik 4,582m (41.797340°N, 77.876322°E). This is marked Pik 4,573m on the Russian map and is probably the highest in the range, although there is another peak of similar height marked several kilometers to the northeast.

Ascending 45° snow-covered scree brought us to the true north ridge, where snow slopes on the crest settled in such a loud and alarming fashion that we descended to the small northern glacier that allowed access to the northeast ridge. The summit itself had an extremely large cornice, so we got as close to the top as we dare. We reversed the northeast ridge and then crossed back to the north ridge, joining it when it became rocky. The flanks were steeper than expected, so we traversed all the scrambly summits for a distance of 7km to the end of the ridge, where we could descend easily to

base camp. All heights and coordinates in this report have been taken from a satellite phone and not from the Russian map.

– **Emily Ward**, Alpine Club, U.K.

## Images



(A) Pik 4,467m. (B) Pik 4,526m. (C) Pik 4,490m. (1) North ridge of Pik 4,467m, descended after a traverse from Pik 4,526m to Pik 4,467m. (2) North ridge of Pik 4,526m, climbed in 2016. (3) East face of Pik 4,490m.



Unclimbed Pik ca 4,500m in the mountains east of Suek Pass.



Pik 4,582m in the mountains east of the Suek Pass. The first ascent was made in 2016 via the left skyline (northeast) ridge.

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