



AAC Publications

Ogre I and II, Attempts

Pakistan, Karakoram, Panmah Muztagh

Marcos Costa (Brazil), Jesse Mease, Billy Pierson (both USA), and I (U.K.) went to the Choktoi Glacier in June and July to attempt the unclimbed north face of the Ogre. This Eiger Nordwand of the Karakoram is accessed by a short walk over the Sim La (5,300m) from the upper Choktoi. It features serac-laden snow and ice slopes to 6,600m, topped by a rock ramp to an upper snowfield at 7,100m and a steep headwall to the summit (7,284m).

We shared permits with Scott Adamson and Kyle Dempster (both USA), who were planning to climb the north face of Ogre II and the north ridge of Latok I. Our liaison officer, one of the most inept any of us had encountered, informed us that the new and especially time-wasting military regulations being introduced this year in the wake of the Nanga Parbat massacre were intended to make things safer for all climbers, primarily by making it difficult for them to come at all. Once again the livelihood of the locals plays no role in the thinking of Pakistani officialdom.

After all four of us made an acclimatization trip up Baintha Ahrta (ca 6,300m, soloed by me in 2013), the forecast called for excellent weather and we rushed off to the north face of the Ogre and launched up it. However, at sunrise on the first ice pitches beyond our 2013 high point (ca 5,900m), we found ourselves in the firing line of very significant stonefall, with Jesse in particular being hit several times in our extended run for cover. Marcos and I spent the morning digging a four-man snow cave, and we sheltered in this until midnight before retreating. Rivers of slush flowed past us at sundown, providing our first hint that nothing was normal about the summer of 2015 in the Karakoram.

Sure enough, stiflingly hot days, with the freezing level far above 6,000m, dragged into weeks. Marcos and Jesse repeated the latter's 2013 all-free rock route on Biacherahi Central Tower. Billy and I attempted a new line up the snow couloirs leading to the north side of Porter Peak (ca 5,700m), directly east of base camp, but were closed down 10m below the summit by an impassable cornice. A team including the Huber brothers, trying a new route on Latok III, was lucky to escape uninjured when their tents were nearly blown off their platforms by the blast wave of a collapsing serac. With no break in the weather in sight, we gritted our teeth, chose our targets, and prepared for nighttime operations.

Billy and I returned to the Ogre. On the first night we regained our cave and spent a comfortable day. On the second night we breached an ice barrier in the main rockfall gully and exited left to shelter under a serac at 6,400m. On the third night we climbed to the top of the snow at 6,600m and here were shut down unequivocally. The rock band to 7,100m is by no means the excellent granite for which the Ogre is famous, but a slabby, friable, red- and black- streaked stone, which takes no protection and would not even remain in place for long enough to host a tool or a crampon. With no ice or snow cover, which could perhaps be expected only in September, progress was impossible. We rappelled the next night and were back in base camp the following day.

Marcos and Jesse decided to try Ogre II (6,960m) by the northwest ridge, climbed by Koreans in 1983 for the first ascent of the peak. On their first day they could only reach the basin below the col connecting the two Ogres before things became too warm. On their second night they climbed to the col, and then they were free of objective hazards and could continue up excellent ice and mixed granite. On their third day they reached a high camp around 6,600m on a precarious perch with stunning views of the Ogre. Their fourth day found them on steep, technical rock with insufficient

equipment either to climb or to protect, and they were forced to retreat from a high point of ca 6,700m, regaining base camp safely the day after us. I would like to thank the MEF, BMC, and Alpine Club for their generous support of our effort. [\[Read the story of Scott Adamson and Kyle Dempster's attempt and accident on the north face of Ogre II.\]](#)

Bruce Normand, U.K.

Images



Jesse Meese climbing above high camp on the northwest ridge of Ogre II. Below him are snow slopes forming the southwest side of the col between the Ogre and Ogre II.



Jesse Meese on the northwest ridge of Ogre II, with part of the southeast face of the Ogre behind. The highest snow ramp, slanting left from the serac on the right, was used in 2012 by Kyle Dempster and Hayden Kennedy to make the third ascent of the mountain. Below the lower snow band lies the top section of the southeast pillar.



Looking down past Hayden Kennedy on the southeast face of the Ogre to the the Korean Route (1983) on Ogre II, attempted by Marcos Costa and Jesse Mease in 2015.



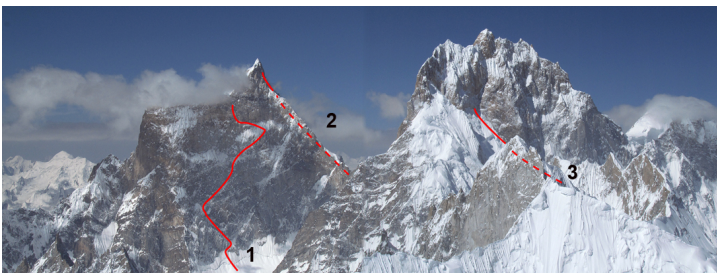
Ogres II and I from the upper Choktoi Glacier. (1) Adamson-Dempster attempt (2015). (2) Korean Route (1983), attempted by Costa and Mease. (3) Normand-Pierson attempt (2015).



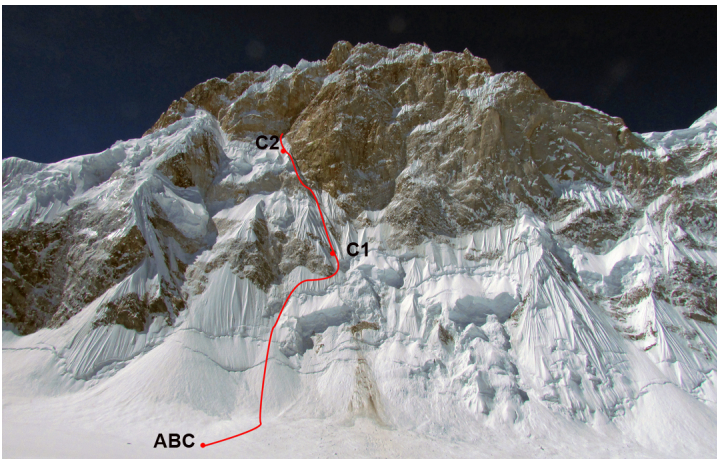
Marcos Costa on mixed ground during an attempt on the northwest ridge of Ogre II.



Marcos Costa making athletic moves on an overhang close to the Costa-Mease high point on the northwest ridge of Ogre II.



Ogres II and I from the upper Choktoi Glacier. (1) Adamson-Dempster attempt. (2) Costa-Mease attempt. (3) Normand-Pierson attempt (2015).



The unclimbed north face of the Ogre. The 2015 attempted line and camps are marked. Above the high point, the proposed route was the obvious ramp cutting right through the rock barrier to the snow patch below the summit tower.



Billy Pierson prospecting for something climbable at the start of the rock band (ca 6,600m) on the north face of the Ogre.

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