

## AK-SHIRAK RANGE

Pik 150th Anniversary of the British Alpine Club (4,836m), and four other first ascents; ski-mountaineering. In 2006 I was asked to organize a ski-mountaineering expedition as part of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Alpine Club planned for 2007. In 2003 and 2006 I visited the Ak-Shirak Range in the Central Tien Shan and saw that there was plenty of scope for more exploratory mountaineering. Accordingly, on April 7, 2007 five Alpine Club members set



Ascending the Petrov Glacier on the way to "Pic 150th Anniversary of the British Alpine Club," with unclimbed peaks in view. Dave Wynne-Jones



Enjoying fine views from Pik 150th Anniversary of the British Alpine Club (4,836m) in the Ak-Shirak. Dave Wynne-Jones

out for three weeks in Kyrgyzstan: Stuart Gallagher, Gethin Howells, Adele Long, Gordon Nuttall, and I.

As we approached the Kumtor gold mine, however, I saw that conditions were hugely different from what I'd found in 2003. Though early in April, the road was clear, as were most of the slopes below 3,800m. Fortunately, Lake Petrov was still frozen solid, so 40 minutes and 2km after setting foot on the ice, we were setting up Camp 1 on a sandy beach beneath the snout of the Petrov Glacier. Camped at 3,730m, we had gained 2,000m in a five-hour drive; headaches were obligatory.

The next day we struggled up the convoluted glacier to leave a cache, and a day after, on a scout of the glacier, the snow cracked like a pistol as it settled in huge plates beneath us. Camp 2, almost 4,300m, had more stable snow conditions. The next day we mostly skied and occasionally climbed in crampons to a summit at 4,836m. Our first first ascent had to be named "Pik 150th Anniversary of the British Alpine Club" in the fine tradition of Soviet peak names. We then enjoyed carving turns all the way to the foot of the pass.

Our next peak was to the east and surprised us with fresh snow leopard tracks as we climbed up under its southwest face. Ice glistened under the snow, so we abandoned plans to skin up the face and left our skis at an ice boss on the west ridge. Trying to sneak past the ice boss, we found wind-polished armor plating, and we roped up for a short pitch. Higher, we roped again for more ice to the corniced summit at 4,887m. We called it Pik Ak Ilbirs (meaning "snow leopard" in Kyrgyz).

Over the next couple of days we headed east again to climb two more peaks from the pass at the head of the glacier. One was an icy whaleback rising to a narrow fin of snow and rock at

the 4,720m summit (Pik Plavnik, or The Fin) from which we could see Khan Tengri and Pobedy looming majestically in the distance. The other was a heavily corniced ridge that dropped off steeply to the north, 4,815m, Pik Solidarnost (because it was the only one that we all got up). From there it was clear that our proposed route, linking several glacier systems, would take us far too low for safety in the prevailing conditions. We decided to break camp and head for the north-facing glacier bays to the south.

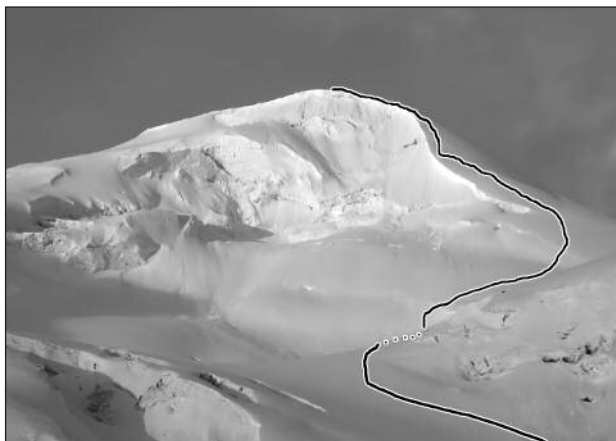
However, as we lost height snow conditions became increasingly difficult. We made heavy going of the descent and were lucky to find a good campsite on a medial moraine. Next day, while making an early crossing of the glacier to the south in an attempt on the peak opposite, we found the snow repeatedly collapsing under us with a resounding whump. A serac collapse from the flank of the mountain and plenty of evidence of avalanches from adjacent slopes led us to back off, instead climbing nervously but gradually up to scout the major pass to the east. That night we talked it through and decided we'd pushed our luck with avalanches far enough. The next day only Gethin reached our final summit, a rocky peak east of camp: Pik Mari (named after his mum).

After what had clearly been an exceptionally warm winter, we decided we'd just have to be satisfied with our five first ascents. I called in our transport on the sat-phone for two days hence, and we spent those days getting back down the glacier and across the lake. The mountains, of course, went on looking spectacularly beautiful, and it's clear that there is a lot more ski-mountaineering to do in the Ak-Shirak. Thanks are due to the team for their determination and good fellowship, and to the Mount Everest Foundation and Alpine Club Climbing Fund for financial support.

DAVE WYNNE-JONES, Alpine Club

## TENGRI TAG

Temasek (4,374m), Singapura I (4,589m/4,550m), Ong Teng Cheong (4,743m), first ascents. The MacCoffe Tien Shan Expedition departed Singapore on July 20, 2005. [This report was filed two years late due to the expedition's exclusive media arrangement—Ed.] We were soon inserted by helicopter onto the Siemienova Glacier at 3,943m. On July 24 we climbed our first peak, 4,374m, via the snowy south-



Singapura I Peak (4,589m by GPS, 4,550m on the map) showing Rozani's Route. David Lim

east ridge. The peak lies on the Sigitova ridge, though it is not marked on our map (42°19.42' N 80°3.589' E). We named it Temasek Peak. We believe this is the first virgin peak to be climbed by any Southeast Asian climbers, and we named it after the first name our Singapore island nation was known by, Temasek. The route: Ramses Ridge (Russian 3A/French PD). On July 26

we climbed our second peak, 4,589m (by GPS), marked as 4,550m on our map, by the north face, after negotiating hidden crevasse fields and deep snow. The hardest part was the steep upper section at 55°, where Rozani executed a good lead to the corniced summit (42°18.49' N 80°0.788' E). We named this fairly tough mountain Singapura I Peak as it seemed to present the kind of challenges our nation faces. Rozani's Route (Russian 3A/French PD+). On July 28 we made an abortive attempt on the steep, rocky east face of our third peak, 4,743m. This peak is un-marked on the map, but listed as an unclimbed summit. Loose, dangerous rubble forced a retreat. On July 29 we tried again via the long Siemienova Glacier and Siemienova Pass, and then up the east ridge, reaching the corniced summit at 10:30 a.m. (42°20.188' N 80°0.1644' E). This 4,743m peak is the highest in the vicinity, and we named it Ong Teng Cheong Peak, in honor of our late President Ong. Mr. Ong was the Patron of the 1st Singapore Everest Expedition in 1998, and his support for this mountaineering quest was invaluable. We dubbed the route Wilfred's Ridge (Russian 3A/French PD). We called the aborted route from the east side Rabbit Gully.

DAVID LIM, Singapore



Ong Teng Cheong Peak (4,743m), named after the late president of Singapore. David Lim



Mohd Rozani on the steep face of Singapura I. David Lim