



## Scottish Wakhan Expedition 2010

Expedition report on an exploratory mountaineering trip to the Little Pamir area of the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan June 20 –August 23 2010 by Alan Halewood and Neal Gwynne.

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With grateful thanks to: Mount Everest Foundation, Mountaineering Council of Scotland, David and Angharad James- Mountain Unity International, Ahmed Ghyasi- Wakhan Tourism, Hayat Khan and Adab Shah- Interpreters in Ishkashem, Qachi Beg Guesthouse owner in Sarhad, Chris and Huw, Lindsay Griffin, Mahboob Ali in Dushanbe and to all the friendly and hospitable people we met in Afghanistan.

## Expedition Summary

Between June 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2010 2 Scottish Mountaineers, Alan Halewood and Neal Gwynne travelled to the Little Pamir, mountainous area at the eastern end of the Wakhan Corridor of NE Afghanistan to undertake some exploratory mountaineering.

After flights via Istanbul they arranged a 4wd in Dushanbe to travel to the border crossing at Ishkashem. One in Afghanistan they arranged food, permits, a translator and onwards transport to the roadhead at Sarhad. From here their 6 day trek KaschGoz was hampered by unusually heavy monsoon rain and snow. KaschGoz is the summer encampment of Haji Osman, headman of the Khyrghyz who inhabit the Little Pamir. Here they arranged onwards horses and 2 days further travel saw them established on a tributary to the east of the main Waghjir River Valley. 3 days were spent establishing a camp and ascending Kohe Iskander (5562m) before they began their return journey. Whilst crossing the 4895m Garumdee (aka Uween i Sar) pass they made a detour to climb a peak they named Koh e Khar (5327m, 'Peak of the Donkey' named for the twin towers on the summit which bore a resemblance to donkey's ears). Upon their return to Sarhad they discovered that the roads were washed away so they spent 2 days on horseback until reunited with their vehicle. The border crossing at Ishkashem and the return journey to Dushanbe was without major incident. However the final taxi journey to the airport was enlivened when they were held up at gunpoint by nervous policemen searching for a group of Islamic Extremeists who had just killed their guards and escaped custody nearby.

Both peaks are believed to be first ascents:

Koh e Iskander. 5562m. N36deg 59'59" E77deg 07'34" By East ridge, difficulties to Scottish III Alan Halewood 6 August 2010

Koh e Khar. 5327m. N37Deg 12'36" E73Deg 42'46" By South Ridge, both tops climbed, difficulties to Scottish III Alan Halewood and Neal Gwynne 12 August 2010-11-05

## Expedition Members

**Alan Halewood.** Age 39, British. Full time Mountaineering instructor (MIC and IML) based in Fort William. 24 Expeditions covering every continent (both professional and recreational trips). First Ascents in Bolivia (Quimsa Cruz), Patagonia (Cordon Navarro Tierra Del fuego), Grenland (Milne Land and Gaase Land) and Mongolia.

**Neal Gwynne.** Age 34, British. Biology teacher and Mountaineering Instructor (MIA, MLW, IML) based in Glasgow. Previous expeditions (professional and recreational trips) to the Andes, Spitsbergen, Greenland, Kenya, SE Asia. Previous first ascents in Greenland (Milne Land and Gaase Land).

# Finances

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Expenses

Visas	\$600
Flights	\$3000
Uk Transport	\$400
Equipment	\$400

Date	Activity	Transport	Cost \$	Accom.	Cost \$	Food	Cost \$	Guide	Cost \$	Animals	Cost \$	Other	Cost\$
20	2230Dep LHR												
21	0420 Arrlst 2045 Dep												
22	0320 ArrDush-Khorog	4x4 shared	315	Serena Khorog	238	local	21						
23	Khorog-Ishk			Hanis Guesthouse	50							Admin	17
24	Ishk x border	Border tx	25	Aria Guesthouse	50	local/gh	30					Ghyasi	100
25	Ishk-Khandud	4x4	800	Khandud GH	50	local	15	Hayat	30			Diesel	2
26	Khandud-Sarhad			Sarhad GH	46	local	9.00	Hayat	30			Tent Rent	20
27	Sarhad			Sarhad GH	46			Hayat	30		48	Baths	3
28	Trek-Showar					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
29	Trek-Sang Nawishta			Yurt	23	trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
30	San Nawishta			Yurt	23	trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
31	Trek-Barnaoz					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
1	Trek-Garumdee			Meal in Yurt	12	trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
2	Trek-KaschGoz			Yurt	23	trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
3	Trek-Waghjir					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
4	Trek BC					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
5	Trek Camp 1					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
6	Koh e Isknader					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
7	Camp 1					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
8	Trek Horsemens's Camp					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
9	Trek KaschGoz			Yurt	23	trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
10	Trek Garumdee			Yurt	23	trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
11	Trek Foot of Garumdee Pass					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
12	Koh e Khar trek Barnaoz					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
13	Trek Borakh					trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53		
14	Trek Sarhad			Sarhad GH	46	trek food	14.00	Hayat	30	3 Horses	53	Baths	3

Date	Activity	Transport	Cost \$	Accom.	Cost \$	Food	Cost \$	Guide	Cost \$	Animals	Cost \$	Other	Cost\$
15	Sarhad and ride W			Sarhad GH	46	GH		Hayat	30				
16	Ride, 4wd to Abgerch	4wd	70	Gh	30	GH		Hayat	30	Horses	170		
17	4wd Ishkashem			Abgerch GH	50	Gh		Hayat	30			Sundrys	3

## Expedition Timeline

Date	Activity
20Jul	2230Dep LHR
21	0420 ArrIst 2045 Dep
22	0320 Arr Dushanbe. Dushanbe to Khorog by 4wd, poor roads. Dushanbe to Khorogby prearranged 4wd, poor roads. O/n Khorog Serena
23	Khorog to Ishkashem (Tajik side). O/n Hanis Guesthouse
24	Ishkashem (Afghan side). Simple border crossing. Day with Wafiullah from Wakhan Tourism: permits, arr. Translator, purchse food, arr. onwars travel. O/n Aria Guesthouse
25	Ishk-Khandud. Late start owing to Wafiullah being apparently drunk. Good roads and no problems at checkpoints.
26	KhandudSarhad. Full day on deteriorating roads. Vehicles trapped by river and mudslides and 2 points. O/n KachiBeg's Guesthouse (recommended).
27	Sarhad. Arranging horses and horsemen (3 of each). Negotiating bribe with local police chief.
28	Sarhad to Showar. With Translator Hayat khan, horses and hosemen. Heavy rain, poor visibility. O/n Camp by uninhabited shelter.
29	Showar to Sang Nawishta. Large river crossings, more rain. Thick mud. Loads abandoned to make shelter at settlemet of Sang Nawishta. O/n Guest Yurt.
30	Rest day Sang Nawishta. Recover loads. More rain. On Guest Yurt.
31	Sang Nawishta to Barnaoz. Rain and Sleet clears end of day. O/n Camp by uninhabited shelters.
01Aug	Cross Garumdee Pass 4895m. Heavy snow cover. O/n Camp Garumdee settlement.
2	Garumdee to KashGoz. Cross Akbilis Pass. Buzkashi. O/n KaschGoz Guest Yurt.
3	KaschGoz to Waghjir Valley. Retain Hayat Khan, 1 Wakhi horseman and 2 new Khyrgyz horsemen. O/n Camp by Waghjir River.
4	Cross Waghjir River. Horses drop loads and return to camp near main river. Base Camp established in tributary to east of main valley. Load carry to Camp 1 Rtn BC.
5	Move to Camp 1.
6	Climb Koh e Iskander
7	AH Rest Day, NG explores ridge west of Camp 1
8	Rtn to Horsemen's Camp south of Waghjir River
9	Rtn to KaschGoz
10	KaschGoz to Garumdee. O/n Guest Yurt

11	Garumdee to East side of Garumdee Pass. Short day after problems recovering horse in morning. Now with Hayat Khan, 1 Wakhi horseman and a boy. 2 donkeys, 1 horse.
12	Garumdee Pass. NG and AH ascend onto Ridge forming N side of pass. Go W to where it turns N at snowy dome ('Yak's back) climb 2 towers of Koh e Khar. Descend W to Barnaoz
13	Barnaoz to Borakh (on Panj river). Long day's trek.
14	Borakh to Sarhad. Long day. Saw horse killed last night by wolves above Sarhad.
15	At Sarhad most of day. Hear late on that roads are out, transport not coming. Ride several hours into night. O/n Hut somewhere on road.
16	Continue ride, pass several flooded sections of road, until spot a 4wd. Hire this to take us to last flood. Walk around and take our 4wd to O/n stop at Abgerch
17	Abgerch to Ishk. O/n Guest House.
18	Cross Border. O/n Hani's Gudest House.
19	Ishk-Khorog by prearranged 4wd. O/n Delhi Durbar Hotel
20	Khorog to Dushanbe. 4wd. O/n Hotel Tajikistan.
21	Dushanbe. O/n Hotel Tajikistan
22	Dushanbe. O/n Hotel Tajikistan
23	0510Dep0835 Arr 1315Dep1515Arr

## Contacts

Grants: Mount Everest Foundation <http://www.mef.org.uk/>  
Mountaineering Council of Scotland <http://www.mcofs.org.uk/home.as>  
Tourism Services in Afghanistan: WakhanTourism AhmedGhyasi <pamirbsc@gmail.com>  
Advice on Travel for Westerners visiting the Wakhan:  
Mountain Unity international- David James <http://www.mountainunity.org/>  
Driver in Tajikistan: [altynbek11@mail.ru](mailto:altynbek11@mail.ru) Tel:935588596

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Mayhew, Clammer, Kohn, Lonely Planet Guide to Central Asia, Lonely Planet 2004  
Shahrani, Nazif, The Kirghiz and Wakhi of Afghanistan, University of Washington Press, 2002  
Hauser, Markus, The Pamirs (Map), Gecko Maps  
Peaks of Silver and Jade, Pinelli and Predan (see Mountain Unity Int'l above)

A full list of articles by climbers and trekkers visiting this area can be found at:  
<http://www.mountainunity.org/mountaineeringinthewakhanCorridor.html>

## Articles on Expedition

<http://www.ukclimbing.com/articles/page.php?id=3031>  
<http://www.thebmc.co.uk/News.aspx?id=3873>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-10758092>  
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MCofS Magazine The Scottish Mountaineer, No. 49 Dec 2010



Koh e Iskander

Map Showing approach to Koh e Iskander

Waghjir River Valley

Horsemen's Camp

Base Camp

Camp 1

Koh e Iskander

Outward Journey

Return Journey

Glacier

Koh e Iskander

