# Official Trip Report GUM Club Girls Tien Shan Expedition.



 $23^{\text{rd}}$  August to  $20^{\text{th}}$  September 2013

Report written by Emily Ward, all photos by Emily unless stated otherwise

### **Introduction**

**Synopsis:** Five young female mountaineers, a mix of current and ex-members of the Glasgow University Mountaineering Club, travelled to the Dzhirnagaktu region of Tien Shan, Kyrgyzstan. We were climbing in a lightweight, self-sufficient Alpine style and aimed to leave as little impact on the mountains as possible.

The main inspiration for the trip was this image of a peak in the Dzhirnagaktu basin. Dubbed 'Monolith', the image was taken by the QUBMC 2012 expedition to the basin.

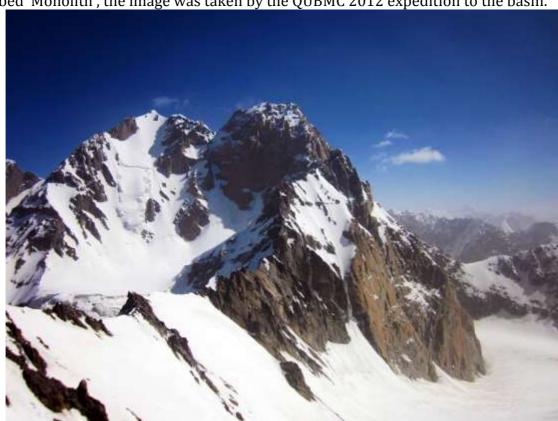


Photo by Alek Zholobenko from the 2012 QUBMC expedition

#### **Initial Planning process, why Kyrgyzstan?**

Kyrgyzstan is rapidly becoming one of the most popular countries for new routing expeditions, and for good reason! The country is mostly mountainous, having 6500 glaciers and several peaks over 7000m. These highest few still seem to attract most of the visiting climbers. As a former Soviet country, Kyrgyzstan remained fairly closed until the fall of the USSR. This, in combination with the geography of the country means that there are still many unexplored basins and unclimbed peaks.

For all five members of the team, this expedition was our first. Having gained a lot of experience in Scotland and the Alps we wanted to test ourselves in a bigger range. Although Kyrgyzstan does have some really high peaks, there are many unclimbed summits around the height of Mont Blanc, a perfect altitude for our previous experience!

Due to work and university commitments, we were only able to go away for 4 weeks. Kyrgyzstan lends itself perfectly to short expeditions, as the mountains are easily

accessible from the main city. The mountains around the Western Kokshal-Too region rise from a large plateau around 3800m. Being 'about the height of the Aiguille du Midi', we wrongly presumed that altitude and acclimatization to this level would not be a problem

As our planning progressed, we discovered that Kyrgyzstan is a really easy place to visit, as it requires virtually none of the anticipated 'red tape'. In order to promote tourism, visas are no longer required for British citizens (amongst many other countries). As we were climbing in the area bordering China we did have to get military permits, but they were cheap (€25 each) and organised for us by our travel company. Unlike bigger, more commercialized mountain ranges, actual climbing permits aren't required. This takes the pressure off both financially and bureaucratically. It also means that expeditions aren't limited by their paperwork.

Being so inspired by that single photo taken by the QUBMC expedition made choosing the actual basin really easy although other alternatives were investigated. We discovered that several other parties had explored the majority of the other basins in the Western Kokshal-Too extensively. A few to the east of Kyzyl Asker were relatively unvisited but had expeditions going to them this season.

We are eternally indebted to the QUBMC expedition for all the information they passed on to us. Ronan Kernan's willingness to answer all of our daft questions as well as their extensive trip report, were particularly useful!

### The Dzhirnagaktu Area

The Dzhirnagaktu glacier basin lies immediately west of Kyzyl Asker in the Western Kokshal-Too region of the Tien Shan. The region is remote and fairly uninhabited besides a handful of nomadic herders, hunters and climbers. As this area was once part of the disputed border between Kyrgyzstan and China, military outposts are the only real buildings in the area.

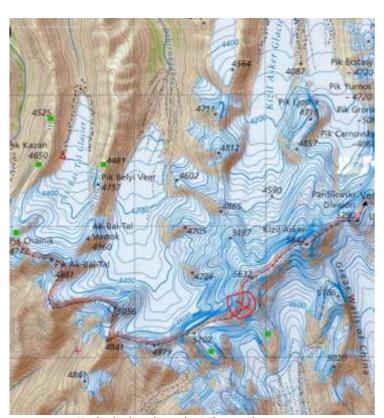


Kyzyl Asker and Dzhirnagaktu basin from the first Ak-Sai river crossing

There have been a grand total of three previous expeditions to the basin: a Polish team in 2010, the QUBMC expedition in 2012 and the Austrian team 2013. Although we had heard rumours of this last expedition, ITMC didn't confirm this until the Austrians were already in the basin. They arrived in the country a full 6 weeks before us and were able to climb new routes on most of the significant peaks in the basin, except Monolith, which still remains unclimbed.

The QUBMC trip report details the routes climbed by themselves and the peaks done by the 2010 Polish expedition. The report can be read <a href="https://example.com/here-1">here-1</a>. From this I was able to work out the map below on the left, with the green squares representing unclimbed peaks and the red X marking Monolith.

We overlapped the Austrians by a night in the Nomad Hostel, Bishkek and they kindly gave us the map shown on the right below. It shows what peaks they summited and approximate lines of attack. The peaks circled in red show those done by two female climbers in the party.



Unclimbed peaks in the Dzhirnagaktu region.



Map showing the peaks climbed by the Austrian party.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://docs.google.com/file/d/0Bw7kwCjznmBPQy1keHZ1T05Jb2M/edit?pli=1

#### Team:



#### Emily (Roo) Ward

Currently I am splitting my time between Chamonix, Chester and Glasgow to get in as much climbing as possible! I have spent 5 summers in the Alps, 6 months in Norway and I've climbed extensively in Scotland. I lead up to E2, Scottish VI,7 and TD+ in the Alps. I'm 26 years old, SPA qualified, ML trained with valid REC first aid certificate.



#### **Carol Goodall**

Carol lives in Aberdeen where the mountains and the sea make a great playground. She has explored the Chinese Tien Shan and learnt survival in the New Zealand backcountry. She has explored the Alps in summer and in winter on skis. She leads up to HVS, Scottish Grade IV and TD rock routes in the Alps. She is 30 years old; ML qualified and has a valid first aid certificate.



#### **Libby Southgate**

Libby has multipitch Trad experience across the UK, leading up to E1. Living in Glasgow she has had three Scottish Winter climbing seasons leading up to grade V as well as winter mountaineering. She has also had three GUM club trips to the Alps including experience of D Alpine Rock. She is 21 years old, SPA trained and the current GUM Club president.



#### **Hannah Gibbs**

Again, she has multipitch Trad experience in the UK, as well as the Dolomites and New Zealand and leads up to E2. She also has 3 Scottish winter climbing and mountaineering seasons, leading IV/5 and following up to VI/7. Whilst living in New Zealand, she enjoyed a lot of winter mountaineering on the South Island including a new route in the Darrans. She is 26 and SPA trained.



#### **Imelda Neale**

Imelda has over ten years of rock climbing in Britain, from mountain routes to a lot of adventurous sea cliff climbing, she leads up to E2 level. Many seasons winter mountaineering in Scotland, hillwalking and leading through on grade IV's. She has had three trips to the Alps, a summer trekking in Peru and also spent a year in New Zealand. She is 28 and holds a valid First Aid Certificate.



The team united for the first time in Bishkek

#### **Preparation**

#### Logistics

As they came highly recommended, we used ITMC (a Bishkek based guiding and mountain travel company) to arrange our transport into the basin. The services included airport transfers, accommodation in Bishkek and Naryn, sat phone hire, military border permits and an old soviet van to drive us to the mountains. They were also on hand to give advice about various different basins and what conditions might be like for us.

Carol, Libby and Imelda were flying from Edinburgh a couple of days before Hannah and I left Chamonix. This would give them time to buy the majority of the food, meet some useful people (the Bristol Djangart expedition, Pat Littlejohn and Austrian Dzhirnagaktu party) and make final travel arrangements. We then would spend a day together in Bishkek packing and double-checking we had enough food and equipment.



Imelda, Carol and Libby with our trusty UAZ van

The following day we would drive down to Naryn, before driving into the mountains for another two days. As the Ak-Sai river was unusually high this year, an exceptionally warm summer meant a lot of glacial melt, we were told that we would go on a large detour up to the Kotur river east of Kyzyl Asker before cutting back along the moraine towards Dzhirnagaktu. We would be dropped off in a similar place to the Austrian party, c. 10 km away from base camp.

After 19 days we would then be picked up in the same spot and take two to drive back to Bishkek, arriving the afternoon before our 3.55am flight to Istanbul.

Here is our trip plan:

23<sup>rd</sup> August: Carol, Libby and Imelda fly from Edinburgh to Bishkek.

24th-26th August: Final preparations in Bishkek

25<sup>th</sup> August: Hannah and I fly from Geneva to Bishkek.

27<sup>th</sup> August: Drive from Bishkek to Narvn.

28th-29th August: Drive from Narvn to drop off point.

30<sup>th</sup> Aug- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept (approx): Load carrying to establish basecamp. 3<sup>rd</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> September (approx.): Climbing from basecamp on glacier.

15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September: Dismantle basecamp and head back to pick up point.

18th September: Reunited with vehicle, drive to Naryn in one day.

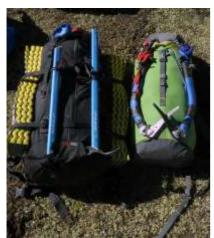
19th September: Drive from Naryn to Bishkek, head to airport in evening.

20th September: Fly home.

#### Equipment

As the expedition was kindly supported by *Blue Ice* and *Mountain Hardwear*, we were all geared up with brand new rucksacks, harnesses and tents. The Trango 3 was probably one of the most invaluable pieces of kit we had with us and made expedition life a great deal

more sociable and comfortable! We even found that four of us could fit in it fairly comfortably if we stored all the kit in another tent, although condensation and down sleeping bags proved a little problematic.



Blue Ice bags ready for load carrying!

Climbing equipment wise, we took two full racks of rock and ice gear, two sets of half ropes and 100m of tat. Unlike previous expeditions to the basin, we actually placed quite a bit of rock gear and not a single ice screw on any of our routes. As we managed to down climb all the mountains that we summited, we didn't have to use any of the tat either!

Having a portable weather station was useful, it can keep a record of coldest and warmest temperatures as well as the pressure trends, letting us know how well the snow had refrozen overnight. Somehow we managed to misplace a stove, meaning that we only had one Pocket Rocket with us for most of the trip. Thankfully it didn't break on us, if it had then we would have had a fairly unpleasant diet!

We had major problems with our sat phone. When tested in Bishkek the solar panel and battery charged the phone fine, yet when we were out in the hills, it didn't really work. On the glacier, I couldn't persuade it to switch on at all on several days. Pretty early on in the trip we discovered that we couldn't read or send text messages either, the only one we did get told us that our credit top up had failed to work. Not very useful really!

When I had got the phone working, I never had too much problem with getting reception and making calls even up in the basin. Imelda had a totally different experience, with the signal being extremely temperamental the day she was trying to get us a helicopter rescue. Although ITMC said that no one else had reported problems with that particular handset, we decided that we would hire one from a specialist sat phone company next time.

#### Food

Carol did an extremely impressive job of calculating how much energy we would expend, with inspiration from Mark Twight's *Extreme Alpinism*. From this she was able to create 3000 calorie per day menus! Sadly this planning went to pot when her and her notebook listing what we should be eating per day had to return to Bishkek early. At this point, we became three climbers with five peoples worth of food so rationing wasn't an issue! Alarmingly we did nearly make it through all the cheese however attempting to eat a bar of chocolate each per day was more of a chore than we anticipated. Luckily we had decided to swap half the chocolate and bring Turkish delight; otherwise we would have been struggling to eat two bars a day instead of one.



A standard dinner on the glacier. (L. Southgate)

Hannah's suggestion of taking dried food made our lives much more bearable. We would definitely recommend taking a range of dried vegetables to use in evening meals. They aren't too expensive if you buy them online before the trip, the bags don't weigh much and they seem to last for a good few meals. In fact we actually ended up bringing quite a lot back to Bishkek with us! Sundried tomatoes were the

most successful dried foodstuffs; seaweed salad on the other hand was pretty disgusting.

Alongside food from our sponsors (*Nora's Noms* and *Tunnocks*), we did bring quite a lot of food out from Britain and France with us, including a large supply of porridge oats. However we discovered that porridge is probably one of the most prolific foods in Kyrgyzstan so we needn't have bothered! I guess we should have researched that one a little better before leaving. In fact, the only things we couldn't easily source in Bishkek were dried milk powder and peanut butter. If possible, French saucisson and Italian Parmesan should be brought along, as the Kyrgyz versions are a bit dubious.

#### First Aid and Medicine

Although most of us have outdoor instructing orientated First Aid Certificates, Imelda opted to go on an additional Wilderness Medicine course. After this, she volunteered to be our medical officer; something she would highly recommend not doing on future trips!

We took a fairly comprehensive medicine kit with us and were very glad of it! Although normally we wouldn't take antibiotics so readily, it was good to have such a large range to deal with various stomach problems and my chest infection. They enabled us to continue on our fairly tight schedule without having significant periods of rest or further deterioration in our health.

Miraculously, we didn't really use the first aid kit. Everyone managed to escape fairly cut and blister free! Imelda did however cut her fingernails a bit too short and develop 'polar finger', which lasted most of the time on the glacier.

We are very much indebted to Dr Ross Anderson of *Adventure Medical Consulting*. Not only did he help us put together the following medicine kit list, but he also acted as a medical phone advisor from Kathmandu when things started going wrong. As I am currently undergoing hormone therapy for cancer, he wisely advised that I should stop taking my Tamoxifen pills as there is potentially an increased chance of blood clots at altitude.

The following is a list of the drugs in our medicine kit. We also took a first aid kit with items for minor (and probably major!) traumas; wound dressings, steri-wipes etc. As two of the members of the trip are allergic to penicillin, we were obliged to take a fairly wide range of antibiotics! Although we brought a lot of it back unused we all agreed that such a comprehensive kit was necessary.

#### Allergy;

Piriton 4 mg x 28

## Altitude;

Diamox 250mg tablets x 112 Dexamethasone 500 micrograms tabs x 28

#### Pain Killers;

Naproxen 500mg x 112 Codeine phosphate 30mg tabs x 56 Tramadol caps 50mg x 30

#### **Antibiotics:**

Co-amoxiclav tabs 500/125 x 42 Flucloxacillin 500mg caps x 28 Clarithromycin 500mg tabs x 56 Ciprofloxacin 500mg x 40 Metronidazole 400mg x 21

#### Creams;

Canesten pessary x2 or fluconazole 150mg tab x2 Anusol.

#### Eyes/Ears;

Chloramphenicol eye ointment Amethocaine eye minims drops x2 1x Otrivine bottle (nasal decongestant) & throat lozenges

#### **Gastrointestinal**;

Buccastem 3 mg Loperamide 2mg x 30 Ranitidine 150mg tabs x 60 Senna 7.5mg tabs x60

# The Expedition Routes

# North Ridge up to point 4564m Imelda Neale, Libby Southgate, Emily Ward: 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013



This ascent was done from our mid way boulder camp at c. 3800m. It takes the eastern fork of the ridge around the small glacier. The ridge itself is wide and fairly mellow angled, with a few short steeper sections at about 45 degrees. We went up a small rocky pinnacle that we reckoned was probably the highest point on the ridge and corresponded roughly with the point on the map. Summiting this point involved a short mixed scramble at about Scottish II. Descent is via same route.



# Point Zero Zero One Gully, Butterfly's Leg (4865m) Imelda Neale, Libby Southgate, Emily

Imelda Neale, Libby Southgate, Emily Ward: 9th September 2013

An easy snow couloir leads up to the ridge between Rock Horse and Butterfly's Leg. The glacier to get to the back of the cwm is fairly crevassed and takes a bit of routefinding. The couloir is about 300m long from the glacier floor and is probably about 55 degrees at it's steepest. The bottom half of the couloir had fairly good neve on the first ascent but higher up

turned into more wind affected then unconsolidated powder. Once at the col, follow the south ridge negotiating some unexpected crevasses and chossy scrambling. Descent is by the west ridge, until you can cut back down scree to the glacier. About 4.5 hours to summit.



# Not Quite A Contamine, Pony (4705m) Imelda Neale, Libby Southgate, Emily Ward: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013

From the main glacier, follow a moraine band until under the start of the North Face. Take the second snow couloir to the ridge, climbing the rocky rib may also be possible but was pretty loose when attempted! The snow was very deep and unconsolidated on first ascent but improved greatly on the ridge. Many options are possible along the scrambly, mixed ridge. We took the most interesting path possible and encountered short steps of Scottish III. The last 100m of climbing is a nice snow arête leading to the cornice below the Western summit, you can then traverse to the main summit fairly easily (again look out for the unexpected crevasses). We then traversed ridge towards the col; this turned out to be a mix

this terrain was quite unnerving we were glad to find a snow couloir to take us down to the southern glacier. Again this glacier is fairly crevassed but easy to negotiate. 6 hours camp to camp.

Flutterby, Night Butterfly (5056m) Imelda Neale, Libby Southgate, Emily Ward: 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013

This route follows the aesthetic East ridge of the mountain. The snowy crest is gained by an easy angled snow couloir, 50 degrees at steepest. After the false summit, drop round onto the south face slightly to give the cornice a wide berth! This last section is a 60 degree slope – mainly snow ice but with some harder glacier ice. There is also a large bergschrund just below the main summit that may be impassable in certain conditions. Descend via the same route. 6.5 hours camp to camp.





# First couloir and North West Ridge, Kalzalnitsa (4768m) Emily Ward: 13th September 2013

Take the first couloir up to the ridge (short section 60 degrees snow ice) then traverse the wide snow ridge to the summit via a very short rock scramble. Descent via the main glacier is possible but as it is also quite crevassed, down climbing has less objective danger. 2 hours approx. to summit.

#### Out:

Flights:	£2146.86
ITMC charges (permits, transport, some accommodation, gas)	£2035.01
Sat phone hire+credit	£299.89
Accommodation	£417.55
Taxis etc	£37.70
Food	£554.45
Medical kit	£223.97
Group kit	£58.25
Insurance	£1418.06
TOTAL:	£7191.74

#### In:

TOTAL:	£2950.00
Tunnocks	£50.00
Meers-Grey Fund	£400.00
MCofS Grant	£500.00
BMC Julie Tullis Memorial Grant	£2000.00

Personal contributions: £4241.74

#### Weather and snow conditions



As most reports from previous Tien Shan expeditions said that they wished they had gone a bit later, we took their advice and did! On the whole, the weather was pretty settled and good for us. After driving up in a daylong storm, the first week settled into a fairly predictable Alpine diurnal cycle with good weather in the morning and snow showers starting in the mid afternoon. Then, later in the trip the weather became even more settled and we had a solid week of very calm,

sunny days! After a final storm in the last week of the trip, the good weather continued once again. This final storm lasted for a day and a half and did cut our time on the glacier

down by a day, but otherwise we didn't have to worry about the weather at all throughout the expedition.

Comparing our photos with those of the Austrians from a month earlier, we had much better snow coverage and conditions. By the time we got to the glacier, the first autumn snowstorms had hit and at least half a meter of snow covered the moraine and glacial ice. As the temperatures were generally a lot cooler too, the snow was refreezing well at night and turning into fairly good neve.

September, in our experience, is definitely a better weather month to climb in than August. Strangely we were the last ITMC expedition to leave Kyrgyzstan this year, but I would definitely favour going back in September again next time.



Leaving Base Camp in the final storm of the expedition. (L. Southgate)

#### **Expedition Diary**

In spite of my careful planning and preparation, the expedition had a lot of unforeseen problems! The most significant was the fact that we lost two of the members before we had even reached basecamp. Going from five climbers to three did make us question whether we would be able to continue the trip. As we were all still pretty psyched we headed up to the glacier anyway, which was definitely the right decision!

I have included this diary of the trip to record what went wrong. In spite of all our setbacks, I'm very glad that we persevered and actually had a really successful expedition.

**23**<sup>rd</sup> **Aug** Carol, Libby and Imelda fly from Edinburgh

**24**<sup>th</sup> **Aug** Food shopping and meeting with the Austrian expedition.

**25**<sup>th</sup> **Aug** The three in Bishkek meet Vladimir at ITMC and Pat Littlejohn to discuss options for alternative basins. More food shopping and meet the Bristol Djangart expedition. Hannah and I fly out from Geneva.

**26**<sup>th</sup> **Aug** ITMC to discuss our options: Lilia tells us about the Kotur alternative access route Last bit of shopping and Hannahs birthday dinner!

27<sup>th</sup> Aug Imelda has no rock shoes so goes to buy some last minute; we pack the van and leave when she is back. Full days drive to Naryn. At lunch Hannah is sick again - she had spent the previous week in Chamonix recovering from a mystery vomiting illness. Our driver gets lost in Naryn but then we find the Community Tourism Board's coordinator who takes us to our guesthouse. (turns out it was the wrong guesthouse as our driver had not told her that we already had a booking...) As Libby isn't well either, we arrange to stay in Naryn another day. Carol, Imelda and Libby are not acclimatized so start taking Diamox.

**28<sup>th</sup> Aug** Libby is having a reaction to the food; she's suddenly eating meat after 3 years of vegetarianism; with fluids and antibiotics she will recover. Hannah's sickness is probably a continuation of her previous illness and is more complicated as she was struggling to keep down water. After a skype consultation with Dr Ross Anderson, I had to make the tough decision that she couldn't come up to the glacier with us. Hannah decided to head back to Bishkek and fly back to Chamonix to recover.

**29th Aug** Leaving Naryn at 6am, we drive until we come to a blocked bridge–the other side has collapsed a under another ITMC van, flipping it over (luckily no serious injuries). Fortunately, our driver missed the turn and we don't have to cross the bridge after all. After a 4 hour detour via the wrong military base we end up in the right place. When the storm breaks, the mud gets really soft and we inevitably get stuck for the night.

**30**<sup>th</sup> **Aug** We dig and push our van out the next morning with the help of a passing van. We are scolded for continuing so late in the day – the road is much safer and easier in the morning when the ground is more frozen and there's less melt water. As we are running out of petrol



Stuck van (L. Southgate)

after yesterdays detour we are dropped off 11 kms from the planned point. Luckily the rivers are going to be low enough to cross on foot.



Our main camp under a massive boulder, which provided a lot of shelter.

31st Aug First full day of load carrying. We cover 30km of shuttleruns and establish camp at the big obvious boulder it has a huge overhang that's perfect for sheltering a couple of tents. On arriving at camp Carol suddenly gets very unwell and can't catch her breath. Even at total rest, her breathing rate is alarmingly high. She has previously had High Altitude Pulmonary Edema, but as she is on Diamox and we have ascended much slower than recommended, it's hard to believe! Her condition doesn't improve so we phone for a rescue. The Kyrgyz Mountain Rescue (run by ITMC) won't send help until our insurance confirms it, and our insurance expects us to arrange the rescue independently. The BMC medical helpline went above and sorted us out in the end! The Sat phone problems meant we had absolutely no idea if a helicopter was actually coming or when it might arrive.

**1**<sup>st</sup> **Sept** A day of waiting and trying to keep the Sat phone going just in case someone tries to contact us. Eventually the helicopter appears at 3.30pm so sadly, we became three.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sept** A rest and planning day, we decide to head up and establish basecamp in the next few days.

**3rd Sept** Ridge up to point 4564.

**4<sup>th</sup> Sept** Packing for the glacier; the weather comes in at lunchtime so we aim to get up early the following day.

The Dolphin Camp is too far away to do two shuttleruns in a day (about 9-10km) so we try to do it in a oner. Our packs are very heavy in spite of our best efforts, weighing in at the 35-37kg mark! This is pretty heavy when baring in mind the average bodyweight of the team (c.52kgs). Libby and I have to drop some of our weight after a few km but one and a half shuttles is just about manageable before dark.

**6<sup>th</sup> Sept** Load carrying trip up to glacier. We go through the moraine on the Western bank which is very unconsolidated and time consuming. As the weather comes in, we pitch the Direkt 2 tent on the glacier and drop our kit. We find a better way back to Dolphin via snow patches that cover the river bed.

**7th Sept** Carrying up to base camp. Imelda stays up there to make camp whilst Libby and I go back to the Dolphin for the last lot of kit, we pick up gear from the Direkt 2 tent as we go past.

**8**<sup>th</sup> **Sept** A reccee up the eastern branch of the glacier, to see Monolith.

9th Sept Point Zero Zero One Gully 10th Sept Not Quite a Contamine



Western summit of Pony

**11**<sup>th</sup> **Sept** First attempt on Night Butterfly, then a walk up to Uighur Col.

**12**<sup>th</sup> **Sept** *Flutterby*.

**13<sup>th</sup> Sept** I climb *Kalzalnitsa*, Libby and Imelda attempt Daytime Moth<sup>2</sup> but poor snow conditions turn them around.

**14<sup>th</sup> Sept** Pack up camp before the storm hits too badly and walk back down the 15km to Boulder camp on the plain.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Daytime Moth is a small, not wildly significant peak (about 4800m high) on the ridge between Uighur and Moonlight Arete that has an interesting looking mixed, Western ridge. We really wanted to do it after checking it out from the Uighur Col but time and conditions were against us.

15<sup>th</sup> Sept Rest day spent bouldering. In the evening we hear the engine of the van, which sadly can't get to the boulder as planned – one more day of load carrying tomorrow!

16<sup>th</sup> Sept Load carrying again, Libby and I take one load to the Soviet bridge and are reunited with Carol. The driver then takes us down to a point on the river that's much closer to the Boulder. We complete the load carrying much faster than we expect and drive back to Naryn. As we arrive very late, our guest house has been taken by another group so we stay in the CBT coordinators flat!

**17**th **Sept** There are big celebrations in Naryn, for its 145th anniversary, so we stay an extra night.

**18**<sup>th</sup> **Sept** A taxi back to Bishkek.

**19<sup>th</sup> Sept** Final meeting at ITMC to settle up and reclaim all of our bags. We also visit a map shop and stock up on ideas for next time.

**20<sup>th</sup> Sept** Early morning flight home, made unpleasant by an argument with the Turkish Airlines rep at Manas airport. He refuses to acknowledge the email from Turkish Airlines stating that sporting equipment will cost us €30 per bag and instead charges us €90 per bag. We are still trying to claim this money back... Apparently it happens quite often so climbers travelling with Turkish be warned!



Libby, Imelda and myself on the summit of Night Butterfly

#### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks once again to our sponsors:

British Mountaineering Council
Mountaineering Council of Scotland
Meers Grey Fund (Glasgow University)
Mountain Hardwear
Blue Ice
Nora's Noms
Tunnocks