



## 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.

Report Author: Alan Halewood

Contact: [alan@climbwhenyoureready.com](mailto:alan@climbwhenyoureready.com)

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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. Once in Afghanistan they arranged food, permits, a translator and onwards transport to the roadhead at Sarhad. From here their 6 day trek Kasch Goz was hampered by unusually heavy monsoon rain and snow. Kasch Goz 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 Koh e 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), Greenland (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).

## 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: Wakhan Tourism Ahmed Ghyasi <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

## Bibliography

Clammer, Paul, Lonely Planet Guide to Afghanistan, Lonely Planet 2007

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>

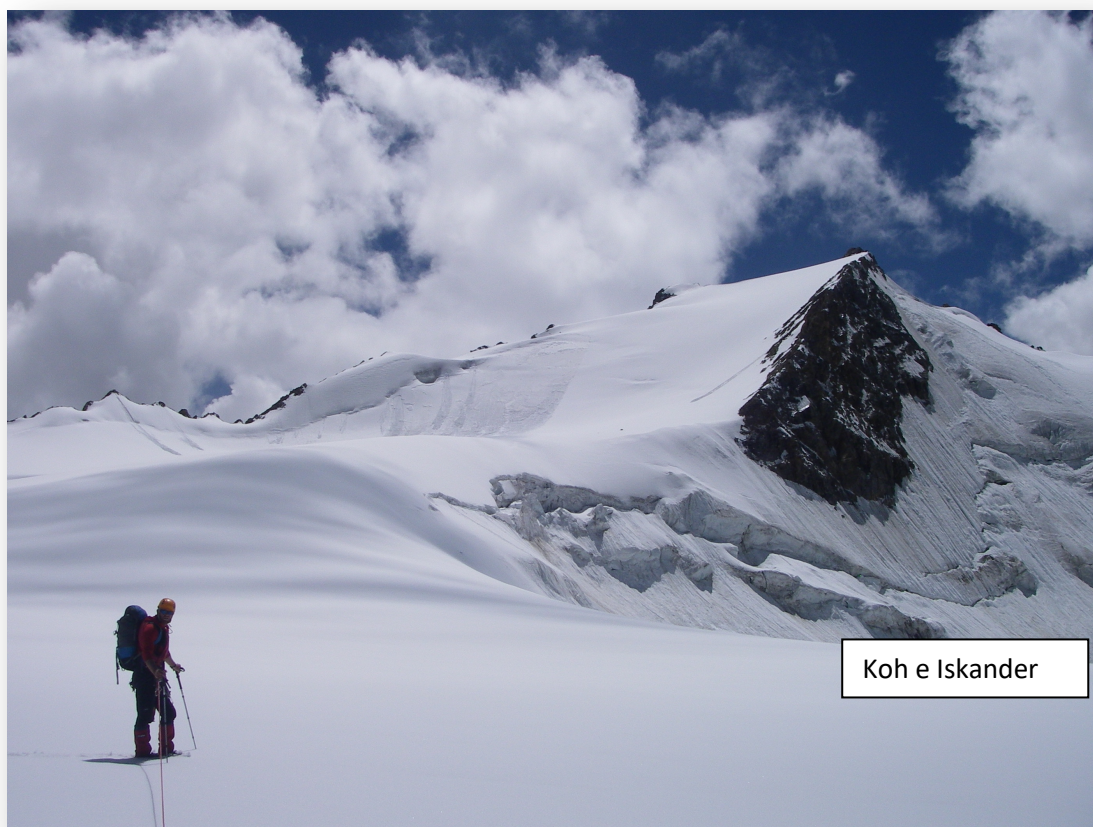
<http://www.thebmc.co.uk/News.aspx?id=3873>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-10758092>

<http://www.alpinist.com/doc/web10f/newswire-asia-climbing>

American alpine Journal 2010

MCoFS Magazine The Scottish Mountaineer, No. 49 Dec 2010



Koh e Iskander

# Map Showing approach to Koh e Iskander

Waghjir River Valley

Horsemens' Camp

Base Camp

Camp 1

Outward Journey

Return Journey

Glacier

Koh e Iskander

