



BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

## **Final Report – Alpine Climbing Group Expedition 2018: Borkoldoy, Kyrgyzstan**

*MEF Reference: 18/30 / BMC Reference: 8/15*



**The compilers of this report and the members of the expedition agree that any or all of this report may be copied for the purposes of private research.**

We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude towards the organisations that provided generous financial support to this expedition, without whom it would never have happened: the Mount Everest Foundation, the British Mountaineering Council, and the Montane Alpine Club Climbing Fund.

## Contents

Expedition Objectives.....	3
The Team.....	5
Expedition Summary.....	7
Description of Routes Climbed and Attempted.....	16
Maps of Area.....	17
Logistics.....	19
Permits.....	19
Travel.....	19
Food.....	19
Equipment.....	20
Health, Medical, and Insurance.....	20
Weather and Ground Conditions.....	21
Glaciers.....	21
Google Earth Imagery.....	22
Miscellaneous.....	22
Finances.....	23
Prospects for Future Expeditions.....	25

## Expedition Objectives

This was a non-commercial mountaineering expedition to the remote Borkoldoy mountain range in southeast Kyrgyzstan. The expedition comprised 8 team members ranging from 19 to 33 years old with varying expedition experience. The team gained access to the eastern part of the range after negotiation with local hunters, who had obstructed all but one previous parties. The expedition was planned, executed and largely funded by ourselves.

The principal objectives were attempts on three unclimbed peaks of around 5000m, and various smaller peaks in the range of 4500-5000m. The previous expedition that had been into the Borkoldoy range had climbed 14 unrecorded peaks from a base camp by Kainar Lake. Therefore we had decided to establish our base camp further 'up' the valley (to the South-West), and our original objectives were in an area that had been photographed but not explored by the previous expedition.

The Expedition took place in July-August 2018, and our previous experience of less remote alpinism would only help us with the climbing aspects of the trip – the logistics of such a venture demanded a whole new skillset. I consulted with Neil Cox extensively (the leader of the previous Expedition to the Borkoldoy Range in 2017). Neil provided photographs of our primary objectives, answered endless questions at all hours, as well as helped with logistics. Based upon his experience of the area, Neil suggested that 2 weeks London – London was enough for this trip, with our intention of exploring further up the valley.

The Primary Objectives were identified as follows:

1. Peak 4857.  
41°21'24"N 77°42'15"E  
Unclimbed Peak





2. Peak 4908.  
41°20'54"N 77°45'00"E  
Unclimbed Peak



3. Peak 5042.  
41°21'9.20"N 77°50'12.42"E  
Unclimbed Peak



## **The Team**

### **Expedition Lead** (*Aaron Tregellis Hodgson, 30, British, Marketing Executive*)

Aaron has over 10 years of rock, ice, and alpine climbing experience in Europe and the Himalaya. Currently based in Edinburgh, in 2015 he finished his PhD in Russian. A keen exponent of light and fast alpinism, Aaron's personal alpine climbing highlights include the Tournette Spur of Mont Blanc, on-sighting the classic Rebuffat line on the south face of the Aiguille du Midi, a sub-3 hour ascent of the Hornli Ridge on the Matterhorn, and a 34 minute solo traverse of the Aiguille d'Entreves. His ultimate aim is to take this style to the biggest walls of the Himalaya. The combination of being an accomplished mountaineer and fluency in the Russian language meant Aaron was well-equipped to lead this expedition of young and ambitious mountaineers to help them achieve first ascents in the remote Borkoldoy mountain range.

### **Medic and Rescue Policy** (*Tom Greenham, 33, British, Veterinary Surgeon*)

Tom has eighteen years of climbing experience on rock, ice, and mixed. He also has fifteen years of alpine climbing in summer and winter, with highlights including ascents of large north faces such as the Swiss route on Les Courtes and smaller technical objectives such as Temps est Assassin on the north face of Mont Blanc du Tacul. Tom was keen to take this experience to the Borkoldoy region to attempt alpine style ascents of previously unclimbed peaks and routes.

### **Training** (*Tom Simpson, 28, British, Ice Climbing Instructor*)

Tom is currently an Ice Climbing Instructor at Ice Factor in Kinlochleven, having recently made the move up north from Cornwall. He has been climbing for over a decade and has spent the last five years winter climbing in Scotland. Actively involved across the climbing spectrum, from deep water soloing to dry tooling, bouldering to big walling, Tom's climbing highlights include redpointing Made in Mascun (7C+) at the El Delphin sector in Rodellar, on-sighting Elixir s'Astaroth (ED+, 6b+) on the Grand Capucin, and a solo ascent of The Curtain on the Ben. Tom was an invaluable addition to this expedition and took on the role of training the team at our pre-expedition weekends.

### **Kit** (*Matthew Guy, 27, Manufacturing Engineer*)

Matt has five alpine seasons under his belt, climbing up to AD grade in addition to one 6000m peak over nearly a decade of mountaineering and climbing. He has experience on rock, mixed, and ice with highlights including Zinalrothorn and Island Peak. Matt was keen to explore an unfamiliar region and apply his experience to expedition planning and climbing.

### **In-Country Logistics** (*Francis Tocher, 20, British, Mechanical Design Engineer / Student*)

Francis has five years of mountaineering experience across the disciplines of Scottish winter, rock, and alpine up to D-. Francis' highlights include a free ascent of the southwest face of the Dent du Geant and a free solo ascent of the Bernia Ridge (using roped abseils). Francis was keen to explore the logistical aspect of expeditions in the greater ranges as well as exploring new routes and peaks in alpine style.

**In-Country Logistics** (*Robbie Blease, 19, British, Sales Assistant*)

A Cumbrian lad, Robbie has been climbing for over 10 years and currently leads trad at E2. His alpine highlights include the Kuffner Ridge and a free ascent of the Rebuffat-Pierre, and this year was introduced to the suffering that is Scottish winter climbing by Aaron Tregellis Hodgson. Robbie can normally be found in either the Lakes or around Chamonix, trying to push his grades across all climbing disciplines and was a valuable addition to the Borkoldoy expedition.

**Maps / Cartography** (*Rowan Shand McIntosh, 21, British, Student*)

Having spent years caving and undertaking multi-day hikes, Rowan now has 2 years British trad experience and 4 years alpine experience. Rowan initially began alpine climbing after completing the Haute Route. Following this, Rowan has been out to the Alps each summer to search out new opportunities to further his climbing experience, most recently joining this expedition. This was a trip he envisaged as a step to progressing to further expeditions.

**Communications** (*Joe Ramsay, 20, British, Student*)

After discovering climbing through university, Joe now has 3 years British trad experience, 3 years of Scottish winter mountaineering experience, and a season in Chamonix. Joe has taken almost every opportunity to further his climbing expertise over the last 3 years, and the Borkoldoy expedition was an exciting opportunity to test his climbing ability in a remote mountain range.



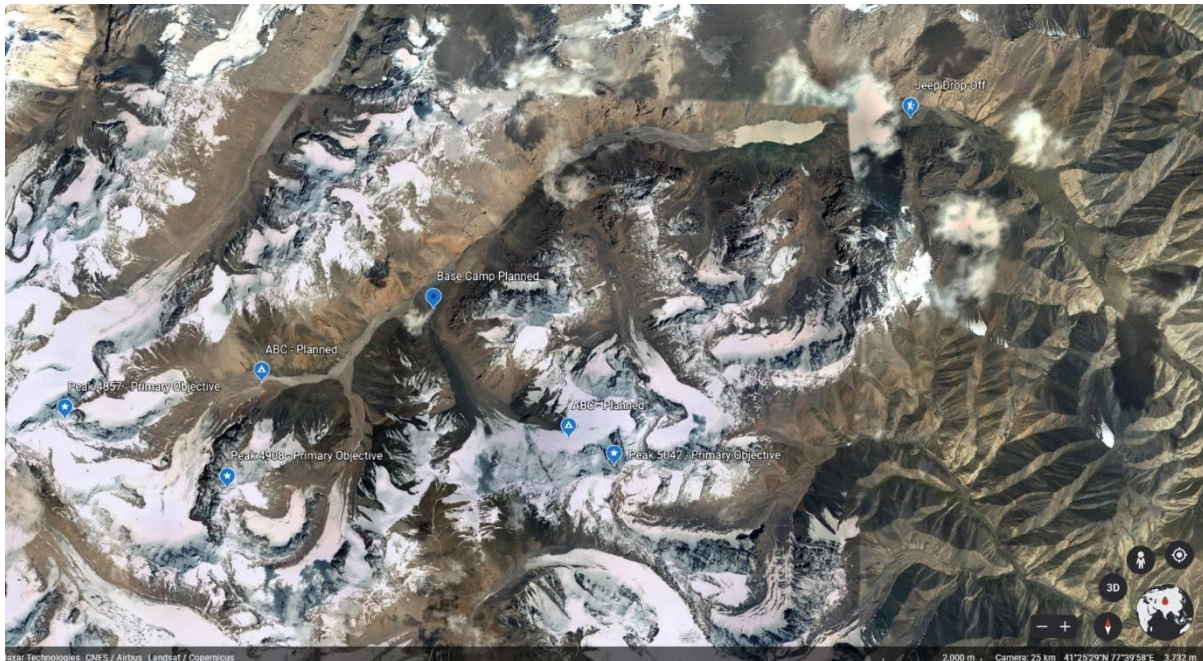
## Expedition Summary

We flew from London on 28 July, via Moscow, and arrived in Bishkek the next day on 29 July. Helpfully Aeroflot had lost one of our bags, which contained one members' full climbing kit (minus his boots) and an inReach device. The lessons from this trip would be as steep as the lines we were there to climb.

The next day, 30, was spent sorting gear and food, and we spent the whole day of 31 July travelling from Bishkek to the Borkoldoy Range. A 3 hour minibus ride to Lake Issyk Kul was followed by an 8 hour journey south by Toyota Landcruiser to the mountain range.

One thing we found almost as soon as we arrived in the range was that the terrain was a lot more rugged than we had been led to believe. We were of the understanding that it would take around 4 hours to reach our proposed Base Camp site at  $41^{\circ}22'37.09''\text{N } 77^{\circ}47'45.46''\text{E}$  from the jeep drop-off. Once we had left the jeeps, we each carried extremely large and heavy bags, with the hunters on horseback with the majority of our gear.

After 6 hours, as darkness was falling, we had only reached  $41^{\circ}24'25''\text{N } 77^{\circ}49'56''\text{E}$ , around 7km from the jeep drop-off, and around 5km from our proposed Base Camp location. As the evening was drawing on the horses were getting noticeably more jumpy, due to the presence of wolves in the valley, and the hunters were keen to get back down the valley. We bivvied for the night at  $41^{\circ}24'25''\text{N } 77^{\circ}49'56''\text{E}$ , and the following morning (1 August) we moved our camp a further km or so up the valley to the confluence of two rivers at the head of the delta ( $41^{\circ}24'16''\text{N } 77^{\circ}49'24''\text{E}$ ). Without the horses this took most of the morning and the rest of the day was spent setting up camp and digging a toilet trench.



This map shows our planned objectives, Base Camp location, and Advanced Base Camp locations

On our second full day (2 August) in the range we split up into smaller groups and went to explore the surrounding mountains and identify our primary objectives. We quickly realised that as the terrain was more rugged and difficult than we had anticipated, combined with the reduced timeframe of the trip (8 potential climbing days), we would need to focus on technical lines further down the valley closer to Base Camp.



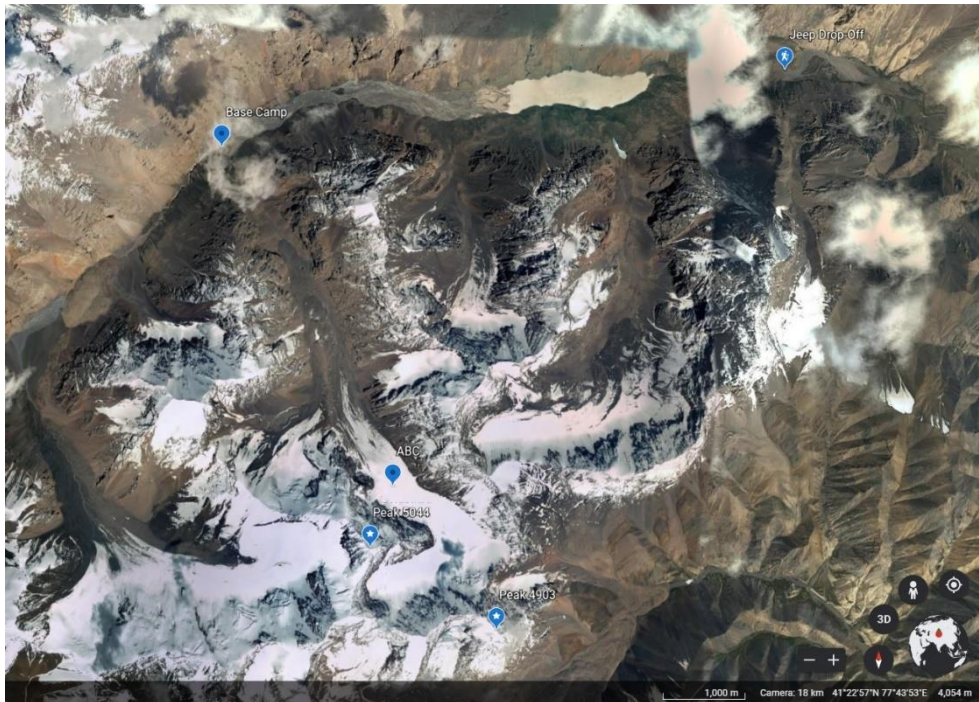
Base Camp (3551m)

Furthermore, the loss of an inReach meant that we could only have 1 team climbing at any one time instead of 2 (as we planned to keep one at Base Camp to communicate with the teams on the mountain), and therefore we wanted to maximise our time and efforts by reducing walk-ins to mountains much further up the valley. Advanced base camp was consequently set up in the afternoon of 2 August on a glacier where we had identified many potential lines (41°21'59"N 77°50'55"E).





Advanced Base Camp (4275m)



This map shows our actual Base Camp location, as well as Objectives and Advanced Base Camp location

That night the first team (of 3 climbers) left for an attempt at a new line on the north-east face of the already climbed Peak 5044 ( $41^{\circ}21'39''\text{N}$   $77^{\circ}50'40''\text{E}$ ). The climbing was technical but also

unfortunately barely protectable. We now knew that Borkoldoy rock quality ranges from bad to atrocious, so the team bailed from that route and tried a new route on the north-west face of a nearby unclimbed c. 5000m peak that became known as 'The Keiger' (Kyrgyzstan Eiger) due to its fearsome appearance (41°21'09"N 77°51'43"E). Unfortunately they retreated from their high point about 500m up the face.



'The Keiger' (4903m). Viewed from Base Camp



Abseiling off 'the Keiger'



When they returned to Base Camp that night (3 August) they were full of praise for the mountain, so a second team (again of 3) set off that night intending a single push from base camp to summit, but were themselves repelled around 100m further up the face and 100m below the ridge line due to rockfall. A 30 hour round-trip from Base Camp and the route and the peak was still unclimbed.



The Couloir on 'The Keiger'

Two teams of 3 each had attempted the route and, with more attempts planned, on 5 August Tom Greenham (from the first team) and Robbie Blease (fresh as a daisy) set off to Advanced Base Camp for a different line on the north-east face of Peak 5044. Robbie had first spotted the line on the reconnaissance day and steadfastly refused to attempt anything else until he had climbed that route. After 13 hours on the face on 6 August, Tom and Robbie reached the summit of Peak 5044 ('Robbie's Revenge', TD, WI4 - peak first climbed in 2017, but a new route on a new face). They made it safely back to Base Camp after a 22 hour push from Advanced Base Camp.



'Robbie's Revenge', TD, WI4. FA Robbie Blease and Tom Greenham, 6 August 2018



Robbie teetering up the WI4 pitch at the height of Mont Blanc on Peak 5044





Robbie on the summit of Peak 5044

With our first new route in the bag, psyche was high but unfortunately bad weather blew in during the evening of 6 August for the next 2 days. Time was spent in Base Camp playing cards, cooking and eating, collecting rocks for an undergraduate dissertation on the glaciers of the Borkoldoy Range by team member Rowan Shand McIntosh, and exploring further up the valley to look at potential future objectives.



Base Camp Meals

The hunters appeared early on 9 August and we reversed the journey back to Bishkek in a long 20 hour day. 10 August was a contingency day in case anything had gone wrong with the journey back to Bishkek, and was spent engaging in cultural activities. On 11 August we flew back to London via Moscow.

The unforeseen but all-too-predictable period of bad weather allowed for some collective introspection about the expedition. Could it be considered a success? We had only completed 1 new route on an already climbed peak after all. What would we do differently next time? Hindsight is a wonderful thing of course, but we all learned the logistics of expedition planning and that will stand us in good stead moving forward. From that perspective our Expedition was a resounding success, but there was still a sour taste from having come this far and not having got up as much as we wanted. We did however identify new objectives for future expeditions and learned an incredible amount about ourselves in the process.

Apart from the lessons already listed we also came to the conclusion that 2 weeks London-London to travel to such a beautiful and remote range was simply not long enough. 8 potential climbing days meant that any bad weather would (and did) curtail the expedition. We had all hoped for more than a single opportunity to climb unclimbed technical lines.



The weather inevitably cleared for the journey back to Bishkek

## Description of Routes Climbed and Attempted

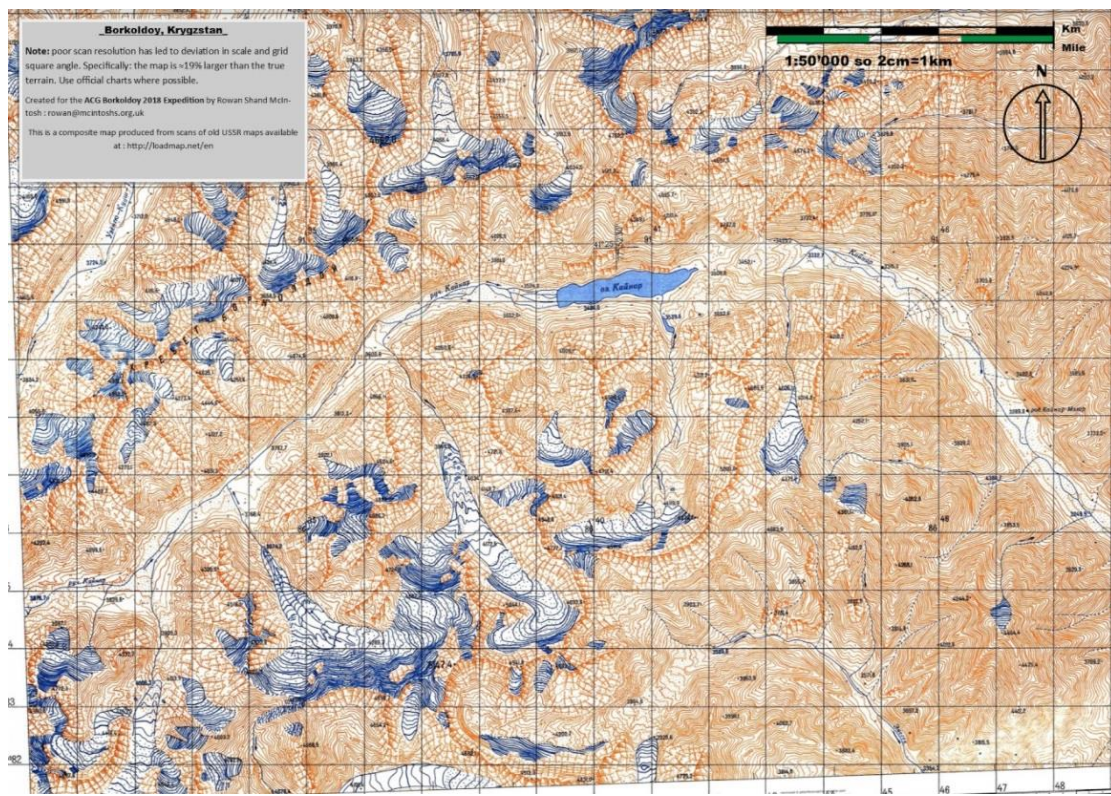
Below is the technical information regarding our expedition in the Borkoldoy Range:

1. Attempted new route on Peak 5044 (41°21'39"N 77°50'40"E)  
Altitude: 5044m  
Date: 3 August 2018  
Estimated Route Length: 1200m  
Estimated Grade: AD+  
Style: Alpine  
Not Successful – High Point: 4565m  
Reason for Retreat: Route became largely unprotectable  
Weather Conditions: Cloudy but stable  
Names of Climbers: Tom Greenham, Matt Guy, Joe Ramsay
2. Attempted new route on Peak 4903, known as 'the Keiger' (Kyrgyzstan Eiger) (41°21'09"N 77°51'43"E)  
Altitude: 4903m  
Date: 3 August 2018  
Estimated Route Length: 1100m  
Estimated Grade: TD-  
Style: Alpine  
Not Successful – High Point: 4660m  
Reason for Retreat: Late in the day, with no available bivvy site  
Weather Conditions: Cloudy but stable  
Names of Climbers: Tom Greenham, Matt Guy, Joe Ramsay
3. Attempted new route on Peak 4903, known as 'the Keiger' (Kyrgyzstan Eiger) (41°21'09"N 77°51'43"E)  
Altitude: 4903m  
Date: 4 August 2018  
Estimated Route Length: 1100m  
Estimated Grade: TD-  
Style: Alpine  
Not Successful – High Point: 4750m  
Reason for Retreat: Rockfall  
Weather Conditions: Sunny  
Names of Climbers: Aaron Tregellis Hodgson, Thomas Simpson, Francis Tocher
4. New Route on Peak 5044 (Route named 'Robbie's Revenge') (41°21'39"N 77°50'40"E)  
Altitude: 5044m  
Date: 6 August 2018  
Estimated Route Length: 1250m  
Estimated Grade: TD, WI4  
Style: Alpine  
Weather Conditions: Cloudy but stable  
Names of Climbers: Robbie Blease, Tom Greenham

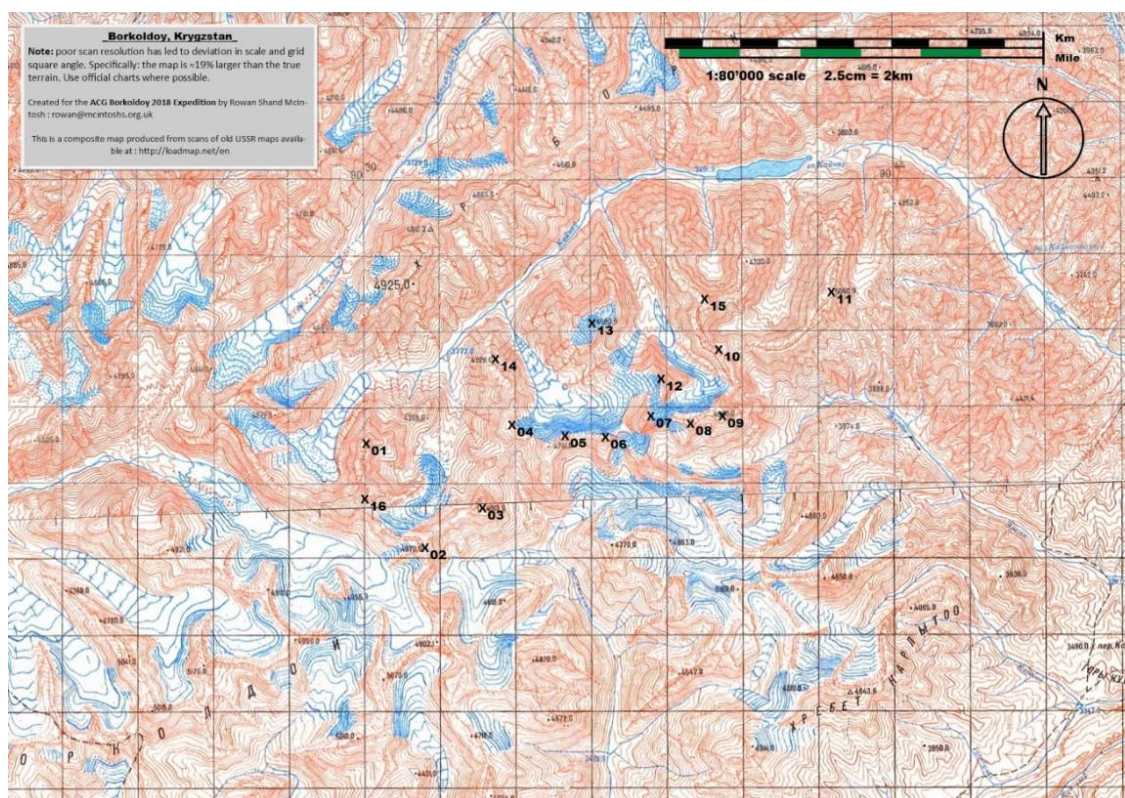


## Maps of Area

We produced 2 maps for the Expedition, which were based on old Soviet maps of the area:



This first map is 1:50,000



This second map is 1:80,000, and on it we had marked some mountains that we considered could be useful acclimatisation peaks further down the valley

The numbered peaks are as follows:

1. 4923m
2. 4925m – climbed in 2017
3. 4843m – climbed in 2017
4. 4695m – climbed in 2017
5. 4730m – climbed in 2017
6. 4836m
7. 5027m
8. 4904m
9. 4911m
10. 4661m – climbed in 2017
11. 4725m
12. 4935m – climbed in 2017
13. 4923m - climbed in 2017
14. 4480m
15. 4858m

As detailed above, all those peaks further down the valley listed as unclimbed here are still unclimbed after our expedition.

## **Logistics**

### **Permits**

There are no peak fees to climb in Borkoldoy, nor anywhere else in Kyrgyzstan. However, due to the proximity of the Borkoldoy Range to the Chinese border, we needed to purchase a border permit (at a cost of 20 Euros per person). It is important that all information on the document is correct as it is checked against your passport at border posts and by any border patrols you may encounter. It is important to keep passports with you at all times in the mountains.

Border permits can be obtained through one of the many logistic agencies that operate out of Bishkek. We used Tien-Shan Travel to arrange all of our logistics and transportation. They were extremely knowledgeable, helpful, and professional. We highly recommend them.

In terms of access to the Borkoldoy range, we used Tien Shan Travel to negotiate with the local hunters who own the land. Hunting season begins mid-August, and the valley is home to wolves, snow leopards, and ibex amongst other animals. We saw lots of signs of them all, including footprints and scat, but didn't actually see any of them. The hunters asked for 2000 Euros for a permit, but we managed to negotiate them down to 850 Euros. Future expeditions would do well to bear this in mind.

### **Travel**

All eight members of the team flew from London to Bishkek via Moscow with Aeroflot, with two team members flying out 48 hours earlier in order to source food for Base Camp. Prices were very reasonable from the UK (approx.. £450 each return). Other alternatives were via Istanbul or Kiev, although the reliability of these airlines was not confirmed.

The team purchased extra baggage both ways, which wasn't unduly expensive. The main problem was that Aeroflot lost one of our bags en route to Bishkek, which contained a team members' personal climbing kit (minus his boots, thankfully) and an InReach device. We managed to share kit so that the loss wasn't unduly felt. However, he did have to buy kit in the UK upon his return to replace the lost kit. Aeroflot offered a paltry amount for the lost luggage, but fortunately we had purchased adequate insurance. However the annoyance was that our kit had been thought through and considered, and he had to make do without any of his kit for the expedition.

WE were met at Bishkek airport by Tien Shan travel who took us to their guesthouse. This accommodation was very reasonable and allowed us sufficient space to pack equipment and good.

The logistics of travel from Bishkek to Borkoldoy were entirely organized by Tien Shan Travel. This organization worked very effectively. The journey from Bishkek involved a 3 hour minibus ride to Lake Issyk Kul, which was followed by an 8 hour journey south by Toyota Landcruiser to the mountain range. This was reversed after the expedition.

### **Food**

We each individually sourced our own mountain food, which comprised of freeze dried meals, and brought them from the UK to provide lightweight and easy to cook meals on the mountain. Bringing this food was well worth it and made mountain food much easier to organize and carry. These supplies



provided about 1500 calories per person per day, which we supplemented with instant noodles, chocolate, muesli, nuts and raisins, and hot drinks.

Having said that, Bishkek provides almost everything else imaginable and we spent a significant amount of time devising a selection of menus for food in Base Camp. Our In-Country Logistics Team did a fine job sourcing all the food and we all ate very well on this expedition, with Thomas Simpson's culinary skills a particular highlight.

For cooking in Base Camp, we rented a 20kg gas cylinder and a double-burner stove from Tien Shan Travel, along with a selection of large pots. We found that one cylinder was sufficient for the duration of our expedition, and seemed to be on almost constantly.

For cooking on the mountain we used JetBoil stoves, which operated fine on gas cylinders that we bought from Tien Shan Travel.

## **Equipment**

We spent some time coordinating our equipment, through much use of a spreadsheet on Dropbox. Apart from bringing the usual range of equipment and clothing that one would choose for a summer alpine trip, we also brought the following items:

- 3x inReach Devices: Aeroflot lost one, which was expensive to replace. The loss of an inReach meant that we could only have 1 team climbing at any one time instead of 2 (as we planned to keep one at Base Camp to communicate with the teams on the mountain). The inReach devices also allowed us to receive weather forecasts from the UK.
- 25W folding solar panel: This was invaluable for charging our electronics, and provided plenty of power in the sunshine at Base Camp.
- Large Base Camp Tent: we hired this from Tien Shan Travel. This tent was large enough for the whole team with standing height, and we stored most of our food and kit in here as well. Our biggest regret was not hiring some tables and stools as well, as we sat on the floor using our duffle bags for back rests the entire time we were at Base Camp.
- Personal Tents: we brought 4x 2 person tents, and 2x 2 person single skin mountain tents for Advanced Base Camp and any potential mountain bivvies.
- Climbing Gear and Protection: we brought 3x full rock racks with us, a full set of cams, double set of nuts, a selection of pegs, and 30 ice screws of varying sizes. We also brought three sets of half ropes, of which only 2 were used. We brought enough gear for any eventuality including long abseil descents.
- Footwear: each team member brought approach shoes, B3 climbing boots, and rock shoes (which were unused due to the technical ice routes we sought out instead of the abysmal rock of the Borkoldoy).

## **Health, Medical, and Insurance**

When travelling to such a remote location, health concerns are paramount and we were prepared to deal with potentially serious issues. Although none of the team were trained medics, three of the team were first aid trained, and we used the advice of various doctors to build a comprehensive medical kit. The contents of the basecamp kit was extensive, including Diamox for altitude sickness, medications and antibiotics for various infections, an assortment of bandages and wound-treatment items, and documents



listing the kit contents, dosages, interactions, and treatment options. The on-route kits were pared to a minimum of a few painkillers, altitude medication, etc.

Aside from on-hand medical equipment, we were prepared for serious issues by individually purchasing comprehensive rescue / medical insurance from the British Mountaineering Council.

No members of the team suffered from serious medical problems. However, one of the team members suffered from a touch of giardia, which we treated with some antibiotics. This cleared up fairly quickly. We boiled all water from the stream by Base Camp, and used Chlorine Dioxide tablets (brought from the UK) for any water that wasn't boiled first.

As there were eight people in Base Camp, we dug a large slit trench about 100m downstream from our tents and around 150m away from the river over a natural wee hill, which afforded some privacy. This was sufficient for the whole trip and was filled in before we left.

## **Weather and Ground Conditions**

We generally experienced good weather and climbing conditions. The last few days were marked by significant rainfall and wind at Base Camp, and produced deeper accumulations of snow above 4,000m. During the day temperatures fluctuated between c. 12 °C and 20 °C during the day, but fell close to freezing overnight at c. 3,500m. Winds were generally SW-NW and did not cause problems for climbing. A longer spell of poor weather towards the end of our trip brought stronger winds and low cloud.

A relative of one of the team members kindly provided us with daily weather forecasts, via inReach device, as well as informing us the pattern for the next few days.

The terrain underfoot was more rugged than we expected, from consulting the previous expedition. However, the area around Base Camp was on good grass, and there was an area further up the valley that would also have been a suitable location if it wasn't for the duration of the trek to get there. This would however make a good Advanced Base Camp location for exploration further up the valley.

Moraine travel was often the best way to reach the upper 'white ice' glaciers and there were only short sections of unstable moraine on all glaciers explored.

As expected, climbing conditions were best early in the morning and snow softened right up to summit levels when in direct sunlight. We also encountered quite substantial rockfall from mid-afternoon on the north-west facing couloir of 'The Keiger'.

## **Glaciers**

It should be stated that we found the glaciers in the range to be broadly in keeping with the size shown on the map, but found them to be considerably drier towards the terminus and only truly 'wet' up towards the mountains from which they flowed. Therefore we could make fairly good time up the glaciers as we only needed to rope up for the last hour or so before reaching the mountains we went to climb.

## **Google Earth Imagery**

We also noted the accuracy of the Google Earth images with the exception of the area around the head of the Glacier near 41°21'29"N 77°50'33"E (see Prospects for Future Expeditions, page 26 for photograph), but observed that the terrain underfoot was a lot more rugged than depicted and expected, which slowed us considerably.

## **Miscellaneous**

As previously mentioned we buried our toilet waste in a deep toilet trench downstream of Base Camp, and we also burned all our used toilet paper. Everything else was taken back out of the Borkoldoy, and we left no trace to suggest that we had been there. We had erected cairns on the glaciers to help direct us to our objectives in the dark, but we knocked them down when we left having deconstructed Advanced Base Camp.

## Finances

Below is a summary of our expedition accounts, including income and expenditure. Tien Shan Travel quotes everything in Euros, which caused some exchange rate issues. However, we paid for the main items (permits and in-country transport) by bank transfer from the UK.

Item	Cost Total (£)	Cost per person (£)	
Contributions	£9,600	£1,200.00	
Grants	£3,200	400.00	Contingency funds
Permit	-743.00	-92.88	850 euros
Border Permit	-141.04	-17.63	20 euros per person
Food	-492.08	-61.51	Sourced in Bishkek
In-country transport	-158.61	-19.83	Bishkek to Tosor and back - 180 euros each way
In-country transport	-1311.32	-163.92	Tosor to Kainar Lake and back - 750 euros each way
Airport Meet	-35.24	-4.41	40 euros each way
Accommodation in Bishkek	-211.44	-26.43	30 euros per person (including breakfast)
Horses	-317.26	-39.66	40 euros per horse, can carry 60kg - 5 for outward, 4 for return = 360 euros
Communal kitchen tent	-87.43	-10.93	10 euros per day
2-burner gas hob	-26.22	-3.28	3 euros per day
Communal kitchen equipment	-17.48	-2.19	2 euros per day
Gas bottle - 25kg	-26.22	-3.28	For communal kitchen - 30 euros
<b>Total</b>	<b>9232.66</b>	<b>1154.10</b>	



We each arranged our own flights, at a cost of c. £450 return (Robbie and Francis flew to Bishkek 48 hours earlier to source the expedition food), and we each arranged our own insurance. We also each provided £400 (£3200 total) in contingency money, of which £273.51 was spent. This was mainly on Excess Baggage for both flights, non-Sterling currency fees, and a communal meal in Bishkek at the end of the expedition for the team members. From this total we each received back £365.81.

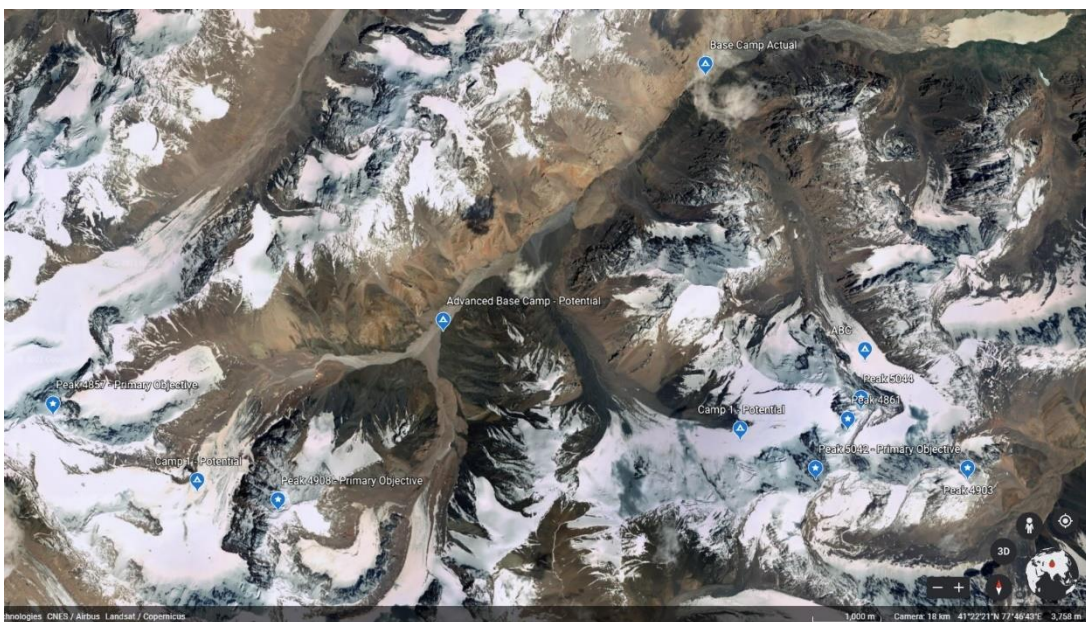
The total cost to each team member excluding flights and insurance was therefore £1188.30.

## Prospects for Future Expeditions

Once the poor weather blew in towards the end of our trip we spent some time investigating and identifying potential future objectives. We considered that the Borkoldoy has potential for future expeditions, both in terms of new technical routes on existing peaks, and for exploring unclimbed mountains.

We think that the location where we set up our Base Camp was ideally situated for the next expedition into the Borkoldoy, considering the time taken to reach there and technical objectives in that area. We also consider that the location of our Advanced Base Camp is a good choice for the technical routes on Peak 4903 and Peak 4861.

Below are some images taken from Google Earth to help indicate potential objectives and camps.





The photos below give a flavour of some of the main objectives, but there are many more possibilities.



'The Keiger' (Kyrgyzstan Eiger) (4903m) -  $41^{\circ}21'09''\text{N}$   $77^{\circ}51'43''\text{E}$ . There are numerous potential routes but the most obvious takes the central couloir seen in this image.



Peak 4861 -  $41^{\circ}21'29''\text{N}$   $77^{\circ}50'33''\text{E}$ . We had looked at a direct line up the middle of the North East face, which we think would go at about Scottish VI, 7. Maybe a touch harder. There is also a considerably easier route up the left hand ice field then up the East Ridge.





Peak 5042 - 41°21'9.20"N 77°50'12.42"E

This mountain had originally been one of our primary objectives, and here we can see the North East ridge, taken as Robbie and Tom were descending from the summit of Peak 5044.



This is the same peak (Peak 5042 -  $41^{\circ}21'9.20''\text{N}$   $77^{\circ}50'12.42''\text{E}$ ) viewed from the adjacent glacier, showing the North West face, with possible buttress climbs. A complex mountain with lots of scope for potential routes.



Another view of Peak 5042 ( $41^{\circ}21'9.20''\text{N}$   $77^{\circ}50'12.42''\text{E}$ ), here showing the entire serac-filled North East Ridge.



This photo shows 2 unclimbed peaks towards the head of the valley. Again, we had identified these peaks as primary objectives prior to travel. On the left is Peak 4908 ( $41^{\circ}20'54''\text{N } 77^{\circ}45'00''\text{E}$ ), and on the right is Peak 4857 ( $41^{\circ}21'24''\text{N } 77^{\circ}42'15''\text{E}$ ).



This shows another view of Peak 4857 ( $41^{\circ}21'24''\text{N } 77^{\circ}42'15''\text{E}$ ), with a potential route, taken in 2017. It seems that 2018 was drier than 2017.





Peak 4908 ( $41^{\circ}20'54''\text{N}$   $77^{\circ}45'00''\text{E}$ ). An incredible looking mountain whose easiest route resembles the North Face of the Lenzspitze.



Another view of Peak 4908 ( $41^{\circ}20'54''\text{N}$   $77^{\circ}45'00''\text{E}$ ) with a potential route drawn on, taken from an area we had identified as a potential Advanced Base Camp site.





Finally, this is a glacier to the South East of Peak 4908, and was taken from  $41^{\circ}21'46''\text{N } 77^{\circ}46'36''\text{E}$ . This whole glacier is unexplored, and none of the mountains there have been viewed or photographed, let alone climbed. There is potential for significant exploration in this area, as long as the team was heading to the Borkoldoy for at least a month.