

## American Alpine Journal

### Pamir Alai Expedition 2013, Oibala Mountain Range, Kyrgyzstan

From July 13 until August 13, 2013 we went to the Oibala Mountain Range in Kyrgyzstan. This is the second Dutch expedition to this region. The people are very hospitable and welcome. It was a sensation to drive in a Kamaz (Russian vehicle) from Osh in to the Oibala Mountains. Basecamp was established in the grassy valley of the Kok Suu (river Suu). We stayed there for more than 3 weeks and have not seen anybody else. In the beginning the weather was cold, then we had more stable weather and it got warm. So warm, we had to change our type of routes from ice and mixed to rock climbing. The last 1,5 week we had rain almost every day but still managed to climb our longest route.

The climb is usually done in mixed routes with snow on the lower slopes of the mountain and stone or mixed terrain on the upper parts. Pure rock climbing is possible in the upper part of the valley with rock formations up to 150m. Some bouldering is possible as pastime in the tributaries of the Kok Suu. The rock is either very compact and thus difficult or impossible to secure, or (very) loosely. The snow slopes are between 30 and 55 degrees. Some rockfalls and small avalanches have been observed, but never in our routes.

**First ascents:**

**Pik Irroli - Middle Aged Man (4613m)**

Where - Oibala Mountain Range, Kyrgyzstan

Coordinates - N 40° 03' 37.1" - E 073° 53' 08.9"

When - July 21, 2013

Climbers - Joep Bovens, Dennis Straathof and Jacos van Zelst

Why - nice climb to acclimatise and from basecamp we had a nice view of the mountain north of Pik BasBas (see Pamir Alai Expedition 2011)

Quality: loose rubble on the lower ridge, a little more compact rock, though sometimes unstable on the upper part.

Grade - AD



**Mel's Pik - Icecream for lunch (4194m)**

Where - Oibala Mountain Range, Kyrgyzstan

Coordinates - N 40° 08' 06.5" - E 073° 55' 03.4"

When - July 28, 2013

Climbers - Dennis Straathof and Jacos van Zelst

Why - Beautiful line in corner fissure with a small overhang just before first relay

Quality: Nice hard limestone, fissure hard to secure because of rubble deep inside. Some loose rock but mostly stable.

Grade - 6a+ E5



**Pik Broö - Double Dutch (new route on existing peak) (4562m)**

Where - Oibala Mountain Range, Kyrgyzstan

Coordinates - 40° 07' 35.8" - E 073° 55' 29.2"

When - July 29, 2013

Climbers - Joep Bovens, Dennis Straathof and Jacos van Zelst

Why - nice small ice couloir ending at the ridge of the mountain. Then we followed the ridge which gave us magnificent views.

Quality: thin layer of hard re-frozen snow, mixed but mostly stable terrain on the ridge. Due to hot weather the decent was a tricky downclimb on fast melting snow over clear ice.

Grade - AD



**Little Matterhorn - Down the Rabbit Hole (4055m)**

Where - Oibala Mountain Range, Kyrgyzstan

When - August 1st, 2013

Climbers - Joep Bovens, Dennis Straathof and Jacos van Zelst

Why - nice straight line of 100 m.

Quality: compact limestone, beautiful for climbing although difficult to secure

Grade - 6b



**Pik M - Don't trip, don't fall (4472m)**

Where - Oibala Mountain Range, Kyrgyzstan

Coordinates - N40° 08' 23.8" - E 073° 50' 10.4"

When - August 2th, 2013

Climbers - Joep Bovens, Dennis Straathof and Jacos van Zelst

Why - from ABC 3 this was the most eye catching mountain. So, we wanted to climb this mountain over the ridge from West to East

Quality: mostly loose terrain

Grade - D



### **Dragon's Back - Our Way (4580m)**

Where - Oibala Mountain Range, Kyrgyzstan

Coordinates - N 40° 03' 45.8" - E 073° 49' 17.5"

When - August 6th, 2013

Climbers - Joep Bovens, Dennis Straathof and Jacos van Zelst

Why - to see whether it was possible to climb this 3 km long ridge in 1 day from basecamp back to basecamp. It took us 17 hours to complete this trip.

Quality: Mixed terrain, hard ice and soft snow, loose rock and rubble alternates with hard compact rock.

Grade - TD- / 6a

