



21st Century Altai
Expedition Report

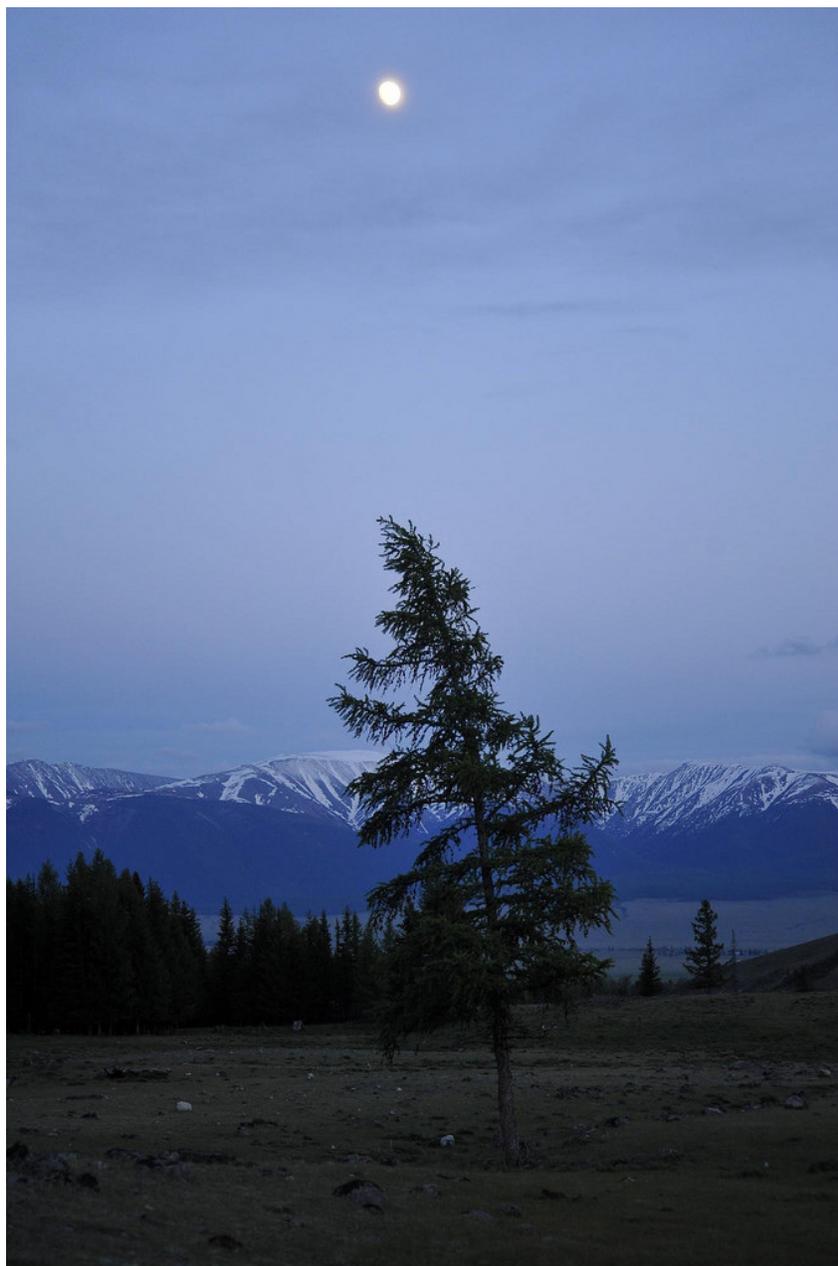
21st Century Altai

A mountaineering expedition to the South Kurai and Northern Chuysky ranges of the Russian Altai

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Abstract

A team of six travelled to the Russian Altai mountains, establishing a base camp in the South Kurai Range and successfully climbing to five summits. All peaks are thought to be first British ascents and it is possible that four of these had not previously been climbed. Some team members also spent a few days in the Northern Chuysky range at the end of the trip.



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Introduction

As a young adventurer, it's easy to become despondent in the belief that "everything has been done" and that there is nowhere left to explore. At least, that is, without doing something so extreme as to require decades of experience or being very dangerous.

Two friends set about planning this expedition with an inflatable globe and a pin (used sparingly) with the objective of identifying remote yet accessible mountainous areas of the world.

A trip to Stanfords, several reports from the RGS database and a conversation at the 'Explore' conference later, it became apparent that no one was climbing in the Russian Altai. With only the aid of a 20-year-old piloting map, we were quickly able to identify unclimbed and accessible mountains.

Through word of mouth and an advert put out by the RGS, our team of two quickly grew to six

What and Where is Altai?

The Altai is both a mountain range and a Republic. The mountains span across quad-border of China, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Russia. As we understand, climbing is possible in all four of these countries with Mongolia the most popular and explored; China, perhaps, the least. The Altai Republic is a region of Russia whose people and culture are quite distinct from the rest of the country. (There's also a region called Altai Krai next door but I shouldn't worry about that for now).



Map indicating Altai Mountains (big circle) and Altai Republic (small circle)

Reasons Not to Go to the Altai

In planning this expedition, we received no small amount of negative feedback about the area and timing of the trip. This was to the extent that we considered canning the whole thing on several occasions. We were told that the rivers would be too high, there would be too much snow, the roads would be covered in permafrost and unpassable, the roads would be covered in snow (and unpassable), we would need snowshoes, snow conditions would be bad and so forth.

One charming gentleman even replied to our advert for team members with these words:

"the time for this trip is july! whose bright idea was the timing you suggest and why??? is the timing an indicator for the level of thought you guys have put into the project? now that would be scary ... lol ..."

Needless to say, he didn't get an invite.

Anyway, two things happened as a result of this: Firstly, we dithered for too long and couldn't get border zone permits to climb near Mongolia where we had hoped. Second, we decided that whilst the information we'd received might indicate sub-optimal climbing conditions, this trip was to be about more than pristine snow conditions, it was to be an adventure and those can be had whatever the weather. So, we agreed unanimously to give it a go.

You'll get the gist from the rest of the report but we had a fantastic time, the conditions were fine, rivers weren't scary, there was no permafrost or snow on the roads and the snow shoes didn't come out of our bags.

Itinerary - Overview

Outline

Fly to Barnaul city, drive to Kurai village, walk two days to a valley for base camp, climb for a week, reverse. An Advance Party went out two days ahead to prepare and remained for 5 days to explore (at which point they were re-named the Elite Team).

Travel

Fly London → Moscow → Barnaul. About 5 hours for each flight, several a day to Moscow and one or two to Barnaul. Less than £500.

Hired minibus Barnaul → Kurai. About 10 hours driving. Booked through Igor (see below). The route is entirely along the well-known M-52 Chuysky-Trakt. Kurai village is a bit small to be marked on most maps but is a few miles east of Aktash. It's possible to get public transport along the Chuysky-Trakt as far as Gorno-Altai (capital of Altai Republic, south east of Biysk on the map below) but more difficult beyond that. Private taxis are an option and a guidebook will give you more information than we can.

Pre-booked taxis Kurai → Gorno-Altai/Barnaul. It was a little confusing with the language barrier but we booked taxis through Igor to take us to Gorno-Altai where we'd pick up a bus. As it happened, the first group negotiated a fare all the way to Barnaul.



Spent the flight to Moscow discussing life, love and relationships. What kind of expedition IS this?!

My odds of surviving this trip have just increased by about 50%. Aeroflot outward journey complete. Now haggling for a room sans douche.
1:19 AM May 22nd

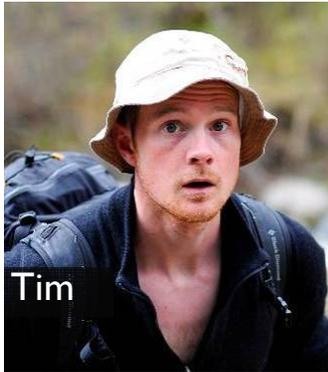
Itinerary - Day by Day

Date	Phase	Description	Flights
Thu 21 May	Advance Party	Stay in Barnaul, get food/maps/vodka	Adv. out
Fri 22 May			
Sat 23 May	Travel	Main party travel	Main out
Sun 24 May		Main party delayed	
Mon 25 May		Main party arrive early; travel Aktash/Kurai; stay in hostel/huts	
Tue 26 May	Climbing	Drop off at end of road, start walk to BC	
Wed 27 May		Continue walk to BC	
Thu 28 May		Set up camp, recce valley, snow training	
Fri 29 May		Matt, Marc, Spike to ABC; Tim, Dave, Nancy climb ridge	
Sat 30 May		3Ms climb first peak; TDN recce London Bridge	
Sun 31 May		3Ms climb Mighty Whitey, return to BC; rest day	
Mon 01 Jun		Tim, Dave, Matt to ABC; Nancy, Marc, Spike walk down	
Tue 02 Jun		TDM climb Lunar Run; Marc departs; all meet at ABC2	
Wed 03 Jun		Climb London Bridge, walk to BC	
Thu 04 Jun		Strike camp, walk to Kurai	Marc home
Fri 05 Jun		Rest day in Kurai	
Sat 06 Jun	Travel	Nancy, Spike, Dave depart; Matt, Tim start walk, driven to Aktru BC	
Sun 07 Jun	Elite Phase	Climb Teacher Horseshoe	N, D, S home
Mon 08 Jun		Walk to Kurai	
Tue 09 Jun		Wait for taxi	
Wed 10 Jun		Travel to Barnaul	
Thu 11 Jun	Travel	Depart	T, M home



That was some of the deepest sleep from which I've ever had the displeasure of being woken. What time is it?? Time to meet our local agent.
7:57 AM May 22nd

The Team



Tim

Age: 26

Occupation: Wannabe Adventurer – www.thenextchallenge.org

Experience: ML trained, expeditions to Kyrgyzstan and Bolivia, organised expeditions for British Schools Exploring Society

Background:

My experience of expeditioning had largely been tagging along with others and following their lead, an issue which I was pleased to address on this trip by taking a lead role in the planning. I got a great sense of satisfaction from seeing the plan come to fruition, especially when the team expanded from two to six and the logistics grew accordingly.



Nancy

Age: 26

Occupation: Trainee Maths Teacher

Experience: ML trained, expeditions to Peru, Norway and Greenland, organised expeditions for the British Schools Exploring Society

Background:

Having spent over three years organising remote, mountaineering expeditions for other people I decided it was time to readdress the balance and took very early (and unfortunately temporary) retirement in order to get back into the hills for myself. My experience of expeditioning has largely been with the same group of mates from university so it was wonderful to find myself in the wilderness with some new faces and revel in the randomness of a new mix of personalities.



Matt

Age: 30

Occupation: Civil Servant

Experience: Rock, ice and mountain climbing for several years in UK, Alps and further afield. Expeditions to Pakistan and Bolivia.

Background:

Having expeditioned with Tim before in Bolivia I had few doubts about going on another with him trip and knew this would be a real adventure. Seemingly brought in as the team member with the most climbing experience I started off a little nervous about the nature of what we were undertaking.



Spike

Age: 27

Occupation: Event Coordinator; Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

Experience: Trekking expeditions to Kenya, the Yukon, Borneo, Spain and Nepal. Plus lived and climbed in Chamonix for a summer.

Background: Whilst at university I went on numerous expeditions, both with the Officer Training Corps and independently. Last year I spent 7 months circumnavigating the world along the line of 50° north in a Land Rover Defender. When I was driving through the Altai I was struck by it's beauty and remoteness, and decided to return to climb there in the future.

3.5 hours heated, but productive, negotiations with Igor the agent. Next stop the Middle East
8:34 AM May 23rd



Age: 26

Occupation: Freelance Photographer (www.davidtett.com)

Experience: Climbing expedition in Nepal. Highest climb: Annapurna Basecamp

Background: I'm a freelance photographer with a passion for travel and adventure photography. Being rather inexperienced climber I was fortunate enough to have a great team supporting me and get some great photographs of the area. Overall the trip has boosted my abilities and confidence that I can on and do anything I want to do, as long as I want it enough!



Age: 30

Occupation: Surgeon

Experience: Climbing Expeditions in the Andes, Caucasus and Himalayas. Highest summit so far: 7000m.

Background:

I'm an altitude addict and an NHS Surgeon. This expedition has been hugely rewarding on both a personal and professional level. Although, as this was my first experience as team Doctor, I'm pleased to say that my medical skills were rarely called upon. Travelling to Siberia and climbing in the Altai is a journey of discovery in the truest sense of the phrase.

Team missed their flight delaying our departure by 24 hours. Frustrating but sleep is sweet recompense.
8:24 PM May 24th

Climbing

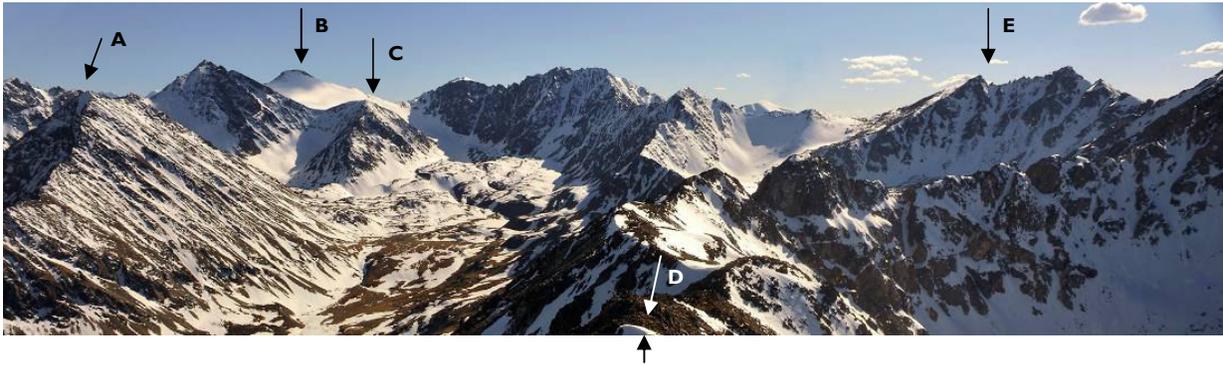
It is worth highlighting upfront that we didn't (have to) get onto a glacier once. And in the decision-making process about conditions and routes this was a big plus

Being there for the winter-spring melt, the snow conditions were climbable but did rapidly deteriorate during our period at camp. In its current condition, the snow would have precluded climbing anything steeper as it would have provided no reliable anchors or been of good enough condition to climb up. Optimal conditions undoubtedly occur later in the season but we found plenty of easier-angle routes to gain access to summits.

The Routes

Key	Name	Lat & Long	Height	Grade	Climbers	Date
A*	Dangerous Dave's Day Out	50° 22.41' N 87° 47.01' E	3,089m	PD	ME, TM, DT	02/06/09
B	Mighty Whitey	50° 21.93' N 87° 45.84' E	3,259m	PD	MB, MF, MR	31/05/09
C	Where Igor Dares	50° 22.34' N 87° 45.83' E	3,071m	PD	MB, MF, MR	30/05/09
D*	Basecamp Ridgeline	TBC	TBC	F	DT, NP, TM	29/05/09
E	London Bridge	50° 23.93' N 87° 45.05' E	3,167m	F	NP, MR, ME, TM, DT	03/06/09
Z	Teacher Horseshoe			PD	ME, TM	07/06/09

N.B. The Teacher Horseshoe (Z) is in the Northern Chuysky Range, an area quite separate from the rest
* These exact summits are not visible in the photo.



Dangerous Dave's Day Out

A steep, continuous snow slope to a rocky ridge and summit.

Up at 3am, depart ABC at 4am and at the start of the route for 5am as day started to dawn.

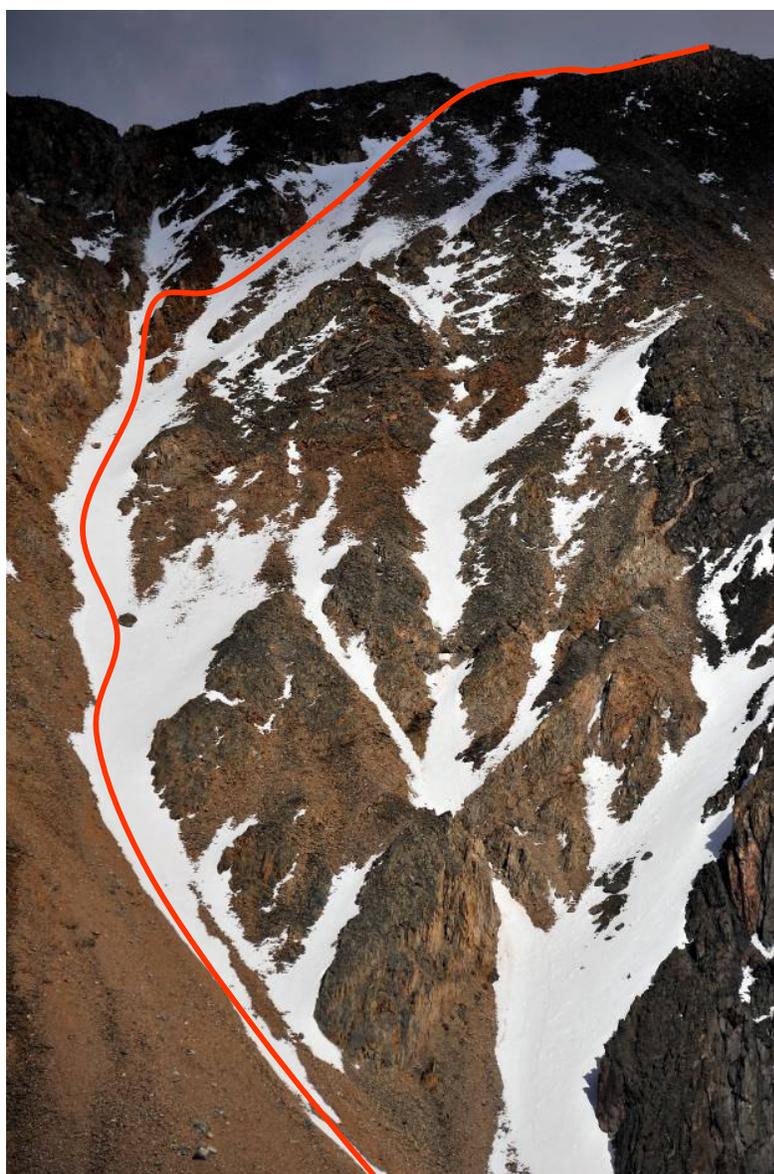
We moved roped as a three, on a snow slope that looked very steep but was actually fine once moving.

Snow was slushy and at the cusp of being annoying/disturbing. The only issue on the ascent was Tim's decision to cut across a rock buttress two-thirds of the way up. A move which prompted Dave – on his first Alpine outing – to give the route it's name. The rock was very loose and a little scary.

The rocky ridge to the summit was a little loose but straight forward.

We stuck on the snow for the descent.

Key	A
Height	3,089m
Grade	PD
Lat	50° 22.41' N
Long	87° 47.01' E
Climbers	MF, TM, DT
Date	02/06/09



In an 'ayil' (traditional Altai hut) listening to stories about Igor's military days and his "secret devices" with frequent vodka toasts
5:14 PM May 25th

Mighty Whitey

We chose an earlier rise than the day before (Route C – Where Igor Dares). Even so, at 3am when we left Advanced Base Camp it was worryingly warm, probably around +7 C.

From the camp we walked easily and quickly up the level gully, what we had come to know as the "M3", past our route of the day before. We continued on, traversing the slope which rose to the left. Even at this early hour the intermittent crack and rumble of falling rocks in the valley belied the disturbing warmth. We hesitated briefly before crossing under a short rocky face for this reason. Past a rocky outcrop and contouring round to the left quickly brought us on to the main snow slope. Given the remarkably warm conditions we decided to climb straight up, avoiding crossing or destabilising any slope.

We climbed, and descended, mostly in shadow. If the slope had caught more of the sun it could have been a very different story. As it was, the snow changed its condition every few metres; sometimes firm, sometimes crust over mush and sometimes crust over powder but all hard going. The wind picked up considerably as we reached the ridge where we turned right and after a short very, easy angled rocky scramble to the summit.

Key	B
Height	3,259m
Grade	PD
Lat	50° 21.93' N
Long	87° 45.84' E
Climbers	MB, MF, MR
Date	31/05/09



The sun is shining for the first time since England as we pack our bags, load the horses and start our journey into the hills...
6:03 AM May 26th

Where Igor Dares

A slightly disorienting route up steep snow gullies, before finishing along an airy ridgeline.

Wake up at 3am to a cold start but certainly not chilly. Leaving at 4am under a clear sky which was already brightening. After a short initial steep snow slope we gained a wide snow route which ran beside the steep rocky slope of our objective and the moraine to our right. We nicknamed this the "M3 Motorway" due to its width, and gradient (or lack of it).

We quickly made it to the bottom of our climb (c. 20-30mins). Shortly we came to a large snow gully rising up to the left to our summit with a distinctive rock island in the middle of it - moving left the over a loose rocky step added some interest.

We started up the gully and then branched onto a smaller one to the left. We picked our way through various gullies, remaining mostly on the snow as the rock was very broken and unstable. The snow was deep and proved exhausting, particularly for the lead climber.

Eventually we reached the ridgeline but due to restricted visibility from the surrounding rocks we were unsure where the summit lay to our left or right. We opted for the latter (the correct option) and reached the summit at 8am after a short scramble over broken rocks along the exposed ridge. Whilst our approach to the summit was steep, the mountain sloped away more gently in the opposite direction.

We descended quickly down the main snow gully and reached the M3 and then ABC easily.

Key	C
Height	3,071m
Grade	PD
Lat	50° 22.34' N
Long	87° 45.83' E
Climbers	MB, MF, MR
Date	30/05/09



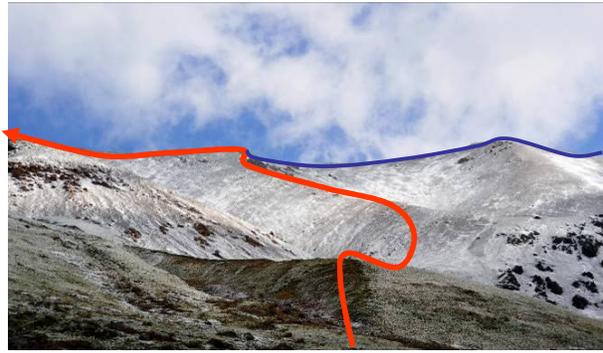
At 3089 metres on the summit of a previously unclimbed Siberian mountain.
2:04 AM Jun 2nd

Basecamp Ridgeline

A steady slog to gain the ridge and a scramble along it to reach the summits.

Getting to the top of the ridge was a straight forward walk directly from base camp, albeit a bit of a slog. Great views along the valley and into the next one. We continued along the ridge (left image below) which was a slightly exposed scramble on loose rock and then back along in the opposite direction (blue line below) where we found a summit with an iron 'hammer and sickle' sign on.

Key	D
Height	
Grade	F
Lat	
Long	
Climbers	DT, NP, TM
Date	29/05/09



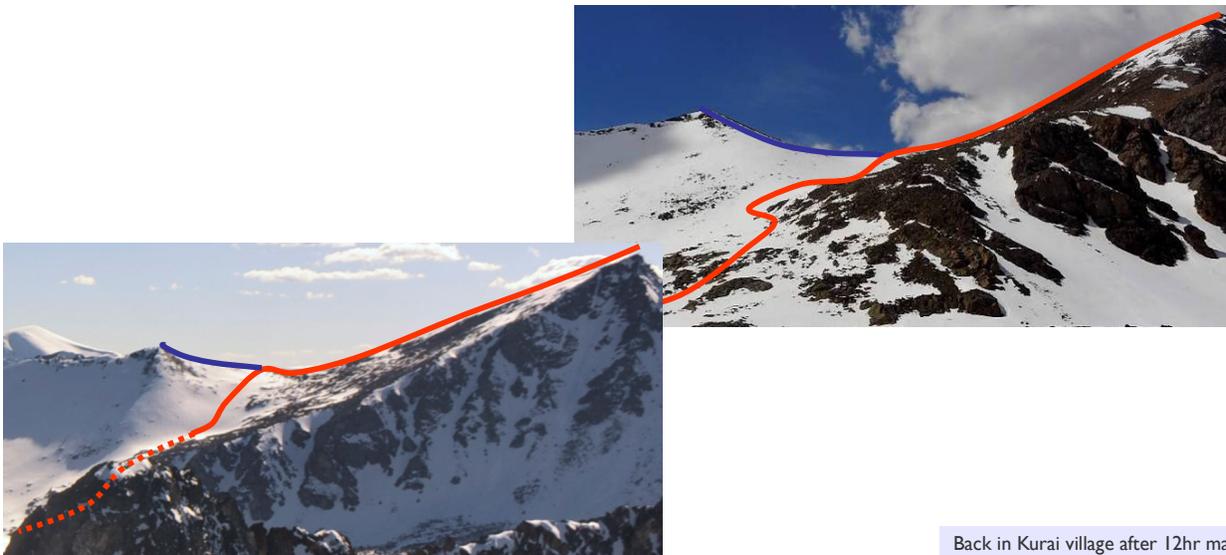
London Bridge

The team (minus Marc)'s last chance for an ascent, this had been reced previously and looked straight forward save for navigating melting snow over streams.

From ABC there was a parabolic curve (shallow, steep, shallow) of snow to plod through to the col. Most followed the ridgeline, hopping between large boulders and snow patches, whilst Spike went straight up boulders on the face.

A wonderfully exposed summit with loose rocks continually "falling down" (hence the name). Half the group continued to the smaller summit on the descent, indicated with the blue line below.

Key	E
Height	3,167m
Grade	F
Lat	50° 23.93' N
Long	87° 45.05' E
Climbers	NP, MR, MF, TM, DT
Date	03/06/09



Back in Kurai village after 12hr march. Pitch black, exhausted, dogs and bulls roam the streets and we're locked out of our hut!

4:55 PM Jun 4th

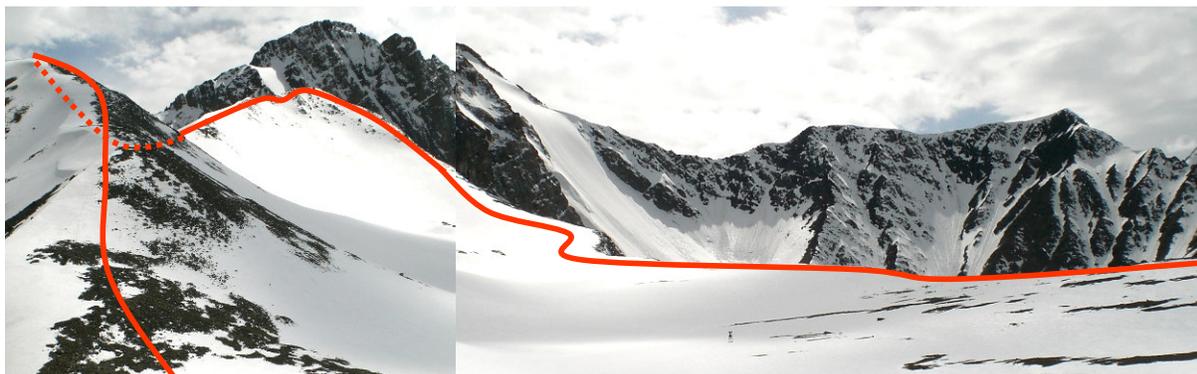
Teacher Horseshoe

Slogged up a path from the Aktru base camp and crossed a steepening snowfield to a col. It was possible to do this almost entirely on rock. A quick scramble took us to the top of the Teacher and back down to the start of the horseshoe (shown below).

Crossing the plateau (bottom right in pic), we followed the ridge line which turned to ice covered choss beneath the summit. Back tracking didn't look pleasant so we continued and found ourselves exposed on a very loose slope but escaped by climbing over the ridge onto the snow. The remainder of the ridge was easy walking and took us back to the col.

Note that this route is in the more popular Northern Chuysky range - a completely different area from the rest of the routes. It was completed by Matt and Tim on the 'Elite Phase' from Aktru base camp.

Key	Z
Height	
Grade	
Lat	
Long	
Climbers	MF, TM
Date	07/06/09



Only part of route shown (we'd lost our photographer by this point)

Awake. Great couple of weeks: blue skies and sunshine, bear prints at basecamp and 5 peaks bagged under the British flag. Time to rest!

5:27 AM Jun 5th

Equipment

Tents

We took two three-man tents – a Terra Nova Hyperspace on loan from the British Schools Exploring Society (BSES) and similar Mountain Equipment Co-op version. Both of which were good. We also took a large base camp ridge tent. Not exactly designed for remote mountaineering, it was nonetheless a big bonus, making base camp feel like a home and providing a more sociable and comfortable shelter

Stoves

We had three Primus Omnifuels (also loaned from BSES) and an MSR Whisperlite. The BSES stoves get “well used” by teenagers on expedition and were temperamental until broken down and scrubbed clean (then one of them stopped working completely). The MSR was good. We used petrol from a petrol station.

Comms

We had a satphone which worked reasonably well for contacting Igor (see ‘K2 Adventures’ below) and wasn't needed otherwise. UHF radios (walkie-talkies) were good for communicating between basecamp and ABCs (when the batteries were charged). The solar panel and hand charger did not work through the mini-inverter (which converts a UK three-pin plug to a cigarette lighter attachment).

Excess Baggage

As ever, we battled with this. One of our team saw on the Aeroflot website that we had 2x20kg bags so we packed accordingly. When we arrived, we were told we only had 1x20kg (predictable) and argued our way to a small penalty fee (~£50; not in the budget). On the way back, however, despite a lengthy debate that saw Matt discard several large bottles of vodka and the airline guy having to run us through security checks moments before the plane took off... we got stung quite badly.

Equipment List (Individual)

Admin

Passport, Russian visa, Insurance doc, Sense of humour

Warm Stuff

Sleeping bag, Sleeping mat, Rucsac (40-50l), Walking boots, Sandals (optional), Gaiters, Thermal top, Thermal bottoms, Waterproof top, Waterproof bottoms, Warm/Down jacket, Hat and gloves, Underwear and socks

Basecampy stuff

Waterbottles, Water purification tablets/drops, Sunglasses, Suncream, Book, Sun hat, Headtorch, Knife, fork and spoon, Bowl, mug, Lighter/matches/fire steel, Personal first aid kit/blister kit, Trekking poles (optional), A broad sense of optimism (optional), Towel/flannel, Chargers for batteries etc

Mountain Kit

Mountaineering boots, Crampons, Walking axe, Helmet, Harness, HMS Screwgate

Equipment List (Group)

Basecamp

3-man tent x 2, Basecamp tent x 1, Lantern x 1, Trowel x 1, Stoves x 4, Fuel bottles x 6, Pans x 6, Dehy Rations (assorted) x 40, First Aid Kit x 1, Water bladders x 3, Millbank water filter x 1, Boombox x 2

Mountaineering

Rope (50m half) x 2, Ice Screws x 3, Hexes (set) x 1, Nuts (set) x 1, Twin axes x 2, Avalanche Probe x 1, Snow shovel x 1, Prussiks x 6, Slings x 6, Screwgates x 6

Comms

Satphone x 1, EPIRB x 1, UHF x 3, GPS x 2, Solar panel x 1, Hand charger x 1, Cigarette inverter adaptor x 1, AA charger x 1, Altimeter watch x 1

In my bivi bag amidst pine trees. Fantastic horse shoe ridge line today to finish the trip. A few good summits and just a little drama.

4:20 PM Jun 7th

K2 Adventures (aka Igor)

Our logistical support came from the company K2 Adventures, listed in Lonely Planet and on Google. We contacted several companies but K2 were the only ones to actively respond. For all intents and purposes, Igor Fedyaev was K2 Adventures.

Igor arranged the following for us: visa invitations, climbing permits, transport to Kurai, accommodation in Kurai and horsemen to basecamp and back. All of which worked very well.

However, there was some difficulty in negotiations from the early emails up until the final handshake. For whatever reason – culture, language or financial motivation – Igor's modus operandi was to offer all-encompassing packages with a fixed price tag e.g. "OK, here is a day-by-day itinerary which will cost you \$15,000". Our preference was to find out how much individual parts cost e.g. how much for the minibus?

This difference of approach was still not resolved upon arrival in country. Through judicious use of the good and bad cop roles, Matt and Tim battled through heated negotiations on the advance party and finally got a breakdown of costs which included a payment of \$1,500 to Igor as "profit" in addition to the daily rate we had agreed. Even the least cynical of people would note that \$1,500 was the exact amount that we had transferred to him in advance. Nonetheless, we got the costs down to what we considered reasonable and, I hope, both parties left reasonably pleased.

In summary, we would recommend Igor and K2 as providers – they delivered on all their promises and operated to a high standard – but be prepared to fight for transparency or accept that you may be paying for more than you need.



A dog followed us when we set off two days ago. She came up 25km with us, camped out and has now made it safely back to Kurai. As have we.

4:40 PM Jun 8th

Thought we had a good deal on a taxi to GornoAltaisk - £ 40 for a 7hr drive. But now, 4 hours late and no sign, it somehow seems less good. 8:43 AM Jun 9th

Visas & Permits

Visas are necessary for a visit to Russia. They require an invitation from a hotel, tour provider or similar and is often a service for which you pay. The service in London is outsourced from the embassy which means it costs more but is infinitely easier than the absurd system previously in place.

A border zone permit is necessary if climbing close to another country. Our original intention had been to climb near the Mongolian border. Transport there was one of many factors being given as reasons we shouldn't go (see 'Reasons not to go to the Altai' section above) so when we were told that our application for permits was too late, we were almost relieved. They are supposed to take some three months to process. Ours were processed through Igor so we can't offer much insight.

You should also register with the Rescue Rangers (more like Mountain Rescue and less like chipmunks) who have a base, for example, in Aktash. Again, Igor did this for us.

Food

Food was sourced in country with a few exceptions. The Advance Party made several trips to supermarkets in Barnaul and we stopped in Biysk en-route to the mountains where we had the aid of Igor to translate labels.

We used a formula from a book called Cookery from the National Outdoor Leadership School. It worked on weights of food types required per person per day (e.g. x grams of breakfast, y grams of carbohydrate for main meal). Then we combined that with a few "set menus" and logic. The result was that we had far more food than we needed. This was probably exaggerated by not always knowing what was available and thus, for example, finding a stash of cakes on the last few days. But, given that it wasn't expensive and we had horses carrying it, more was definitely better than less.

Language was a slight problem with some food types as the labels were often indecipherable (thankfully tinned meat would announce its contents with a large photograph of the appropriate animal). But, generally speaking, the supermarkets were well stocked and should be reliable for a future trip.

Maps

Igor produced laminated colour photocopies of a map (~1:50,000) that we used to navigate to base camp. We also took print outs from Google Earth which showed the valley in 3D and were very useful for orientation.

We couldn't get copies of the 1:50,000 map that Igor produced so your best bet would be to go through a local agent/mountaineering group. Some Russian climbers we bumped into later said that our maps (the scanned ones from Igor) were not good and that they had better ones which were hard to get in shops.

There is a 1:200,000 topographical map of the Belukha region available online (EWP Altai Mountains) and another 1:200,000 map of the region, laid out in a book like a road map, available roadside in-country.



3-1. Clawing my way out of second place in the All-British Siberian Chess Contest. Still no taxi. 5:33PM Jun 9th

Sweating in back seat of a yellow minibus doing about 80mph. Been going since 5am when an excitable little Russian man arrived with a taxi.
8:51 AM Jun 10th

Water

The valley's main river and tributaries were used as a water supply. Half the team use iodine and the remainder suffered no ill effects.

Medical

We had no injuries or illness on the expedition.

The concerns before departure were ticks and encephalitis. They are a known problem at that time of year. Vaccination is available but in the hoo-ha of "are we going, aren't we going?" we completely forgot about it. Drugs are available from Russian pharmacies but it was a futile exercise without a translator. Marc (the doctor)'s research indicated that the symptoms are flu-like with a two week incubation period so we weren't too worried. (It's worth noting that this advice came from the same man who was heard to say at basecamp "Is it wrong that a little part of me was hoping someone would get appendicitis so I could practice in the field?")

Bears

When we caught up with our horsemen at our designated base camp spot, not only had they shot and killed a goat, but they also claimed to have seen a bear. Some things don't need translating.

The Siberian Brown Bear does inhabit the area (a fact discovered after our return). Large foot prints were seen at various sites in the valley (photo below) and, bizarrely, at the top of one of the Basecamp Ridgeline (described above).

We acted accordingly and kept the base camp tent and food away from the tents in which we slept.



Photo: Spike Reid

In a hotel room watching a Russian soap opera with a bottle of beer and packet of crisps.
2:28 PM Jun 10th

Budget

Income

Mount Everest Foundation (MEF) - £1,050
 Gordon Foundation - £400

British Mountaineering Council (BMC) offered their endorsement but had limited funding available. We also applied to the Mark Clifford Mountaineering Grant (but received no reply) and the Captain Scott Spirit of Adventure award (but were told after the deadline that they weren't giving any grants that year).

Outgoings

	Total	Individual	Notes
Flights	£2,865	£478	£445-510 per person
Visas	£504	£84	£75 normal processing, £120 overnight
BMC Insurance	£474	£79	'Alpine' grade
Visa invites / Permits from K2	£ 401	£67	
K2's Fee	£ 1,046	£174	<u>Not</u> disclosed in advance, only after we had paid it
Tent hire	£ 30	£5	From EquipMe (UK)
Bus to Kurai	£ 511	£85	Charter through K2
Basecamp food	£ 284	£47	Supermarkets
Flight delay costs	£ 128	£21	K2's charge when main party flights were delayed
Kurai hut	£ 90	£15	
Rescue Ranger Registration	£ 67	£11	
Igor's daily rate	£ 260	£43	
Horses to BC (inc. tip)	£ 617	£103	
Horses back from BC	£ 439	£73	
Kurai Hut x 2	£ 160	£27	
Excess Baggage	£ 223	£37	Matt got stung on return flight
Total	£8,099	£1,349	



Thank you...

- **Mount Everest Foundation** – for an “interview” that buoyed us and the finances to help
- **The Gordon Foundation** – for a very straightforward offer of help
- **British Schools Exploring Society** – for lending us tents, stoves, comms and everything else
- **The BMC** – for liking our project

...Igor for getting us into the mountains and some wonderful Soviet intrigue through your “secret devices” stories; Pat for letting us put your name down should anything go wrong; Shane Winser (RGS Geography Outdoors) for being as helpful as ever; and Roger Payne and anyone else who’s brain we picked at the RGS Explore Conference 2008.

More Information

- **www.thenextchallenge.org/altai** - You can download this report, see slideshows and read more about the trip at Tim’s website ‘The Next Challenge’
- **www.davidtett.com** – To see and order more photos
- **tim@thenextchallenge.org** – I’d be glad to help or answer any questions



