

BRITISH MALUBITING

EXPEDITION 1988

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of the expedition was to make a lightweight ascent of Malubiting - a peak in the Karakorum range of the Himalaya in Pakistan.

The peak has three separate summits, West, Central and East being 7453 m, 7291 m and 6970 m respectively in height above sea level. All the tops have been reached previously, but always by quite large expedition groups. The British Army in 1959 reached the East peak, a Japanese team climbed the Central peak in 1975 and the highest West peak was reached in 1971 by an Austrian expedition.

Our research suggested that the mountain had not been climbed from its southern side, although the Manchester Karakorum expedition in 1969 had got beyond the obvious col at 5625 m. Malubiting was also chosen as the objective because of its proximity to Gilgit which allowed for relative ease of access as the team were on a restricted time schedule.

THE CLIMBING TEAM

STEPHEN CALLEN - A 33 year old Social Worker. Experience - 5 Alpine Seasons (N. Face of Dru) The South Ridge of Alpamayu in Peru and was leader of the 1986 Tirich Mir Expedition to Pakistan.

JOHN McBEAN - A 39 year old Teacher. Experience - 9 Alpine Seasons including N. Face of the Triolet, N. Face of the Courtes (Swiss Route), Cassin Route on the Badile.

RAYMOND DUFFY - A 40 year old self employed Decorator/Gardener. Experience - 7 Alpine Seasons including ascents of the Courtes, Grepon and Cime Grande.

LESLIE ANDERSON - A 35 year old Teacher. Experience - 8 Alpine Seasons including N. Face Triolet, Cassin Route on the Badile and N. Face of the Droites.

Took over as leader of the expedition when David Harries withdrew to take up a permanent post at the National Mountaineering Centre. Also writer of this report.

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AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXPEDITION

The four members of the expedition flew from Heathrow Airport on a P.I.A. flight to Islamabad on the twenty fourth of July 1988 and stayed in nearby Rawalpindi. They arrived during the Muslim religious festival of Eede, so all official buildings and most shops were closed for the next two days.

Five days were spent in a non-stop round of administrative and preparatory duties. These included the first contact meeting and introduction to the Liaison Officer at the Tourism Department, arranging insurance for the L.O. and the porters, depositing a helicopter bond at the bank, clearing their air-freight (GAZ) through customs. This was mainly done by John and Les - the "Diplomatic Team".

Meanwhile the "Provisions Team" - Steve and Ray spent their time haggling in the Bazaars, arranging food for the duration and buying equipment needed for base camp and the cook.

Following the official briefing at the Tourism Office on the first of August the team and the L.O. left Rawalpindi in a hired Toyota minibus with two drivers, for the hair raising drive to Gilgit. The journey followed the Karakorum Highway for some eighteen hours. The road is an incredible feat of engineering by

joint authorities which forms a link through the Himalayas to connect Pakistan and China.

Two days were spent in Gilgit finalising arrangements, buying last supplies and "booking-in" with the local administration and armed services.

On the fourth of August two hired jeeps arrived at the Park Hotel to pick the team up. All supplies were organised into fifteen, twenty five kilogram loads ready to be carried by the porters and these were loaded up. The team followed the River Indus for a couple of hours until they reached the village of Sassi. They had hoped to drive to the village of Dassu but had been informed that the road was "unjeepable". The leader of the village helped organise fifteen porters who would carry supplies up to Dassu and arranged for a cook who would join the team for the duration of the trip.

They arrived in Dassu late that evening having spent two and a half hours getting the porters and loads across the river where a bridge had been destroyed - it was suspected that this had been done by the local Baltistan people who are not over-enamoured by the Pakistan authorities. The next morning they paid off the porters from Dassu who would stay with them for the three day walk to base-camp.

The "walk-in" passed through increasingly beautiful countryside, following an irrigation channel, passed the village of Iskere then crossing the glacier leading up to Haramosh La, then the village of Kutwal before reaching the area of base-camp on the seventh of August.

The porters were paid off and base-camp was established around 3900 m on an alp below the obvious col east of the summits. The first problem the team came across was the lack of drinking water in the area, they had to resort to using glacier melt which even after two stages of filtering still contained mica suspended in the water. The next two days were spent organising base-camp and unpacking the loads.

At this stage Ray discovered a 'missing' beat when he took his pulse. This was about one in ten beats. Obviously this caused a great deal of concern and eventually Ray returned to Gilgit with the Liaison Officer and Cook on the tenth of August in order to have a check up at the hospital.

By the thirteenth of August camp 1. had been set up just below the glacier at about 4450 m and Steve and Les moved up. It had been decided that the diamond shaped rock buttress was too loose and dangerous and that the chances of an accident that way were just too great. They therefore attempted to find a safe route through the ice-fall to the right of the buttress.

A cache of equipment was deposited at about 5000 m and then the pair returned to camp 1. where they were met by John who had arrived from base camp with another load.

That evening there was a violent storm which deposited large amounts of fresh snow and following a disturbed night the three descended to base camp, where they were pleasantly surprised to find that Ray and the cook had returned from Gilgit. Ray had been examined and cleared by a heart specialist. The L.O. had not accompanied them, he remained in Gilgit with "bad knees".

It was seven days before they could move back up to camp 1. - there had been another severe storm and numerous avalanches, including one huge one, in this time. The pressure readings were continually changing throughout their time in the mountains and the weather was never settled for more than two days. The four climbers moved up to camp 1. for a closer look at conditions.

As the team climbed above camp 1. they were appalled by the state of the ice-fall and the amount of avalanche debris on the route. They were also concerned by a bowl shaped area above their line which would still be holding large quantities of fresh snow.

The unsettled weather concerned them as once onto the ridge above the bowl, any descent would have been extremely dangerous. For this combination of factors it was decided to abandon their

attempt to climb Malubiting.

Steve and Les climbed with empty sacs to retrieve the dump of equipment. Camp 1. was cleared the next day and the team returned to base-camp on the twenty second of August sending the cook down to arrange some porters.

The team cleared base-camp burning or burying all remains and left on the twenty third of August. By paying the porters for three days they reached Sassi in two and by finding an available jeep were back in Gilgit late on the twenty fourth of August.

The team stayed in Gilgit for a couple of days and even re-made the acquaintance of their Liaison Officer. The final six days were spent in a quick reconnaissance up to the Hunza area. They reconnoitered up the Buwaltar Glacier and up the Barpu Glacier above the village of Hoppar. This was very useful in terms of looking for objectives for the future.

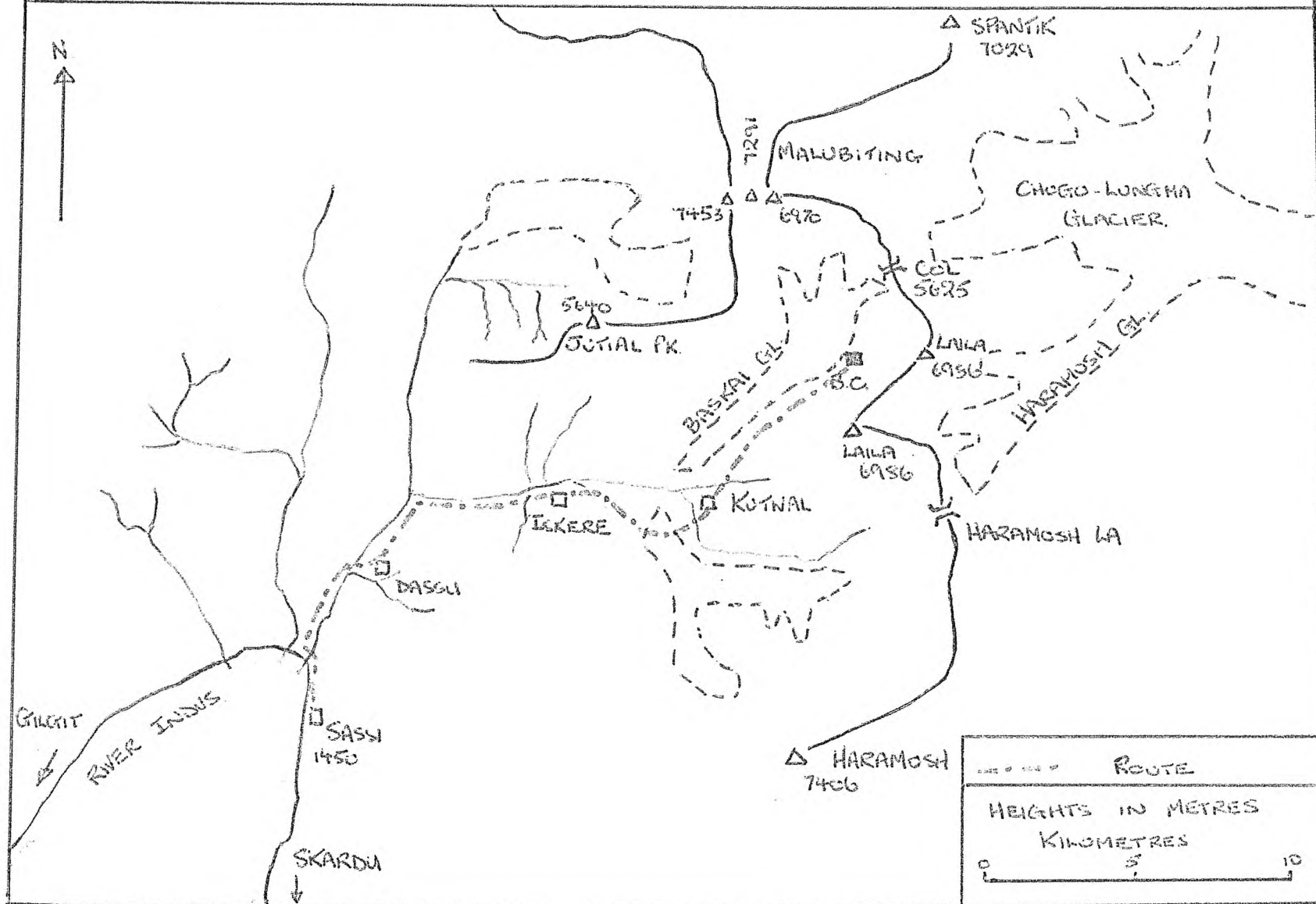
They returned to Rawalpindi on the second of September and following the de-brief at the Tourism Office, flew back to Heathrow, via Moscow, on the fourth - ready for a pint!

THE KARAKORAM RANGE



THE LOCATION OF MALUBITING

BRITISH MALUBITING EXPEDITION 1988



SUMMARY

Malubiting 7432 m was chosen for an attempt by a four-man expedition. Research indicated that an approach from the north was very dangerous, but that the southern side held better possibilities.

Two possible lines were considered, the diamond shaped buttress or the ice-fall to the right, both led to a col at 5625 m whence the ridge could be followed to the three summits.

In the event both routes proved to be too dangerous. The buttress was exceptionally loose and above the ice-fall a bowl shaped area held fresh snow and then avalanched frequently down the route. During the course of the expedition's time on the mountain the weather was never settled, the barometer readings changed significantly at least every two days.

Members of the team reached about 5000 m on the ice-fall route, but following two large storms it was decided to abandon the attempt to climb Malubiting.

Although the approach to the mountain had been interesting and quite beautiful the area could not be recommended to future groups due to the lack of even a relatively safe line on the mountain. The lack of decent water above 3200 m and the lack of

TIMESCALE

24th July	-	Flight from Heathrow to Islamabad
1st August	-	Leave Rawalpindi for Gilgit
4th August	-	Leave Gilgit for Sassi
7th August	-	Arrive Base Camp
10th August	-	Establish Camp 1.
13-14th August	-	First attempt
20th August	-	Second attempt
22nd August	-	Cleared mountain
23rd August	-	Cleared and left Base Camp
24th August	-	Arrive Gilgit (late)
28th August	-	Visit Hunza Valley - Hoppar
31st August	-	Return to Gilgit
1st September	-	Return to Islamabad
4th September	-	Return flight to Heathrow

EXPEDITION FINANCES

INCOME

	<u>R</u>	<u>£</u>
Mount Everest Foundation		300.00
British Mountaineering Council		300.00
Merseyside Mountaineering Club		100.00
Personal Contributions (4 x £1350.00)		<u>5,400.00</u>
		<u>6,100.00</u>

OUTGOINGS

Peak Fees		700.00
4 x Visas for Pakistan		100.00
Medical Supplies		80.00
Insurance for the Climbing Team		627.00
4 x Flights to Islamabad (P.I.A.)		1,900.00

Minibus Rawalpindi - Gilgit	3,300 }	
2 x Jeeps Gilgit - Sassi	1,400 }	
1 x Jeep Sassi - Gilgit	1,000 }	300.00
Minibus Gilgit - Rawalpindi	3,000 }	

LIAISON OFFICER

300 R per day in Rawalpindi	2,100 }	
150 R per day for Food	4,500 }	220.00

R

£

PORTERS FEES

140 R per day 14 on walk in and cook	}	
6 on walk out and cook	}	300.00
Cook - 2,500 R and remains of Kitchen Equip.		85.00
Insurance - Porter/Cook/L.O.		45.00
Cooking Equipment (for base-camp)		65.00
Food (bought in Pakistan)		275.00
Freighting (GAZ)		160.00
Accommodation - 14 nights in 'Pindi and Gilgit		150.00
+ meals		150.00
Communal Gear - Lightweight Tents		
Ropes		
H/A Stoves		
Meals (dried)		<u>800.00</u>
		<u>5,957.00</u>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although the expedition was far from being a mountaineering success, the four members of the team would like to thank all who assisted, encouraged and advised them. The trip provided a wealth of experiences and memories which the team have learned from, as well as fueling ambition for projects in the future.

Thanks to: Mount Everest Foundation

British Mountaineering Council

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Robbie Mallinson

Brian and Kath Morgan

Jim and Pat Whitney

Mrs Carters (Chemist) - Glossop

Beecham Health Care - Brentford

Kirkby Warwick Pharmarceuticals - Bury st Edmunds

Searl Pharmarceuticals - Morpeth

I.C.I. (Pharm. Div.) - Macclesfield

Unichem - Chessington

Merrel Dow Pharm. Ltd. - Staines