

Two expeditions to Malubiting

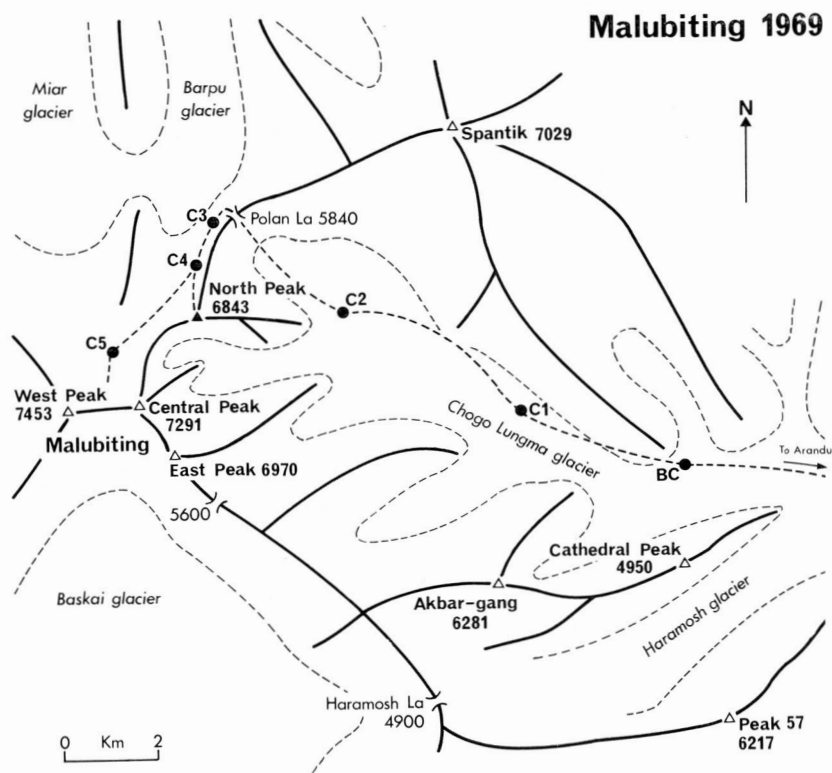
Malubiting (7453 m) lies in latitude 36° N, longitude 75° E beside the Chogo Lungma glacier, which at 50 km is the third longest in the Karakoram. There are four summits: West (7453 m), Central (7291 m), East (6970 m) and North (6843 m).

The Frankfurter Himalaya expedition 1955 reached 6200 m on the South-east ridge of the East Peak, after having been successful on Spantik (7027 m).

In 1959, two members of the Army Mountaineering Association expedition climbed the East Peak (see *A. J.* 65 46).

The 1968 Manchester Karakoram expedition (see *A. J.* 74 218) met with an accident and retired from the mountain.

The highest summit remains a much sought-after prize, even after the expeditions described below.





76 *Camp 2 under North peak.* This photo and the next five: A. Kuś

The Polish Karakoram expedition 1969

Andrzej Kuś

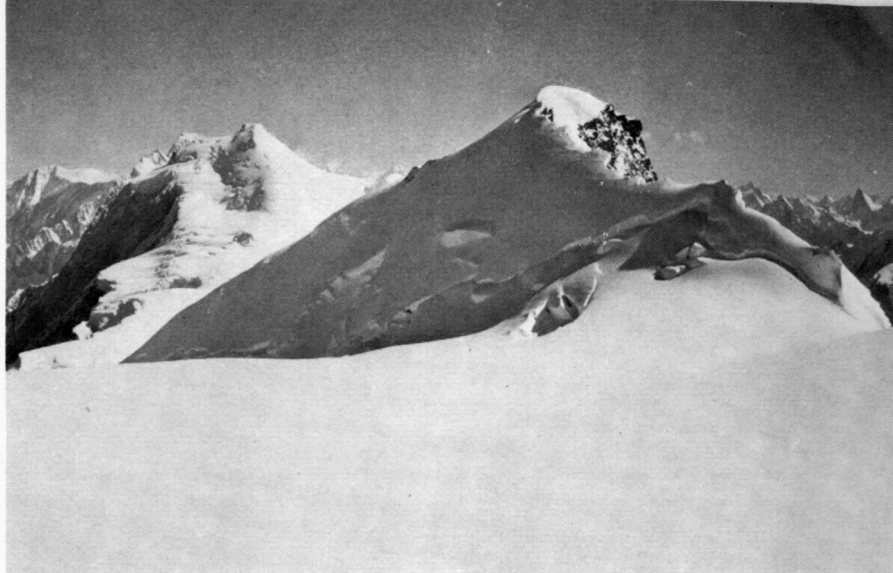
After many vicissitudes we finally received permission to attempt Malubiting from the south-east. Our small party consisted of Richard Szafirski (32), leader, Andrzej Heinrich (32), Roman Petiycki (45), cameraman, and Andrzej Kuś (29). Captain Imtiaz Ahmad Khan accompanied us as liaison officer.



77 *'Polish Pass' at the head of the Chogolungma glacier*

Base Camp was established at Palichor, 4300 m, on 17 September. We found a short cut from Palichor to the upper Chogo Lungma via the steep, grassy slopes of Spantik's shoulder. By this route we avoided the ice-fall and soon approached the snow-fields of the upper glacier, where Camps 1 and 2 were established. The continuation of the route was now quite plain.

Our first choice was to attack the virgin North Peak of Malubiting, 6843 m. The logical route to it led by a glacier cirque at the head of the Chogo Lungma and a steep wall of snow and ice about 350 m high above it. This cirque was dangerous at certain times of the day because of avalanches, but we soon reached the wall and tackled it with the help of a fixed rope. The col at the top, 5840 m and known as the CL-La, provided a splendid view of the Barpu



78 *Malubiting North peak (6843 m)*

glacier and of all the peaks from the Batura to Trivor. Richard proposed that we should call the col Polan La (Polish pass) as we found here a rocky *chtopek* on a snowy saddle recalling to us a pass in the Tatra. At its foot we set up the two small tents of Camp 3.

It was already 27 September and after a snow-storm in the night we decided to go down to Base Camp for a rest, together with Roman who was in support at Camp 2. The weather forecast said '80 per cent probability of thunder-storms and snow' for the next few days.

On 2 October we started up again from Base Camp, feeling already a touch of winter in the air. Roman accompanied us with his cameras as far as the col, where he handed over his job to Richard and turned back. There was steep snow with the continuous thunder of sérac avalanches. We chose the ridge above the Polish pass as the best way up. 300 m of moderate climbing (II–III) along it, where we put some fixed ropes, opened the way to the North Peak. We climbed it without difficulty on 8 October from Camp 4, 6200 m, and got back to camp early in the afternoon.

Next day was rather more toilsome, as we brought our loads forward and pitched Camp 5, 6750 m, on the Malubiting plateau, walking up through deep snow.

After a cold night, with a temperature down to -34°C , the three of us started early with high hopes for Malubiting West, 7453 m, the highest summit of the massif. But soon clouds came up from the west and steadily increasing wind brought violent squalls of snow. In the ever-deepening snow our efforts were ineffective. About 1pm, being then somewhere near the col, 7100 m, between the Central and West Peaks, we had to give up. There was no hope of the



79 *Summit of North peak, 8 October 1969*

summit that day and not enough food to wait some days in the hope of being able to make another attempt, especially as the slopes of the North Peak were being rendered increasingly dangerous by avalanches.

Thus an immediate retreat was the best solution and we felt really safe only when, after having dismantled the higher camps in very bad weather and deep snow, Roman and Imtiaz greeted us at the Base Camp with a good dinner and a few drops of brandy carefully preserved since our departure from Poland.



80 *Malubiting*
West peak (7453 m)