



## AAC Publications

---

### **South Lachama Glacier, Exploration and Attempt on Peak 5,320m**

Nepal, Changla Himal

"True Peak 5,822m" (unclimbed) seen from high on the north lateral moraine of the South Lachama Glacier. Photo by Mike Fletcher

**Following a suggestion from Julian Freeman-Attwood, Drew Cook, Lorna Earl, Mike Fletcher, Nick King, Stephen Humphries, and I chose to explore the southern branch of the remote Lachama Glacier in the hope of attempting one or more of its unclimbed peaks.** Our expedition lasted from September 27–October 27. We flew from Kathmandu to the hilltop town of Simikot, and then made a five-day trek to our base camp at the junction of the north and south Lachama valleys (4,348m, 30°8'20.84"N, 82°5'12.29"E). Although the trek followed a well-defined, undulating track bordering the Chuwa and Dojam rivers, it was made more arduous and challenging by late monsoon rains and the large volume of livestock descending from higher pastures prior to winter.

Since our base camp was not ideally located, an advance base was established just short of the terminal moraine of the South Lachama Glacier at 4,585m. From this camp, the team made exploratory forays both to the pass leading south, to our primary objective peak of Peak 5,822m, and eastward in an attempt to access the glacial headwall and our secondary objective. During these forays, it became increasingly obvious that the photograph we had been given depicting Peak 5,822m (which we now called "False Peak 5,822m") was in fact a lesser summit estimated from Google Earth images to be around 5,590m. We now believed that the "True Peak 5,822m," as indicated from satellite images and the available terrestrial map, was the mountain we had selected as our secondary objective at the head of the glacial cirque.

Guarded by extensive and complex boulder fields, access to the glacier was awkward and time-consuming, with the preferred route being the true right lateral moraine. Closer inspection of the icefall leading to True Peak 5,822m made us question the wisdom of attempting this summit in the limited time at our disposal. Instead, we focused on establishing a camp near the 5,201m pass due south of advanced base camp and beneath False Peak 5,822m.

Having made this decision, on October 14 the party relocated to a high camp at 5,120m, just below the pass. However, once there, we were unable to identify a reasonable route up the west face of False Peak 5,822m under the prevailing conditions, so elected instead to attempt one or more of the rocky outcrops on the ridge leading westward from the pass. Snow-covered boulder fields made even this simpler approach awkward and time-consuming, and once on the ridge proper, a steep, snow-plastered wall eventually defeated our efforts to reach the highest point. We aborted the attempt on Peak 5,320m just 20m below the summit. Lack of time then forced a return to base camp and thence home.

– Derek Buckle, U.K.

## Images



Nick King at the high point just below the summit of Peak 5,320m, above the South Lachama Glacier. The snow peak behind and to the left is Gave Ding (6,521m), climbed by Mick Fowler and Paul Ramsden from the north in 2015. The prominent rock spire on the right is "False Peak 5,822m" (ca 5,590m).



"True Peak 5,822m" (unclimbed) seen from high on the north lateral moraine of the South Lachama Glacier.



Looking east up the South Lachama Glacier. Apart from Gave Ding (Fowler-Ramsden, 2015), the high snowy mountain on the left, all other peaks seen here are unclimbed.

## Article Details

Author	Derek Buckle
Publication	AAJ
Volume	62
Issue	94
Page	
Copyright Date	2020
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions