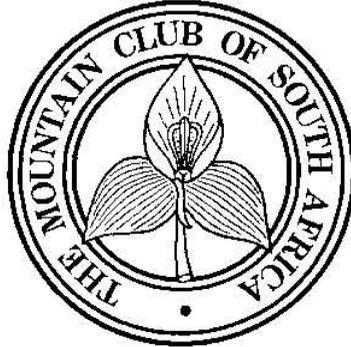


# **ROCK CLIMBING ROUTES AT MHLABATINI AND FERNKLOOF**



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2041**



## Preface

This guide is basically a reprint of the previous update to the route book. A number of new routes have been included and in a few cases, existing routes have been described differently, in an attempt to make it easier to find/follow a route. As far as possible the volume is complete. If however, any routes are missing or incompletely described, this is unintentional.

The intention behind the publication is to provide frequent issues of the route guide each containing the latest set of route updates. Feedback regarding any errors, omissions or additions is most welcome. Please submit all feedback to ClimbZA ([www.climb.co.za](http://www.climb.co.za)), the MCSA or the author.

This route book is the collective work of many people and I would like to thank all those who helped in any way. Mention must be made of the contributing authors of routes, without whom there would be no route book.

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All photos were taken by the author unless otherwise stated.

Andrew Porter, January 2013



## **Indemnity**

Mountain climbing, rock climbing, abseiling and other related activities are dangerous and can lead to or cause serious injury, material loss and death. The Mountain Club of South Africa advises you not to participate in these activities unless you are competent to do so or are under the guidance of a competent person, and unless you are using the correct equipment.

This route guidebook serves only as an indication as to those routes that have been done before and the degree of difficulty encountered by the opening party. The degree of difficulty expressed herein is highly subjective and will vary from person to person. There is no warranty, express or implied, that these routes are safe for you to do, that you will be able to do them, that you will find and identify them correctly or that you will stay on route.

You climb entirely at your own risk. While every effort has been made to ensure correctness and accuracy, the Mountain Club of South Africa accept no liability or responsibility whatsoever for any accident, injury, death or material loss arising from the use or misuse of this guide book.

Please note that bolts are not placed by the MCSA, but by individual climbers some of whom are MCSA members and some of whom are not. The MCSA therefore cannot and does not check bolt placement for safety. Furthermore bolts deteriorate over time. Check the bolts yourself and try and find when they were placed and by whom before you rely on them. Bolts are not failsafe.

## Conventions Used

The true right of a gully is defined as the side of the gully on the right hand side of an observer who is facing downstream. Similarly, the true left of a gully is defined as the side of the gully on the left hand side of an observer who is facing downstream.

The routes in this guide are listed on the true right hand side of the kloof followed by the true left side of the kloof. In each case, the routes are listed from the upstream end working downstream.

The star rating of the individual climb is a guide to the quality of the route. In general the following applies:

- No stars No rating has yet been given. Climb the route if it looks like fun, or give it a skip.
- \* A route of little merit
- \*\* A mediocre route
- \*\*\* A good route
- \*\*\*\* An excellent route
- \*\*\*\*\* One of the finest. Exceptional.

For grading, the newer numeric system is used. Grades have been converted from the old alphanumeric system, using the convention as per the article "Grade Comparison Guide" by Clive Curson, p118 of the MCSA Journal #98 of 1995. This is a guide only so some of the grades may be out by a grade or two. In particular, climbs of grade 19 (old G1) can often be rather solid for their grade.

## MHLABATINI: List of Climbs

| <b>Climb Name</b>                   | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Stars</b> | <b>Pg</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| MIDNIGHT BEAUTY                     | 31           |              | 63        |
| RIVERS OF RAIN                      | 27           | ***          | 71        |
| BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS          | 26           | *****        | 68        |
| MYTH OF FINGERPRINTS                | 26           |              | 77        |
| CRYING OVER MEMORIES                | 25           | ****         | 76        |
| FOREVER YOUNG                       | 25           | ****         | 12        |
| THE APPRENTICE CRACK                | 25           | ****         | 55        |
| THE FINAL CUT                       | 25           | ****         | 71        |
| TOTAL ON-SNORT                      | 25           | ****         | 76        |
| GLORY ROAD                          | 25           | ***          | 69        |
| WISH YOU WERE HERE                  | 25           | ***          | 64        |
| GUY'S ROUTE                         | 25           |              | 56        |
| REASON RUN DRY                      | 25           |              | 33        |
| CANYONS OF OBLIVION                 | 24           | ****         | 13        |
| DIRE STRAITS                        | 24           | ****         | 64        |
| CRYSTAL FIRE                        | 23           | *****        | 17        |
| EGOWHIP                             | 23           | ****         | 54        |
| JUXTAPOSITION                       | 23           | ****         | 64        |
| MAGIC MOMENTS                       | 23           | ***          | 63        |
| SOULCRUSHER                         | 23           | ***          | 26        |
| BACK FROM BEYOND                    | 23           | **           | 11        |
| ELITE STREET                        | 23           | **           | 68        |
| THE BAT AND THE WICKED              | 23           | **           | 32        |
| WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING     | 23           | **           | 12        |
| BULLDOG ARETE                       | 23           |              | 54        |
| DIRIGIBLE DOG                       | 23           |              | 78        |
| NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING<br>GAINED | 22           | ****         | 62        |
| BORED GAMES                         | 22           | ***          | 54        |
| DIAMONDS IN THE DAWN                | 22           | ***          | 39        |
| CATCH 22                            | 22           | **           | 39        |

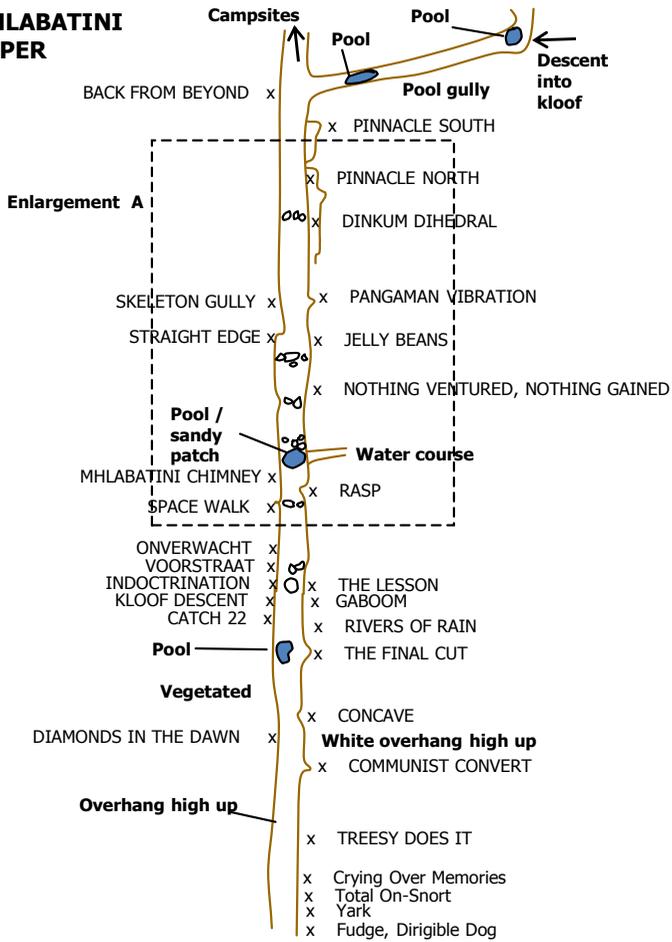
| <b>Climb Name</b>             | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Stars</b> | <b>Pg</b> |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| HEDONISTIC HEIGHTS            | 22           | **           | 66        |
| GELIGNITE                     | 22           |              | 59        |
| THE FILE                      | 22           |              | 67        |
| TALES OF BRAVE ULYSSES        | 21           | *****        | 29        |
| BULLIT                        | 21           | ****         | 31        |
| SPACE WALK                    | 21           | ****         | 35        |
| VORTEX                        | 21           | ****         | 63        |
| OEDIPUS WRECKS                | 21           | ***          | 60        |
| SHADOW OF DOUBT               | 21           | ***          | 59        |
| UNKNOWN PLEASURES             | 21           | ***          | 65        |
| CARRION                       | 21           | **           | 24        |
| GABOOM                        | 21           | **           | 70        |
| RASP                          | 21           | **           | 67        |
| SHIELD OF ACHILLES            | 21           | **           | 28        |
| PRIME RATE                    | 21           |              | 84        |
| SEARCH                        | 21           |              | 79        |
| GOOD DOG                      | 20           | *****        | 35        |
| TAIL OF A BRAVE DOG           | 20           | ****         | 26        |
| JULUKA                        | 20           | ***          | 56        |
| ORGASMATRON                   | 20           | ***          | 18        |
| HOLLOW IDOLS                  | 20           | **           | 14        |
| TEMPTATION CRACK DIRECT       | 20           | **           | 28        |
| YOUNG WHIPPERSNAPPER          | 20           | **           | 16        |
| FUTCH                         | 20           | *            | 78        |
| THE LESSON                    | 20           | *            | 69        |
| FREEZEFRAME                   | 20           |              | 49        |
| LOVE JUGS                     | 20           |              | 44        |
| OBSCURED BY CLOUDS            | 20           |              | 65        |
| ONVERWACHT: ALTERNATIVE START | 20           |              | 37        |
| THE CREDIT CARD CULT          | 20           |              | 84        |
| DINKUM DIHEDRAL               | 19           | ****         | 51        |
| LOTTA BOTTLE                  | 19           | ***          | 50        |
| SCHWEESICLES                  | 19           | ***          | 59        |

| <b>Climb Name</b>         | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Stars</b> | <b>Pg</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| DEE CRACK                 | 19           | **           | 53        |
| ME PIGFACE                | 19,A0        | **           | 62        |
| NAUGHTY MONKEY            | 19           | **           | 60        |
| PASSIVE RHYTHMS           | 19           | **           | 52        |
| PINNACLE SOUTH            | 19           | **           | 45        |
| TEMPTATION CRACK          | 19           | **           | 27        |
| THE HAWK'S NOSE           | 19,A1        | **           | 25        |
| THE SLIT                  | 19           | **           | 15        |
| TREMADOC FEVER            | 19           | **           | 50        |
| YAHOO                     | 19           | **           | 12        |
| ONVERWACHT                | 19           | *            | 36        |
| FIRE AND ICE              | 19           |              | 40        |
| GRINALDUS                 | 19           |              | 81        |
| PANGAMAN VIBRATION        | 19           |              | 54        |
| PIGMY FACE                | 19,A1        |              | 61        |
| TREESY DOES IT            | 19           |              | 75        |
| DELICACY                  | 18           | ****         | 32        |
| JELLY BEANS DIRECT        | 18           | ****         | 58        |
| ELIXIR                    | 18           | ***          | 29        |
| QUICK SILVER              | 18           | ***          | 18        |
| REVENGE OF THE BUN-EATERS | 18           | ***          | 22        |
| SATYRIASIS STRUT          | 18           | ***          | 61        |
| BULLION                   | 18           | **           | 80        |
| THE SLOT                  | 18           | **           | 15        |
| TREACHERY AND TREASON     | 18           | *            | 41        |
| PERAMBULATING PUP         | 18           |              | 78        |
| NOT SO MUCH TO FLY AS TO  | 17           | ***          | 82        |
| PLUMMET                   |              |              |           |
| PINNACLE DIRECT           | 17           | ***          | 46        |
| BURST BALLS               | 17           | **           | 21        |
| BURST BREECH              | 17           | **           | 20        |
| CEE CRACK                 | 17           | **           | 57        |
| INDOCTRINATION            | 17,A0        | **           | 38        |

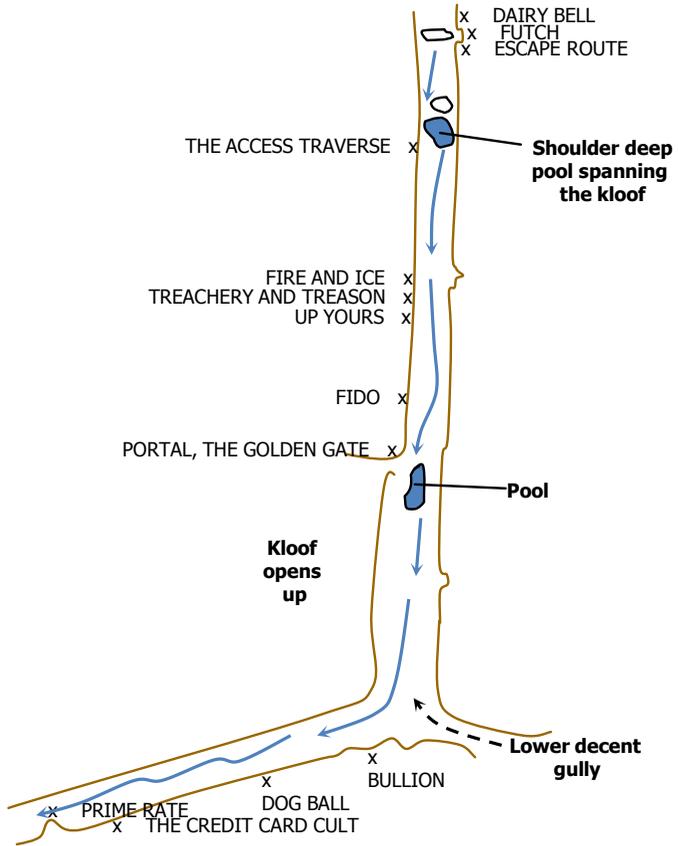
| <b>Climb Name</b>        | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Stars</b> | <b>Pg</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| LE BON GENERAL           | 17           | **           | 53        |
| SHADOWPLAY               | 17           | **           | 51        |
| DAIRY BELL               | 17           | *            | 77        |
| COMMUNIST CONVERT        | 17           |              | 74        |
| DUSTY DOG                | 17           |              | 77        |
| OBLIQUE                  | 17           |              | 80        |
| OVERDRAFT                | 17           |              | 84        |
| THE CUNNING LINGUIST     | 17           |              | 60        |
| UP YOURS                 | 17           |              | 41        |
| GOATEE                   | 16           | ***          | 42        |
| JELLY BEANS              | 16           | ***          | 57        |
| PORTAL                   | 16           | ***          | 43        |
| YORKSHIRE                | 16           | *            | 53        |
| CARDIFF ARMS             | 16           |              | 14        |
| YARK                     | 16           |              | 75        |
| STRAIGHT EDGE CORNER     | 15           | ****         | 17        |
| AND THEN THERE WERE FOUR | 15           | **           | 82        |
| DOGBALL                  | 15           | **           | 83        |
| MARKWELL                 | 15           | **           | 33        |
| PINNACLE NORTH           | 15           | **           | 47        |
| THE CANNON               | 15           | **           | 19        |
| ZENITH RIDGE             | 15           | **           | 66        |
| FALSE INVALID            | 15           | *            | 24        |
| CANNON: DIRECT VARIATION | 15           |              | 19        |
| CLEVER                   | 15           |              | 80        |
| CONCAVE                  | 15           |              | 73        |
| FURPECT                  | 15           |              | 47        |
| INUENDO                  | 15           |              | 80        |
| LEAPFROG                 | 15           |              | 11        |
| SUBTLE                   | 15           |              | 79        |
| THE GOLDEN GATE          | 15           |              | 43        |
| TRIVIAL PURSUITS         | 15           |              | 65        |
| VOORSTRAAT               | 15           |              | 37        |

| <b>Climb Name</b>          | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Stars</b> | <b>Pg</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| CLEFT BUTTRESS             | 14           | *            | 15        |
| RESCUE                     | 14           |              | 79        |
| MHLABATINI CHIMNEY         | 13           | ***          | 30        |
| THE ROOT ON THE HYPOTENUSE | 13           | **           | 72        |
| INVALID                    | 13           | *            | 23        |
| AND THEN THERE WERE THREE  | 13           |              | 81        |
| EASY DOG                   | 13           |              | 84        |
| FIDO                       | 11           |              | 42        |
| FUDGE                      | 11           |              | 77        |
| HAIRY FISH                 | 11           |              | 83        |
| NO NETTLES                 | 10           | *            | 52        |
| THE ACCESS TRAVERSE        | 10           |              | 40        |
| ROUGH ROCK RECESS          | 9            | *            | 48        |
| VARIETY                    | 8            | **           | 13        |
| NETTLE CHIMNEY             | 7            | **           | 49        |
| ESCAPE ROUTE               | 7            |              | 79        |
| SKELETON GULLY             | 7            |              | 14        |
| KLOOF DESCENT              | 5            |              | 38        |

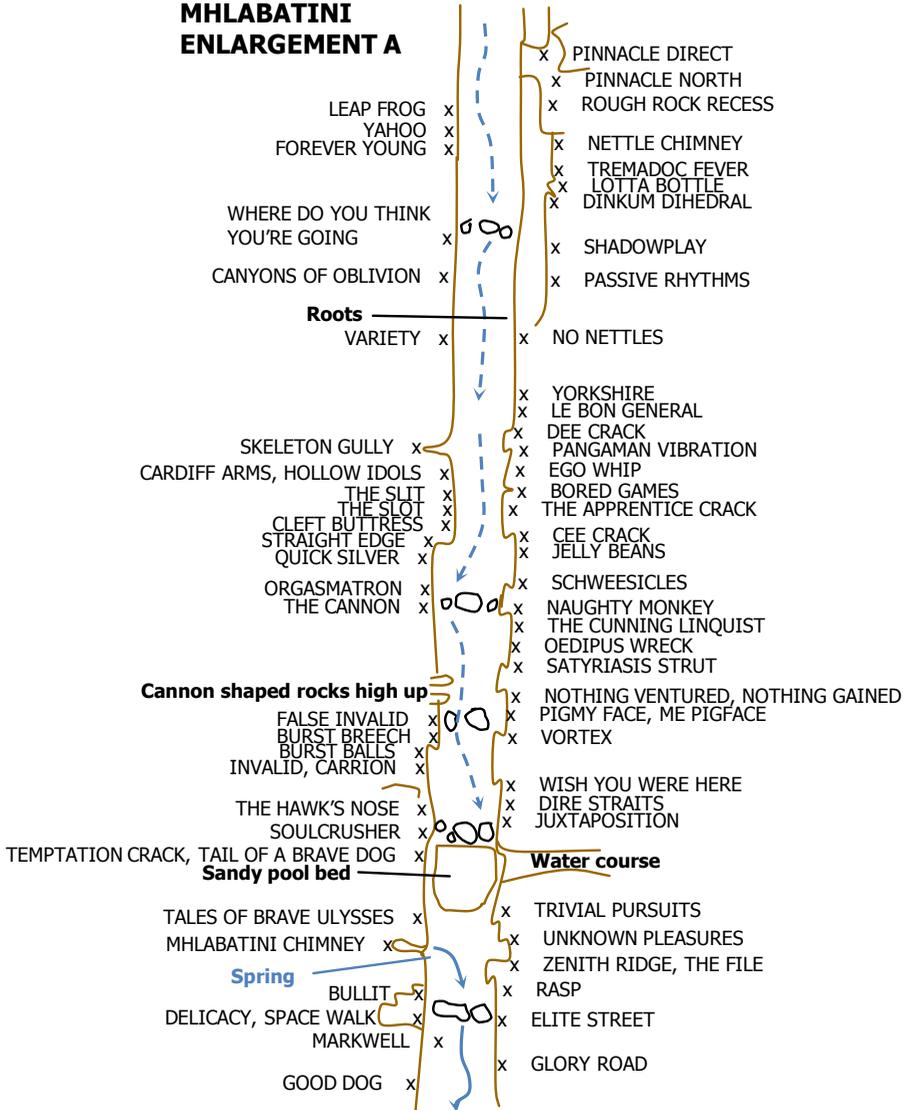
**MHLABATINI  
UPPER**



# MHLABATINI LOWER



# MHLABATINI ENLARGEMENT A



# **MHLABATINI**

## **General**

Climbs in Mhlabatini tend to be of moderate to hard grades with very few easy climbs. The climbs in the Straight Edge area all follow distinct lines and are about 20-25m long with excellent abseil trees on a ledge 20-25m above the kloof floor. There is a concentration of hard, good climbs here within a very close radius that is hard to beat at most sport crags. The multi-pitch climbs tend to be committing, but offer some of the best climbs of their grade in the Magaliesberg.

## **Access**

The Mountain Club of South Africa (MCSA) wholly owns Mhlabatini. Access to non-members is restricted by permits issued by the MCSA.

## **Safety**

The first aid dump is located on a ledge beneath a small overhang 8m up the second gully on the right. This is 20m after reaching the floor of the kloof.

## **Aspect**

This is a fairly narrow kloof, so it can be a little chilly on a cold day. Climbs can be easily found in the sun or shade at any time of day. As it runs north-south, the climbs on the true left receive morning sun, and afternoon shade. The reverse is true for climbs on the true right.

## **Descents**

For climbs in the STRAIGHT EDGE area, on both sides of the kloof, a ledge runs about 25m above the stream bed. Walk along this to find a suitable tree for abseil. For climbs in the SPACE WALK area, walk upstream to the gully at the top of STRAIGHT EDGE, scramble down this and then do the by now usual abseil. For other climbs, abseil or walk to the nearest descent gully as seems appropriate.

## **Camping**

A campsite can be found above the lower descent gully into Mhlabatini. Berghiem offers a decent campsite for car camping. It is possible to hike to MHLABATINI from this campsite if you choose, alternatively it will be a 5 minute drive away from the usual car park.

## **Finding Routes**

A suggested approach to finding routes here is to first find MHLABATINI CHIMNEY. This is the chimney on the true right of the kloof at the point where the river flows out of a point 5m up the chimney into the kloof. Above this it is normally dry excepting a few pools or trickles of water.

About 100m upstream of MHLABATINI CHIMNEY is a prominent downstream facing dihedral on the true right – this is STRAIGHT EGDE.

## Climbs on the true right

### **BACK FROM BEYOND**

**23 \*\***

The route is situated at the top of the kloof opposite where the tributary enters on the true left. Look for a finger crack which is undercut by a dassie ledge.

**1. 15m 23** Climb up easily to a ledge left and under the dassie ledge. Pull into the finger crack which is undercut and continue up 3m to the top.

*First ascent: Jan 1987 G. Mallory, D. Neetling and S. Bradshaw.*

### **LEAPFROG**

**15**

The climb is located 70m downstream from the junction of Pool Gully with the main kloof, 20m above a large group of roots growing on a smooth brown face.

**1. 18m 15** Start on a boulder, ascend 2m to a ledge, then climb diagonally to the left. Pull up to a small ledge ("Leapfrog" move) and climb into the bottom of a prominent cleft.

**2. 18m 6** Climb on ridge on left of the cleft.

**3. 9m 8** Go back into recess and climb on right hand wall (optional pitch).

#### **Note:**

The crux section of the first pitch may be avoided by using the roots referred to above, but this is not recommended as the roots have deteriorated in some places.

*First ascent: Unknown T. Louw.*

## **YAHOO**

**19 \*\***

The route follows a line about 5m upstream from WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING. It follows an obvious crack 5m right of the smooth face topped by an overhang.

**1. 25m 19** Proceed up the crack with chimney technique until it becomes necessary to straddle. Move up a further 3m until it is possible to reach a good jug. Make three strenuous pull-ups to where the rock becomes vegetated and then handrail right 2m and exit with ease. Scramble to the top.

*First ascent: Feb 1985 Peter Lazarus.*

## **FOREVER YOUNG**

**25 \*\*\*\***

Start 3m right of WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE GOING, above the large boulder, but downstream of the obvious chimney cracks.

**1. 25m 25** Climb up a few metres to steeper rock. Move right then make hard moves up to a good hold. Continue more or less straight up via the corners and small roofs above.

*First ascent: Dec 1985 K.M. Smith and A. de Klerk.*

## **WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING**

**23 \*\***

A large overhang (split by a gnarly crack) about 20m up is located on the left side of the kloof about 15m upstream of VARIETY. Start at the base of a large boulder next to the face.

**1. 30m 23** Climb the slightly right-leaning crack bounding the upstream side of the large overhang.

*First ascent: Apr 1985 S. Bradshaw and K.M. Smith.*

## CANYONS OF OBLIVION

24 \*\*\*\*

The roof crack 50m upstream of the STRAIGHT EDGE corner. Start a few metres downstream of WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING.

1. **20m 20** Climb the obvious recess until able to traverse right to a hanging belay beneath the crack.
2. **5m 24** Climb the crack.

*First ascent: Oct 1985 K.M. Smith and M. Brunke.*

## VARIETY

8 \*\*

The climb starts in a cave-like recess 5m below a group of roots on a brown face which are opposite a large tree growing in the kloof bed (about 30m upstream of STRAIGHT EDGE).

1. **18m 5** Climb up into cave. (This pitch may be slippery in places in wet season).
2. **12m 8** Climb face on left, working back into cleft and eventually chimneying up it.
3. **15m 8** Traverse out to left for 5m and climb up an exposed ridge, finally re-entering the cleft below a large cave.
4. **22m 7** From the back of the large cave traverse outward and upward on the lefthand wall, finally ascending a rough grey face to a stance above the cave.

*First ascent: 1951 E. Scholes, G. Burrow and Miss E. Lasser.*

## **SKELETON GULLY**

**7**

This climb follows a gully recess 15m up from the STRAIGHT EDGE corner. After ascending the gully for 18m, bear generally right to end at the same point as VARIETY. It is also possible but more difficult to move out left higher up, along a traverse on the left hand wall.

*First ascent: 1940 H. Wong and K. Ruhle.*

## **CARDIFF ARMS**

**16**

Situated 4m downstream of SKELETON GULLY. Start just to the right of a black water streak on a 4m wall, below a large crack.

**1. 25m 16** Climb wall (awkward) to enter crack system, and proceed more easily upwards to large belay ledge.

**2. 12m 10** Climb front edge of buttress to ledge, then the crack in some loose blocks to another ledge. Move right to below short corner and up this on good holds to large ledge. Exit on left and scramble to top.

*First ascent: Nov 1981 N. and R. Cleaver.*

## **HOLLOW IDOLS**

**20 \*\***

This climb starts on the true right hand side between THE SLIT and CARDIFF ARMS. The latter route starts up a black water streak directly below a chimney/crack. Start approximately 1-2m left of this water streak.

**1. 25m 20** Climb the blunt arete and continue up the face diagonally left for 5m. Above is an upstream-facing corner.

Climb up the corner and continue up a vague groove to a tree. Either tear up the loose gully above, or ab off the excellent tree on the right.

*First ascent: May 1985 M. Brunke, K. Smith, S. Bradshaw and A. Ashford-Jack.*

## THE SLIT

19 \*\*

This climb is situated just to the right of THE SLOT, i.e. about 4m upstream of CLEFT BUTTRESS.

**1. 25m 19** Climb straight up to the crack through the overhang. Jam up this, pass the trees on the right, and climb the continuation crack to a large grassy ledge. The crux is at 7m. Finish off as for THE SLOT.

*First ascent: Nov 1978 K.M. Smith and A.J. Smith.*

## THE SLOT

18 \*\*

This route starts and continues 1 to 2m upstream of CLEFT BUTTRESS, the crux being the overhanging section at 7m.

**1. 25m 18** Climb straight up to the point where the crack cuts the overhang. Jam through, pass the trees on the left, and climb the continuation crack to a large ledge. From here one can scramble off, or climb the chimneys or buttresses above.

*First ascent: Nov 1978 K.M. Smith, A.J. Smith and C. Rotteglia.*

## CLEFT BUTTRESS

14 \*

Start round the corner from the STRAIGHT EDGE corner and about 3m upstream, directly below a prominent cleft in the buttress.

**1. 16m 14** Climb the cleft via awkward mantleshelf-type move.

**2. 16m 10** Continue easily to the top.

*First ascent: Unknown C. Nicholls.*

## YOUNG WHIPPERSNAPPER

20 \*\*

Starts midway between STRAIGHT EDGE corner and CLEFT BUTTRESS and takes the crack and outside edge of the buttress above.

**1. 25m 20** Ascend the layback crack just to the right of a tree growing against the cliff 2m out from the STRAIGHT EDGE crack to a ledge 5m up. Climb the off-width crack (left) to below an overhang and step left to a small ledge on the outside corner. Attain the ramp above delicately and layback through the steep section (crux). Climb more easily to a ledge and eye belay.

**2. 12m 9** Chimney up behind stance (as for STRAIGHT EDGE CORNER).

### Variation:

**1. 25m 19** From the sloping ramp move left around the corner and climb to the same stance on small positive holds. Climb straight up from the top of the off-width crack, that is, do not step left onto the outside corner. (May 1985 Kevin M. Smith, Steve Bradshaw and A. Jack)

*First ascent: Nov 1982 E. Haig, George Mallory and J. Schoonees.*

## CRYSTAL FIRE

23 \*\*\*\*\*

Climbs directly up the right hand wall of the STRAIGHT EDGE corner.

**1. 20m 23** Climb up the centre of the wall, heading for the rhombohedral-block sticking out above.

### Notes:

**1.** Two (pre-placed) fixed pitons provided additional protection at 5m and 15m.

**2.** A good selection of medium wire nuts is useful e.g. doubles of sizes equivalent to Rocks 2 and 3.

*First ascent: Jan 1985 K.M. Smith, S. Bradshaw and A. de Klerk.*

## STRAIGHT EDGE CORNER

15 \*\*\*\*

The climb starts in a sharp right-angled downstream facing corner 150m below the junction of Pool Gully.

**1. 20m 15** Layback or jam up the crack until a small cubbyhole is reached. Bear right above cubbyhole to a large ledge.

**2. 12m 9** Chimney up behind stance.

**3. 12m 10** This is an arbitrary pitch up the centre of the red buttress straight above. It is necessary to climb out to the right to avoid an overhang at the top.

### Variations:

**1. The Slab Pitch: 30m 15** Climb the slab to the left of the first pitch more or less straight up to the big ledge. (C. Lomax and D. Cheesmond).

**2. Monkey Wee, Monkey Poo: 25m 18** From the top of pitch 1 traverse left for 5m to a chimney/crack. Ascend this with awkward moves. (M. Makowski and party).

*First ascent: 1940 J. Botha and H. Wong.*

## QUICK SILVER

18 \*\*\*

Starts 3m left of STRAIGHT EDGE CORNER.

**1. 20m 18** Climb the wall directly, following the obvious weakness to a steep band near the top. Traverse slightly right and up to small roof. Move left around this and up to good belay.

### Variation:

Instead of traversing slightly right, continue straight up the wall making use of a discontinuous crack through the bulge at grade 21. (Mike Grant)

*First ascent: Nov 1981 P. Douglas, T. Holt and C. Mitchell.*

## ORGASMATRON

20 \*\*\*

Takes the slab 8m downstream of STRAIGHT EDGE. Similar climbing to that on QUICK SILVER. Start directly below the slab which is dissected by horizontal rails. Step off a boulder to start.

**1. 25m 20** Ascend the slab directly without reference to either of the bounding vertical crack systems. Crux at overlap, at 8m. Move slightly right to the base of the crack system in the headwall. Follow this system for 3m and finish by moving right into a small corner.

*First ascent: May 1986 R. Dodding, T. Willmot and M. Lancaster.*

## THE CANNON

15 \*\*

The climb is located by two distinctive features jutting out from the top of the kloof like twin cannon, about 30m below STRAIGHT EDGE CORNER. Start at a tree about 10m below STRAIGHT EDGE, where the floor of the kloof takes a drop.

**1. 18m 11** Ascend a grey slab and traverse left to a tree, the roots of which can be used as a belay.

**2. 5m 7** Traverse downstream to the lower end of the grey slab, passing below the "cannon" to a stance with two trees.

**3. 5m 15** Ascend a small nose on thin holds to a ledge under the "cannon".

**4. 9m 8** Climb red face to the right of the "cannon".

*First ascent: Nov 1956 R. Cameron.*

## CANNON: DIRECT VARIATION

15

Start about 5m upstream from INVALID and near the downstream end of a buttress.

**1. 25m 11** Start up a slight recess and climb generally diagonally rightwards to where it is possible to move easily through the overhangs. Then climb diagonally left to finally gain a large ledge at the downstream end of the buttress.

**2. 15m 15** Traverse about 3m left and then up a small arete. Continue directly up the face above past a piton in place to gain a large ledge.

**3. 9m 8** The same as the last pitch on THE CANNON. Climb the red face to the right of the "cannon".

*First ascent: Feb 1975 A. McGarr and party.*

## BURST BREECH

17 \*\*

The route follows a vertical line starting on the right side of the corner immediately upstream of INVALID. The start is on a shelf 4m above the stream bed. The line continues through the crux move of THE CANNON and through the overhangs 6m to the left of THE CANNON rocks.

**1. 30m 13** Traverse diagonally right 5m, up over a bulge and left over a sloping ramp to a point above the starting tree belay. Climb diagonally left over a delicate balance mantleshelf and around a corner then up to a broad shelf and tree belay. (Long runners should be used to reduce rope-drag problems).

**2. 40m 15** At the right end of the shelf climb up and around the corner onto an exposed face following the crack line to THE CANNON crux pitch. This move is protected by a fixed piton. Climb this section in common with THE CANNON. The stance is at the foot of the square cut recess above and in line with this difficulty.

**3. 20m 17** Climb 3m up the recess, move out to the left to avoid the bulge and re-enter the recess about 9m up using a few excellent handholds and finally a handjam. Using straddle and hand-jamming techniques enter a "blind" cubbyhole (crux). (Excellent large taper nut crack available in the sloping floor of the cubbyhole). Leave the recess by taking a spectacular breech-rendering step to the left and mounting the remaining vertical exposed rock over reasonably good holds.

### Note:

Variations may be climbed over the first 4m by moving left and up over very vertical and strenuous rock (15 to 17) or finishing up between the "cannons".

*First ascent: Mar 1977 H. Seuring, J. Brittain and K. Bennetts.*

## **BURST BALLS**

**17 \*\***

The climb is situated on the downstream end of the buttress on which THE CANNON and BURST BREECH are found (hence climbs name). The line is an obvious, direct crack and corner system and takes in the crux (15) section of THE CANNON. Climb commences in a chimney 1m upstream of a large tree growing on a ledge 6m above kloof floor.

**1. 40m 17** Scramble up chimney and past abovementioned tree and break through overhanging roof with jam-crack (crux). Continue directly above through corner and recess, past peg and through the crux of THE CANNON, to a large grassy ledge. (Can ascend one of the upper pitches described for THE CANNON from here).

*First ascent: Oct 1984 T. O'Connor, L. Chambers and T. Holt.*

## REVENGE OF THE BUN-EATERS

18 \*\*\*

To the left of the first pitch of INVALID is a relatively smooth slab, capped by a roof. The route climbs this slab. Start 5m left (downstream) of the corner ascended by FALSE INVALID, that is halfway between a small, downstream-facing corner and the large tree.

**1. 15m 18** Climb to the rail under the overlap. Gain the slab above at the point where the overlap is the smallest. Climb the slab, trending leftwards to a long narrow ledge at 10m. Delicately step onto the top of the block/flake (seems solid), and hand traverse right along the obvious rail to an alcove belay stance and tree (this is on INVALID). Rap from the tree.

### Notes:

- 1.** A Mhlabatini rarity - a slab. Similar in style to QUICK SILVER. Great climbing. Small gear required.
- 2.** Dedicated to our friend Dennis Gray - who has an aversion to bun-eaters.

*First ascent: 30 Dec 2001 R. Dodding and H. Murch*

## INVALID

13 \*

The climb is located about 15m upstream from the pool which spans the kloof near MHLABATINI CHIMNEY. A small crack offers the only route on a near vertical smooth grey face which ends in an open book a few metres to the left of the crack.

**1. 28m 13** Using the crack climb 15m to tree sling point in small recess. Continue 9m up left wall of recess and scramble 8m over large sloping ledge to foot of chimney above the recess just climbed.

**2. 12m 13** Climb through the first overhang to roof of second overhang. Climb out via face on left (rock is not too sound at this point).

### Variation:

The pitch follows an obvious line up the grey face immediately above the top of pitch 1.

**2. 20m 16** Start in a corner where the grey face meets the steep red face about 2 metres downstream from the top of the recess/chimney just climbed. Move easily to a small overhang at about 7 metres and pull through on the right hand side (crux). Bear right above the overhang and to the summit on granulated grey rock via the line of least resistance. (Jun 1987 G. Muyburgh and party)

*First ascent: Oct 1958*

*W. Wieder, Miss M. Armstrong*

*and R. Kinsley.*

## CARRION

21 \*\*

The route takes a line up the centre of the face immediately upstream of HAWK'S NOSE or SOUL CRUSHER. Climb INVALID's first pitch to gain the large ledge below face.

**1. 25m 21** Starting in a small corner below a roof which extends leftwards. Climb the face to a small ledge. The face becomes steeper at this point. Gain a rail 2m above, move left 2m and pull through the grey bulge to finish.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 G. Mallory (leader), with vultures A. Smith, S. Mallory, K. Smith, S. Bradshaw and A. Jack.*

## FALSE INVALID

15 \*

Start from the same point as INVALID.

**1. 18m 13** Climb vertical crack about 1m left of the prominent corner to a large ledge to the right of the crack.

**2. 30m 15** Follow the obvious line of weakness above ledge directly above the crack of pitch 1 strenuously for about 3m on thin holds. Then scramble for about 15m to the base of a chimney and then to the top via the chimney.

*First ascent: 1975 A. McGarr and C. Gillet (Pitch 1) A. McGarr and G. Klein (Pitch 2)*

## THE HAWK'S NOSE

**19,A1 \*\***

The climb starts amongst the trees about 15m upstream of TEMPTATION CRACK (i.e. about 4m above the pool).

**1. 18m 15** Climb the wall near a tree (growing about 1m away from the face) for about 6m. Traverse left on a foot ledge for 5m. Climb a small recess to a ledge.

**2. 15m 15,A2** Traverse right and up to a sloping ledge on a nose below an overhang with a protruding right hand wall. Aid up the crack in the middle and then move right and up to a large ledge.

**3. 20m 19,A1** Climb the left hand recess to the roof, traverse left until it is possible to reach out and place a nut in the flared chimney. Using this, gain access to the chimney and climb this to the top. (The chimney portion of this pitch has also been aided - 3 pegs 17,A2).

### **Variation:**

**2. 18m 17** Climb diagonally left and then back right to same ledge as original pitch.

*First ascent: 1978/79 variously C. Ward, C. Baker, H. Vogl, D. Cheesmond and B. Gross.*

## TAIL OF A BRAVE DOG

20 \*\*\*\*

This takes a line up on the downstream edge of the SOULCRUSHER/HAWKS NOSE buttress. Scramble up to belay at a thin tree in the original TEMPTATION CRACK.

**1. 15m 19** Climb a few metres up TEMPTATION CRACK, traverse about 5m right under the roof until one can breakthrough onto a face. Climb up to ledge shared with SOULCRUSHER.

**2. 5m 20** Climb the small downstream facing dihedral 3m left of SOULCRUSHER, exiting right near the top. Climb to the ledge above and belay below the dihedral on the left edge of the buttress.

**3. 15m 19** Climb the dihedral, exiting right to belay in a spectacular position.

*First ascent: Oct 1985 C. Edelstein, C. Curson, K. Smith and A. Smith.*

## SOULCRUSHER

23 \*\*\*

The feature of the route is the short, impressive, downstream-facing dihedral about 20m above the sandy pool-bed spanning the kloof above MHLABATINI CHIMNEY. Start 3m right of TEMPTATION CRACK.

**1. 20m 15** Climb up past the right side of a large overhang at 10m and continue up a crack. Traverse left to a ledge situated below and to the left of the dihedral.

**2. 15m 23** Climb the dihedral.

**3. 15m 20** Climb the bottomless off-width crack / chimney above.

### Note:

SOULCRUSHER partly follows the line of the old aid route THE HAWK'S NOSE.

*First ascent: Jan 1985 K.M. Smith and A. de Klerk.*

## TEMPTATION CRACK

19 \*\*

The climb starts at the upstream of the pool which spans the kloof near MHLABATINI CHIMNEY.

**1. 14m 15** Climb through small overhang into the open book above the pool and continue up to a small tree belay point.

**2. 25m 15** Climb up face to left of small gully out on to nose under overhang.

**3. 5m 15** Using a shoulder take-off, break through overhang on the left to reach foot of inverted V-crack. (19 if shoulder not taken).

**4. 15m 19** A very strenuous chimney leads to the top.

### **Note:**

Pitch 3 may be avoided by turning left, then up and traversing back right to foot of inverted V-crack (13).

### **Variation:**

**4. 15m 11** Traverse from foot of inverted V-crack downstream around corner to overlook MHLABATINI CHIMNEY. Climb crack on the right and out to reach gully.

*First ascent: Jun 1960 W. Wieder, R. Kinsley and A. Burger.*

## **TEMPTATION CRACK DIRECT**

**20 \*\***

Start directly below the top chimney of TEMPTATION CRACK.

**1. 30m 20** Climb up to the very square roof about 8m up. Climb straight through. Continue to ledge.

**2. 40m 19** Climb the crack directly behind through a small roof to the base of the TEMPTATION CRACK chimney. From here straight up to top, as per the original route.

### **Note:**

The first free ascent was in Oct 1985 by C. Curson and S. Brown.

*First ascent: 1979*

*C. Lomax and D. Cheesmond*

## **SHIELD OF ACHILLES**

**21 \*\***

An eliminate between the first pitches of TEMPTATION CRACK and TEMPTATION CRACK DIRECT. Start midway between these two routes.

**1. 20m 21** Climb straight up through the small roofs to a ledge.

*First ascent: Oct 1985*

*K.M. Smith, G. Mallory, C. Curson,*

*and C. Edelstein.*

## TALES OF BRAVE ULYSSES

21 \*\*\*\*\*

Start between MHLABATINI CHIMNEY and TEMPTATION CRACK DIRECT, beneath an obvious crack and white root, thicker than a man's wrist.

- 1. 25m 20** Climb the crack to where it steepens. Move left and continue on good holds to easier rock which is followed to a ledge. Directly above looms a short but steep orange-streaked wall, left of TEMPTATION CRACK DIRECT's pitch.
- 2. 12m 21** Climb the centre of the wall to a rail and pull straight through the overhang above. Stance below the left bounding buttress of TEMPTATION's final chimney.
- 3. 18m 19** Climb the vague red recess up the left hand side of the buttress to the top of a short fist crack. Traverse scarily right to the undercut arete and climb this to the summit.

*First ascent: May 1985 K.M. Smith, S. Bradshaw, M. Brunke and A. Ashford-Jack.*

## ELIXIR

18 \*\*\*

The climb starts in MHLABATINI CHIMNEY at the shallow cave in the upstream face (second stance for that climb) and ascends the upstream face of the chimney for the first pitch, and the downstream face for the second pitch.

- 1. 25m 18** Climb up right to gain the block (3m), step left, and ascend the wall, passing to the right of the flake. Exit right to a large ledge and then climb up to the top belay stance for MHLABATINI CHIMNEY.
- 2. 15m 18** On the downstream face gain the vertical crack directly (delicate), jam up the crack to the top.

## Notes:

1. Aid was used on the second pitch for the first ascent.
2. Tough for the grade.
3. The first free ascent was in Oct 1985 by M. Brunke, R. Dodding and N. Margetts.

*First ascent: Sep 1985 P.S. Greenfield and G. Graafland  
(first pitch); Sep 1985 P.S. Greenfield and S. Middlemiss  
(second pitch).*

## MHLABATINI CHIMNEY

**13 \*\*\***

Climb commences immediately below the first large pool stretching right across the kloof. A small spring of water enters the kloof at the bottom of the chimney.

1. **12m 5** Ascend up bed of the spring to the foot of a chimney.
2. **22m 13** A broad chimney is climbed, past two steps to a chockstone.
3. **15m 13** Climb behind chockstone and traverse outwards for 6m climbing out into the open through a small hole in the roof of the chimney.
4. **9m 8** Climb a face, alternatively a recess, on the right hand wall.

*First ascent: Oct 1940 H. Wong and M. Gaze.*

## **BULLIT**

**21 \*\*\*\***

The climb goes straight up the buttress on the downstream side of MHLABATINI CHIMNEY. It takes a line mostly independent from DELICACY. Start at the foot of a shallow recess, near the left hand side of the buttress and 10m below a small overhang.

**1. 35m 19** Climb up the recess until below the overhang, where a piton can be placed for protection. Stretch up to a hold above the overhang and move up diagonally right through the overhang on small holds (hard). Continue up to a ledge below the next overhang. Traverse right along this and then move up on the corner via an awkward mantleshelf. Continue up for about 3m until level with a ledge on the arete above the overhang. Traverse left with difficulty on polished holds to a stance on this ledge. (Nut runner belays). Alternatively, traverse left beneath overhang to arete then pull up and mantleshelf onto belay ledge.

**2. 15m 18** Traverse left for a few metres and then up to the foot of a prominent open book. Climb up this (strenuous) and exit on the ledge to the left. Climb up the right hand wall to a large stance with block belays.

**3. 25m 21** Climb straight up the recess above the stance for 8m to where a small nut runner can be placed. Lean across right and clip into a piton (in place). Move across right (1 peg and 1 small nut) before pulling up on to an exposed, cramped ledge below a short overhanging wall. From the right hand side of the cramped ledge climb directly up into a small recess and continue right around the corner to a ledge and resting place. Climb easily up the broken recess above to the top.

### **Note:**

The first free ascent was in 1979 by C. Edelstein.

*First ascent: Oct 1969 L.P. Fatti, J.M. Anderson and M. Cramphorn (pitches 1 and 2); Jan 1971 L.P. Fatti and A. McGarr (pitch 3)*

## THE BAT AND THE WICKED

23 \*\*

The roof crack bounding the downstream side of the top of the BULLIT buttress. Scramble and climb to the highest ledge on the buttress i.e. the ledge from which BULLIT's final pitch starts.

**1. 20m 23** Climb up easily leftwards to the corner-crack leading to the roof. Trickily up this crack, then out right along the roof crack to the lip.

*First ascent: Apr 1986 K.M. Smith and S.M. Bradshaw.*

## DELICACY

18 \*\*\*\*

The climb starts about 12m downstream from MHLABATINI CHIMNEY.

**1. 18m 7** Climb 12m up open book before traversing 9m upstream into recess. Scramble up recess to belay point in crack below platform on right. This platform is on the downstream side of the left hand buttress of MHLABATINI CHIMNEY.

**2. 20m 18** Climb 3m up crack to platform. (You could skip this by walking up the recess to the large tree and then traversing right on the mega ledge) Traverse 5m right along large ledge and move up to the next ledge. Climb 5m to ledge on left at foot of the next open book (strenuous). Climb this for 5m and step right onto a comfortable ledge. The open book and ledge are shared with BULLIT.

**3. 12m 15** Climb up about 3m in open book then move right onto prominent nose. Traverse right on exposed rock to small ledge.

**4. 30m 15** Climb up the corner above on an undercut layback. Then traverse left onto the outside of the very exposed buttress on good jugs and straight to the top.

### Notes:

**1.** The first free ascent was in 1978 by K.M. Smith.

**2.** The original ascent made a traverse right from the top of pitch 3 to the top of MHLABATINI CHIMNEY. Pitch 4 as described is fun and really exposed and was first climbed by P. Dawson and P. Norton

*First ascent: Oct 1958 R. Kinsley, W. Wieder, S. Perry and Miss M. Armstrong.*

## **REASON RUN DRY**

**25**

Climbs the steep wall on right of the top pitch of GOOD DOG.

**1. 30m 25** Climb the wall passing a few pieces of fixed gear.

### **Note:**

Runout.

*First ascent: 1998/9 Stefan Isabek and Derie van Eeden.*

## **MARKWELL**

**15 \*\***

The climb has a common start with SPACE WALK.

**1. 20m 13** Scramble up to a convenient belay ledge.

**2. 15m 15** Climb as for SPACE WALK up a rubble-filled crack. 8m below the overhang move diagonally left to a piton stance.

**3. 6m 15** Move left in steps to a small ripple-marked ledge.

**4. 18m 7** Move left into recess to top of buttress.

*First ascent: 1966 P. Fatti, D. Cretchley, D. Wildman, C. Fatti and I. McLarty.*



*Andrew Porter on the exposed crux of SPACE WALK.*

## SPACE WALK

**21 \*\*\*\***

This route takes the next buttress downstream of BULLIT. It has the largest red overhang on top and a large rotten recess to the right. Start in the middle front of the buttress.

- 1. 20m 13** Scramble up to a convenient belay ledge. (As for MARKWELL).
- 2. 30m 19** Climb the main break, fairly easily at first and then with difficulty. Move right into the undercut jam crack at the overhang, and through to a good belay ledge below the top roofs.
- 3. 25m 21** Climb out easily to left onto a thin crawling ledge. Wriggle out until able to flop out into a handrail position. Traverse left until able to pull through the roofs on small holds. Continue straight up through to the top.

*First ascent: 1979 C. Lomax and D. Cheesmond.*

## GOOD DOG

**20 \*\*\*\*\***

Start about 10m downstream of SPACE WALK. Scramble easily up a grey slab to a ledge and belay around a large tree which is 3 metres downstream of a corner.

- 1. 25m 19** Climb delicately up a smooth face to a large square roof. At the roof, move right onto a rail which has some large blocks on it. Move back onto the original line and continue up to stance on a polished sloping ledge in a corner.
- 2. 20m 19** Up the corner for 2m, then move right and up. Traverse easily to a stance common with SPACE WALK.
- 3. 15m 20** From the ledge move up onto triangular block. Reach high for a jug and traverse left to a stance on the top.

### **Note:**

Opened without aid, falls or pre-abseiling. For its grade, a spectacular and mind-shattering climb. A bold lead.

*First ascent: Oct 1983 Charles Edelstein and A Lambert.*

## ONVERWACHT

19 \*

Start on the true righthand side of the kloof, about 30m downstream from MHLABATINI CHIMNEY. The climb goes up a grey buttress with a small overhang 6m above the stream and capped by a large red overhang 45m up.

**1. 30m 19** Climb up to a tree 2.5m above the stream and on the left hand side of the buttress and then move up diagonally right underneath the overhang. Traverse 3m right and then move up through the overhang using a small ledge as hand and foothold, and continue up for a further 3m on small holds to where a nut runner is placed in a vertical crack. Move delicately right for 2m and then up the shallow depression for 1.5m before moving diagonally back up left to a small tree on the face. Continue up for 5m to a ledge on the left hand side of the buttress. From here either climb straight up with difficulty through a small overhang to the large ledge 5m above or, (easier), traverse left around the corner and then up to the ledge.

**2. 30m 10** Climb up the large red overhang, bypass it on the right and then traverse back left on to the nose above the overhang. Continue straight up to the top.

*First ascent: Jan 1971 L.P. Fatti and E. Druschke.*

## **ONVERWACHT: ALTERNATIVE START**

**20**

Start about 6m right of the original start, on top of a boulder just to the left of a prominent corner, and just right of an arete with a small overhang about 3m up.

**1. 30m 20** Climb up delicately to where protection can be placed in a horizontal crack at the level of the overhang. Swing left and move up the arete past overhang via two handholds, before being forced back right on to the smooth face. A very delicate move enables one to reach a good handhold and climb up on to an awkward ledge. Traverse left 3m to join the original route just below the next overhang.

*First ascent: 1983*

*L.P. Fatti and D. Peters.*

## **VOORSTRAAT**

**15**

The climb starts about 45m downstream from MHLABATINI CHIMNEY and below the downstream end of a very large overhang.

**1. 18m 10** Climb grey slab and continue up over roots before traversing left into corner.

**2. 15m 15** Climb overhanging open book to tree stance.

**3. 9m 10** Traverse to right and then up face to top

*First ascent: Jun 1960*  
*and R. Charlton.*

*B. Penzhorn, M. Urban, P. Street*

## **INDOCTRINATION**

**17 \*\***

The climb starts on the opposite side of the huge boulder marking the start of THE LESSON. It is on the true right hand side of the kloof, at the same level as KLOOF DESCENT.

**1. 22m 17,A0** Start up a smooth open book recess to the left of a large tree. Several tricky moves up the fault above lead to a blank wall about 20m up. Using a small nut for aid, move up until able to do an awkward mantleshelf on to a tiny stance.

**2. 30m 15** Directly above the stance is a wedge of rock forming a small overhang. Climb over the overhang before moving to the right around the corner. Move up and right via a tricky mantleshelf to a large ledge. To the right is a large loose overhanging recess; avoid this by moving left and up to a tree below an overhang. From the tree, step left until able to climb up easily over some stacked blocks to a large platform.

**3. 20m 10** Climb up the crack in the face above. Follow the easiest line to the top.

*First ascent: May 1977 L.P. Fatti and R.H. Smithers.*

## **KLOOF DESCENT**

**5**

An easy route on the right of the kloof next to a group of large boulders.

*First ascent: Nov 1957 R. Forsyth.*

## **CATCH 22**

**22 \*\***

The climbing involves the obvious roof crack opposite GABOOM. Start 8m downstream of KLOOF DESCENT group of large boulders.

**1. 30m 17** Climb up for a few metres, traverse right to break through a small overlap, traverse back left and climb up to the base of a short buttress. Climb this to a ledge, from which a traverse of 5m left is made to a ledge just below and to the right of the roof crack.

**2. 10m 22** Move left and up to the roof, negotiate the crack, and climb the wall above to a ledge on the right.

### **Note:**

Which pitch is the catch?

*First ascent: Oct 1985 G. Mallory and K.M. Smith.*

## **DIAMONDS IN THE DAWN**

**22 \*\*\***

This route is the right hand of three cracks on a buttress about 100m downstream of THE FINAL CUT but on the true right. The buttress is at the top of the kloof. The route takes an off-width-looking crack and is discernable from the river. Approach from the top.

**1. 15m 22** Easily up to the roof. Pull through and continue up the crack.

*First ascent: Oct 1986 S. Bradshaw and G. Mallory.*

## THE ACCESS TRAVERSE

10

This allows access to the kloof from the lower campsite and traverses above the lower pool and boulder which prevent access to the kloof. (See plan).

Start 9m downstream of the pool and ascend 3m then traverse diagonally right to a sapling immediately above the pool. Step down and right under an overhang then up rightwards to a block runner. Descend diagonally right and jump onto the large boulder.

The next pool may be passed on its true left (facing downstream) by ascending ledges.

*First ascent: Unknown Party Unknown.*

## FIRE AND ICE

19

This route is on the true right side of the kloof just 50m upstream of GOLDEN GATE. It takes the break up a grey face which is touched by the branches of a large tree about 18m above the level of the stream. It then continues up the centre of an orange buttress (not visible from the stream).

**1. 40m 17** Climb the break to a large overhang and continue up to the right of the overhang (the large branches of the tree will be just behind you). Continue up and slightly left on easy ground to below an overhanging crack.

**2. 30m 19** Climb the overhanging crack to easy ground and then climb the arete directly above on good jugs on its right edge.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 C. Edelstein and G. Mallory.*

## TREACHERY AND TREASON

18 \*

The route is about 75m downstream of the wade pool at the bottom of Mhlabatini. It starts immediately upstream of a short steep grey wall (30m downstream of FIRE AND ICE).

**1. 20m 13** Start up a messy recess and pull past a steeper section to gain a stance.

**2. 25m 10** Scramble diagonally right to reach a ledge below an impressive orange and white face on a downstream facing buttress.

**3. 20m 18** Climb a thin crack in the face left of the buttress.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 G. Mallory and S. Mallory.*

## UP YOURS

17

The climb is situated 40m upstream from THE GOLDEN GATE buttress and 45m downstream from the big pool blocking the bottom of the kloof. The climb is 5m downstream from a recess and large tree that leans over from the left. Start from a boulder in the river below an overlap.

**1. 20m 17** Climb up to the overlap and through easily to the left. Move right to a short steep face and climb this to the corner under the prominent overhang. Swing left and down, then climb the ramp and face to a cubby hole. (At this point, the tree from the other side of the kloof reaches the rock.)

**2. 35m 13** Move 3m to the left and climb straight up easy rock to a recess between the buttress on the right and large block on the left. Climb onto the block and then move up and around to the left and climb a recess until it is possible to move across right to a large ledge below a corner.

**3. 20m 10** Climb the corner to a cubby hole. Climb into it and then up a crack to top of buttress. Scramble to the top.

*First ascent: Jun 1981 C. Shuttleworth and H. Boshoff.*

## FIDO

11

Start 30m upstream from THE GOLDEN GATE, in an openbook formed by an undercut buttress.

**1. 30m 11** Climb the right hand wall of an openbook, capped by a large overhang 20m up. Climb 10m to small tree growing on face then traverse to left side and around onto the face of the buttress. Straight up on good holds to stance with tree belay.

**2. 25m 9** Climb straight up in corner to large stance with tree belay.

**3. 10m 5** Scramble to top.

*First ascent: Aug 1985 B. Schumacher and J. Ferrington.*

## GOATEE

16 \*\*\*

The route ascends the buttress immediately upstream of THE GOLDEN GATE (aka Gatepost) buttress. From the original start of THE GOLDEN GATE, walk behind a huge block and then descend 3 metres to a sloping ledge. One is now approximately 10 metres above the streambed.

**1. 12m 14** Ascend the buttress easily, keeping within 2 metres of the left arete, to a large ledge. Tree root belay.

**2. 25m 16** Three metres left of the corner recess is a crack. Gain the crack, ascend it (crux), until it is possible to step right onto a ledge. From the right-hand end of the ledge, ascend the slab heading rightwards to a substantial tree. Pass a second tree, to gain the ledge above.

### Note:

The rock is magnificent, and the protection good.

*First ascent: 14 Apr 2001 Heather Murch and Russ Dodding (alternate leads)*

## PORTAL

16 \*\*\*

This route takes the deep right leaning crack 2m upstream of the start of THE GOLDEN GATE, ascends this to the large ledge and finishes up the obvious crack directly above – cairn.

**1. 20m 16** Start the crack with difficulty. Climb the deep groove until forced left, then ascend the juggy face to reach the large ledge above.

**2. 20m 15** Move up the blocks to reach the crack immediately above. Climb the face left of the crack using the crack for protection. Move slightly right to reach the comfortable stance on top.

### Note:

Good climbing on excellent rock.

*First ascent: 18 Sep 1994 T.P. Willmot and U. Kiefer.*

## THE GOLDEN GATE

15

The route ascends the Gatepost Buttress at the lower end of the kloof and immediately above the lower campsite.

Scramble up from the downstream side to a ledge under the buttress. Start below a thin black crack 3m right of the blunt undercut arete.

**1. 15m 13** Ascend diagonally left to the arete and up this then diagonally left to belay below the chimney.

**2. 10m 15** Make an awkward initial move up the chimney then continue up to a tree belay on the right.

**3. 15m 10** Move 5m right and up a curving crack then across left on good holds to finish.

### Variations:

**1a ?m 17** Start 3m left of the blunt arete and ascend a slanting crack to gain the arete.

**1b ?m 15** Start 5m left of the blunt arete and ascend the corner for 5m then right and up to the arete.

**Note:**

Below the Gatepost Buttress on the left is a small buttress providing many 30m problems of varying difficulty.

*First ascent: Aug 1968 K. Fletcher, R. Duff and party.*

**LOVE JUGS****20**

The route takes the line up the middle of the buttress known as THE GOLDEN GATE at the bottom campsite. THE GOLDEN GATE is the large orange rock buttress visible from the road.

**1. 35m 20** Start 2m to the right of corner on the northern aspect of the buttress. A difficult move up and then more easily to a large ledge. Above is another break. Do an awkward move up and then move diagonally up right to jumbo ledge. Climb the obvious slanting crack 2m right of the wriggle chimney and move right before the next huge ledge.

**Note:**

The last pitch is common with that of THE GOLDEN GATE.

*First ascent: May 1985 C. Edelstein and T. Gluck.*

## Climbs on the true left

### **PINNACLE SOUTH**

**19 \*\***

Located at head of kloof, 20m upstream of PINNACLE NORTH. (There is a similar leaning pinnacle against the face). Climb and scramble 30m to base of crack on right hand side of pinnacle.

**1. 30m 11** In crack to top of pinnacle.

**2. 10m 19** Ascend the bulging face above the pinnacle.

The crux is the first 3m. Thereafter ascend an easy sloping ramp. (This pitch was originally opened using a shoulder for aid (15))

#### **Variation:**

The 19 move can be bypassed by a semi-hand traverse left into a corner (13). Continue left onto ledge and ascend flake 5m further left.

*First ascent: May 1969 R.F. Davies, I. Cohen and D. Smith.*

## **PINNACLE DIRECT**

**17 \*\*\***

Start directly below prominent pinnacle near descent gully.

**1. 20m 17** Ascend strenuous handjam crack to ceiling. Move out to right 2m and up 4m to top of gendarme.

**2. 10m 15** Move right 3m into chimney, between gendarme and face and climb chimney 6m to top of pinnacle. Alternatively move diagonally left and ascend easy face. Step across to main face and ascend thin face to ledge. (Part of this pitch is shared with PINNACLE NORTH).

**3. 30m 17** Ascend 7m up thin ridge to sloping platform. Hand-traverse 6m to left and move up to long sloping ramp beneath low ceiling. Ascend ramp and continue past large chockstone to the summit. Alternatively, traverse left 10m to corner and climb strenuous chimney to gain the ramp.

### **Note:**

This climb is strenuous, having probably the longest hand-traverse in the Magaliesberg. Protection is good.

### **Variation:**

For a direct finish, from halfway along the big hand-traverse, ascend direct to top (20). 1985 G. Mallory.

*First ascent: Feb 1975 M. Prior, S.S. & H. van Rensburg and C. Sorour.*

## **PINNACLE NORTH**

**15 \*\***

Located near the head of the kloof at a split red buttress opposite a tree with 50cm diameter trunk growing off opposite (right) face of the kloof at a height of 3m. Scramble to wide ledge 10m up.

**1. 30m 11** Climb in crack formed by a pinnacle leaning against the face to top of pinnacle. Near top move out left and ascend outside of pinnacle to top.

**2. 6m 15** Up directly from pinnacle. Crux is first 2m. Variation: (10) Traverse left then up a gully or crack to same stance.

**3. 10m 13** Traverse right into recess with two cracks at back. Left hand crack is the steeper (13). Right hand crack is easier (10).

*First ascent: 1970*

*R.F. Davies and I. Cohen.*

## **FURPECT**

**15**

The climb starts on the face immediately downstream of PINNACLE NORTH, avoids a fierce-looking jam crack and ends up a steep open book cum chimney.

**1. 25m 15** Climb the steep face 2m right of the corner which is the start of PINNACLE NORTH. Just below a small roof with a jam crack running through it, traverse left on to the route of PINNACLE NORTH. Climb up till it is possible to traverse back right above the jam crack to a good ledge at the bottom of a big open book-cum-chimney.

**2. 18m 13** Climb the chimney to the top and move out to the right. Scramble to the top.

### **Variation:**

**2. 20m 15** Climb the chimney to the first obvious handrail. Rail out right to the nose, move around it and climb a hand jam crack to the top.

*First ascent: Nov 1982 J. van Eeden and S. Isebeck.*

### **ROUGH ROCK RECESS**

**9 \***

Situated 3m right of PINNACLE NORTH. Start by scrambling up 4m, at a point as high up the kloof as possible where the upper krantzies lie back in an upper bay. To the right of PINNACLE NORTH is a crack or recess running straight up. (Grey, very rough rock.)

**1. 13m 8** Climb 6m up to ledge with big nettle tree. Continue up recess 7m to good tree.

**2. 10m 9** Climb up past narrow cubbyhole on awkward holds to big tree.

**3. 15m 7** Climb up through hole in roof and scramble to base of next pitch.

**4. 10m 8** Climb narrow open book type of chimney, not the easy crack on the left, to good stance. (At this point, climb crosses NETTLE CHIMNEY.)

**5. 14m 7** Pass around to the right, under a corner which is of a higher grade, to next recess and climb over chockstones to good tree (10m). Finish by going right again into short chimney to top.

First ascent: Dec 1978 S. Junod, M. and R. Forsyth.

## NETTLE CHIMNEY

7 \*\*

Start higher up the kloof, as for start of PINNACLE NORTH.

1. **25m 7** After scrambling up from the riverbed 10m move right past start of ROUGH ROCK RECESS, which climb is in recess, and climb grey rock to a good tree and up again to big nettle tree, 10m.
2. **20m 7** Traverse to right and climb easy gully, then scramble to large tree set in a corner far back from stream.
3. **30m 7** Climb up for 4m and then move left 3m and climb round big rock blocks and up recess to big stance behind nettle tree.
4. **25m 7** Move to crack as far left as possible and climb easy crack to top.

*First ascent: Aug 1945 J. Plekke and K. Ruhle.*

## FREEZEFRAME

20

Climbs a thin crack up a face & past a tree approximately 30-40m upstream of DINKUM DIHEDRAL, between TREMADOC FEVER and NETTLE CHIMNEY.

1. **20m 20** Climb the crack moving leftwards towards the top.

*First ascent: 1990 S. Middlemiss and W. Jenkin.*

## TREMADOC FEVER

19 \*\*

The route takes the groove immediately to the left of DINKUM DIHEDRAL. Scramble up onto the ledge 20m above stream bed. Start 4m left of the start of DINKUM DIHEDRAL, behind a stamvrug tree.

**1. 25m 17** Ascend diagonally right from behind the tree to gain the ledge below the dihedral taken by DINKUM DIHEDRAL. Step up and left to gain the groove and follow this to below a V-notch in a small roof. Pull through the notch and belay on nettle tree stance.

**2. 8m 19** Jam up the righthand crack, with difficulty near its top, until able to gain the loose-looking block in the off-width on the left. Follow the off-width rightwards to the top.

### Note:

Pitch 2 offers contrived but excellent climbing. The whole route is on clean rock.

*First ascent: May 1985 M. Haffner and R. Dodding.*

## LOTTA BOTTLE

19 \*\*\*

Scramble up to the ledge 20m above stream bed from where the crux pitch of DINKUM DIHEDRAL starts.

**1. 15m 19** Climb the arete 3m to the left of DINKUM DIHEDRAL, finishing through a gap in the roof and belay by a tree on the ledge. Protection is a little sparse but placing side runners will downgrade this route!

Finish up DINKUM DIHEDRAL or abseil off.

*First ascent: May 1985 J. Wright and S. Brown.*

## **DINKUM DIHEDRAL**

**19 \*\*\*\***

About 40m upstream of STRAIGHT EDGE on true left of kloof, the kloof steps back to form a bushy and tree filled ledge about 20m above stream bed. Scramble up onto this and to its back.

**1. 12m 15** Climb a recess on rough rock to a chockstone which blocks it at the top. Move out left past it onto a small ledge.

**2. 18m 19** On the right hand side of the ledge, there is a spectacular upstream facing open book with a crack in its centre. After a tricky take-off move, climb the open book. Continue up on good jams and finger-locks to a small ledge 1m under the triangular roof. There is an optional step left onto face about 5m up. Fist-jam through the horizontal crack in the roof to a resting place on the arete. Move up and left to a belay ledge with a nettle tree. (Note: This pitch offers superbly protected and sustained climbing.)

**3. 10m 17** From the ledge, two cracks can be seen. Climb the right hand jam crack till it is possible to step left 2m into the off-width crack in the corner. Climb this and the hidden crack on right hand face to the top.

*First ascent: Nov 1982 J. van Eeden and S. Isebeck.*

## **SHADOWPLAY**

**17 \*\***

Start at break 6m right of DINKUM DIHEDRAL. Climb the crack (which becomes off-width) exiting right at large ledge.

**1. 20m 17** Climb the red face to the base of the fine looking jam crack, climb this to tree belay.

*First ascent: Aug 1985 M. Haffner and C. Curson.*

## **PASSIVE RHYTHMS**

**19 \*\***

Starts 15m right of SHADOWPLAY at a dihedral with a large capping roof.

**1. 25m 19** Climb dihedral to roof, exiting left by underclinging and wide bridging to a small ledge. Climb directly up the buttress on crystalline rock to ledge and tree belay.

*First ascent: Aug 1985 M. Haffner and C. Curson.*

## **NO NETTLES**

**10 \***

Start on grey face covered by tree roots opposite VARIETY.

**1. 30m 7** Traverse right past a sharp ridge to large ledge with trees.

**2. 15m 7** Climb straight up in corner on clean rock to tree and move to right onto large rock ledge with adequate block belay.

**3. 15m 10** Move left from ledge and climb chimney above tree to top. Strenuous past overhanging section.

### **Variation:**

**1. 25m 7** Start as for NETTLE CHIMNEY up to the large ledge. Now, move left on large ledge for 40m to the third recess.

**2. 20m 17** Make a difficult take-off on left side of recess. Move to right after 5m to sloping rib. (The leader used two slings on chocks to surmount this section of about 3m while one member of party climbed this by pulling up on a handjam). Continue up the recess and chimney and exit on left to top. (Dec 1978 S.H., S.D. and P. van Rensburg)

*First ascent: Dec 1978 R. Forsyth and S. van Rensburg.*

## YORKSHIRE

16 \*

The start is about 20m upstream of STRAIGHT EDGE on the opposite (left) side of the kloof. To the left is a grey face festooned with roots. Take off from a ledge a little way up the face.

1. **18m 10** Ascend to a large ledge.
2. **25m 16** Continue to top up steep recess or crack on reddish rock (on right is a sharp ridge).

*First ascent: Jan 1950 P. Harris and J. Clayton.*

## LE BON GENERAL

17 \*\*

The climb starts only a metre or so to the right of YORKSHIRE, i.e. directly opposite SKELETON GULLY.

1. **33m 17** Ascend thin handjam crack to ledge (12m). Traverse 5m to the right on ledge, then ascend strenuous handjam crack 12m to ledge.
2. **35m 15** Traverse diagonally 3m under righthand side of nose then up 3m and traverse back 3m and up 3m onto nose. Continue up ridge to cubbyhole.
3. **14m 15** Move up to right out of cubbyhole and make awkward move up to diagonal crack with creeper. Climb crack 4m then move left onto ridge and continue to summit.

*First ascent: Date unknown M. Prior and A. Koster.*

## DEE CRACK

19 \*\*

About 10m upstream from BORED GAMES (i.e. just left of the recess).

1. **30m 19** Climb the overhanging jam-crack to broken ground. The first 10m are really good, and steep.

*First ascent: 1979 C. Lomax and D. Cheesmond.*

**BULLDOG ARETE**

**23 \*\*\***

Climbs the arête and face past 2 bolts immediately left of PANGAMAN VIBRATION.

- 1. 20m 23** Climb arête and face past 2 bolts.

*First ascent: 1989 S. Evans and D. Margetts.*

**PANGAMAN VIBRATION**

**19**

Takes the obvious corner just left of EGOWHIP.

- 1. 20m 19** Climb the corner/recess directly.

*First ascent: May 1985 M. Haffner.*

**EGOWHIP**

**23 \*\*\*\***

Climbs a very narrow dihedral running up the right wall of the prominent corner between DEE CRACK and BORED GAMES. (Right of PANGAMAN VIBRATION.)

- 1. 20m 23** Scramble onto a ledge (peg) and pull-up into the base of the dihedral. Climb up to the top of the dihedral, exit right, and continue up on sparse holds to easy ground and a large tree.

**Note:**

A bolt protects the crux.

*First ascent: Circa 1983 T. Holt (after top rope practice).*

**BORED GAMES**

**22 \*\*\***

A clean hard pitch, similar to SCHWEESICLES. The line followed is a crack on the opposite side of the kloof and 5m upstream from STRAIGHT EDGE.

- 1. 40m 22** From stream bed gain a large handhold on the left. Pull up into the recess, pass a dying tree to the right and continue up the crack right up to the large ledge.

**Note:**

Originally called MALABALABA (17,A1), an African game like draughts played with bottle tops.), opened in Sep 1977 by G. Moseley and A. Dick.

*First ascent: Dec 1984 K.M. Smith and G. Mallory*

**THE APPRENTICE CRACK****25 \*\*\*\***

The obvious thin crack up the face about 2m right of BORED GAMES.

**1. 10m 25** Climb the crack to a gnarled tree. Either abseil back down or continue up easy rock to the top.

*First ascent: Jan 1985 A. de Klerk and K.M. Smith.*

## **JULUKA**

**20 \*\*\***

The climb goes up the slight buttress and shallow recess above, which lies between BORED GAMES and CEE CRACK. Start at the top of the large boulder alongside the face.

**1. 30m 20** It is advisable to protect the first 10m of the climb by placing a sling high up in the tree leaning across the kloof from just downstream of the apex of the block above. Layback very strenuously up a thin crack to get your hands onto the ledge above. Get onto this ledge by traversing left strenuously to a better handrail and then swinging the feet up. Traverse delicately back right in a very off-balance position to where a handhold can be reached allowing one to step right into a small bottomless recess and up to a resting place on a ledge above (place for a small stance). Climb the shallow recess above to the large ledge above. Halfway up is a difficult move (19) involving a brief move onto the left arete. (In the opening ascent, the leader held onto a nut to swing onto the left arete which reduced the grade to 17.)

**2. 20m 15** Walk about 5m right and climb the face and pillar above just to the right of the prominent arete. Continue up on the right hand side of the arete, finishing up with a strenuous move (15) near the top.

*First ascent: Mar 1982 J. Levy and P. Fatti.*

## **GUY'S ROUTE**

**25**

Climbs the face and arête past some bolts immediately left of CEE CRACK.

**1. 20m 25** Climb face and arête past some bolts.

*First ascent: Unknown G. Holwill.*

## CEE CRACK

17 \*\*

The downstream facing corner crack between JELLY BEANS and BORED GAMES opposite STRAIGHT EDGE.

**1. 30m 17** Climb jam-crack with an awkward move just above the cubbyhole to broken ground.

*First ascent: 1979 C. Lomax and D. Cheesmond.*

## JELLY BEANS

16 \*\*\*

This route is 5m below STRAIGHT EDGE on opposite side. Start to left of small cave (SCHWEESICLES). It starts up a downstream facing open book with a smooth slab on its right.

**1. 25m 16** Climb up slightly sloping face about 8m to apex of triangle and fixed piton. Jam up crack in open book for about 3m until feet are at level of good thin crack on right face. Step across to top ledge on left. Move to left hand end of ledge. Climb up crack and face to extensive grassy ledge. Walk 5m left to large tree on wide flattish rock ledge.

**2. 18m 13** Ascend grey and orange slab directly behind tree to top.

*First ascent: 1965 J. Anderson and P. Venter.*

## JELLY BEANS DIRECT

**18 \*\*\*\***

Start as for JELLY BEANS.

**1. 23m 18** Climb up slightly sloping face for about 8m (13) to apex of triangle and fixed piton. Jam up crack in open book for about 3m until feet are at level of good thin crack on right face (17). Instead of stepping across to top ledge on left (as for JELLY BEANS), continue straight up open book on good jam holds to the small obvious roof (17). Pull through roof to stance (18).

*First ascent: Jun 1979 C. Edelstein, D.K. Luyt and M. Mears.*



*Hector Pringle on the superb pitch of Jelly Beans Direct*

## GELIGNITE

22

Between JELLYBEANS and SCHWEESICLES on the same side of the kloof. Start as for JELLY BEANS.

**1. 25m 22** Up crack until handrail is reached. Right along rail to arete. Step up and continue up corner until next rail. Back left to finger crack. Up crack to top.

*First ascent: Oct 1985 A.J. Smith, P. Douglas and B. O'Meara.*

## SCHWEESICLES

19 \*\*\*

Starts at small deep cave opposite big tree, 8m below STRAIGHT EDGE on opposite side of kloof.

**1. 22m 19** Move up as high as possible in cave. Move out left under overhanging roof of cave and into shallow recess. Continue up recess to good ledge and tree belay.

**2. 25m 14** Continue directly upwards (2m to right of chimney recess with two trees) on coarse grained rock to top (12m up is a tree).

*First ascent: Mar 1966 M. Makowski, J. Anderson and I. McLachlan.*

## SHADOW OF DOUBT

21 \*\*\*

Climbs the thin crack and continuation corner 2m right of SCHWEESICLES and NAUGHTY MONKEY takes the left-facing open book 1m further right.

**1. 20m 21** Climb the thin crack, past a roof on the right, to reach a ledge. Continue up the blank looking open book above, and exit right onto easier ground.

Note: No use is made of any tree.

*First ascent: Sept 1985 K.M. Smith, M. Haffner and C. Edelstein.*

## **NAUGHTY MONKEY**

**20 \*\***

Start about 3m to the right of SCHWEESICLES at the base of a tree. Same start as for SHADOW OF DOUBT.

**1. 20m 19** Climb into the right hand of the two cracks and into a shallow corner higher up. Pull over two bulges and up onto a ledge.

**2. 15m 19** Move up the rippled corner directly above until able to move left onto the arete about halfway up. Continue up to the top.

*First ascent: Jan 1985 A. de Klerk (solo).*

## **THE CUNNING LINGUIST**

**17**

Starts 2m left of lone tree on embayment - see SATYRIASIS STRUT and OEDIPUS WRECKS.

**1. 20m 17** Climbs broken corner crack system at left end of embayment.

*First ascent: Sept 1985 M. Haffner (Roped solo).*

## **OEDIPUS WRECKS**

**21 \*\*\***

First pitch takes face left of SATYRIASIS STRUT.

**1. 10m 21** Start 2m right of the lone tree on the embayment ledge. Climb thin seam past one rail and at next rail step left (no naughty stepping right to tree), and then climb face in the line of the very thin seam to large ledge.

**2. 10m 19** Climb the poorly protected, slim, open groove.

*First ascent: Sept 1985 M. Haffner and K. Smith.*

## **SATYRIASIS STRUT**

**18 \*\*\***

Between NAUGHTY MONKEY and NOTHING VENTURED NOTHING GAINED is an embayment with large ledge (which is scrambled up to).

**1. 20m 18** Climb obvious jam crack at right hand end of bay to ledge with tree. Step left and climb the cracked slabby face (crux).

*First ascent: Aug 1985 M. Haffner.*

## **PIGMY FACE**

**19,A1**

Situated in a broad recess shaped like an "A" with the top triangle removed. Its right hand retaining wall is a smooth grey face which is undercut at its outer edge. Start 20m downstream of STRAIGHT EDGE on the opposite side of the kloof.

**1. 20m 19,A1** Commence in the left of the recess. Move up the small recess for 1,5m and traverse right via a hand and foot rail to another recess formed by the wall and the right hand slabbed wall (5m 17). Ascend recess partially for 3m and move out left onto the face. Continue up to a ledge 2m up (3m 17). Move across right retaining wall (2 pitons, A1). Continue a further 2m on small finger holds to the corner and around to a ledge (19). Continue up a recess and a small chimney to a broad ledge (8m 15).

**2. 30m 7** Scramble to top.

### **Note:**

Pitch 1 is sustained but well protected.

### **Variation:**

The 19,A1 traverse may be avoided by a spectacular hand-traverse on the foot rail.

*First ascent: 1967 M. Makowski, I. McLachlan, T. Lane and A. Carmen.*

## **ME PIGFACE**

**19,A0 \*\***

Same start as for PIGMY FACE. Whereas PIGMY FACE traverses right after about 5m up the left hand corner, this climb continues up the corner to the overhang before traversing right.

**1. 25m 19,A0** Climb the recess to the overhang. Crux move (19) shortly below the overhang. Traverse right along the obvious handrail, standing in a sling or a "Friend" about halfway across, to a small tree in the right hand corner. Climb up the tricky face just to the right of the corner to a large stance.

**2. 12m 10** Climb up to the large ledge from where one can scramble to the top.

### **Note:**

The first free ascent was in Oct 1985 by G. Mallory.

*First ascent: Mar 1982 P. Fatti and G. Moseley.*

## **NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED**

**22 \*\*\*\***

Situated in a broad recess shaped like an "A" with the top triangle removed. Its right hand retaining wall is a smooth grey face which is undercut at its outer edge. Start 20m downstream of STRAIGHT EDGE on the opposite side of the kloof.

**1. 25m 22** Climb straight up the open book forming the left hand side of the recess and through the roof to the ledge with a tree.

*First ascent: Jul 1984 A. Jardin and S. Bradshaw.*

## MAGIC MOMENTS

23 \*\*\*

Climbs the wall right of NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED.

**1. 25m 23** Climb up to the horizontal break and then top out via an excellent lock and some small face holds. Hard if you are short.

*First ascent: Unknown Party Unknown.*

## VORTEX

21 \*\*\*\*

Start 4m downstream of NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED i.e. 24m downstream of STRAIGHT EDGE beneath a 1m roof with a crack running through it.

**1. 25m 21** Climb up to beneath the overhang and jam out to the lip. Reach strenuously for distant jugs and pull through (crux). Continue up for 1m to a rail and traverse right for 3m on excellent jams to a ledge. Climb up easier rock to big ledge. Scramble off to the right.

*First ascent: Sep 1983 S. Mallory and G. Mallory.*

## MIDNIGHT BEAUTY

31

Has one bolt and climbs a ridiculously thin seam through a bulge/roof.

*First ascent: Unknown S. Bradshaw*

## **WISH YOU WERE HERE**

**25 \*\*\***

Climbs the steep corner/crack up the middle of the overhanging band of rock downstream of VORTEX, i.e. upstream of the sandy pool-bed above MHLABATINI CHIMNEY (opposite and slightly downstream of INVALID).

**1. 15m 25** Climb the corner and continuation crack.

*First ascent: May 1985 S. Bradshaw and K.M. Smith.*

## **DIRE STRAITS**

**24 \*\*\*\***

Climbs the crack 4m downstream (right) of WISH YOU WERE HERE.

**1. 10m 24** Climb the crack and chimney.

*First ascent: Apr 1985 K.M. Smith and S. Bradshaw.*

## **JUXTAPOSITION**

**23 \*\*\*\***

The route starts 2m to the right (i.e. downstream) of DIRE STRAITS, on the same side of the kloof.

**1. 20m 23** Climb the crack exiting through the obvious break in the roof above. Scramble easily to the top.

### **Notes:**

- 1.** A few small nuts (micros) are useful as protection.
- 2.** Hoping not to sound like one C.E. (alias S) tall people may find the grade only 21!

*First ascent: May 1987 P. Lazarus.*

## TRIVIAL PURSUITS

15

Opposite to and just upstream of MHLABATINI CHIMNEY.

**1. 10m 15** Climb the off-white downstream facing open book.

*First ascent: Feb 1986 M. Smith, M. Brunke, K.M. Smith and S.M. Bradshaw.*

## OBSCURED BY CLOUDS

20

Well, by trees actually.

The start is 5m upstream of UNKNOWN PLEASURES in an openbook with a crack in it which widens to fist-jam size.

**1. 15m 18** Climb the crack to a ledge. Move back along the ledge to an easy crack on the right at a big inset. Move up the crack to end on the ledge with a large tree.

**2. 20m 20** To the left is a big red block. Start on the block (beacon) move up an overhanging groove to easy ground. Above is a red wall with a thin crack to start. Climb up and move left to exit on a small ledge.

Second pitch cleaned on abseil as second could not follow.

*First ascent: Good Friday 1987 B. Roux and L. Tonin (Pitch 1 only).*

## UNKNOWN PLEASURES

21 \*\*\*

Takes the obvious breaks up the buttress just upstream of ZENITH RIDGE.

**1. 25m 21** Ascend the shallow corner until able to pull onto easier ground above. Move slightly right and then climb diagonally left to the base of the obvious finger-crack. Follow this to a stance with tree.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 M. Haffner, G. Mallory, R. Dodding and C. Lomax.*

## HEDONISTIC HEIGHTS

22 \*\*

Takes the crack line between THE FILE and UNKNOWN PLEASURES. A long pitch giving surprisingly good climbing. Starts midway between the two above-mentioned routes.

**1. 35m 22** Climb ledges to base of chimney/gully and then step left to gain the crack. Hard moves (protected by 2 pegs) to gain large layback flake, and then to small cubby. Awkward moves leaving this and then continue more easily following crack/groove line to tree belay.

*First ascent: Jan 1986 M. Haffner.*

## ZENITH RIDGE

15 \*\*

The climb is opposite and slightly downstream of MHLABATINI CHIMNEY. Scramble about 6m from stream bed and start on blocks (small tree). Start in a deep open book closed at the top.

**1. 9m 15** Up into open book and over obvious chockstone.

**2. 8m 15** Start with a semi-hand traverse to the right. Continue traverse over a poised block which rocks when touched, into deep recess with white roof.

**3. 22m 15** Traverse right starting across small sloping ramp. Ascend steep broken ridge. Two overhangs must be negotiated. The first overhang is just above the traverse (stomach move). The second is from a small alcove. Straddle up until a good grip high in the back of the crack can be reached. Pull up and out to the right. The pitch then eases off but is still steep. Stance on big ledge.

### **Variations:**

**3. 13** Instead of traversing right, go up recess and higher up move right to join original pitch.

**4. 28m 10** Climb the red face to the left, i.e. the downstream side of the buttress above the start of the climb. Go out onto crest of the ridge at one point. First class rock.

*First ascent: Mar 1966 R.F. Davies, Paul Fatti and D. Cretchley.*

### **THE FILE**

**22**

Ascends the flake crack 4m left of RASP.

**1. 25m 22** Fingery laybacking to slight break. Move right to shake-out rest at keyed-in block. Layback flared crack above to the RASP stance.

*First ascent: May 1985 M. Haffner.*

### **RASP**

**21\*\***

Start 3m downstream of MHLABATINI CHIMNEY on the true left side of the kloof.

**1. 25m 21** Climb easily up to a large ledge. Continue up a jamb-crack in a downstream facing corner. At the top of the corner the going gets tough. Continue up a layback crack to a common stance with ZENITH RIDGE.

**2. 25m 17** Climb up the chimney. Move right then up to a stance.

*First ascent: 1979 D. Cheesmond and party.*

## **ELITE STREET**

**23 \*\***

This climb is situated directly opposite the huge rotten recess which separates the BULLIT and SPACEWALK buttresses. Scramble up a few metres to a ledge. Start about 6m downstream of RASP. A pentagonal roof lurks 12m above.

**1. 20m 23** Climb a thin crack to an incipient block. Gain the base of the flared recess with difficulty and climb up to the roof. Exit left and climb more easily to beneath an overhang cut by an off-width crack.

**2. 10m 22** Climb the crack.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 K.M. Smith and S. Bradshaw.*

## **BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS**

**26 \*\*\*\*\***

A superb though contrived variation to GLORY ROAD giving very hard climbing.

**1. 25m 26** Start up GLORY ROAD. Climb crux of that route to the base of the flake. Follow the left hand crack exclusively to the top flake. Continue rightwards to the tree.

### **Note:**

The right hand crack in the flake was not used at all. Using the right hand crack will make the route easier. (GLORY ROAD uses the right hand crack).

*First ascent: Jul 1986 S. Bradshaw.*

## GLORY ROAD

25 \*\*\*

Climbs the crack 2.5m right of ELITE STREET (and therefore 9m downstream of RASP).

Scramble up to a ledge and traverse right to the base of the crack.

**1. 25m 25** Climb the crack past a mega hold to the base of a "shield". Continue up the right side of the shield to a ledge, move left, and climb more easily to the top.

*First ascent: Aug 1985 S. Bradshaw and K.M. Smith.*

## THE LESSON

20 \*

The route starts from the top of the huge boulder, just upstream from GABOOM.

**1. 15m 17** From the top of the boulder a few tricky moves right lead to the base of the obvious shallow chimney. A difficult move gives access into the chimney. Climb up and exit to the left onto a large ledge.

**2. 18m 20** From the right hand side of the ledge climb up for 2m using downward sloping holds. Next traverse right across the smooth face to a point where one can place a small nut in a vertical crack. Stretch across right for the piton (in place) which enables one to move right onto good holds. Traverse right and climb up the break to a large tree at the base of an obvious open book.

**3. 25m 13** Climb up the open book exiting to the left. Move right over a short wall and then right around the corner. Climb the arete to the top.

### Notes:

**1.** The first free ascent was in Mar 1983 by C. Edelstein and J. Brown.

**2.** Pitch 2 can be climbed more directly by continuing up the crack and through the chimney crack above. A lack of handholds makes this route technical and strenuous and is

somewhat more difficult than freeing the original aid (21). (Mar 1983 C . Edelstein and M. Brunke.)

*First ascent: Jul 1976 R. Smithers and L.P. Fatti.*

## **GABOOM**

**21 \*\***

Start from a chimney between the large boulder and the kloof wall at KLOOF DESCENT.

**1. 9m 15** Climb across rightwards to a tree. Continue rightwards with an awkward mantleshelf onto a large ledge and tree belay.

**2. 28m 21** Ascend the layback crack on the left of the tree (5m) then step left and up to a protruding ledge below a short steep wall. Climb the recess on its left using a nut to gain the ledge above the steep wall. Move up the groove, step right and up to the bulge. Swing left into a short groove with a good jamming crack and up this to the overhang. Move back right into the original groove and up to a large ledge and peg belay.

**3. 9m 15** Gain the horizontal break in the left wall and up into the cubbyhole. Move across left, around the arete and along the ledge to a belay in the corner above the tree.

**4. 22m 15** Ascend the corner and traverse right below the overhang to a small tree. Move up 1.5m and up right onto a slab, then up a short steep groove. Continue up rightwards to the top.

### **Note:**

A fine route. Pitch 2 provides sustained climbing with great variety on good rock.

*First ascent: Aug 1968 A.D. Barley, P. Haupt and M. Sanders (with aid on pitch 2 at 19,A1, first free ascent unknown)*

## **RIVERS OF RAIN**

**27 \*\*\***

Start 10m downstream of GABOOM from a sandy patch.

**1. 20m 17** Up tree on white rock to a muddy ledge. Walk left to tree. Up tree until forced back onto rock. Continue up to ledge beneath very overhanging corner/ crack on left.

**2. 10m 27** Climb the corner/crack.

*First ascent: Mar 1986 K. Smith and S. Bradshaw (pitch 1); Mar 1986 S. Bradshaw (pitch 2)*

## **THE FINAL CUT**

**25 \*\*\*\***

18m downstream of a large collection of boulders in blocking the stream, on the true left, the kloof cuts back with a very attractive looking, purple-streaked overhanging downstream facing corner. The route takes this. Scramble 10m up to the obvious large ledge below the obvious corner.

**1. 25m 25** Up the very sustained corner to belay in the tree.

*First ascent: Nov 1984 S. Bradshaw and A. Jardin.*

## THE ROOT ON THE HYPOTENUSE

13 \*\*

Start 18m downstream of KLOOF DESCENT at the base of a huge recess below a large projecting overhang. Scramble 3m to a large ledge.

**1. 9m 10** Ascend the V-groove using the numerous tree roots where necessary, to a large ledge on the left. Tree belay.

**2. 9m 11** Move back across the top of the groove and diagonally right to a ledge on the arete. Peg belay.

**3. 9m 13** From the ledge make an awkward move into the recess and continue traversing right to a tree which is used to gain the ledge above. Peg belay.

**4. 15m 10** From the right end of the ledge move up a few metres and traverse right 3m until the wall can be climbed to a large detached block. Continue up to a large chockstone belay below the "prominent white overhang" (Pitch 1 stance of CONCAVE).

**5. 15m 13** Traverse right round the arete then make an awkward move across behind the tree to a ledge. Flake belay above.

**6. 18m 8** Ascend the flake behind and climb up leftwards through trees to a ledge and tree belay.

**7. 9m 13** Climb the yellow wall on the left of the recess using a good flake then difficult moves to the top.

### **Note:**

The route is entirely on good rock and traverses diagonally right under the large overhangs. The roots on pitches 1 and 2 are a nuisance but the rock underneath provides sound holds.

*First ascent: Jul 1968      A.D. Barley and Miss M. van Steenderen.*

## CONCAVE

15

The climb starts below a prominent white overhang (shown on kloof plan). Scramble 5m to tree belay.

**1. 18m 15** Walk upstream 3m to a small nose which gives access to ledge 3m above. Move up a further 1m to larger but off-balance ledge. Climb 5m over slightly overhanging face - high handholds up to the right. After 3m of easier rock to foot of recess, mantleshelf 1.5m into open book. Continue 9m up series of small recesses to ledge.

**2. 22m 15** Climb steep corner on small but good holds (delicate take-off) to ledge under large overhang.

**3. 22m 15** Climb 12m up steep but broken crack to ledge above chockstone. Continue up crack a further 6m to small ledge at foot of open book. Traverse right 3m around corner (this can be made at two levels) into another open book. This is climbed for 3m to beacon.

*First ascent: Nov 1960 R. Kinsley and B. van der Riet.*

## COMMUNIST CONVERT

17

18m upstream of the large tree is a large cave at 18m which is the initial objective of the climb. Start between the cave and the tree.

1. **6m 10** Use the sapling to gain the large ledge.
2. **18m 13** Traverse 9m left to the base of the V-groove below the cave. Ascend the groove by laybacking and using the pinnacle flakes on the left wall. Belay in the cave.
3. **9m 15** Traverse 5m left from the cave and up to a narrow ledge. From the right end of the ledge make a difficult move up, then slightly left to the long ledge under the overhang.
4. **18m 7** Traverse to the left round the arete and slant up and along the top ledge to a block and tree belay.
5. **17m 10** Move up into the groove capped by a tree, pass the detached block, step right and up the rib to large ledge and chock belay below the top overhang.
6. **17m 13** Climb directly up the wall behind, then up the shallow cracks (half red, half white - conversion imminent) to a large ledge below the overhang split by a chimney.
7. **9m 17** Climb up the recess to the overhang and move out until a very difficult move into the chimney can be made. Red converts easily to the top.

### Note:

Non-converts can avoid the last pitch by an easy slab on the left.

*First ascent: May 1968 A.D. Barley and Miss M. van Steenderen.*

## TREESY DOES IT

19

About 30m upstream from YARK and 30m downstream from COMMUNIST CONVERT is a tree growing up beside a face which has an overhang about 10m up.

**1. 18m 19** Move up face for about 5m making liberal use of tree. Move onto ledges and then up and leftward onto ledge just below overhang. Traverse leftward with difficulty to ledge at base of a corner.

**2. 15m 15** Climb strenuously up corner for about 5m and then right onto ledge. Move easily up face to large ledge and then walk right to large tree.

**3. 40m 13** Move up face for 6m then to right into base of recess. Climb up past large tree to a larger tree about 12m up. Continue up recess system and then up face to top.

*First ascent: Jun 1974 L.P. Fatti and A. McGarr.*

## YARK

16

37m upstream of ESCAPE ROUTE a large single root slants down the left wall from 15m to the kloof bed. 6m upstream of this is a crack starting at 5m and slanting up left.

**1. 22m 16** Start from a boulder and move awkwardly up rightwards to the base of the slanting crack. Ascend the crack 5m and traverse left under a nose and then up 3m until a swing right can be made onto the nose. Traverse a few metres to a tree belay almost above the start.

**2. 9m 13** Move back left and up a recess then ascend the rib directly above the stance to a ledge and peg belay.

**3. 15m 15** Move diagonally up right for 5m then up the steep wall on good holds. Move left below a bulge and up to a large ledge and chockstone belay.

**4. 12m 6** Scramble to the top.

*First ascent: Jun 1969 A.D. Barley, M. White and Miss M. van Steenderen.*

**CRYING OVER MEMORIES**

**25 \*\*\*\***

Bold climbing up the tenuous flake-line left of TOTAL ON-SNORT.

**1. 15m 25** Start 2m left of TOTAL ON-SNORT. Head slightly leftwards to peg. Straight up flakes (exiting left at the top).

*First ascent: May 1986 S. Bradshaw.*

**TOTAL ON-SNORT**

**25 \*\*\*\***

This route is situated on the short overhanging face 60m upstream of the wade pool on the true left side of the kloof i.e. 20m or so upstream of FUTCH on the same side of the kloof. Scramble up onto the rock ledges below the start of FUTCH and walk left past DIRIGIBLE DOG. Scramble up about 4m to below the short face.

**1. 15m 25** Start on the right and climb the obvious crack to a peg, move up with difficulty to good holds. Continue to the top.

**Notes:**

- 1.** Peg left in-situ, placed on abseil.
- 2.** Opened with multiple falls.
- 3.** Excellent climbing - only shortcoming of the route is that it is short.
- 4.** Maybe harder than 25.

*First ascent: Jan 1986 C. Edelstein.*

## MYTH OF FINGERPRINTS

26

Climbs the face to the right of TOTAL ON-SNORT past the bolts to a rail. A good wire protects the finishing moves.

*First ascent: 1987 Roger Natrass.*

## DUSTY DOG

17

Start on the arete 10m to the left of FUTCH.

**1. 20m 17** Pull up awkwardly over the bulge. Climb the recess to under the large overhang. Traverse the face and exit right.

*First ascent: Jan 1986 C. Edelstein and M. Greenslade.*

## FUDGE

11

Approximately 10m upstream of FUTCH on the same side of the kloof is a very aesthetic open book 10m above stream level. From the base of FUTCH scramble up to base of open book.

**1. 12m 11** Climb open book to top (pleasant but short) - from here a variety of routes led to the top.

*First ascent: Oct 1985 S. Middlemiss and P.S. Greenfield.*

## DAIRY BELL

17 \*

A short route with some interesting roof moves. The route starts 8m to the left of FUTCH.

**1. 15m 17** From the large sloping ledge 4m above the stream mantleshelf into a short open book. Step 1m right and continue straight up to the roof. The roof is climbed by pulling through on a detached block on the left.

### Note:

Scramble to easier ground or abseil down ESCAPE ROUTE.

*First ascent: Dec 1982 G. Mallory and E. Haig.*

## PERAMBULATING PUP

18

About 5m to the right of DUSTY DOG is a large block with a medium sized tree growing behind it, start at its base.

**1. 20m 18** Climb up 3m to the overhang, move right and up in the corner on excellent jams.

*First ascent: Jan 1986 C. Edelstein and M. Greenslade.*

## DIRIGIBLE DOG

23

The start is 5m to the right of PERAMBULATING PUP beneath a bulging overhang. A thin crack starts in the bulge of the overhang and widens further up - to about 4 cm.

**1. 20m 23** Start with a difficult move from the left to a good hand hold, and then move easily to the top.

*First ascent: Jan 1986 C. Edelstein and M. Greenslade.*

## FUTCH

20 \*

Takes the impressive off-width crack through the roof just upstream of the cave next to ESCAPE ROUTE. The grade varies from 17 for a small climber with experience in off-width climbing, to 22 for a larger fellow!

**1. 15m 20** Start from boulder left of the cave and climb left onto a ledge in the corner (wet in summer). Ascend the open book on a loose sounding flake to the roof. Enter the crack awkwardly and wriggle strenuously to the top.

**2. ?m 6** Scramble right to ESCAPE ROUTE and descend.

*First ascent: Dec 1982 J. Schoonees, G. Mallory, H. van Eeden and J. van Eeden.*

## **ESCAPE ROUTE**

**7**

Above the lower pool a boulder blocks the kloof. This provides a means of escape to the left when going down the kloof by a climb of 18m on roots and ridge.

*First ascent: Nov 1957 E. Scholes.*

## **SEARCH**

**21**

About 50m below the wade pool, the kloof opens up for a short while on the true left. Just upstream of this, there is a sloping ramp rising upstream. SEARCH starts 10m upstream of the widening of the kloof.

**1. 25m 21** Climb awkward crack from ground level for 5m to gain the sloping ramp. Move into recess on orange rock with small roof 10m above the sloping ramp. Continue to top.

*First ascent: Unknown Roland Magg and Gunther Bargon.*

## **RESCUE**

**14**

Start 5m downstream of SEARCH. An upstream facing corner starts 5m up, above the sloping ramp.

**1. 25m 14** Start below the corner, and ascend 5m to reach sloping ramp. Climb corner system to top.

*First ascent: Unknown Roland Magg and Gunther Bargon.*

## **SUBTLE**

**15**

These are three short routes left of CLEVER (just round the corner). SUBTLE takes the open book on the left.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 C. Edelstein and G. Mallory.*

## **INUENDO**

**15**

These are three short routes left of CLEVER (just round the corner). INNUENDO straddles through the small roof in the middle.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 C. Edelstein and G. Mallory.*

## **OBLIQUE**

**17**

There are three short routes left of CLEVER (just round the corner). OBLIQUE takes the right-slanting crack on the right.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 C. Edelstein and G. Mallory.*

## **CLEVER**

**15**

On the rock buttress, on the true left side of the kloof, just downstream from the lower campsite is an obvious crack-line with a small tree half-way up.

**1. 20m 15** Move up from the slabs onto the face and then into the crack and continue up to the ledge and tree. Continue up the inverted-V and then up easy rock to the top.

*First ascent: Apr 1982 C. Edelstein, R. van Dijk and J. Lever.*

## **BULLION**

**18 \*\***

This route is below the lower campsite (between CLEVER and CREDIT CARD CULT). It takes a line up a striking orange face flanked on either side by recesses.

**1. 8m 19** Start in the middle of a grey slab and climb on thin holds to a stance at a tree.

**2. 15m 18** Start on blocks on left and climb up 3m before moving 1m right. Climb straight up from there.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 G. Mallory and S. Mallory.*

## GRINALDUS

19

This route is situated on the first rock buttress you come to on the true left side of the kloof just downstream of the lower campsite. Start 3m to the right of CLEVER just to the left of an overhang which is about 8m above the ground.

**1. 20m 19** Start below a short face. Pull-up on good holds onto the face to below a small overhang, swing right and continue up the right-facing open book to a metre or so below the overhang. Swing left onto the arete and continue up the left facing open book to below an overhang (consisting of a jutting-out slab of rock). Pull through the overhang on the right.

*First ascent: Apr 1982 C. Edelstein and R. van Dijk.*

## AND THEN THERE WERE THREE

13

Situated on the small buttress in the lower part of Mhlabatini, just downstream of the lower campsite and on the true left hand side of the kloof. Approximately 12m downstream of GRINALDUS is a wide very shallow open book, the faces of which are grey.

**1. 38m 13** The route ascends the right face of the open book (fairly thin). Move up diagonally rightwards to the large grassy ledge at the base of the two chimneys above (4m). Ascend the rough knobbled face to the right of the right hand chimney to the summit.

*First ascent: Apr 1985 T.P. Willmot and S. Kelsey.*

## **AND THEN THERE WERE FOUR**

**15 \*\***

This route has as its objective the left of the 2 chimneys mentioned in AND THEN THERE WERE THREE. It starts in a groove immediately below this chimney and 5m downstream of AND THEN THERE WERE THREE.

**1. 40m 15** Ascend the groove to reach the large grassy ledge above. Climb the left of the 2 chimneys above, clearing the obstruction in an exposed position. Move more easily up the open book above to just below the summit. Swing left to take a stance on the ledge with tree.

### **Notes:**

- 1.** Protection is adequate.
- 2.** Pleasant climbing on good rock.

*First ascent: 18 Sep 1994 T.P. Willmot and U. Keifer.*

## **NOT SO MUCH TO FLY AS TO PLUMMET**

**17 \*\*\***

Approximately 8m downstream of AND THEN THERE WERE THREE is a deep vegetated chimney. Left of this is a grey slab topped by a pronounced steep-looking red face bound on the right by a sharp arete.

**1. 38m 17** The route ascends the left of the grey slab to the ledge above with tree, just below the red face (4m). Continue up the red face starting at its left extremity and moving up diagonally rightwards (thin) to the rounded nose above. Immediately above the nose is a crack system. Ascend this to the top, finishing as for AND THEN THERE WHERE THREE.

### **Note:**

A pleasant short route with good exposure on the face.

*First ascent: Apr 1985 T.P. Willmot and S. Kelsey.*

## HAIRY FISH

11

Approximately 1 metre downstream of NOT SO MUCH TO FLY AS TO PLUMMET is a broken open book leading to a chimney on the right of the sharp arete. The route ascends the book and the chimney to the top. A pleasant route although a bit chossy lower down.

**1. 24m 11** Move up the open book to the base of the chimney. Gain the chimney by stepping right and up. Bridge up, bearing right as the chimney widens. As the angle eases, ascend the red face on the right to the top.

*First ascent: Apr 1985 S. Kelsey, M.T. Willmot and T.P. Willmot.*

## DOGBALL

15 \*\*

This route takes the direct looking line 5m downstream of HAIRY FISH. A large chockstone pokes out of the crack halfway up – cairn.

**1. 40m 15** Ascend the grey face to the left of the groove moving right into the same with difficulty at about 5m. Climb up and to the right to the chossy ledge below the chockstone above. Move up the steep face and clear the chockstone in an exposed position. Climb the steep open book above to reach a comfortable stance on top.

### Note:

Pleasant climbing.

*First ascent: 18 Sep 1994 U. Kiefer and T.P. Willmot.*

## **EASY DOG**

**13**

30m downstream from GRINALDUS on the same side of the kloof is a south-facing open book. Climb this easily.

*First ascent: 1983 C. Edelstein.*

## **THE CREDIT CARD CULT**

**20**

This route starts 5m to the left of OVERDRAFT and takes the thin line through the centre of the orange face. (25m)

*First ascent: Jun 1985 C. Edelstein and G. Mallory.*

## **OVERDRAFT**

**17**

10m left of PRIME RATE is an undercut orange face. On the right arete of the face is a break.

**1. 25m 17** Climb this starting with an awkward move.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 C. Edelstein and G. Mallory.*

## **PRIME RATE**

**21**

On the same side as GRINALDUS, about 100m downstream two roofs are visible - the first about 15m above the stream bed, the second 10m above the first. Scramble up to a stance below the first roof.

**1. 25m 21** Step off a block and do a difficult move through and up to a ledge (tree belay) under the next roof. An immaculate move takes you through the next roof.

*First ascent: 1983 C. Edelstein, J. Brown and T. Holt.*

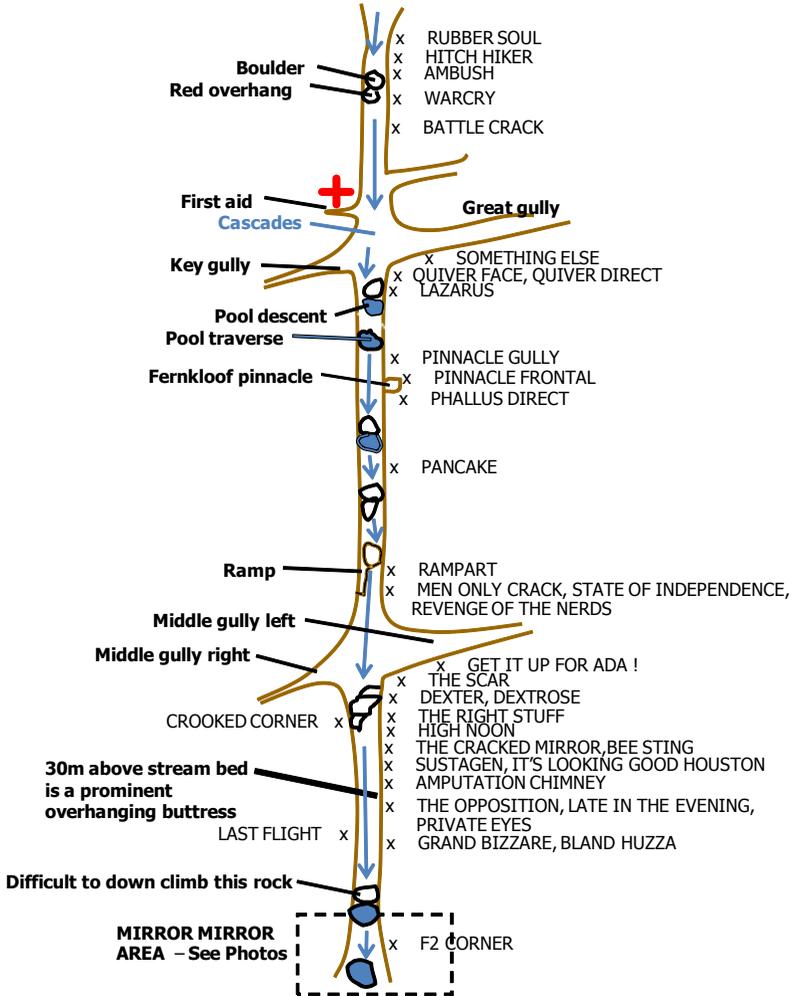
## FERNKLOOF: List of Climbs

| <b>Climb Name</b>              | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Stars</b> | <b>Pg</b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| AQUALUNG                       | 32           | **           | 128       |
| STORMWATCH                     | 31           | ***          | 136       |
| A WILL TO COWER                | 30           | ***          | 131       |
| ACROMAX                        | 29           | ***          | 129       |
| FABERGE                        | 28           | *****        | 136       |
| GLASS MENAGERIE                | 27           | ****         | 131       |
| VANDALS DIRECT                 | 27           | ****         | 135       |
| LAWYERS, GUNS AND MONEY        | 27           | ***          | 137       |
| WHEN THE MUSICS OVER           | 27           |              | 135       |
| MIRROR MIRROR                  | 26           | *****        | 131       |
| VANDALS                        | 26           | ****         | 135       |
| DIRECTLY UNKNOWN               | 26           | ***          | 130       |
| MR TOAD'S WILD RIDE            | 26           |              | 136       |
| NAKED INSTINCTS/ SLIGHT CHANGE | 25           | ****         | 130       |
| THE LOOKING GLASS              | 25           | ****         | 132       |
| LIQUID GLASS                   | 25           | ***          | 132       |
| THE ENERGY OF SLAVES           | 25           | ***          | 131       |
| TRUE SAILING IS DEAD           | 25           | ***          | 137       |
| STRONG ARM OF THE LAW          | 24           | ****         | 136       |
| CROOK AND CRIME                | 24           | ***          | 135       |
| THE SULTANS OF SWING           | 24           | ***          | 137       |
| BREAKING THE RULES             | 23           | ***          | 136       |
| LOST RUBY                      | 23           | **           | 129       |
| THE FAVOURITE GAME             | 23           | **           | 129       |
| THUNDERSTRUCK                  | 23           | **           | 129       |
| JACKBOOTS AND BROWNSHIRT       | 23           |              | 115       |
| BAMBI AND THE BROKEN LEG       | 22           | **           | 132       |
| DESPERATE MEASURES             | 22           |              | 94        |
| UNKNOWN                        | 22           |              | 129       |
| THE RIGHT STUFF                | 21           | ****         | 116       |
| REVENGE OF THE NERDS           | 21           |              | 111       |

| <b>Climb Name</b>            | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Stars</b> | <b>Pg</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| THE DARK OF THE SUN          | 21           |              | 118       |
| BANGALALA BROOKS             | 20           | ****         | 124       |
| BEAUTIFUL LOSERS             | 20           | **           | 130       |
| GRAND BIZARRE                | 20           | **           | 125       |
| QUIVER DIRECT                | 20           | **           | 102       |
| QUIVER DIRECT VARIATION      | 20           |              | 103       |
| HIGH NOON                    | 19           | ****         | 117       |
| DEXTROSE                     | 19           | ***          | 115       |
| LATE IN THE EVENING          | 19           | ***          | 122       |
| REFLECTED SINS               | 19           | ***          | 132       |
| BLAND HUZZA                  | 19           | **           | 126       |
| PRIVATE EYES                 | 19           | **           | 124       |
| REACH FOR THE SKY            | 19           | **           | 123       |
| THE SCAR                     | 19           | **           | 113       |
| BEE STING                    | 19           | *            | 119       |
| STATE OF INDEPENDENCE        | 19           |              | 111       |
| DEXTER                       | 15 or<br>19  | ****         | 114       |
| THE CRACKED MIRROR           | 18           | ***          | 118       |
| AMBUSH                       | 18,A0        | **           | 97        |
| TTLCTTCTKFWGSO               | 18           | **           | 134       |
| UTOPIAN BEACH HERMIT         | 18           | **           | 128       |
| THE REVEALING SCIENCE OF GOD | 18           |              | 127       |
| PHALLUS DIRECT               | 17           | ****         | 106       |
| RUBBER SOUL                  | 17           | ***          | 95        |
| IT'S LOOKING GOOD HOUSTON!   | 17           | **           | 120       |
| THE OPPOSITION               | 17           | **           | 122       |
| NOT NOW JOHN                 | 17           |              | 113       |
| THE JOKER                    | 17           |              | 126       |
| TRAD UNKNOWN                 | 17           |              | 133       |
| SUSTAGEN                     | 16           | *            | 121       |
| F2 CORNER                    | 16           |              | 130       |
| QUIVER FACE                  | 15           | **           | 101       |

| <b>Climb Name</b>       | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Stars</b> | <b>Pg</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| TSSPMQ                  | 15           | **           | 134       |
| AMPUTATION CHIMNEY      | 15           | *            | 121       |
| LAZARUS                 | 15           | *            | 103       |
| PIGDOG                  | 15           | *            | 99        |
| HITCH HIKER             | 15           |              | 96        |
| HOROSCOPE               | 15           |              | 108       |
| PANCAKE                 | 15           |              | 109       |
| RAMPART                 | 15           |              | 110       |
| WARCRY                  | 15           |              | 97        |
| PINNACLE FRONTAL        | 14           | ****         | 107       |
| GET IT UP FOR ADA !     | 14           | **           | 112       |
| BATTLE CRACK            | 13           | **           | 98        |
| SOMETHING ELSE          | 13           | **           | 100       |
| ENTREE                  | 13           |              | 104       |
| KEYHOLE                 | 13           |              | 99        |
| LAST FLIGHT             | 13           |              | 93        |
| MOONRISE                | 13           |              | 96        |
| PINNACLE GULLY          | 10           | **           | 105       |
| TWINKLETOES             | 10           | **           | 94        |
| BORED, BORED, BORED     | 10           |              | 112       |
| CHOCKSTONE FACE         | 10           |              | 114       |
| KEY ROUTE               | 7            | **           | 100       |
| CROOKED CORNER          | 7            |              | 93        |
| MEN ONLY CRACK          | 7            |              | 109       |
| ANDREW PEDLEY'S PROJECT |              |              | 128       |
| OPEN PROJECT            |              |              | 137       |

## FERNKLOOF







*Figure 1: The Stormwatch Area*

# FERNKLOOF

## General

This kloof is steep and scenically attractive. The approach hike to the trad climbs is a bit of a bitch, so the author has only climbed here once, preferring to go to neighbouring Mhlabatini instead.

There are some very good sport climbs in the lower part of the kloof. A few of the better lines have been included in this guide.

The usual meet point is found at the junction of Great Gully and the Main Kloof. This can be approached from either the east side via Key Gulley or from the west side via Great Gully. The eastern approach is direct and steep. As the climbs are all on the true left, it is often possible to scope out the rock from above if you approach this way. The western approach is longer, rising higher and less steep.

Access to the upper area through the kloof is difficult due to a large pool through which you would need to swim and some difficult boulders above the pool. The upper section of the kloof below the 15m waterfall contains a few 50m climbs. These lie above the meet point but the best rock and longest climbs are found adjacent to the meet spot continuing downstream. These areas have climbs of 70 to 80m in height.

## Access

Fernkloof is privately owned, and currently access is easy, via the Bergheim camp ground. Park in the campsite. You can walk to a gate and along a road until you get to a good path leading toward the kloof. You can see the kloof directly in front

of you as you walk along the path. There is always plenty of water in the kloof. The bolted sport routes are found in the lower areas all below the large pool.

As of October 2012, it costs R25 per person per day and R20 per car per day to park at Bergheim.

### **Safety**

The first aid dump is located in a small cave 13m up a small gully left of the cascades, which are 16m upstream of the trad meeting place at the junction of Key, Great and Main gullies.

### **Aspect**

All of the climbs are on the true left of the kloof, which means that they will receive morning sun and afternoon shade.

### **Descents**

Use either Middle Gully Left or Great Gully for the trad climbs.

### **Camping**

Bergheim offers a pleasant campsite for a decent fee. Over weekends, you will often find other climbers camping here. They normally congregate at the campsites amongst the trees, once you have driven past the swimming pool.

### **Finding Routes**

DEXTER is fairly easy to find. A very short way downstream of Middle Gully, you will find a set of obvious and large roofs on the true left. DEXTER starts on the upstream end of these, climbs above the first roof and then does a 15m traverse

rightwards above the first roof and below the second roof. A peg is visible near the end of the traverse.

## **Climbs on the true right**

### **CROOKED CORNER**

**7**

This is a route starting about 10m below Middle Gully Right and sloping back at an easy angle except for the final 6m.

*First ascent: 8 Nov 1948 J.P.K. Roux.*

### **LAST FLIGHT**

**13**

On the right side of the kloof below Middle Gully Right is a small prominent buttress. The climb makes its way up the centre of this buttress.

**1. 10m 10** Move up from bed of the kloof until it is possible to gain a ramp slanting up to the right. Belay in a cubby hole.

**2. 15m 13** Climb steeply out of cubby hole on the left and then move diagonally right to an alcove on the right hand edge of the buttress.

**3. 15m 11** Traverse back left until it is possible to move up the wall. Pleasant and exposed climbing leads to the top.

*First ascent: 1977 C. Baker, D. Hughes and P. Goodridge.*

## Climbs on the true left

### **TWINKLETOES**

**10 \*\***

The climb starts 20m to the left of AMBUSH and goes up the obvious chimney/corner to the left of the overhanging buttress.

**1. 15m 10** Climb the chimney to the inverted V roof, move right and continue up the obvious corner to the tree belay.

**2. 40m 10** Climb the face on the right side of the corner to the top.

A pleasant climb.

*First ascent: Early 1983 D. Peters and A.C. Fatti.*

### **DESPERATE MEASURES**

**22**

Located about 40m downstream from the top of the upper area on the true left. The route starts just left of massive overhangs (piton can be seen in small rail just below the overhangs)

**1. 23m 21** Start on a jammed block in the river, gain access to a big jug just to the left of a crack with a layback/dyno move, once you gain the crack, climb it to the overhangs above and move left out to recess with two cracks, climb the left crack to a ledge with a tree on it.

**2. 15m 15** Climb the finger crack on the right hand side of the ledge, follow the crack to an awkward move involving a handjam, this takes you into a chimney with a big triangular block above it, climb out of this to a larger sloping ledge.

**3. 40m 22** Above the triangular block is a jam crack that break through the slightly overhanging wall almost to the top, climb this until the crack disappears following as straight line to the top as possible. The protection is great all the way through this route, many nuts are very handy for the last pitch.

*First ascent: Dec 2000 Robert Powell and Deon Grobelaar.*

## RUBBER SOUL

17 \*\*\*

The route takes a direct line up the front of a buttress 18m upstream from AMBUSH and 18m downstream from the 12m waterfall. The start is directly below an inverted V 8m up and at the centre of the buttress wall.

**1. 14m 13** Climb directly up to the inverted V, move above it and across left to a stance and peg belay, to the right of a tree.

**2. 14m 17** Climb diagonally right from the stance to the twin horizontal cracks in the red wall (peg runner 6m). Move left and pull strenuously over a bulge to a resting ledge. Move 1m left and make an awkward layback move. Then diagonally right to the ledge and peg or tree belay.

**3. 9m 15** Move up into the short steep groove, make a difficult move up it and up to a large ledge below the large overhang.

**4. 25m 15** Follow the ledge some 2m left and move up 10m over a bulge then right to good holds above the overhang. Continue traversing rightwards some 8m and ascend a short corner then easily to the top.

### Note:

A pleasant direct route on good clean rock.

*First ascent: May 1968 A.D. Barley and M. White.*

## MOONRISE

13

This route follows a shallow crack/recess which runs almost to the top of the cliffs, to the right of RUBBER SOUL.

**1. 30m 10** Climb up to the tree 3m downstream of, and level with, the 'inverted V' of RUBBER SOUL. Follow the crack behind the tree to a ledge, and continue up a recess to a ledge on large blocks. (The grade of this pitch can be raised by avoiding the use of trees and roots).

**2. 30m 14** Continue climbing up the now steeper recess, starting from the left hand end of the ledge. This leads to easier rock which is followed to the top.

### Note:

From the right hand end of the ledge at the top of the first pitch one can climb to the top over grade 8 rock.

*First ascent: Jul 1977 K.M. Smith and P. Bender.*

## HITCH HIKER

15

Starts 4m to right of RUBBER SOUL.

**1. 15m 13** Climb crack to second tree and ledge.

**2. 15m 11** Climb recess (bushy) to below red face.

**3. 35m 15** The pitch follows a straight line to the top, except for the upper section where it turns diagonally left. The first section consists of crack climbing followed by various face moves.

### Variation:

From the right hand edge of the ledge at top of pitch 2, one can lower the grade to 10 by climbing out to the right.

*First ascent: Nov 1976 E. Druschke and R. Stapley.*

## AMBUSH

**18,A0\*\***

The climb is 100m upstream of the junction with Great Gully. At this point there is a 6m overhang at the top of the face. The climb starts at a 2,5m long rock splinter leaning against the face.

- 1. 18m 13** Climb sometimes at the crack and sometimes to the right, past a tree 8m up to a small stance at a chockstone.
- 2. 11m 15** Traverse right for 9m, then ascend at the left of a minor overhang to the second ledge above this overhang.
- 3. 13m 18, A0** Traverse left for 6m above the traverse of the second pitch to a corner. Traverse left around the buttress (awkward) until the ledge ends. Climb diagonally upwards to the left onto a long narrow ledge.
- 4. 6m 10** Climb upwards and then diagonally left to a stance on which there are three trees.

### Notes:

- The climb is sustained.
- Started in 1950 by R. Davies and D. Gillham.

*First ascent: 1957 R. Davies, G. Carter and J. Barclay. (with aid – since climbed free)*

## WARCRY

**15**

Start 12m downstream of AMBUSH next to a 3m high rock rib.

- 1. 22m 15** Up onto the top of the rib. 3m up left, then ascend rightwards past a tree to a large tree and belay in an overhang bay.
- 2. 22m 13** Ascend the steep wall immediately right of the overhang bay using tree and good holds. Continue up the groove to the top.

### Note:

A rather scrappy route compared with others in the area.

*First ascent: Jun 1969 A.D. Barley and M. White.*

## **BATTLE CRACK**

**13 \*\***

Commence about 20m up Great Gully from its junction with Fernkloof proper.

- 1. 12m 13** Climb a grey face to the left of an overhang which has a crack dividing it from the sloping grey slab on its left. Climb the slab to a ledge.
- 2. 15m 6** Climb up easy face for 6m. Traverse left and up onto a broad grassy ledge to a grey face 5m right of the largest tree on the ledge. (Battle Crack is the 3/4m wide crack starting about 8m above the broad grassy ledge. It has a tree at its base and a large undercut brown recess below it.)
- 3. 15m 11** Climb the grey face right of the brown recess, up the side of a detached block, then follow a dassie traverse left to a tree on a small brown platform at the foot of the crack.
- 4. 15m 11** Chimney up crack to a flake-like chockstone and move left onto arete, then onto blocks at foot of final crack.
- 5. 10m 8** Move right, past the crack continuing from the top of the chimney and up an easy recess to the top.

*First ascent: Dec 1948 E. Scholes and M. Estill.*

## PIGDOG

15 \*

**1. 12m 13** This pitch is the same as the first pitch of BATTLE CRACK.

**2. 16m 7** Climb the easy rock for 6m, then traverse left along a broad grassy ledge. At the base of Battle Crack there is a large recess, containing a large bushy tree in its base, and another fairly large tree at 8m.

**3. 35m 15** Climb up the shallow recess on the righthand wall of the corner above the bushy tree. Move right before reaching a small overhang, and continue up to a ledge at 7m. (This is the dassie traverse of BATTLE CRACK.) Climb up diagonally rightwards from the lefthand end of the ledge for 4m, then traverse right onto the arete. Follow this up, breaking through a gap in the overhanging rock, 2m to the right of a prominent open book. Carry on to tree belay at top.

*First ascent: Jul 1977 P. Bender and K.M. Smith.*

## KEYHOLE

13

**1. 12m 13** The first pitch is same as BATTLE CRACK.

**2. 22m 10** From tree at top of first pitch go straight up grey nose on the left, into a corner, then again straight up a grey block to a stance on top.

**3. 25m 10** Go straight up the corner above the block and into a chimney, past a big tree near the bottom of the chimney. Carry on up the chimney to a ledge and a tree.

*First ascent: Nov 1957 P. Harris, R. Forsyth and Miss J. Humphreys.*

## SOMETHING ELSE

13 \*\*

Start 8m right of BATTLE CRACK and 12m left of KEY ROUTE where a medium-sized tree grows out of a split in the overhang above.

- 1. 10m 13** Move diagonally left in a recess past a fixed piton, past the tree and onto a ledge.
- 2. 20m 6** Scramble up diagonally left to the broad grassy ledge below the main krantz.
- 3. 28m 13** Climb the grey recess to the left of the large tree which lies below BATTLE CRACK. Beyond a small tree about 10m up the recess becomes a narrow chimney. Climb the chimney to the top passing a chockstone and a deep narrow cave high up.

### Variation:

**3a. 15** Something Further: From the small tree 10m up, climb the brown vertical wall to the left. Zig-zag up and enter a conspicuous brown square recess with blocks at its base. Swing around the block to the right and re-enter the chimney on to the top. (Sep 1979 R. Fox and D. Scott)

*First ascent: Unknown Party unknown.*

## KEY ROUTE

7 \*\*

Commence in Great Gully at its junction with the main kloof.

- 1. 12m 7** Climb recess behind a 35cm wide smooth blackish tree. Bear slightly left to large sloping ledge.
- 2. 10m 5** Traverse left and ascend a bush covered recess to a tree.
- 3. 12m 7** Climb through recess on right to a triangular patch of grass and a small tree.

### Note:

Pitches 2 and 3 are seldom climbed and the variation below is the more usual route.

### **Variation:**

**2 & 3. 25m 10** Instead of traversing left, climb directly up to small tree in recess. Move right onto nose and up diagonally right into a brown recess. Climb recess past a stamvrug tree. Continue up and left over blocks and step left under nose to triangular patch of grass.

**4. 25m 7** Climb crack at back of ledge and move left to enter final chimney to top.

*First ascent: 1947 F.G. Petousis, E. Ruhle and K. Ruhle.*

## **QUIVER FACE**

**15 \*\***

Commence in main kloof approximately 15m below junction of Great Gully. There is a small overhang 18m above the starting point.

**1. 18m 15** Climb 3m to bottom of small smooth recess. Traverse to right into a small crack which is ascended, after which climb a face on the right on small holds to a broad platform and small tree.

### **Variation:**

**1a. 15m 10** Avoid the first pitch as described by starting 3m downstream from Great Gully. This is the more obvious route.

**2. 5m 10** Reach another platform by a layback in a corner.

**3. 30m 7** Traverse to the left and upwards over a number of blocks until underneath a conspicuous "prow" jutting out from the top of the kloof. Traverse under a nose to the triangular grass patch described under pitch 3 of KEY ROUTE.

**4. 22m 10** Climb exposed nose on right of grass patch then up underneath and to the right of the prow to a ledge. Traverse to the right along the ledge and up a short chimney.

*First ascent: Dec 1950 E. Scholes and M. Estill.*

## QUIVER DIRECT

19 \*\*

Start as for QUIVER FACE, about 15m downstream of junction of Great Gully below a small smooth recess, and 18m below some overhangs.

**1. 28m 19** Climb directly up the recess, stepping out left at the top (crux). Traverse 3m left, move up 2,5m and then traverse back right for 3m and pull up onto a ledge and resting point. Standing in a sling from a piton, move up into the base of a steep recess above the ledge and climb this to the overhangs. Traverse left under the overhangs to a good ledge and piton belay.

### Variation: (QUIVER DIRECTER)

**1a. 28m 17** Start in smooth recess (same as QUIVER DIRECT). Climb up and move left at top (15). Move 2m left and climb 2,5m up. A number of delicate moves brings one to ledge below overhang with two breaks. Move delicately up to the left of the left hand break until a very thin slit below the overhang acts as a handhold. Move right to the break in the overhang and then make a difficult move up the recess to below the second overhang (17). Move left to belay point. (This recess is 2m to the left of the original route which climbs the right hand recess with the aid of a peg.) Variation opening party unknown.

**2. 28m 13** Layback up the corner above the left hand end of this stance and continue straight up to ledge and block belay below and slightly to the right of a steep red recess.

**3. 25m 15** Climb the recess strenuously for 9m and then swing out right on good holds. Continue straight up and finish up a deep chimney past chockstone at the top.

*First ascent: Nov 1972 P. Fatti, R. Davies with B. Penzhorn. (pitches 2 and 3 only).*

## QUIVER DIRECT VARIATION

20

Start as for QUIVER DIRECT.

**1. 45m 16** Climb the first pitch as for QUIVER DIRECT, then continue up in a vertical line to a large ledge, belay at the base of a steep jam crack.

**2. 15m 20** Climb the crack, and finish through notch in short overhang. Belay on the broad ledge.

Scramble to the top.

### Note:

Protection on the second pitch is excellent and climbing is strenuous.

*First ascent: May 1987 P.S. Greenfield, R. Dodding and T.P. Wilmot.*

## LAZARUS

15 \*

Start 3m downstream of the start of QUIVER DIRECT and 3m upstream of the big chock boulder above the wade pool. The pitch follows a crack system on the left hand side which is entered by starting on a large boulder just downstream of it.

**1. 25m 15** Step up onto a small footledge and move by an awkward hand-swing left around the bulge to gain the start of the crack (3m). Follow the crack via two bulges (good nut runners) to a horizontal break (8m). Climb the wall above moving diagonally right and then back left to stand on top of a large flat block at the start of the reddish rock (9m). At this point one is below the downstream end of some large overhangs. Move right to gain a small crack and climb this to the belay ledge (tree belay to right) (5m).

**2. 43m 15** Climb the obvious corner and system of easy broken ledges, moving slightly right, to a short free-standing pinnacle at the base of a steep shallow red corner (23m). One can belay here. Climb the pinnacle corner above until it is possible to move right with difficulty to a sloping ledge

on the arete (9m). Move up the left side of the deceptive face by an awkward move onto a large ledge (5m). Climb the right hand edge of the next wall (3m) to a large ledge and walk 6m to a large tree belay. Scramble to top.

**Note:**

The first pitch is the same as that of QUIVER FACE apart from the first few moves.

*First ascent: Sep 1973 M. Makowski and P. Fatti.*

**ENTREE**

**13**

The climb starts from the tree in the gully 30m from the corner of QUIVER FACE.

**1. 25m 13** Climb the tree for 7m and do a delicate step across onto the face. Move 7m right to a right-angled diedre. Climb diedre for 11m using the parallel cracks which are 1.5m apart to a stance at a small tree. Chockstone belay.

**2. 25m 13** Ascend the crack above the stance for about 3m. Traverse 6m to the right to a small pinnacle. Continue upwards for about 11m to the top.

*First ascent: Jul 1974 M. Prior and A. Firth.*

## **PINNACLE GULLY**

**10 \*\***

The pinnacle is situated on the left hand side of the kloof about 100m below the junction of Great Gully and is only detached at its top. Slightly up kloof of the pinnacle is a small gully on the left. The route starts by entering the gully by a short pitch, after which the pinnacle is climbed in the corner formed by its upstream side and the main face.

- 1. 12m 10** Take off from a large tree onto a greasy wet slab, from which a short chimney is reached.
- 2. 15m 8** After walking up the gully for about 10m, climb out on the pinnacle side up a slight recess to a stance on the top of a block.
- 3. 22m 8** Start in a large chimney separating the pinnacle from the main face, below a large chockstone forming a bridge between the pinnacle and the main face. Climb secondary chimney on the right and over blocks and face to a narrow ledge. Traverse left onto top of chockstone.
- 4. 12m 8** About 2m back along the traverse referred to under pitch 3 the pinnacle proper may be climbed. (This is actually part of the last pitch of the Frontal route.)

### **Variation:**

- 1. 10m 10** Climb the very steep, clean corner/recess directly in line with the gully proper.

*First ascent: Jan 1951 R.W. Charlton.*

## PHALLUS DIRECT

17 \*\*\*\*

The route follows a direct line up the front of the Fernkloof pinnacle. Start 5m to the right of PINNACLE GULLY on a smooth sloping slab facing upstream, slightly left of prominent open book breaking through the overhangs.

**1. 26m 16** Ascend the sloping slab to a boulder pinned under a roof. Break through the first roof using this. Climb into open book, moving diagonally left to the left ridge. Climb this until the bulge. Move 1m right into the recess again, which is climbed up a handjam crack to a sloping ledge below the overhanging headwall. (The top half of this pitch is the same as that used by HOROSCOPE)

**2. 24m 17** The crack continues above. Climb up some boulders on the left and step left into an overhanging jam crack. Climb this (strenuous) to a ledge. Step up and right onto the front of the pinnacle. Up this (airy) to below summit overhang. Break through the roof on big holds to top.

### Notes:

- 1.** This route is on superb rock and is exposed.
- 2.** The direct start to pitch 2 to enter the crack directly has been climbed at grade 19 (Oct 1985 S. Middlemiss and S. Kellet.)
- 3.** Instead of climbing the handjam crack of pitch 2, it is possible to continue up the narrow chimney just left of it at grade 16 (Jan 1997 P. Fatti, M. Prior and M. O'Reilly)

*First ascent: Jun 1985 T. Hoole, G. Muller and I. Guest.*

## **PINNACLE FRONTAL**

**14 \*\*\*\***

The route commences at an overhung damp, grey face immediately below the summit.

**1. 12m 11** Start on right and climb up to a dassie traverse below the overhangs, then traverse left round an awkward corner to a tree and good stance.

**2. 18m 14** From the tree, traverse diagonally up to the right for 2m to the bottom of a steep recess. Climb the recess to a large tree.

**3. 12m 7** Climb chimney to top of a large block.

**4. 22m 10** Climb on upstream side of pinnacle to top.

**Variation: (\*\*\*\*)**

**4. 15m 13** From the point at which the pinnacle becomes free-standing, ascend middle of upstream face in slight chimney and move right into the gap beneath the huge top block of the pinnacle. Crawl to outside tip of pinnacle and pull-up spectacularly. Rope work is very tricky here. Continue easily to top.

*First ascent: Feb 1951 E. Scholes, J. Fowler and M. Prior.*

## HOROSCOPE

15

This route follows a line about 6m to the right of PINNACLE FRONTAL, ending at the top of the pinnacle on its north (downstream) side.

**1. 18m 13** Start about 3m right of the start of the Frontal route. Ascend right up to the overhang which is about 6m above stream bed, and traverse left (i.e. above the dassie traverse of the Frontal route) to the bottom of a V-shaped recess which is about 5m right of the recess in which the second pitch of the Frontal route is situated. Climb up the recess for 5m, traverse left onto ridge, ascend a further 5m, traverse right (overhang above) onto the right hand wall of the recess and then ascend the ledge.

**2. 9m 8** Traverse left into recess (above overhang at the top of last pitch) and continue directly up to rock ledge.

**3. 9m 7** Walk right along down-sloping ledge and enter gully on immediate downstream side of pinnacle. Ascend gully past chockstone jammed against tree, and then climb on face of pinnacle. This brings one to the level of the neck between pinnacle and kloof wall.

**4. 9m 15** Climb steep crack on downstream face of pinnacle.

### Note:

The route is a little contrived, as escape to the right is possible at the top of every pitch, except the third.

*First ascent: Nov 1957 R. Davies, I. Cohen and G. Carter.*

## PANCAKE

15

70m downstream from HOROSCOPE to the right of a large pool at first obvious break in rock face.

**1. 15m 10** Climb diagonally left up a recess break in rock face. Up to a tree belay behind large block.

Now walk to the right (facing rock) to a gully. Walk up this (4) to very large cave (60m).

**2. 15m 7** Start pitch at right hand corner (facing the cave) and belay from tree above cave.

**3. 25m 15** Traverse to the left of this tree for 1m and then climb straight up for about 5m (crux) then traverse delicately to easier rock on left. An alternate route can be made by moving left to the far corner and then up. The latter route is easier (9). Continue up easier rock to two small bushes on a large flat sloping platform. There is a tree for a sling runner just before the two small bushes are reached.

**4. 15m 8** From sloping platform move left along traverse to break through in corner.

*First ascent: Mar 1969 J.E. Stapley, R.L. Stapley, S. Rademeyer and P. Finsen.*

## MEN ONLY CRACK

7

Start at end of long earth ramp which commences about 50m above the junction of Middle Gully, just downstream of an exceptionally large chockstone blocking the kloof.

**1. 12m 7** Start at the highest point of the earth ramp and traverse right for 6m past a small nose, then climb recess to a tree.

**2. 18m 5** Traverse left along an upward sloping ledge into the bottom of a very narrow chimney behind a large block.

**3. 8m 7** Climb chimney.

**4. 9m 7** Climb sloping recess.

## Variations:

**2a. 6m 8** Move up leftwards then back right along a ramp to a block belay.

**3a. 22m 15** Traverse up right, round the arete and up a bulging crack. Step left and up a shallow corner crack to the top.

**4a. 15m 10** Traverse round a nose on the right and climb a crack in an exposed position.

*First ascent: Nov 1948 E. Scholes, B. Chadwick and H. Taylor.*

## RAMPART

**15**

From Middle Gully Left go up the kloof keeping high on the right hand side until all further progress is barred by a great column which protrudes from the face.

**1. 28m 13** Ascend the face to the right by means of the four opposing ramps. The 13 move is getting onto the final ramp. (A grade 10 variation is possible by chimneying the crack between the column and the face above the start of the third ramp.) Tree root belay point.

**2. 29m 13** Behind the column a delicate move gives access to an open book on the opposite left hand face. The route bears up and left until a downward sloping ramp leads to a tree at the base of a gully. Ascend to the left on the face behind the tree which leads onto ramp which ends at the base of a deep crack.

**3. 18m 15** Ascend the crack (crux) and then bear left up a ramp through a rounded section to the final stance. A variation crack of equal standard may be found directly above the crack crux.

*First ascent: Feb 1968 R. Duff and B. Tyson.*

## REVENGE OF THE NERDS

21

Same start as STATE OF INDEPENDENCE.

**1. 30m 17** Climb the first pitch of STATE OF INDEPENDENCE and continue up the left hand crack for 5m. Traverse awkwardly left to a small tree.

**2. 25m 21** Step right from the tree and climb the steep crack above to a small stance. Continue up the recess on the right.

### Note:

Opened using one rest.

*First ascent: Unknown M. Brunke, M. Giddy and A. N. Other.*

## STATE OF INDEPENDENCE

19

About 70m upstream of DEXTER, on the left hand side of Fernkloof, is a steep wall of auburn rock with the bottom of the kloof forming a ramp.

**1. 15m 13** In the middle of the face, and approximately 10m up, is a small tree as thick as a man's wrist. Starting on the left where the ramp meets a sloping ledge, traverse 10m right over sloping rock and climb up steeply, directly below the tree, to a stance.

**2. 35m 19** Above are two cracks. Climb the one on the right for 5m. Move right and diagonally up across a steep slab to vanish around the corner. Climb the off-width crack through the roof to a stance.

*First ascent: July 1983 M. Brunke and J. Cheesmond.*

## **GET IT UP FOR ADA !**

**14 \*\***

Situated halfway down Middle Gully Left, the route takes the pronounced groove (cairn) 25m upstream of CHOCKSTONE FACE and follows the left-leaning openbook/ramp system to the top (wormhole visible from bottom).

**1. 45m 14** Pad up the right extremity of the ramp next to the crack to the wormhole. Worm through this moving out leftwards under pressure. The face steepens here. Continue up open book to roof and straddle through this favouring right hand wall to clear. Move up ledge behind to gain groove with narrow overhanging crack system above. Straddle and jam up crack to comfortable belay stance at top.

*First ascent: Nov 1986 T.P. Willmot and P.S. Greenfield.*

## **BORED, BORED, BORED**

**10**

About 40m upstream of SCAR in middle gully left is a cave with a left facing open book above.

**1. ?m 10** Gain the left page of the open book by climbing up some poised boulders just left of the apex of the cave. Move into the crack on the right and ascend till under the roof. Break out left.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 I. Guest.*

## **NOT NOW JOHN**

**17**

15m up the gully to the left of DEXTER is an obvious chimney/crack on the true left hand side. Scramble up easily to a stance.

**1. 45m 17** Climb the recess and step left about halfway into a chimney. Continue up the chimney past a chockstone to a stance.

**2. ?m 10** Step left onto steep rock and climb up the vague break or scramble up at the back of the chimney.

*First ascent: Jul 1983 M. Brunke and J. Cheesmond.*

## **THE SCAR**

**19 \*\***

Located 10m upstream of CHOCKSTONE FACE up middle gully left.

**1. 12m 19** Ascend prominent narrowing crack that slopes left strenuously to ledge on left.

**2. 25m 10** Traverse right to the chockstone crack and up it to a stance under a roof.

**3. 35m 17** Break through the roof on the left using the ridge. Above the roof traverse left onto sloping grey slabs which are ascended to the top.

*First ascent: Jun 1985 I. Guest, G. Muller and T. Hoole.*

## CHOCKSTONE FACE

10

This route commences in a recess at the actual point where the face of Middle Gully Left meets the face of the main kloof.

- 1. 25m 7** Straight up recess to tree and big stance.
- 2. 22m 10** Climb 4m in a chimney to a chock stone, which is avoided by a face climb on the right and a pull up to a rock above the chock stone. Continue out to left, reaching a many-boughed tree.
- 3. 15m 7** Climb crack and face.

*First ascent: Nov 1948 O. Shipley.*

## DEXTER

15 \*\*\*\*

20m downstream of Middle Gully Left is a wide red slab at 9m, both undercut at its base and overhung above. This slab is traversed from left to right. Start behind a large boulder at the upstream extremity of the slab.

- 1. 25m 15 or 19** Ascend the recess for 5m and step right onto the slab. Traverse 2m to a peg runner (in place). Either continue at this level (19) or step down 1,5m (15). Traverse 3m to a shallow groove and up this to an overhang on the left. Make a descending traverse (peg runner in place) then up rightwards to a tree belay in a chimney. A very fine pitch.
- 2. 12m 10** Ascend the chimney to a huge ledge and belay. Walk 25m left.
- 3. 18m 7** Scramble up the corner to the top.

*First ascent: Oct 1966 P. Fatti, J. Anderson, A.C. Carmen and M. Makowski.*

## DEXTROSE

19 \*\*\*

Start as for DEXTER.

**1. 30m 19** As for DEXTER (using the lower grade 15 variation) to the shallow groove in the middle of the face. Climb up this, past the overhang on the left, to the second overhang. Step left to a crack, climb up past the overhang and continue up the recess above to stance and tree belay.

**2. 10m 13** Traverse right along the ledge to a huge block on the skyline. Climb up this and continue up to a large ledge.

**3. 30m 15** Climb diagonally up left to the base of a big recess. Climb the crack in the left hand wall, stepping out left at the top. Continue up to the top, either via a shallow groove above or by stepping right and pulling up spectacularly through the overhang on good holds.

*First ascent: Oct 1979 L.P. Fatti and R. Georgeson-Cecil.*

## JACKBOOTS AND BROWNSHIRT

23

**1. 35m 23** Starts directly below DEXTER and DEXTROSE. Pull through bulge at bottom (strenuous and devious) and up onto slab above. Up slab and move slightly left and up steep bulging rock/corner past peg to rejoin DEXTROSE at 20m. Follow corner to tree.

*First ascent: Jan 1991 S. Middlemiss.*

## THE RIGHT STUFF

21 \*\*\*\*

Essentially a direct version of DEXTER.

**1. 20m 21** Start directly below the stance at the end of the first pitch of DEXTER. Climb up short open book to a roof.

Awkward moves through the roof, then climb the corner above moving left onto the face at the top to gain the stance.

**2. 12m 10** Scramble up the corner and chimney behind the stance to a belay point on top of a flat boulder on the right.

**3. 43m 20** Ascend the right hand of two cracks to a ledge with a tree. move left behind the tree and up another short crack and continue to the top.

### **Note:**

The first free ascent was in Aug 1987 by S. Middlemiss and M. Hyslop.

*First ascent: 16 Nov 1986 R. Dodding and P. Greenfield (Pitch 1); Feb 1969 A.D. Barley and M. White (Pitch 3).*

## HIGH NOON

19 \*\*\*\*

10m downstream from THE RIGHT STUFF, a downstream facing slab cuts through the overhangs which guard the base of the crag. This route follows the slab through the overhangs, then breaks up right below further overhangs to finish up a series of steep cracks above.

**1. 14m 17** Start from a boulder and climb up the centre of the whitish slab using a flake crack. At the overhang traverse left and around the arete to a small stance and peg belay.

**2. 12m 19** The slab continues through the overhang as two thin cracks. Layback up the left crack to reach a small tree. (A peg was used on the opening ascent, but since climbed free.) Make a long step right to reach an easy angled slab at the top of the right hand crack and continue to a good ledge and peg belay.

**3. 18m 10** Go diagonally up right to avoid the overhang and over wide ledges to belay below a steep chimney-crack.

**4. 15m 19** Follow the shallow chimney-crack which is difficult for 6m until a small ledge is gained on the left. Continue more easily to a wide ledge and block belay on the left.

**5. 9m 11** Continue in the same crack line to a wide ledge below a right-angled corner.

**6. 20m 15** Climb the corner crack on layback holds, step left and up to a cave with an awkward final move above.

*First ascent: Sep 1968 A.D. Barley and R.P. Barley.*

## THE DARK OF THE SUN

21

Climbs through the large overhangs guarding the base of the crag near HIGH NOON. This is approximately 50-70m downstream of DEXTER. The route follows some obvious cracks through the roofs (about 5m above the streambed) into a shallow chimney/corner, which is followed to easier ground.

**1. 15m 21** Climb up to the roof and move gymnastically through to the chimney, follow this past a small tree to easier ground.

*First ascent: 1989*

*S. Middlemiss and M. Hislop*

## THE CRACKED MIRROR

18 \*\*\*

Start by a large tree at the base of two parallel cracks which lie midway between HIGH NOON and AMPUTATION CHIMNEY. This climb starts up the left hand of these 2 cracks. About 15m above are two recesses, each containing a single tree.

**1. 35m 18** Climb the crack for 2m, step left and ascend the smooth face directly without reference to either crack. Protection is by tying-off the thick tree root. Gain the blunt arete above (between the two recesses). Follow this delicately to the grassy gully above. Tree belay. (Common stance with AMPUTATION CHIMNEY.)

**2. 15m 18** Traverse 3m right and ascend the steep appealing crack system above to a ledge with a tree. Good protection.

**3. 15m 15** Follow the sharp, stepped arete above, move left and follow a short corner-crack to a broad, vegetated ledge. Scramble to top.

*First ascent: Nov 1986*

*R. Dodding and P.S. Greenfield.*

## **BEE STING**

**19 \***

Start by a large tree at the base of two parallel cracks which lie midway between HIGH NOON and AMPUTATION CHIMNEY.

**1. 30m 15** Climb the right hand crack for a few metres then step left to the other. Continue up this to a ledge and then climb the recess above. Above the large tree, break out to the right. Ascend diagonally right to a hidden stance.

**2. 25m 13** About 18m above is a slanting overhanging crack with a short bottomless chimney below it. Climb up to the chimney, into it and then break out right. The stance is a tiny sloping ledge below and to the right of the crack.

**3. 25m 19** Make an awkward step-down to the right, below a short overhanging wall. Using a layaway grip for the right and poor pinch grips for the left hand, move up to reach good holds. Getting as high as possible on these, move up and find an excellent jug up to the right. Bridge up the corner above.

*First ascent: Sep 1973 P. Fatti and P. Anderson.*

## IT'S LOOKING GOOD HOUSTON!

17 \*\*

Start 7m upstream from SUSTAGEN at the base of a 4m long crack. Above lies a downstream-facing buttress, which has a mass of tangled roots at its base.

**1. 35m 16** Step off a boulder to start, ascend the crack, then move right behind a tree. Follow the SUSTAGEN open book to the second tree, step onto the left hand face and take a leftward-trending line to belay at a bushy tree, below an obvious chimney/groove capped by a huge chockstone.

**2. 15m 15** Climb the chimney/groove, through the hole, and belay on top of the chockstone.

**3. 15m 17** Ascend the left wall of the corner above, keeping just left of the true corner. Mantleshelf delicately onto the huge ledge above. Walk left and belay at a bushy tree below a right angled corner.

**4. 20m 15** This right angled corner is pitch 6 of HIGH NOON. Follow this to the top.

### Note:

Rather scrappy first pitch. Good climbing above that.

*First ascent: Nov 1986 P.S. Greenfield and R. Dodding.*

## SUSTAGEN

16 \*

The climb starts 5m upstream of AMPUTATION CHIMNEY.

- 1. 25m 15** Start the climb beneath a large block with layback holds on the right. Layback for 5m and carry on straight up an open book to an old horizontal tree. (Not more than 2 persons should occupy this tree belay stance.)
- 2. 25m 11** From the old tree traverse to the right and up a chimney to a large ledge.
- 3. 20m 16** Climb the face to the right of the bushy recess and move out left into a narrow chimney which carries on out to the top.

*First ascent: Nov 1979 S. Akers and B. Schumacher.*

## AMPUTATION CHIMNEY

15 \*

The chimney is an obvious 1m break in the wall about 80m below Middle Gully.

- 1. 30m 10** Commence on the left hand side of the chimney and carry on up for 7m to a break. Continue up the second half of the chimney to a large ledge and tree.
- 2. 7m 5** Scramble over some looshish rock and traverse right into a corner with a sheer face on the right.
- 3. 20m 15** Climb up for 7m in 40° recess formed between the vertical face on the right and a small subsidiary ridge as far as an overhang, then step out left and climb a further 7m to a good tree.
- 4. 23m 10** Carry on straight up the recess which now takes an easier angle to the top of the climb.

*First ascent: Nov 1948 E. Scholes, P. Petousis and O. Shipley.*

## THE OPPOSITION

17 \*\*

20m downstream from AMPUTATION CHIMNEY, on the same side, is a group of three large trees. Climb starts up face directly opposite these trees with a very small corner at the base of the face (cairn).

- 1. 25m 15** Move up corner onto face above. Climb through bulge into recess above and continue to top of pinnacle. (Protection is sparse on first half of pitch.)
- 2. 22m 13** Climb large rightward-leaning crack above until a large rightward-sloping ledge is reached. (The crack is blocked above by loose looking rock.)
- 3. 20m 17** From the right hand edge of the ledge move right (2m) onto steep wall. Move up using opposing layaways until angle lessens. Climb corner to top.

*First ascent: May 1985 S. Middlemiss and G. von Maltitz.*

## LATE IN THE EVENING

19 \*\*\*

The climb starts 25m downstream from AMPUTATION CHIMNEY. The climb ascends a shallow open book which continues as a crack through a bulge near the top. A large tree is found just upstream and the open book is flanked by a greyish slab to the left.

- 1. 15m 19** Ascend the short crack into the open book. Continue up steep section to crack. Ascend layback crack with difficulty (crux). Continue up to good ledge with tree belay.
- 2. 15m 13** Move leftwards for 2m then ascend crack/chimney to good belay on top of buttress.
- 3. 25m 15** Continue up the face above following the right hand tending crack system. Take a good stance on top of a series of blocks.
- 4. 35m 16** Traverse right for 5m (1 move 16) to the attractive and easy grey face. Ascend the grey face tending right to the arete.

**Notes:**

Pleasant climb, well protected.

*First ascent: Nov 1986 D. Margetts and A. Mercer.*

**REACH FOR THE SKY**

**19 \*\***

The climb starts directly below the lower overhangs on the buttress on which PRIVATE EYES is located, and starts from the top of a boulder adjacent to a whitish face and large root.

**1. 30m 15** Gain the sloping ledge 3m up and traverse diagonally up left into the recess. Climb up to tree belay. (May be undergraded.)

**2. 30m 17** Traverse diagonally up right, over a small arete, to a sloping ledge and open book. This is on the main arete of the buttress. Climb the open book to a ledge.

**3. 25m 19** From the belay ledge, move up and right onto the buttress' downstream face. Climb the recess above using layback and chimney moves. At the top of the recess move left onto easier rock and climb up to the top.

**Notes:**

An old piton was found on the ledge below the open book of the second pitch. On pitch 3 the rock at the base of the recess appears to be loose, although it was solid when climbed.

*First ascent: Nov 1986 R. Dodding and P.S. Greenfield.*

## **BANGALALA BROOKS**

**20 \*\*\*\***

Pack your leopard print broeks for this one. Climbs the impressive downstream facing wall on the next major buttress downstream from HIGH NOON. This is about 30m upstream of the roped boulder problem in the kloof. The base is guarded by fearsome ferns and barbed bushy brambles. Start to the right of these below a shallow weakness.

**1. 25m 15** Climb the weakness to beneath a roof. Traverse left then up the slab, past the veg. Clamber up some blocks and traverse left and up to belay on a ledge below the right hand side of the impressive face.

**2. 45m 20** Traverse left through a wide, bottomless recess and up to a shattered crack. Keep trending up and left in steps to reach a sloping ledge on the left skyline. Climb straight up to the hanging corner above. Use your leopard-print superpowers to climb this until able to step out left to a ledge. Either belay here or continue to the summit. Remember: you are more attractive than you think!

From the summit two convenient raps on the upstream side of the buttress put you back in the river.

*First ascent: 30 Sep 2012 Hector Pringle, Craig De Villiers, Andrew Porter.*

## **PRIVATE EYES**

**19 \*\***

Devious route finding, sustained climbing. About 80m downstream from HIGH NOON is a buttress with several prominent noses about 20m up. The downstream face is red and is capped by several white roofs. The route starts about 15m above the stream and winds its way up the face, finishing on the right.

**1. 30m 19** Start in a corner that faces the river and has a roof 2m up. Climb the left face of the corner into a chimney position. There is a recess 2m to the left but move up

diagonally right to under a small triangular roof. Pull up diagonally right to reach a large open book. Traverse 4 metres left to a hanging stance.

**2. 25m 19** From the hanging stance, move up diagonally right past some hand jams to easier rock. Continue to the top of this scruffy recess. Step across right and climb up easy rock to the top.

*First ascent: Feb 1984 G. Mallory and S. Mallory.*

## **GRAND BIZARRE**

**20 \*\***

The climb starts about 30m downstream of the prominent undercut buttress on which PRIVATE EYES is located, therefore being about 15m upstream of the wade pool at the lower end of the kloof. At the base of the climb is a cave-like recess, and at its' entrance a tree which is growing across the kloof. High above, and slightly to the left, is a prominent open book. The climb starts on the extremity of the left hand wall of the recess, the initial line being capped by a chockstone and cubbyhole at 5m.

**1. 25m 20** Climb the vague recess on the left hand wall of the main recess to reach the cubbyhole. Traverse left to the first ledge, then move up and further left to second ledge. From this ledge climb the undercut vague open book, and take the recess above, to a tree at the base of the prominent open book.

**2. 37m 16** Climb the open book to grass ledge and belay.

**3. 15m 14** Climb short wall and blocks above to top.

*First ascent: Nov 1986 P.S. Greenfield and T.P. Willmot.*

## **BLAND HUZZA**

**19 \*\***

The route takes the right-slanting line starting at the apex of the cave mentioned in GRAND BIZARRE. Cairn.

**1. 25m 19** Climb the right hand wall of the cave moving left into the apex recess. Heave up and through to easier ground. Follow this to the cave above where a stance can be taken.

**2. 40m 16** To avoid the fractured rock in the natural line above the cave take a ballsy traverse right to the arete. Move up this until crampons can be donned for the mixed climbing above to a stance on top.

*First ascent: Nov 1986 T.P. Willmot, G. Zippel and S. Middlemiss.*

## **THE JOKER**

**17**

**1. 30m 17** Climb a steep face for 3m to reach an alcove at the foot of a shallow groove slanting to the right. Climb more easily up the groove top a good ledge and belay. Even using every possible assistance from convenient roots the move into the alcove is extremely awkward.

**2. 40m 13** Behind the stance is a buttress split by a broad crack. Climb the buttress for 25m to a tree and then finish up a groove.

*First ascent: Feb 1974 A. Firth, D. Hughes, P. Goodridge.*

## **THE REVEALING SCIENCE OF GOD**

**18**

Exact location unknown.

The route starts about 75m up the kloof, past the cascades where the kloof widens slightly. Walk past the cascades to where the kloof is blocked by a large boulder on the right and one or two on the left. The stream makes a small waterfall here. Climb up on the left using the thick roots of a tree growing on the left wall and the boulder closest to it. Walk left and find the cairn. Look up and you will see three large roofs above you. Dyno for a nice jug on the face above you and climb to the open book.

*First ascent: Dec 1997      A. Steyn and Noki.*

## **Mirror Mirror (Sport) Area**

About 100m upstream from the Lower Area an impressive pink and orange smooth wall can be seen with a small roof on the true left side of the kloof. This area continues upstream until the big pool. Routes are listed left to right if facing the wall. The rightmost route only has top anchors and can be used as a warm-up route.

GPS Co-ordinates for the top of UTOPIAN BEACH HERMIT are S25 48.208 E27 18.694 (Datum WG 24)

### **Climbs on the true right**

#### **UTOPIAN BEACH HERMIT**

**18 \*\* [5D]**

The climb ascends the slab above the first pool, opposite the MIRROR MIRROR wall. Traverse in rightwards above the water and up the seam via a mantleshelf move.

*First ascent: Dec 2006 Neil Margetts.*

### **Climbs on the true left**

#### **AQUALUNG**

**32 \*\* [5D]**

A very bouldery route just left of ACROMAX, rather powerful. This was Richard Lord's old project. Has 2 bolts instead of chains.

*First ascent: 2000 Paul Brouard.*

#### **ANDREW PEDLEY'S PROJECT**

**[5D]**

Climbs a line that curves rightwards to share the chains with ACROMAX.

*First ascent: Project Project.*

## ACROMAX

29 \*\*\* [5D]

The third bolted line downstream from the big pool, starting at the undercling just left of the tree. A short bouldery route, pack in the power.

*First ascent:* 1991 G. Murray.

## LOST RUBY

23 \*\* [6D]

Starts just right of the tree, 2m right of ACROMAX. If you use the tree, the grade drops to 22.

*First ascent:* Dec 2007 Neil Margetts.

## THUNDERSTRUCK

23 \*\* [5D]

Climb the groove 3m right of ACROMAX.

### Note:

Retrobolted by Neil Margetts (with permission)

*First ascent:* 1991 J. Orrick, D. Margetts and M. Seegers. (Opened on natural gear)

## UNKNOWN

22

*First ascent:* Unknown I. Guest.

## THE FAVOURITE GAME

23 \*\* [2B, N]

Climb the face 2m right of THUNDERSTRUCK. (Permission has been given to retrobolt this route as long as long as the first ascent remains.)

*First ascent:* 1991 D. Margetts and M. Seegers. (Opened with natural gear)

## F2 CORNER

16

A trad line taking the easy upstream facing corner.

*First ascent: Unknown Party Unknown.*

## BEAUTIFUL LOSERS

20 \*\* [1B, N]

2m Right of THE FAVOURITE GAME is a F2 Corner, BEAUTIFUL LOSERS climbs the face and overhang 1m right of this corner. (Permission has been given to retrobolt this route as long as long as the first ascent remains.)

*First ascent: 1991 D. Margetts.*

## DIRECTLY UNKNOWN

26 \*\*\* [B,A]

Starts from the boulders just above the lower pool. There is a dyno start with the route going left and finishing up and around the corner. The old bolts still need to be removed and must not be used at all.

*First ascent: 1991 J. Orrock.*

## NAKED INSTINCTS/ SLIGHT CHANGE

25 \*\*\*\* [6D]

A 10m route. 10m upstream of MIRROR MIRROR is a short overhanging wall. Starting off a boulder on the right, climb the broken crack-line to exit right to a ledge about 2m from the top of the wall. This route was originally opened by Roger Nattrass on natural at grade 24. A key hold has broken off to bring the grade up to 25 or maybe even 26?

### Note:

Bolted by A. Hufner in 1998.

*First ascent: Aug 1987 R. Nattrass and S. Bradshaw (On natural gear)*

## **THE ENERGY OF SLAVES**

**25 \*\*\* [4B,N]**

This climb starts on the steep face above a boulder which is ascended after the pool. Climb up the face (1 bolt) to a ledge. Traverse left and up to a corner, climb the corner to a roof. Pull through the roof and climb the headwall to the top. (Permission has been given to retrobolt this route as long as long as the first ascent remains.)

*First ascent: 1992 M. Seegers and D. Margetts.*

## **A WILL TO COWER**

**30 \*\*\* [9D]**

Climbs the smooth face on the left of GLASS MENAGERIE. This was Herman du Plessis old project. A bent bolt needs to be removed. Some rather thin climbing on this one!

*First ascent: 2001 Paul Brouard*

## **GLASS MENAGERIE**

**27 \*\*\*\* [8D]**

The line going up the middle of the smooth pink face. Excellent technical route.

*First ascent: 1991 R. Natrass.*

## **MIRROR MIRROR**

**27 \*\*\* [9D]**

Start the climb from the tree growing over the lower pool. Climb the face straight up to the groove between the two small roofs of GLASS MENAGERIE and THE LOOKING GLASS. A good route but with one very hard move.

### **Note:**

Retrobolted by Eric Riemann and Joffrey Hyman (with permission).

*First ascent: Dec 1986 K. Smith (on trad)*

## **THE LOOKING GLASS**

**25 \*\*\*\* [10D]**

The climb shares its start with MIRROR MIRROR. Head up right and up to the roof. Pull through the right hand side of the roof.

### **Note:**

Retrobolted by Eric Riemann and Joffrey Hyman (with permission).

*First ascent:* 1991                      *P. Lazarus (part trad, part bolts)*

## **LIQUID GLASS**

**25 \*\*\* [7B]**

The route starts from the little island below the MIRROR MIRROR wall. Boulder up the start to a ledge and climb the open book to a small roof then pull through to chains.

*First ascent:* Nov 2003              *Eric Riemann.*

## **BAMBI AND THE BROKEN LEG**

**22 \*\* [7D]**

Use either the face or the arête to start. Shares the chains with REFLECTED SINS.

*First ascent:* 2007                      *Johan Olivier.*

## **REFLECTED SINS**

**19 \*\*\* [10D]**

Scramble up to ledge (just right of Mirror Mirror wall) above first wade pools via roots on the right. Start near back of recess by small tree on this ledge. Climb up leftwards to chains.

*First ascent:* Dec 2006              *Neil Margetts.*

**TRAD UNKNOWN****17 [A]**

An unknown line that can be lead on natural and has top anchors. There is a large 'recess' with a few trees growing in it just right of THE LOOKING GLASS. The climb is on the uneven face just right of this. It can serve as a warm up route. A very easy scramble from the downstream side will get you to the top to set up a top rope.

*First ascent: Unknown Party Unknown.*

## Stormwatch Area

Before entering the main kloof the stream passes through a narrow gap with a steep bolted wall on the true left. Routes are listed from left to right when facing the wall. Please note that some of these routes were opened on both natural gear and bolts. STORMWATCH and FABERGE are classics at their grade. GPS Co-ordinates for the base of SULTANS OF SWING are S25 48.175 E27 18.729 (Datum WG 24)

### Climbs on the true left

#### **TTLCTTCTKFWGSO**

**18 \*\* [5D]**

(THE TWO LEGGED COACKROACH TRYING TO CROSS THE KITCHEN FLOOR WITHOUT GETTING STOMPED ON)

Climb the recess/hand crack just to the left of TSSPMQ.

*First ascent: Jun 2007 Darryl Margetts.*

#### **TSSPMQ**

**15 \*\* [6D]**

(THE SILVER STUDDED PHANTUM MOTORCYCLE QUEEN)

Climb the open book around the corner and 10m upstream of VANDALS.

#### **Variation:**

17 Climb the thin face on the right without using the corner on the left. (May 2007 Neil Margetts)

*First ascent: Dec 2006 Neil Margetts.*

## **CROOK AND CRIME**

**24 \*\*\* [6D]**

Climb the left hand side of the Lower Area. Starting behind a tree, climb up steep rock and move diagonally right to a groove. Climb this to the top. The tree you start behind has a bees nest halfway up the tree.

The climb was first opened ground up on trad trending more left at the start and then up right. The direct bolted variation is about 24. Use the rightmost bolts at the start.

*First ascent: Feb 1988 S. Middlemiss and J. Colenso.*

## **VANDALS**

**26 \*\*\*\* [8D]**

Steep line first opened on natural gear.

*First ascent: 1991 K. Smith (On Natural Gear)*

## **VANDALS DIRECT**

**27 \*\*\*\* [8D]**

Start from the river bed at the base of the boulders, a spot is a good plan here to stop the climber falling backward into the rock. Continue up as for VANDALS. This variation adds a bit of pump to the already sustained VANDALS.

*First ascent: Unknown Date unknown.*

## **WHEN THE MUSICS OVER**

**27 ? [4B,N]**

Step out over the pool and follow four bolts leftward finishing up the crack. Additional natural gear is recommended.

*First ascent: 1991 K. Smith.*

## MR TOAD'S WILD RIDE

26

A steep natural crack line just left of FABERGE. This becomes a jelly of wasps in winter. It climbs the crack directly above the boulder with a U-bolt in it.

*First ascent:* 1988                      *K. Smith.*

## FABERGE

28 \*\*\*\*\* [7D]

A classic sustained route, a must do!

*First ascent:* 1990                      *R. Natrass.*

## STORMWATCH

31 \*\*\* [8D]

A complex and sequential sport journey, not a give away at its grade! It was the first 31 in the country even though there was no 30 yet at the time. The direct start is grade 32.

*First ascent:* 1990                      *R. Natrass.*

## STRONG ARM OF THE LAW

24 \*\*\*\* [7D]

Start in the upstream facing corner of BREAKING THE RULES before moving left onto the face above. A good, pumpy route.

*First ascent:* *Unknown*              *C. Curson.*

## BREAKING THE RULES

23 \*\*\*

Fernkloof forms a short narrow gorge just before it opens out to the north. Halfway down the steep left hand wall of this gorge is an upstream facing dihedral.

**1. 20m 23** Climb the dihedral, move right, and continue up a groove to the top.

*First ascent:* *Jul 1986*              *K.M. Smith.*

**LAWYERS, GUNS AND MONEY** **27 \*\*\* [8D]**

Starts just right of the arete moving up slightly rightwards up to a cubby hole with chains on the left of this. This route has been recently re-bolted.

*First ascent: Date unknown J. Colenso and T. Rogers.*

**TRUE SAILING IS DEAD** **25 \*\*\* [6D]**

Start just left of the leaning tree, a fun route.

*First ascent: Date unknown K. Smith.*

**THE SULTANS OF SWING** **24 \*\*\* [5D,R]**

Starts in the tree. A good route although a bit necky. Don't fall low down or you could end up straddling the tree - ouch! The bolts are also suspect - take care.

*First ascent: Date unknown S. Middlemiss.*

**OPEN PROJECT** **[1A]**

A single u-bolt serves as an anchor to this project. The route takes the black streak right of SULTANS OF SWING.

*First ascent: Project Project*

## Stormwatch

**By Roger Natrass**

After ten months of having my "butt kicked" on the harder routes in the States, I returned to South Africa very aware of the widening chasm between our concept of extreme climbing and what was being cranked off on a regular basis throughout the rest of the world. The biggest lessons learnt were: i) their lines are very sequential, and ii) top climbers are prepared to invest large amounts of time in order to earn these ascents.

With regard to the first, I still maintain that the singularly most difficult moves I have experienced exist on established South African routes. Unfortunately, after one or two desperate moves our routes degenerate quickly to easier climbing. Through choice or chisel the Americans cranked routes which were of lesser ferocity but five, six or even ten times more sustained. Often it seemed difficult to decide where the crux was, every move felt as hard as the rest. Frequently the "crux" occurred at one of the easier moves near the top owing to fatigue accumulated from previous sequences.

With reference to the second eye opener, I was amazed to see how much perseverance was ploughed into various projects. I remember Tony Yaniro grimly tying in for the thirty-fifth day on CALYPSO (5.13d), or even Alan Watts finally cranking TO BOLT OR NOT TO BE after almost two years of repeated attempts. The obvious conclusion to be made is that talent and experience are important, but they have to be coupled equally with time, fitness and perseverance to crack the hardest routes of today.

Having just completed FABERGE, on the lower Fernkloof wall, my attention was drawn to the futuristic face immediately to its

right. The line offered fifteen metres of unrelenting climbing up the longest part of the sixty degree wall. It was a combination of confidence after FABERGE, the comments from others concerning the line, and a desire to find something similar to that which I had seen and felt in the States, that led me to rap down and inspect its potential.

The first shock was the angle: some unseen, yet powerful, force pushed me away from the wall, frustrating any attempt to investigate it further. After a quick rap through the tree, growing six metres from the base, I was back at the top, this time armed with RP's, wires, an odd collection of diminutive camming devices and a handful of Rurps. I had soon opened the first reverse aid pitch, at about A3, on rap. A motley collection of RPs, Rurps and Rollers kept me close enough to inspect the holds. Nevertheless they periodically popped and I was sent howling through the tree and into the other side of the kloof.

The line offered what appeared to be a boulder problem start to a good edge at about three metres. This could have been avoided by starting up FABERGE and traversing in, but this would have sacrificed the direct line and reduced the severity and lessened the grade of the task. The choice seemed obvious and the boulder problem start was included.

From there a further three metres of "who knows what!", past two sloping pseudo pockets, led to the small overlap just below the halfway mark. Powerful moves round this bulge took one to the top half which appeared climbable on a combination of pinches and edges, unfortunately without the prospect of any form of rest or recovery.

In order to prevent the "death swing" through the tree and into the other wall, I took a gamble and placed a bolt (ultimately the second) within clipping distance of the edge at three metres. Running the downside of the toprope through the bolt and clipping into this with a biner to my harness, I was able to experiment with a couple of the moves without fear of the hungry tree behind. I devoted the whole of the first day to trying to step off the ground and crank to the edge. Despite many attempts, using countless combinations, I had no success.

While walking back to the car with aching shoulders and fried fingertips I wondered what I had gotten into. The start seemed impossible, and even if I got that, the next three metres looked simply stupid. Then there would be a slim chance of hanging in for the eight metres of +/- 27 to the top. What seemed to make it worse was that I had already placed a bolt. A lone and shining stainless steel lump that could forever remain as a monument to my failure.

A combination of masochism and an ego that refused failure brought me back to the wall for four successive weekends. Soon I had clocked up six days of dogging time. The moves off the deck still eluded me, and the section up to the overlap remained a mystery. However, during a gut-splitting push I had managed to crank the top half in one go. I was excited at this progress, but also felt like crying as this top half weighed in at solid 27!!

At this stage I had a fair idea of what I was up against and realised that it was time for a change of strategy. Talking way into the night with Grant, his CD player cranking and Rotpunkt mags splashed across the floor, we came up with a plan. It would have to be a team effort: Grant on FABERGE, and myself

on STORMWATCH. The diets returned in force and all forms of training were halted: it was going to be our routes and nothing else. No minutes, skin or energy were to be wasted at the wall or the Wilds. We had to become dedicated members of a wierd rock cult; sacrificing time, money and body to these overhanging idols.

The money saved from the spartan diet disappeared into the petrol tank. Twice or even three times a week we sped along the Magaliesberg roads to Fernkloof, free wheeling past the farmhouse to try and avoid the entrance fee. This worked for a while until the gate keeper got wise, and could smell us coming a mile away. Fully aware of how long a business the projects could turn out to be, we soon arranged a discount swindle.

It was not uncommon to leave Jhb at 2pm during the week and drive the 125 km out to Fernkloof. For an hour and a half we would have a thrashing session on top rope, then walk out in the dark and speed the 125 km home. The concept of weekends fell away as we slipped into a cycle of a day on the routes, two or three total rest days, and then back to the rock. We ate nothing and trained nothing! It seemed a little extreme at times but slowly appeared to payoff.

After nine days on the line I had finally managed every move in some contorted form or another. I could pull off the start about one in every four attempts: a lunge from underclings and tinys to a large sloper was the key. Only meticulous brushing and tubs of mental glue made it possible to latch on and hold it.

The section to the overlap was more of a problem. From the edge I could get within nine centimetres of the left pocket, but that was it. That nine centimetres finally fell to a sequence requiring seven separate moves - nothing simpler seemed

possible. The "pockets" were also nasty: the left had two angles, it sloped upwardly and down to the right, forcing all one's weight onto only the left index finger. The right is very difficult to describe. Suffice it to say that I mash three fingers into a depression, with my little finger on the best part of the hold. From here I snatch to a pinch, then up and backwards to a second pinch! A blind slap to a three finger edge followed this double pinch pullup. I had finally solved the puzzle to the overlap.

It was slow progress. At this stage Grant was well ahead. He had already red-pointed half way up FABERGE and was surviving on what seemed like a diet of tomatoes and carrots. I was a long way from leading STORMWATCH and had occasionally consoled myself with a double fat burger at Steers. Every session ended with bum on the top half of the route. The idea was to try and link it in one push at the end of a long day of dogging. I hoped that this would somehow simulate this section of the route during a redpoint attempt; snatching through tough but well rehearsed sequences in a state of "total body pump".

Soon day fifteen arrived. So far we had driven almost 4 000 kilometres and I had only linked the first four metres: the start and the technical crux to the pockets, arching backwards as I barely touched the second pinch. Grant was still going far better. A few days earlier he had redpointed to the very last move! He rapped and put the draws on FABERGE's bolts while I placed the last of STORMWATCH's six bolts. One at the start, number two at the edge, three at the pockets, four at the overlap, (note: halfway), five in the middle of the headwall and the sixth about two metres from the top.

Once the dust had settled Grant went for what was to be his final redpoint attempt, ending a twelve day affair with FABERGE. The laughter and excitement after his success made

the air thick with "post route euphoria". When I returned to the toprope I realised I was sick of this continuous toproping ritual that had occupied the last two months. I had managed the "bitch" in three big pieces. Despite being far from ready I decided to start redpoint attempts on my next visit.

At this stage in the project both Grant and Andrea knew the moves as well as I. Grant was ready to snap out rope at all the clips and Andy knew just when to turn up the encouragement from a ledge on the opposite wall. Despite all the practice, the first three red-dot days were horrendous: only one out of every three attempts made it through the start. The second clip was straight forward but I repeatedly blew off around move four of the "seven moves for nine centimetres" sequence to the pockets. Six attempts a day seemed about my limit, then I would burn away on a toprope. After the usual attempt to link the top I would skulk home - with tired tips and a raw palm from slapping the sloper at the start.

The nineteenth day was full of excitement. Grant had given up tomatoes and was only eating carrots. He had also started on LAWYERS, GUNS AND MONEY two days before, and it seemed as if he would "point" it very soon. I was beginning to think that he would climb every route on the wall before I got up STORMWATCH. After toproping TRUE SAILING IS DEAD a couple of times to warm up, I pulled on the tiny pair of Kendos for another go. Having tried every type of shoe available I had convinced Stephen Kelsey to sell me his pair. Cranking the laces tight I was again reminded that his feet are at least half a size smaller than mine.

I climbed smoothly to the second bolt, clipped, then roared through the "7 for 9" sequence and was suddenly staring at the third. With my left index finger screaming I bumbled the clip,

dropping backwards with metres of slack flapping in the air around me. Grant dived into a gap in the boulders as my feet gouged a hole in the gravel. The dynamic belay arrested my lycra clad arse about fifteen centimetres from the deck. I was pretty shaken yet very excited about getting to the third bolt. I think it was all this extra adrenalin that carried me all the way to the fourth bolt on my next push. This was a big breakthrough as I had surpassed my previous top rope highpoint. Unfortunately I was only halfway up, and wishing that the wall ended at the overlap. At last there was a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. To this point the grade seemed 29/30.

Day Twenty. This is beginning to feel like some marooned sailor's diary: "We are almost out of water and morale is running low. Will there ever be an end to this suffering?" A life belt snaked out to Grant as he redpointed **LAWYERS, GUNS AND MONEY** on only his fourth day. To facilitate faster climbing I placed a fifty centimetre-long sling on the fourth bolt. Through clipping this sling two moves earlier I was now able to move quickly through the overlap - affectionately known as "ThePowerbulge". The flip side of this tactic was to push the leadout to the fifth bolt to almost 4m.

For the last five days of lead attempts I had been clipping the first bolt from the ground. The second clip was just as straight forward owing to the friendly size of the good hold from which the clip was made. Still eager to cut away vital seconds I decided to adopt a tactic that is widely used at sport climbing venues in Europe and the United States. This particular approach was introduced by the French some three years ago and was one that I often encountered during my travels through the USA.

On a number of occasions during previous days I had made the second clip, then down climbed the three metres to the ground. At any of the overseas sport climbing crags I would have been entitled to leave the rope through the second bolt for all subsequent redpoint attempts. The rationale behind this: reversing to the ground could quite easily be accomplished before every attempt. However, this would consume both time and power and therefore reduce the number of attempts one could manage during a given day, only prolonging the endeavour but not necessarily affecting its final outcome. It is obviously a very debateable issue and the decision I made to leave the rope through the second bolt for the remaining days was one that I came to regret, if only for the malicious remarks from some of my friends and peers in challenging the validity of the final ascent.

After several frustrating falls at the start (the sloper wasn't getting any easier to stick) I did manage to push my highpoint to a few moves above the bulge. During this attempt I was again ready to drop off after the double pinch move but, mustering something, I pushed through the "Powerbulge". My forearms began to fill with that terrible tickly weak sensation but I just kept on snatching: once, twice, three then four times. Mashing two fingers behind a flake I twisted and cranked to the pinch from which the fifth bolt is clipped. Unfortunately, the combination of desperate climbing and a nasty lack of oxygen, sucked me from safety and into the acceleration of a seven metre fall.

On stopping a few feet above Grant's head I slouched in the harness, a terrible burning pain searing through both lungs. With staccato speech, and gasping like a sprinter, I gesticulated wildly, cursing the grade. Grant quietly lowered me to the ground, Andrea handed me a mug full of tea and a billy full of

encouragement. Despite the obvious improvement and the smiles from my two closest friends I felt a hollowness inside. I knew that I had approached my limit. The route simply exceeded the specifications of my body machine. I had snatched the last five moves before the fifth bolt, having flamed out before the bulge! "The Wall" had been hit and I was only two thirds up "Stormbitch"

This "Wall" just got thicker and higher on the twenty-first day. After the first two attempts it sprouted barbed wire, punji stakes and rabid doberman. I still took the usual falls at the first bolt, but after making it to the "Powerbulge" I was just as wasted as before. The same old "five slap then plummet" scenario ensued. I kept thinking that if only I had a little more power or control, I would be able to stick the two finger pull. By the end of the day I had a multi-day total of six bums to this same move, all attempts ending with the same accelerating defeat. Every day thus far had witnessed some degree of improvement, but I was now locked into repetitive defeat. I was at a loss for a solution: diets, training and toprope sessions seemed unlikely to provide the missing pieces. Returning on day twenty two, I decided on an old and little trusted technique: "Why crank when you can fly".

The warm up and a few failed attempts lower down were soon behind me. I had almost become used to the sludging of poisoned blood in my forearms as I pulled the Powerbulge. Two slaps later I had the flakelet. At this point I hesitated for a second then ignored twenty one days of rehearsal ..... and just jumped.

With the flake cranked to my waist, one foot front-pointing an edge and the other arching at right angles to the wall, I latched the pinch. A wave of screaming roared up from below. The clip

seemed painfully slow, fingers refusing the cerebral commands that insisted on fine motor control. Snatching two quick breaths I lapsed into "end of the day TR burnout" mode. The preoccupation with hitting and sticking the next hold overrode any thoughts of the 5m leadout to the last bolt. Fumbling with the clip I was reminded that a fall from this point would mean flying almost the length of the route!

Snap! - the biner grabbed the rope, instantly obliterating the lurking fear. Al-though the body moved through the final moves, I could not perceive any motion until I slapped the summit sloper. Chalked and wasted fingers tasted only a hint of friction before slipping off the hold. For a moment I was motionless, both hands off the rock and the top staring me in the face. So close, if only I could have pulled or stemmed on the waves of encouragement from Andrea and Grant. Unfortunately, I simply toppled backwards.

Cramping forearms and what I would imagine was my first asthma attack, brought the day to a close. Andrea had to drive back to Jhb as I sat and nursed complaining forearms. We were all very excited. The "Wall" had been smashed and the summit tasted. The machine had suddenly been upgraded, the improved version able to physically cope with the task of such a redpoint.

Grant had to stand guard on the twenty third day, Richard Lord wanted to put in some time on FABERGE and Andrea was in Jhb for a couple of days. The three of us drove out to Fernkloof, finally exceeding six thousand kilometres of travelling for the route. We laughed at the logistics of the project. The petrol bill clocked in at around six hundred rand. Six bolts, their stainless steel hangers and a drill bit came to about eighty rand. A pair of La Sportiva Kendo's was another three hundred

zoids. Additionally, some ar sehole had stolen two screwgates from the third and fourth bolts. Not content with just the epic rap to get the biners, he had also taken a three metre sling and about seven metres of rope stashed behind a boulder near the top. All in all this gear was valued at about a hundred rand. If I included a minor speeding ticket incurred whilst dashing out for a late afternoon burn, the overall cost was in the region of one thousand two hundred bucks!

Tunes smoked from the tapedeck as we turned towards the Magaliesberg. Still playing with statistics we calculated that I climbed the length of the fifteen metre route about six times a day: keeping this up for twenty-three days meant a total vertical gain of over two kilometres! This is about four times the height of Blouberg. (Chew on that you big wall marathon giants.)

On arrival the air temperature seemed perfect. I rapped and put the draws on the bolts, stopping every metre to meticulously brush all the hand holds. The longer draw on the fourth had to be taped to the wall; otherwise I wasted valuable seconds chasing the dangling bentgate biner. Speed was of the essence here as I made this clip from a powerful position. This wasn't the only quick draw quirk. The last draw was carefully twisted so that the bentgate lay at right angles to the rock. I clipped from a contorted position which gave me ninety degrees of lateral twist and, consequently, the draw required the same amount of twist in order to ensure a fast and smooth clipping action. The fifth had a draw two centimetres longer than the rest as this made the clip just that little bit more comfortable. Lastly, the second bolt had a single screwgate, designed to make all the difference should any near deck falls repeat themselves.

The first push failed at the third bolt. I brushed this aside as the warm-up bum. The second attempt was heartbreaking; I puffed through the bulge and resorted to the lunge near the fifth. Pushing hard I once again found myself passing the sixth bolt and slapping for the summit. Blown fingers, arms and brain were uncooperative and no amount of effort could stop me from dropping backwards.

Hanging free on the end of the rope I hung my head and gasped. The machine had a huge oxygen debt to repay. To the uninitiated the push looked very controlled. Richard seemed to sum it up by simply blurting out "Why did you fall off ???". To reply, "I was pumped", seemed an oversimplification. Something wasn't right. I pulled back to the bolt and after a few minutes had reprogrammed a different final sequence. It had to change as I never had the power to make the long cranks at this stage of the route. The new version had shorter moves on smaller holds. I suppose it made it harder, but short snatches between small positive edges seemed a better prospect than long lunges for a sloper.

After a long rest it was time to squeeze back into the Kendo's. I wondered if it would be the last attempt of the day. A couple of muscles were already mumbling obscenities. Ignoring them I pulled the knot tight and grabbed the first hold. It was the fastest attempt yet: I shot through the lower cruxes, the sequences running at an awesome speed. Soon I was at the Powerbulge: these moves fell quickly but still as strenuously as ever. With arms and lungs beginning to bum at the fifth bolt I made the clip, and set off to the sixth. I began to slow down as the lead-out grew and the power failed. The last clip must have taken about twenty seconds - unacceptably slow for a redpoint attempt.

Facing the final sequence a sense of failure almost overwhelmed me. I could picture myself falling on the last move again. I hung for a moment and chalked my left hand. This was the first time during the eight days of redpoint attempts that I had wasted the time or energy to chalk up. Watching from a ledge a few feet away was Andrea. She quickly picked up my hesitation and yelled "Come on, only four more moves, just FOUR MORE MOVES." The last 'four moves felt like trying to run during a nightmare. My arms felt like lead and all sensation and fine motor control ended at the wrists. I hit the last hold with noise screaming both inside and outside my head. My fingers held. Digging deep into dwindling reserves I pulled hard and rolled onto the top.

It had been four long months since I had started and during this time I had climbed little else. When I think back to how impossible it had seemed until those final days, I realise that there are no limits to what one can achieve.