

Groot Tafelberg | Richmond Northern Cape



Legal Note: All climbing is very dangerous & always at your own risk. Nobody is forcing you to climb. You choose to climb, so choose to go home before the risks become too high. Remember even small injuries can take 6 weeks to heal. No responsibility for inaccurate or incomplete information will be accepted by the scribe or any other body. The landowners accept no liability at all. Climbers take full responsibility for themselves at all times. Fixed protection will become unreliable, loose rock is common, solid rock becomes loose & RD writers make up most of the information, with a beer, at the computer. This RD is only a guide & is no substitute for experience, training, common sense & a touch of caution. So, you are on your own...take care!

Note from The Scribe: It took consistent effort, time, work & organization to get this guide ready for your pleasure...for free! Thus, please respect that all the information & photographs are strictly **Copy Righted**. Nobody "has" a lawyer, normally a lawyer has us...by the short & curlies. But I do know this lawyer, he's a bit of a dick, but apparently, he normally wins. Friends let's not get to see how much of a dick he really is. You are more than welcome to print out, e-mail or link to a web page this guide in its unchanged format, with logos & all information intact.

As this is a web-based guide, it can be considered a work in progress. It is easy to change. Please send missing details, corrections, additions & adjustments to info@easterncaperockclimbing.co.za . All information will be greatly appreciated.

Access: Access arrangements are at this stage unknown. These days there is a huge game fence around the whole of Groot Tafelberg. There do not appear to be any welcome entry gates & no signs saying who owns it. Looks like a very private game reserve.

If anyone gets access, please contact the scribe at info@easterncaperockclimbing.co.za.

Location: Groot Tafelberg is centrally located in the Great Karoo within reasonable driving distance from Kimberley & Bloemfontein in. Follow the R348 gravel road from Richmond to De Aar, Groot Tafelberg is 36km from Richmond on the western side of the R348. The best approach from Kimberley would be via Britstown - De Aar. From Bloemfontein & Southern or Eastern Cape approach would be via Richmond.

Walk-in: ±900m uphill, 45 minute walk-in.

Potential: Huge potential!

General: 17 trad lines.

Environmental: From the mountain one has a very good view of Compassberg shimmering in the haze; this is the nearest rock climbing area to the Tafelberg. The owners are strict environmentalists & want to keep Groot Tafelberg pristine & stunningly beautiful.

- Please make sure all litter is carried out. Please carry out any unnatural items that you find.
- Please make sure your party has toilet etiquette. No ablutions next to water. Discretion & distance, then bury.

Rock Type: Good quality vertical & slab dolerite. Dolerite has a reddish colour; a rough texture & the blocks make a metallic ringing sound when hit. Lines are generally very

Star Ratings	
★★★	Classic route in this province
★★	Good route in the area
★	Good route at this crag
No star	Reasonable to bollocks
Abbreviations & Symbols	
7 ₁₀ (T)	Trad route (natural gear) & grade
9 ₂₁	Sport route (bolted) & grade
4 ₂₀	Open Project / In-progress & ± grade
4 ₂₀	Closed Project & ± grade
7 ₁₀ (S)	FA was solo & grade
⚠	Potential
Ⓒ	Absell point
(11B&C)	Number of bolts & top chains
P / RB	Piton / Removable bolt
☀ (top right)	Afternoon Shade
☀ (top left)	Morning Shade
☀ (center)	Shade all day
☀ (bottom left)	Sun all day
☀ (bottom center)	Dappled shade all day
☁	Can be climbed in wet weather

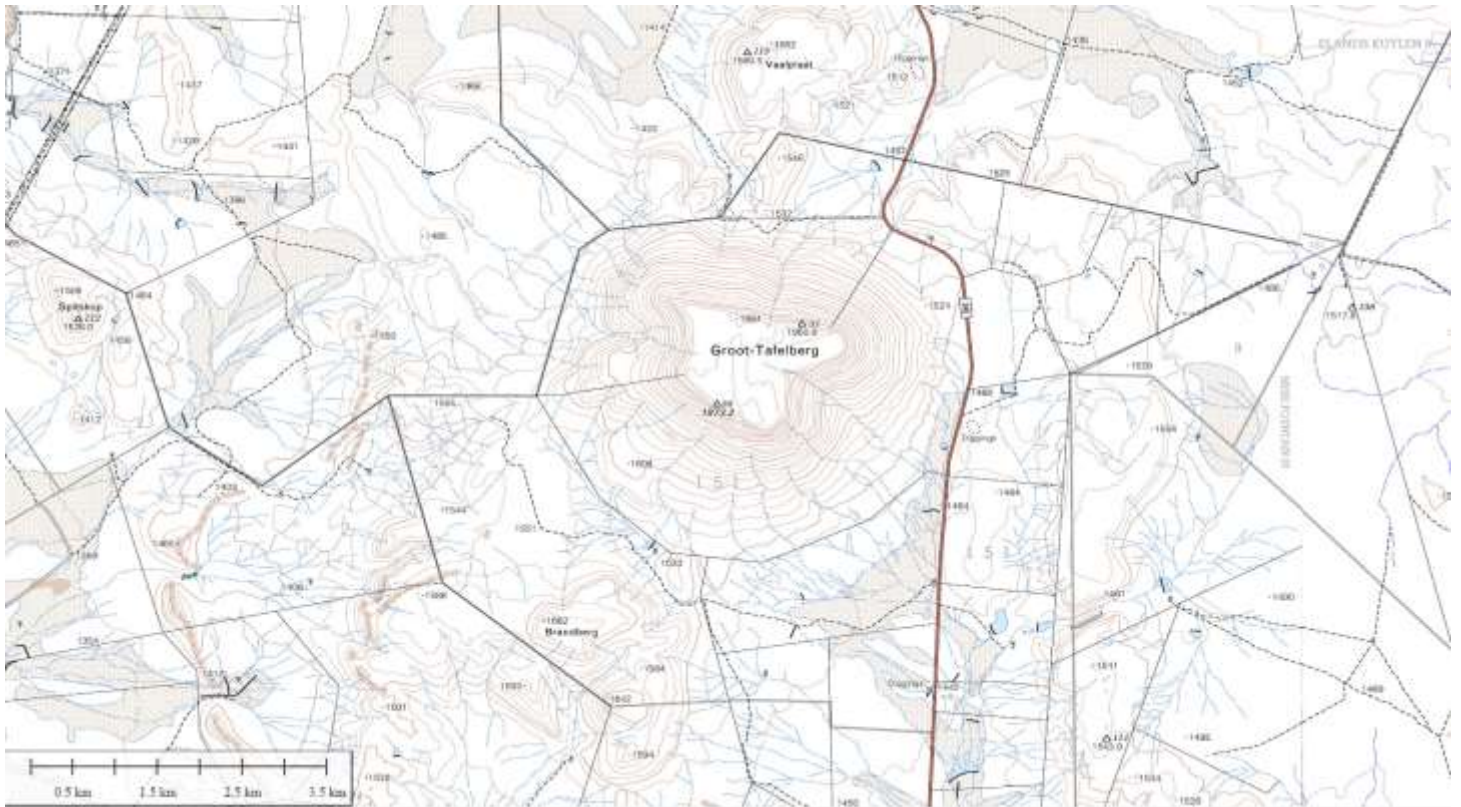
clearly defined & are directly up. The whole crag has the appearance of being stack of blocks with chimneys in between. Climbs are written up from L to R as one looks at the crag. The part of the crag that got climbed is the highest & most prominent part, maybe 10% of the crag. There are kilometres of potential rock to climb, but flip it, in the middle of nowhere!



History: Duncan & Jean Peters moved to De Aar during 1977 & '78, where Duncan did civil engineering work on a bridge. He spotted the crag whilst on a drive & made an exploration trip during which he climbed *Rialto* & recognised the climbing potential. A dual advert placed in the local newspaper by the Peters for a nude model for Jean's art course & a climbing partner for Duncan, elicited several enquiries from prospective nude models, but absolutely no prospective rock climbers.

Thanks & Appreciation:

- **Massive thanks & appreciation to the landowners**, who graciously allow many climbing parties to visit Groot Tafelberg over the years.
- Aleck Mckirdy for his write up of many of the routes in the MCSA Journal, 1984, Page 134.
- G. Laurens for his write up of two routes in the MCSA Journal, 1990, Page 126.
- Duncan Peters for his write up in the MCSA Journal, 1991, Page 191. Duncan Peters was the climber who drove the development of Groot Tafelberg & was on the opening party of many of the routes.



1. Golgotha - 17

Duncan Peters & Aleck McKirdy 1978/05/04 (T)



100m L of arête is a major buttress which forms the highest part of the crag in the vicinity. The lower third of the buttress is split by a gully forming two parallel ribs. The route starts on the RH rib.

P1 – 13 - 28m Climb the crest of RH rib for 12m to a ledge. Move L to the gully, up this for 12m to a chock stone ledge.

P2 – 13 - 15m Up the LH chimney to an eyehole 13m up. Move through the eyehole & belay on the ledge above.

P3 – 17 - 38m Make an awkward start on the L of the arête & continue straight up for 16m. Trend R via a classic mantelshelf followed by another to arrive at a small ledge at 27m. Either proceed straight up to a stance or go slightly R first, which is easier.

P4 – 10 - 15m Bamba to the top.

2. Donald Duck's Direct – 10

Duncan Peters & Aleck McKirdy 1977/10/01 (T)

The route takes the prominent arête on R side of arête. Start at the foot of the arête.

P1 – 10 – 37m Up the crack in the centre of the arête. Continue up, after 20m move R into recess. Up to a large stance.

P2 – 10 – 26m Up easy face for 12 m, move R around corner & climb diagonally R to recess to stance at a block pillar.

P3 – 10 – 21m Traverse 5m R onto exposed nose & up directly to top.

3. Scimitar Arête - 13

Duncan Peters & Aleck McKirdy 1977/10/01 (T)

Climb starts approximately 25m right of *Donald Duck's Direct*, taking the prominent knife edged arête, then continues straight up to the top of the buttress.

P1 – 13 – 24m Up the centre of the sharp arête for 10m Continue up the centre of the buttress for 6m keeping to L of a rectangular jutting block. Move L & up to a sloping ledge beneath a minor overhang. Gain a rounded nose on the L & climb 5m to small stance at the foot of a crack on the LHS of the buttress.

P2 – 12 – 18m Move R to centre of buttress, continue up, then trend slightly L to good stance on the R beneath final overhangs.

P3 – 13 – 27m Turn overhangs by using crack directly above & continue easily to top, finishing 3m R of *Donald Duck's Direct*.

4. Balls of Brass – 19 ★★★

FFA G. Laurens & Andy Morrow 1990 (T)

Start 5m R of Scimitar Arête. Just L of a large roof two-third of the way up the cliff. There is a smooth face which leads up to an impressive rectangular roof halfway up the crag. The route breaks through L end of the rectangular roof.

P1 – 18 – 25m Climb the recess/ chimney to the left of a smooth wall. Climb lightly rightwards up the smooth face for 7m to the start of a fine crack line in an open book, which leads up to LHS of rectangular roof. Climb diagonally L for 5m to the base (delicate) of the RH of two similar corners. Climb the corner to an exposed stance below the overhangs.

P2 – 19 – 25m Traverse a few metres R to a rough crack that leads to L end of the rectangular roof. Ascend to the roof, traverse L & climb the steep crack above on good grips to reach a small but comfortable ledge below minor overhangs.

P3 – 10 – 15m Climb up a few metres to the overhang, step L & continue to the top.

Route was first climbed by Andy Morrow & Duncan Peters & on 14 April 1990, but freed by G. Laurens & Andy Morrow in

5. Chicken Man – 16

Duncan Peters & Aleck McKirdy 1978/06/25 (T)

Start 70m R of the gully & 10m R of a conspicuous chimney.

P1 – 13 - 15m Climb the crack in the centre of the rib to a small stance.

P2 – 16 – 17m Gain the thin undercut crack on the R of the ledge, up the thin crack, then up rib to where it starts to overhang. Stance.

P3 – 16 – 24m Up the steep crack for 7m until level with smooth brown slab on the R, cross it & then up crest of rib for 5m before moving diagonally L & up to a small stance where the rock's angle eases.

P4 – 13 – 21m Climb the L side of the crest of the rib to the top.

6. Apes Dare – 17

G. Laurens & Andy Morrow 1990/04/24 (T)

On the L of the cliff to the R of the decent gully are four prominent pillars of rock. This route runs up the LHS of the third pillar from the L. The crack starts one-third of the way up the cliff. The start is marked by a cairn.

P1 – 17 – 35m Start on easy slab below a large pillar of rock a third of the way up the cliff. Climb up to the R to below the pillar, step L into a recess on L of the pillar & continue up to a ledge just to the R, at the top of the pillar.

P2 – 17 – 15m Climb the crack above the ledge past a smooth face on the R. At the top of the crack move R, through the gap between the face & the large block.



P3 – 17 – 30m Climb the face above & follow the curving crack, then scramble to the summit.

7. Thief – 16

Duncan Peters & A. Goyns 1977/10/30 (T)

90 m R of *Donald Duck's Direct*, is an isolated bush, 8m L of bright orange rib used by *Perambulator*; 15m directly above start.

P1 – 16 – 25m Climb the face trending slightly R to the peapod. From this traverse 3m & up short bottomless chimney to stance common with *Perambulator*.

P1 – 14 – 28m Ascend recess above for 3m (common with *Perambulator*) then up leftwards to chockstone-filled chimney lying some 15m above the start of the pitch & L of the overhanging nose. Ascend the chimney for 12m to gain a small stance 12m below where the chimney is closed by a huge block.

P3 – 14 – 30m Up narrow chimney at back of stance for 5m to gain ledge. Traverse 6m R onto the crest of the overhanging nose & then directly up the steep rock above to the top.

8. Perambulator – 14

Duncan Peters, Aleck McKirdy & A. Dintheer 1977/10/09 (T)

The climb takes a 25m high, rounded bright orange rib some 100m R of *Donald Duck's Direct*. Just R of the start of the route, the crag drops steeply down by about 20m. About 60m up & directly in line with the rib, there is a conspicuous overhanging nose which the climb avoids by going R.

P1 – 14 – 23m Go up 2m L of the crest of the rib where the black-streaked rock meets the rib. Use the crack line in the rib.

P2 – 13 – 23m Take the recess, trending diagonally R to chimney, which is used to gain ledge on R.

P3 – 13 – 23m Move 2m R onto nose & up recess on nose to large gully with chimney in back.

P4 – 12 – 17m Ascend chimney at back of gully, continue to top.

9. Pirate – 16

Ed February & Pete du Preez 1978/06/25 (T)

The route lies 7m to L of *Thief* & heads up cracks in the obvious 'V' groove.

P1 – 16 – 41m From the beacon climb up steep rock to thin cracks in 'V' crack. Continue just R of bush & exit onto platform after steep jamming.

P2 – 16 – 38m Up crack behind stance to tiny ledge on top of pillar. *Thief* comes up other side of pillar. Climb the 4m crack above (in common with *Thief*). From the top of the crack, swing L & up a few short faces to an impressive steep smooth slab, climb the crack on RHS of it, then up to top.

10. Cold Turkey - 16

Aleck McKirdy & Duncan Peters 1990/04/13 (T)

About 200m R of *Rollin' Rock Gully* & 40m L of Rialto there is a smooth



grey narrow face going up the full height of the crag. The route goes just L of this face. Start to the L of the smooth grey face there at a projecting round buttress split by an obvious 15m high cleft.

P1 – 16 – 25m Start up the cleft & after 5m move onto the ridge on the R & climb this to a large ledge. Climb diagonally round to the L & belay in the corner.

P2 – 12 – 35m Climb the corner to a large ledge. Follow this towards the smooth grey face. Climb up to the next ledge to the base of the obvious chimney. Ascend the chimney to a comfortable stance on top of the pillar.

P3 – 16 – 20m An obvious corner leads slightly rightwards up the face just L of the smooth grey slab to terminate in overhangs just below the top of the crag. Climb the face making toward the corner at 7m (poor rock) & continue up the corner to a small stance below where the corner becomes black & smooth.

P4 – 16 – 20m Continue up the corner via some interesting moves to a cubby hole stance on polished rock just below the final overhangs.

P5 – 16 – 15m Step down & traverse a few metres to the R to the crack line. Climb this for a few metres before moving R & climbing gritstone-like rock to the top.

11. Reluctance – 18 ★★

Andy Morrow, Aleck McKirdy & Duncan Peters 1990/04/14 (T)

The route goes up the buttress between Rialto & the prominent smooth grey face 20m to the L.

P1 – 17 – 25m Scramble up a few metres to gain the base of the chimney/ crack line on RHS of the lentil shaped pillar. Sustained 16 climbing leads to a small overhang at the top of the chimney/ crack. Traverse L round the nose & climb up a few metres to a small stance.

P2 – 16 - 20m Traverse a few metres L & climb up several metres to a ledge on the chimney line that forms LHS of the buttress. Continue up the corner for 5m to gain another ledge. From slightly above the ledge, traverse 7m R onto the crest of the buttress. A short section of steep climbing leads to a small but comfortable ledge at the base of a very steep 7m high black corner.

P3 – 18 – 40m Move up slightly then traverse R a few metre before moving up to a narrow ledge. Either gain the ledge above by an awkward mantelshelf or climb the thin crack to the R. The remainder of the pitch consists of superb 14 grade climbing, trending slightly R, up the centre of the buttress on rock reminiscent of the finest Alpine granite. The pitch may be split.

12. Rialto – 10

Duncan Peters 1977/07/09 (T)

This easy line goes up the prominent buttress 50m R of the great grey slab. Two thirds of the way up the face, the buttress leads to two gullies, the RH one being ascended.

P1 – 8 – 30m Start at the centre of the buttress, go up 5m to a lone tree. Continue up on RHS of the buttress until one can easily climb onto its crest.

P2 – 8 – 40m Scramble up the crest of the buttress to the foot of the RH gully.

P3 – 10 – 30m Climb the gully past two chockstones which provide the only problems of the climb. Above these chockstones one passes under a thin arch of rock which inspired the climb's name.

13. Split Image – 14

Aleck McKirdy & Duncan Peters 1978/05/04(T)

The climb goes up the large jagged buttress 70m R of the great grey slab & 20m R of *Rialto's* rib. The first pitch goes up the prominent overhanging chimney on the crest of the rib. The chimney is blocked by chock stones 8m up.

P1 - 14 - 22m Ascend the overhanging chimney to a large ledge.

P2 – 13 – 18m Climb the chimney above to a small ledge with excellent chockstone belays.

P3 – 12 – 31m Up short corner, then up buttress to a ledge with chockstone belay.

P4 – 8 – 23m Up rightwards, then straight up gully to top.

14. Dee Ja Vu - 10

Pete du Preez & Ed February 1978/06/25 (T)

The prominent buttress two-thirds of the way across the crag from the gully is used by this route. The first pitch goes up the crack line which goes up RHS of a leaf-shaped pale grey slab about 17m above ground.

P1 – 10 – 27m Climb crack to R of gully passing a ledge at 12m & continue to exit at the top of a small gendarme.

P2 – 10 – 37m Traverse L on a ledge passing a leaning flake at its end. A further move L leads to a ramp, which is followed via cracks & faces to a belay below the final steep section.

P3 – 10 - 31m Avoid the overhang by jamming etc. to L of it & then traverse back R at level of loose 3m pillar of rock at end of ledge. Continue up just L of 1m pillar to top.



15. Fat Man's Folly – 14

Aleck McKirdy & Duncan Peters 1978/05/05(T)

Two thirds of the way along the kranz, to the R of *Rollin' Rock Gully*, the kranz is capped by huge white overhangs. Start 50m to the R of the white overhangs on the second buttress away from them.

P1 – 13 – 23m Climb the crack line to gain the very large ledge.

P2 – 14 – 40m Ascend the narrow white chimney on the L to a small stance beneath a large chockstone which appears to bar progress.

P3 -13 – 28m Surmount the chockstone & continue up for 5m. Squirm through a narrow slit (not for a fat man) at the back of the chimney, bamba to the top.

16. Backline – 13

Duncan Peters & A. Goyns 1977/10/29 (T)

The climb starts at RHS of crag just where it begins to lose height rapidly. Start at foot of a recessed amphitheatre then proceed up R side of the broken buttress which leads up L.

P1 – 10 – 26m Ascend the sloping recessed ramp to the amphitheatre & scramble to the foot of an obvious deep chimney on L.

P2 – 12 – 12m Up chimney to large stance.

P3 – 13 – 18m Climb RHS of the buttress for 9m to a short chimney which starts just L of a free-standing block. Up narrow chimney, belay on large ledge.

P4 – 10 – 15m Climb chimney on crest of buttress passing a chockstone & continue up second chimney to stance.

P5 – 12 – 40m Go up for 8m, traverse 5m horizontally L onto crest of buttress & continue directly to the top.

?? Heliograph Chimney – 16 ★★

Duncan Peters & Andy Morrow 1990/04/14 (T)

Seventy metres L of the bottom LHS of *Rollin' Rock Gully* there is a large chimney which cuts through the buttress at the top of the crag. The route takes a fairly direct line up to the chimney & follows it to the top. Start: Scramble 5m up to the foot of a water-polished crack on the L of a recessed face (tree belay 5m to the R).

P1 – 14 – 30m Climb the recessed crack for 18m. Step L onto a ledge & continue up a comer for 7m to a large ledge system.

Traverse 5m R to a small belay stance directly above a buttress.

P2 – 16 – 25m Climb the face above & continue up the recess to where it is blocked by a block. From below the block move L onto the face & continue up to the base of the large chimney which break through the overhangs. Belay at a cubbyhole stance on the RHS of the chimney at the level of the overhangs.

P3 – 8 – 25m Climb the chimney, exit R & continue to the top.