

Hill of Execution | Mlengani, Transkei



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Directions: Google snoogle!

History: Mlengani means hanging one & was not actually the high point used to execution people. It was given the name, Hill of Execution or Execution Rock, by white people who fancied that a local chief once used it as a place from which to throw his enemies to their deaths. On the other side of the river is a sheer cliff that was actually used, as a place of execution.

The two recorded climbing trips to Hill of Execution are to be found in the 1974 & 1975 Mountain Club of South Africa Journals. Both articles are written by John Moss. This guide is a paraphrase of these two journal recordings.

Please let me know if you have climbed here or can provide any pictures or better information.

Access: No restrictions.

General: There are only 4 known trad routes, but plenty of potential remains for new routes. Rock is Dolorite.

The following routes are on the northern face, recorded L to R.

The Big Crack – 16, A1

Richard Smithers, John Moss & Brian Shuttleworth 02/04/1975 (T)

Facing the *Pondo Pinnacle* is a prominent long wide crack of the north face.

P1 – 14, A1 – 35m Start in the corner at the foot of the prominent crack. Up the smooth chimney to where the chimney narrows & bulges. Up LH crack using aid on short blades. The thin crack improves & it is then possible to move back R into the chimney. Continue up the chimney to a small stance.

P2 – 16, A1 – 20m Up the wide & steepening crack. Up to where the crack narrows to an overhanging 'V' shaped groove. Move R along a narrow ledge to a short wide flake crack. The crack is difficult to enter. Up the thin crack on the R using aid. Move back L to gain a small square ledge on the edge of the flake crack. Over the flake to a small stance back in the main crack.

P3 – 16, A1 – 30m Above the stance the main crack is steep & off-width. Up the thin crack on the L using aid to where it peters out. Move back into the main crack. Up this with difficulty to the top of the crack.

P4 – 14 – 30m Move R from the belay. Up a steep broken recess. Trend R over loose broken rock. Bamba over steep grassy ground to the top.



Pondo Pinnacle – 16, A0

John Moss & Brian Shuttleworth 04/05/1974 (T)

On the LHS of the north face is a fine freestanding pinnacle that is visible from the road. Start in a deep chimney in the center of the west side of the pinnacle.

P1 – 13 – 27m Up the narrow chimney, past a chockstone & onto a ledge on the L. Up over large blocks onto the front of the pinnacle.

P2 – 13 – 20m Scramble to the L under a huge tree in a crack. Up using rock & the tree to a stance below a steep wide crack.

P3 – 16 - 13m Up the wide crack to a rest below a small overhang, over this & up the layback crack above to a large ledge on the eastern side of the pinnacle.

P4 – 16, A0 – 30m From LHS of ledge up to a large flake, R across the top of the flake, then down. Make an exposed traverse to the arête. Across a steep corner to a ledge on the front of the pinnacle. Up easy section to a small exposed stance with a tree.

P5 – 14 – 20m Traverse 1m L, then up on a flake & diagonally L over steep rock to a ledge. Move round the corner to L to belay opposite the north face.

P6 – 14, A0 – 20m Climb the thin crack above the belay, to a flake. Onto a sloping ledge. Up moving R on good holds to the summit.

Thanatos – 16, A0

John Moss & Brian Shuttleworth June 1974 (T)

On the RHS of the north face is a huge prominent, square, overhanging buttress. The last 2 pitches take the LHS of this buttress. The First pitch climbs a pillar of broken rock leaning against the main face, directly below the overhanging buttress. Start on the RHS of the pillar in a broken corner.

P1 – 14 – 40m Up easy rock, move L into the foot of the corner with the steep crack. Up the steep crack, diagonally L over large blocks to the front of the pillar. Up the front to a small ledge below a steep crack, up this to the RH summit of the pillar.

P2 – 16, A0 – 40m From the top of the pillar, step onto the mail face. Using small holds, traverse to a prominent open book which trends diagonally L. Up the open book to where it is blocked by an overhang. Using aid, pull through the overhang to a good flake. Up the crack to a recess, follow the recess to where it becomes very steep. Make an awkward swing L, follow a ramp & short crack to a good square ledge.

P3 – 14, A1 – 30m Move L & up a shallow recess. Where the recess becomes steep aid was used, continue up the recess. Make an awkward swing L round the first overhang. Up the bottomless flared chimney with considerable difficulty. At the 3rd overhang, stretch out R & pull into foot of bottomless recess. Up to a tree & an exposed stance.

P4 – 13 – 20m Up behind the tree & then up a steep veg chimney. Scramble up steep grass to the top.

Side Winder – 14

Brian Shuttleworth, John Moss & Steven Bowen 31/05/1974 (T)

Start on the short steep western face. Take a diagonal line round the north-west arête & up the north wall.

P1 – 13 – 23m Start on the LHS of the west face in a tree covered recess. Up a short steep wall, diagonally L through bushes & then up a short crack to a stance below a veg recess.

P2 - 14 – 25m Up LHS of recess to some large flakes. Traverse 1.5m L, make an awkward step down to a diagonal ramp leading around the north-west arête. Up the ramp to a short corner crack in the north wall. Up the short corner crack to a stance.

P3 – 13 – 30m Up steep rock behind the stance to a square cut ledge. Follow this narrowing ledge L, then up to a tree belay on a higher ledge.

P4 – 13 – 30m Follow this ledge L to the foot of a steep chimney. Up the chimney & easier rock above to the top.