

SA MOUNTAIN

SOUTH AFRICA'S DEDICATED CLIMBING MAGAZINE

ISSUE NO. 89 • JUNE - AUGUST 2024



LIMESTONE CLIMBING IN
TURKEY

CLASSIC CLIMB
in the 'BERG
ANGES
LEPPAN

GEO
CACHE
LION'S HEAD

CLASSIC TALE
GOING FOR IT ON
SLANGOLIE
FRONTAL

RAW
EXPOSURE

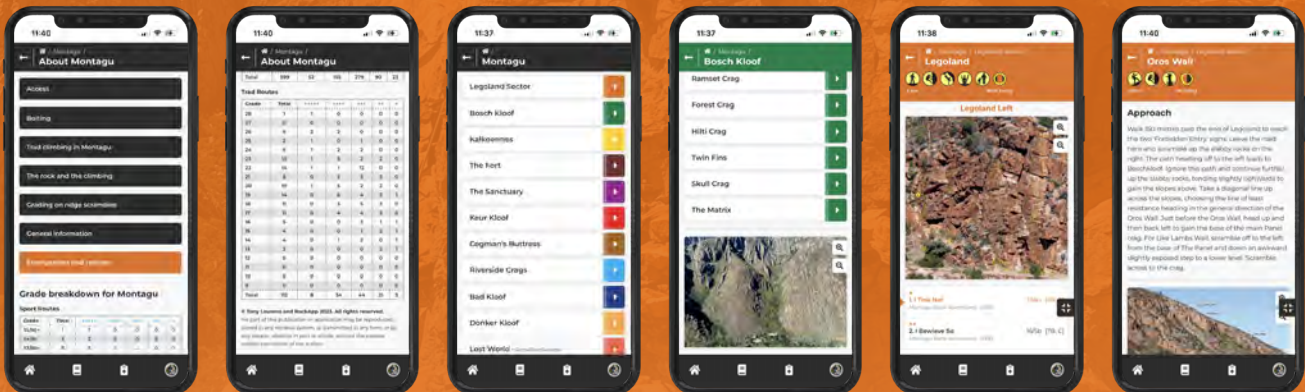
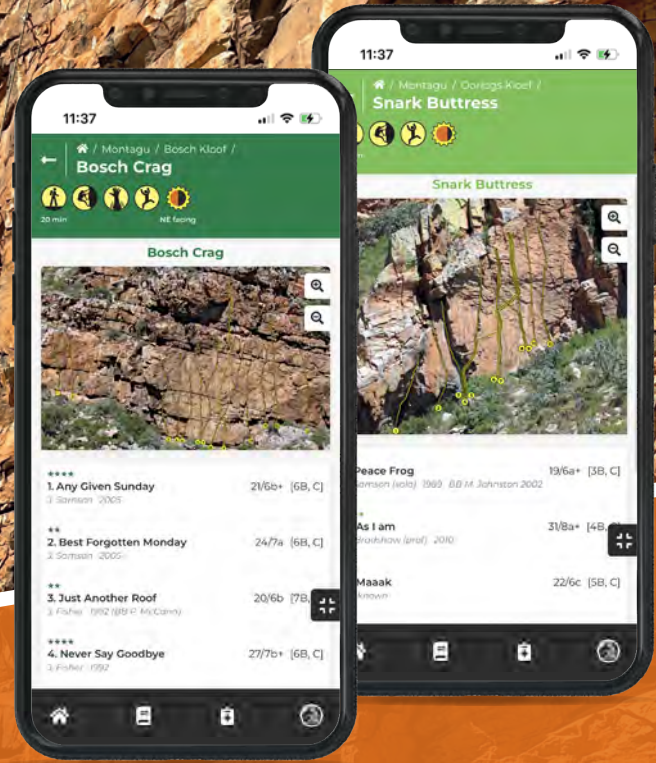
OFF THE WALL
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Italian climber, Alessandro Gelmetti, cruising along Highwayman (16), Geo Cache Sector, Lion's Head. Photo TONY LOURENS

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OFF TO THE DOCTOR!

A trip to the family doctor always comes with a certain sense of anxiety, and as a child it can be quite a traumatic affair. But one such visit to our family GP when I was 13 years old changed the course of my life. My dear old mother, worried and concerned about her young son's recent interest in this dangerous and 'death defying' sport of rock climbing, decided that we needed to go and have a chat to someone sensible about all this malarky. And who more sensible than the family doctor?

So off we went, down to the doctor's surgery and sat nervously in the reception, waiting to be called in to Doctor Sandell's rooms. The door opened and we were ushered in.

"Good morning Mrs Lourens and young Tony, what seems to be the problem today?" Doctor Sandell was a very soft spoken and gentle man, and his voice had this calming effect.

"Well," my mother began, "Tony seems to have found a great interest in climbing the mountains and is often away over weekends climbing and exploring. I'm just a bit worried about his safety and if this is the wisest thing for him to be doing at his age."

"Mmmm," the good doctor replied. Mrs Lourens, why don't you go sit in the reception for a while and I'll have a word with young Tony."

Once alone, Doctor Sandell started asking me all sorts of questions relating to climbing, like "what routes have you climbed? What grades are you climbing? What equipment are you using?" And other similar questions. I found it a little surprising that a doctor knew so much about climbing and climbing jargon, but being a young lad, assumed that he just knew this stuff.

Doctor Sandell called my mother back in and asked her to sit down.

"Mrs Lourens, having chatted to young Tony, it is very evident that he has a deep passion for climbing and the mountains, and there is not much one can do to change this. Tony will carry on climbing one way or another and the best way forward would be to support and encourage him.



Having a cuppa in the hills. Nothing better!
Photo MANDY RAMSDEN

"My suggestion is that you ensure that he has the best equipment available and that he attends some climbing meets with the Mountain Club of South Africa. That way, he will be taking the safest path."

The following week, my mother bought me a brand new 120 foot, 11mm Edelrid kernmantle rope from Canvas Workers in Plein Street. And I'm not sure exactly when I found out, but Doctor Sandell turned out to be a prolific climber and mountaineer in Cape climbing circles.

That's a visit to the doctor that will remain in my memory forever, and unbeknown to me at the time, set me on a course that would shape the rest of my life and ultimately be the catalyst that would make climbing my life and vocation.

I will forever hold a deep gratitude in my heart for Doctor Sandell, his perception and his wisdom, and for my dear old mama, for listening to him and understanding my love for the hills and always encouraging me.

Be safe in the hills

Tony

SA MOUNTAIN

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Black Moon (27/7b+), Geyikbayiri, Turkey.
Photo TONY ARCHIE KIM

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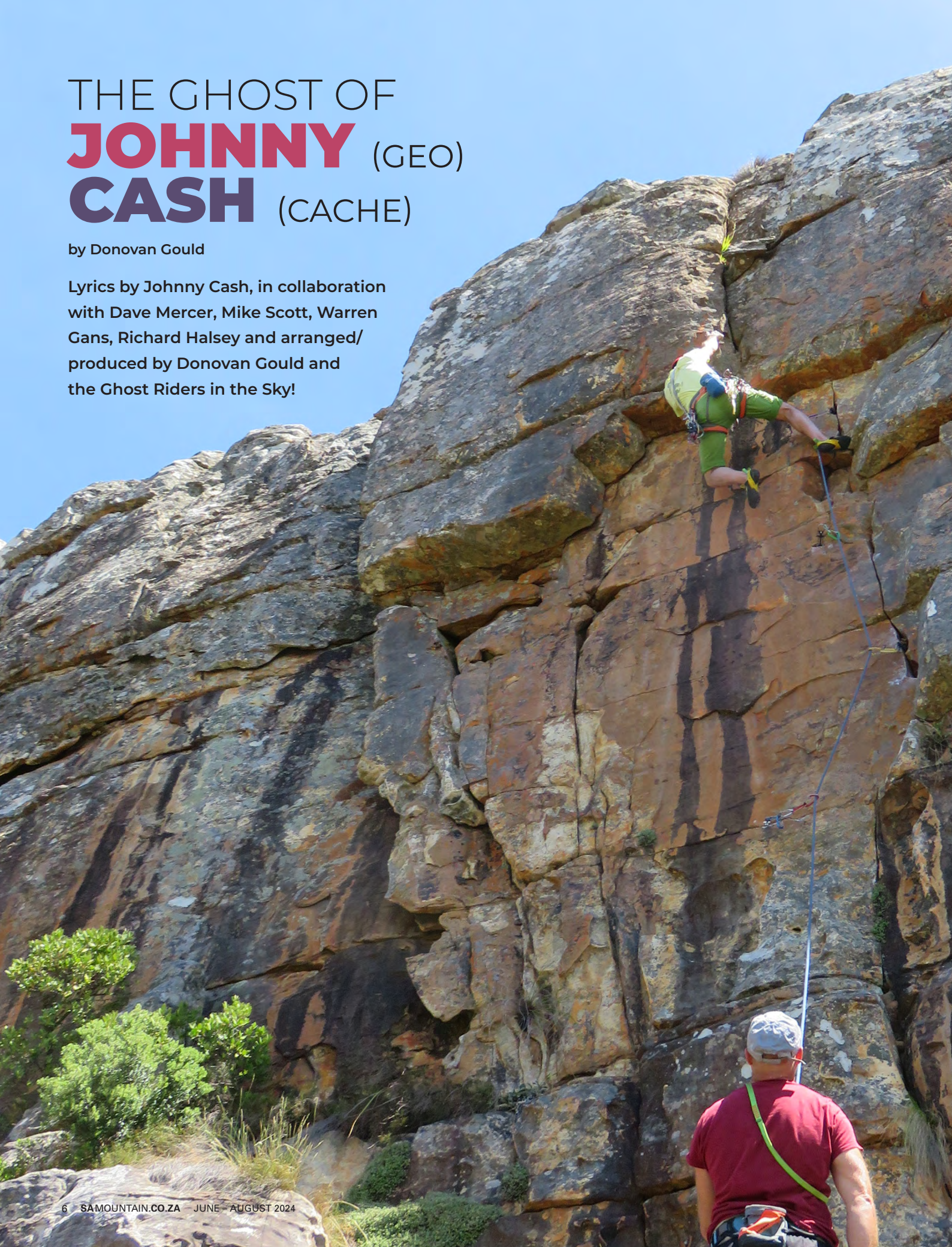
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THE GHOST OF **JOHNNY** (GEO) **CASH** (CACHE)

by Donovan Gould

Lyrics by Johnny Cash, in collaboration
with Dave Mercer, Mike Scott, Warren
Gans, Richard Halsey and arranged/
produced by Donovan Gould and
the Ghost Riders in the Sky!





Tony Lourens swinging through the crux of *Ballad of a Teenage Queen* (18).
Photo WILLIE KOEN

“Hi I’m Johnny Cash!” Trumpets start playing loudly to the tune of *Ring of Fire* piercing your auditory canal like a riotous Mariachi Band as the legend booms in his bass-baritone,

“Love is a burning thing

“And it makes a fiery ring

“Bound by wild desires

“I fell into a ring of fire”. . . silence!

There are no loud trumpets accompanying a booming bass voice but the mellow sounds of the wind in the fynbos, birds singing, insects chirping and loud banter from the hikers making their way up and down from the peak close to our ‘camp’ for the afternoon.

We are here on the northeast facing ledge of Lions Head. Having completed an easy walk up from the circular path and blessed that the crag receives morning sun to burn off any damp and rain from the previous day.

Having stashed our bags, stoves and gear under a big stepped roof known as Geo-Cache Cave, we calmly walk past tall orange, black and grey walls, to our chosen routes.

Climbers have been frequenting the Geo-Cache area for many years using it more for training, as the ethics of the day was to accomplish multi pitch-routes and not to claim single pitch routes. Many climbing apprenticeships started on these steep walls and first-time climbers at MCSA meets would top rope their way up various routes.

Not much history had been recorded on any of the first ascents prior to Dave Mercer’s wonderful guidebook, as none of these routes were claimed and named. Dave was kindly assisted by Mike Scott to show him the known lines that were climbed and top roped. Dave then ingeniously named the lines alphanumerically from left to right utilising Johnny Cash songs aptly named after the Geo-Cache Cave.

Many new lines have been added since the release of Dave’s guidebook and also given Johnny Cash themed names. The alphanumeric order can therefore no longer be followed. The current tally of routes, only in this sector is an astounding 43 lines (at the time of writing). >>

To be fair some are variations, but this crag has beginner friendly trad climbing grades from a leisurely pedestrian grade 10 up to an athletically and mentally demanding 27. There is a plethora of different types of climbing that will suit beginners to hardcore tradsters with crack climbing thrown in the mix too. Classics like *Highwayman*, *Ballad of a Teenage Queen* and *No Charge*.

The cave is a wonderful feature that offers shelter from the sun and a great place to rack up and stash your bags. After your climbing is done, or in-between, it makes a great meeting place to have lunch and a cup of tea. There is a well placed and convenient short abseil near the cave, but here is also a short descent scramble should you not wish to abseil.

The who's who of Western Cape climbing have taken siege and put-up routes on these fabulous orange and black walls, namely Ross Suter, Hilton Davies, Dave Mercer, Guy Paterson Jones and Tony Dick amongst others. Richard Halsey has put up the most lines with Warren Gans putting up the hardest trad route in the neighbourhood. Here are two individual stories of such lines: Richard Halsey's *Musings on Grit Slide* (24R) and the incredible feat of Warren putting up his famous line *Cash's King* (27) 'sung and performed' in their own words, unplugged.

Musings on Grit Slide (24R)

Richard Halsey

There are routes that I tell my buddies to do and ones that I tell them to avoid. *Grit-Slide* is of the latter. Not because it is bad, but you may end up in hospital.

Gritstone conjures up images of cold, crazy Brits soloing things too big to be boulders, or too far above gear for it to be of any use. For example, the 'rack' for *Appointment with Death* involves as many boulder pads as you can muster and one low wire to prevent the route name becoming a reality. Not everyone's cup of tea. For this type of route, head pointing (i.e. practicing on a fixed or top rope) has become the norm. The idea being that you become certain enough that you will succeed to override the part of your brain working out the consequences of failure. There is a satisfaction in mastery, misery in injury, and unknown in death. Why one would risk the second two for the first is a question for someone with more understanding of neuroscience than me. The Geo-Cache area has nice sea views,

good sandstone, pleasant weather, many safe routes, and doesn't feature in climbing movies. Essentially everything that Gritstone isn't. However, I found a nice and 'hard enough' bit of climbing with only one marginal piece of protection between the crux and the ground – a red slider nut that almost no one owns. That felt gritty enough for me. I rehearsed it and didn't crater. However, a dozen years later, with some broken bone stories under the belt, my appetite for this grit style is somewhat diminished. Perhaps that will keep me climbing longer.

Cash's King (27)

Warren Gans

Lion's Head literally sits in the shadow of a famous mountain and can't compete as a climbing destination . . . until you actually climb there.

I am a sport climber, but after three years in Cape Town I realized there is not that much sport in close range to keep me busy. I had to adapt, and that meant bouldering, i.e. dealing with the stumble stones between the car and the crag- or the wild places beyond. The trouble was I didn't have the trad experience those crags demanded. I needed an education.

I found Lion's Head, Geo-Cache Sector in particular, to be the most valuable trad education crag for a sport climber wanting to switch to trad – easy access to the top and bottom, weather friendly, decent rock, variety of grades, and as a bonus it even had a few blanks in the guidebook.

We would wander up to the cave with a rotisserie chicken and slowly work through the bird and the guidebook, feasting on a spicy mix that kept us coming back for more. We learnt, and we pushed ourselves, and eventually we started filling in those gaps in the book, starting with obvious lines like *Man Comes Around*, but for me there was something bigger looming.

The most striking face of the sector is an orange face at its right end, left of the Geo-Cache Cave itself. At the time the only route near the cave was *Mean Eyed Cat*, an appropriately named line flanking the left side of the cave. Between the two was several metres of opportunity, disguised by a horizontal roof, and a secondary roof further intimidates the eye to simply deal with the feline.

After several chickens, I plucked the courage to look skywards and noticed two chinks in the overlaps above. Maybe she goes, but she'll be the hardest line in the neighbourhood. >>

Unknown climber laybacking through some testy terrain on *No Charge* (17).
Photo TONY LOURENS








Yunus Davids pulling through the impressive roof during his on-sight of *Mean Eyed Cat* (21).
Photo MARGHERITA INTRONA

The first break off the cave lip is a committing move on big holds. The higher roof proved more challenging, as it took me several sessions to discover if the move could go. Eventually I starting to feel guilty that my redpoint sport climbing approach might be frowned upon by ‘old tradites’, however I could see no alternative. I was committed, and she had my full attention.

Eventually I discovered a sequence that worked, and now it was time to give her a go. After several lead burns (mostly ending in a flyer off the cramped 21 finishing move) the route went as the hardest trad route I’ve sent, and the hardest Geo-Cache is likely to give.

Geo-Cache was the stepping stone I needed to get me comfortable with trad falls, working trad lines, and gave me the confidence to explore other crags. We then moved onto the Apostles, developing single pitch routes such as *Snake oil Battlegrounds* and others, however none of that development would have happened without Geo-Cache.

The Ledge offers a candy-coated climbing experience that is out of character with the climbing in the region (albeit excellent trad). While the cable car makes access easier than a sports crag, the exposure to weather means alternatives must be thought of, and for this I encourage you not to dismiss what Geo-Cache has to offer. 

Fact File

Geo-Cache is a very enjoyable place to climb and can be quite sociable with many parties along the wall. It makes a great venue for climbers birthday parties.

Weather: You can climb at the *Geo-Cache* sector all year round. Although some routes do seep in the winter months you will certainly find a line dry enough to climb. The walls face east to northeast, so you have sun till about midday, which is nice on cold mornings. And full shade in the afternoons. Depending on the prevailing winds it is somewhat sheltered in strong south easterly winds, but catch it on a black south easter and you will be blown off the peak.

Gear: Standard trad racks are required and bring some additional pieces to make temporary anchors should your climbing party wish to top rope routes. Most routes can be climbed with single or double ropes. A stove, tea, and eats are a must along with a Johnny Cash song in your heart!



Errol Flint circumnavigating the overhang on *Folsom Prison Blues* (15).
Photo WILLIE KOEN

GEO-CACHE ROUTES

1. Whiskers 10 *** FA: R Suter and co. 2004
2. Descent Route C FA: Unknown
3. After Taxes 15 ** FA: Unknown
4. Superstition 22R *** FA: Guy Paterson Jones
5. Ballad of a Teenage Queen 18 **** FA: Unknown
6. Come Take a Trip in My Air-Ship 17R *** FA: Unknown
7. Fly Bye 19 *** FA: R. Halsey and T. Dunnett 26 Nov 2011
8. Drive On 18 *** FA: Unknown
9. Swindled Swoon 22 *** FA: R. Halsey 21 Nov 2011
10. Egg Sucking Dog 17 *** FA: Unknown
11. Folsom Prison Blues 15 *** FA: Unknown
12. Johnny Cache 22 *** FA: H. Davies 11 Feb 2009
13. Johnny Cache Wimpout 18 *** FA: S. Pinfield and H. Davies 11 Feb 2009
14. Pounce 17 *** FA: R. Suter and D. Mercer Nov 2007
15. Kitty-Cat 9 *** FA: R. Suter(solo) 2004
16. Why Not? *** FA: Frits van Daalen July 2023
17. Feline 15 *** FA: D. Mercer and R. Suter Nov 2007
18. Birthday Challenge 22R *** FA: R. Halsey and R. Strate Aug 2019
19. Cougar 17 *** FA: R. Halsey and R. Strate Aug 2019
20. Felix 19 ** FA: S. Pinfield and H. Davies 2009
21. Scratch Pole 19 *** FA: S. Pinfield and H. Davies 2009
22. Going By the Book 12 FA: Unknown (seldom climbed)
23. Highwayman 16 **** FA: Unknown
24. In Your Mind 17 *** FA: Unknown
25. Junkie and the Juicehead 20 *** FA: Unknown
26. Bender Blender 22 *** FA: R. Halsey 19 Aug 2011
27. Kneeling Drunkards Plea 17 *** FA: Unknown
28. Luther Played the Boogie 11 *** FA: Unknown
29. Fees Must Fall 16 *** FA: Unknown
30. Man Comes Around 20 *** FA: W. Gans 2012
31. Mean Eyed Cat 21/22 *** FA: Unknown
32. Mean Eyed Pussy-cat 22 **** FA: L. Flemming 14 Apr 2013
33. Cached Out 24 *** FA: S. Cunnane and W. Gans Jul 2016
34. Cash's King 27 **** FA: W. Gans Apr 2012
35. Hung My Head 24 *** FA: W. Gans 2013
36. Billing Blues Direct 22 *** FA: W. Gans Apr 2015
37. Billing Blues 20 *** FA: D. Van Zyl, B. Daniel and T. Dick 4 Sep 2013
38. No Charge 17 **** FA: Unknown
39. Cash Connection 19 **** FA: R. Halsey 26 Aug 2011
40. Dome Picking 19 *** FA: R. Halsey and R. Strate Aug 2019
41. Orphan of the Road 18 *** FA: Unknown
42. Grit Slide 24R **** FA: R. Halsey 2011
43. Pickin' Time 13 * FA: Unknown

The highlighted first characters of the above route names were ingeniously named and alphanumericly numbered by Dave Mercer starting from left to right of the crag using songs written and performed by Johnny Cash.

Note: Some routes are not shown on the topo photo.



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Jeremy on the steep and pumpy *Family Affair* (31/8a+)
Photo TONY ARCHIE KIM



Turkish Limestone

by Jeremy van der Riet

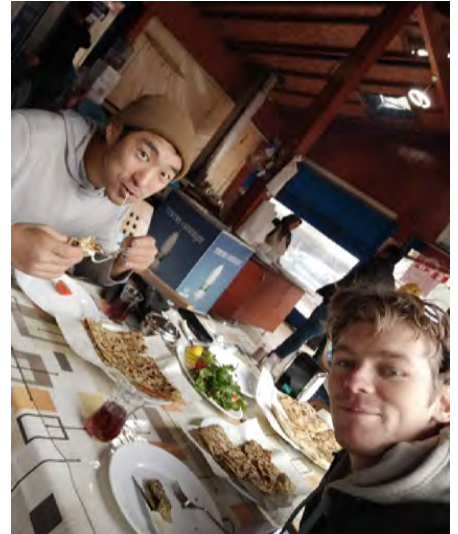
We arrived in Antalya on the 14th. Or was it the 15th of January 2023? The supposed 8-hour night bus from Istanbul had ended up becoming a 12-hour, sleepless blur, that deposited us in the inky grey morning, at the Antalya regional bus station of another new city. Antalya is a popular coastal holiday destination in the south of Turkey. It was also the gateway to our climbing objective, the nearby area in the mountains above the city, centred around the small town of Geyikbayiri. I reminded myself to probably fly from Istanbul next time.

Severely sleep deprived and bleary eyed, we made our way through the dark streets, to try find our bus stop. Using offline google maps and screenshots of the bus timetable from the previous day when we last had Wi-Fi, we attempted to find our next bus. A recurring feature of this trip was the ever-present dirtbag budget. In this case we had decided not to buy sim cards and make do, just like they did in the old days (according to my dad). This nevertheless led to us missing the first bus and getting on the wrong bus, something we only learned two hours later when we were heading in the wrong direction.

Quickly jumping out, we managed to hitchhike (another novel and recurring feature of the trip) the rest of the way to JoSito. JoSito is one of many accommodation options in the valley, and is a very popular, pleasant and well-run campsite/self-catering establishment, as it lies situated in the long valley on the winding road up towards the town of Geyikbayiri, flanked on either side by kilometres of limestone cliffs. We set up our tents, almost beneath the cliffs, and towering further behind the cliffs, loomed more impressive snow-capped peaks, and presented a spectacular view to wake up to from my tent.

I had learned of the incredible climbing destination that was Geyikbayiri in the south of Turkey while looking for places that would allow good winter climbing. I had just graduated and was very psyched to get my much-anticipated climbing gap year underway. And so, despite the European region being gripped by the

Tony and Jeremy enjoying Gözleme at the Akdamlar Sunday Market. Photo JEREMY VAN DER RIET



middle of winter, it was believed to still be possible to climb here, largely determined by the high number of 8a.nu logs that continued unabated throughout the winter months. Turkey fit all those criteria, and thus it became the first, and longest, destination stop of my trip.

We found the campsite and its inhabitants, as I hope you will too should you make the journey, to be quintessential of the climbing community that one finds when meeting fellow climbers around the world. Warm, welcoming and helpful. We were given fresh pancakes and coffee, for we had no food, and only a fistful of notes to buy food at the local market. “We’ll be here for the rest of the week, pay us back when you make it into town to draw cash,” was roughly what we understood from our friendly Norwegian creditors. And of course, the ever-present stream of flawless route recommendations, from our very own South African (basically Geyikbayiri local) Ebert Nel, who solved our lack of a guidebook almost entirely.

Being faced with the dilemma on our first day of going climbing in the afternoon or getting food, we decided that sustenance would ultimately lead to more climbing in the coming days and headed to the local market. But we woke up very eagerly to climb on day two and were soon heading out for our first routes on Turkish rock. We chose one of the furthest crags, and after >>

Jeremy sending *Chain Erection* (30/8a)
Photo TONY ARCHIE KIM





Above: JoSito campsite – view from my tent.
Right: Chai (Tea) at the Akdamlar Sunday Market
 Photos JEREMY VAN DER RIET

barely half an hour of mostly amiable walking, we arrived at the Corridor Crag. An adventurous scramble takes you into the corridor, where climbing is found on both sides. It was not the most spectacular crag, but I was psyched and jumped on my first route.

It was a 23 called *Acupuncture*, and I soon discovered why. Being relatively inexperienced climbing outside of South Africa, I was largely unaware of the different types of limestone and was greatly surprised when I found that it wasn't just tufa's and knee bars as I was accustomed to at our local Oudtshoorn crag. I had forgotten the crags surrounding the Oudtshoorn main wall and their razor-sharp edges. This sharp limestone would have to be contended with here in Turkey as well, although I tried to avoid it, both for the preservation of my shoes and skin.

We soon moved on to more overhanging routes which featured more jugs, knee bars and pockets. This was more my style, and I quickly dispatched a 25 onsight, and a 29 called *No More Mr Nice Guy*, second go, rounding off the day with another 25 onsight at Barbarossa Crag, on a questionable recommendation by a Canadian. As the first day of climbing came to a close, it was concluded that these were indeed holiday grades, and I couldn't wait to keep climbing!

Evenings at the campsite of JoSito can be very social affairs in the communal wooden house. A very neatly organised and well-run communal kitchen becomes a bustling culinary exhibition, as climbers from all nationalities return from a day's climbing. The result is the creations of diverse and mouth-watering arrays of different meals, that left us wondering why your own plate didn't look quite as good, despite having the same ingredients from the local market.

A good course of action, as was often the case, was to cook as a group and combine ingredients. This was a great way to meet people and socialise, as well as sample new culinary creations. People were often more than happy to share a taste of what they were cooking or had acquired at the market that day. Those that had finished eating, would recline on the couches in front of the wood fire, playing chess or recalling the climbing stories of the day and plan where they were >>



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Nico and Sean "Riders on the Storm"

heading next. Others would play guitar or just sit and listen. It is a warm and friendly atmosphere to relax before heading to bed before another day of trying hard.

With more than a thousand routes on offer within walking distance of the campsite, at a multitude of crags, we almost never visited the same crag more than once, at least not on consecutive days. An exception would be if you had a project, and even then, it seemed unadvisable to get bogged down on one route, when there was so much on offer. Onsite and/or move on was the strategy. This would become quite exciting as the goal of desperately clinging on for the onsight could lead to some clips being skipped, in favour of potential glory of 'the send!' However, this also resulted in some spectacular whippers, on the perfectly overhanging falls, that would just leave you hanging in space.

The crag of Trebenna was an exception, visiting it on many consecutive days. Definitely one of my favourite crags, and staying in all day shade, the loong routes of Trebenna are for the warmer days. I found the crag ideal for onsighting, as the 35-metre tufa routes, despite being a bit of a marathon, offered knee bar opportunities throughout, that allowed one to cling on just enough to desperately stave off the pump, fighting your way to the top. The catacomb base at part of the crag, which is highly worth checking out, and the quality of the routes, along with the all-day shade, make Trebenna a must-visit crag. I managed my (then) hardest onsight of *No Money No Dance* (28), and then four more over the coming days.

Another feature of Trebenna is that it is sheltered during the rain. We were lucky during our time in Turkey with the weather. Our timing in January/February coincided with some unseasonably warm winter weather. We were fortunate as well to have arrived the week after heavy rain. Nevertheless, there were a few rainy days. I tried to plan my rest days around these, and so a large portion of the day was spent cozily in the common room. This could be very festive, as the room would be quite busy and there would be a large fire going. The mornings were spent making pancakes and reading or playing settlers of Catan. Another option was heading into town or the local market. On that occasion, myself and an American I had been climbing with, Tony, hitched a lift with a Turkish hotel owner in his imported, bright red, American >>



Jeremy capitalising on the killer kneebar on *Chain Erection* (30/8a).
Photo TONY ARCHIE KIM



Jeremy onsighting *Three Happy Friends* (28/7c).
Photo TONY ARCHIE KIM





Jeep. His English wasn't great, and his driving was rather hair raising, but we were mostly able to make out the steady stream of political commentary and his dissatisfaction with the current regime. It was always interesting to engage with the wide variety of people that gave us lifts.

Rest days in town or at the market offer a chance to experience some of the local culture and cuisine, and just unwind in general. Many of the stores at the market offer Gözleme, a savoury stuffed pancake/bread filled with your choice of (lots of) cheese, meat and/or vegetables. For those wanting to unwind a bit more, the famous Turkish Bathhouse or the beaches of Antalya would be recommended. Elsewhere, there are remnants of the old city which can be explored, such as a Roman era outdoor theatre. For those who have clearly not been climbing hard enough and are still up for some adventure, or just those who have a diverse sports interest besides climbing, there is a ski resort up the valley that offers decidedly cheaper rates for ski/snowboard rentals, and a mountain chairlift pass, when compared to European prices. And nearby at Olympos, there is a deepwater solo crag that offers the chance to climb unroped above the Mediterranean. And, for the hikers or trail runners, the ancient Lycian civilizations of the 15–14th century BC, have left behind many stone ruins and remnants in the forests around the campsite. The Lycian Way is a 520 km hike winding along the southern coast of Turkey, and runs through the campsite and broader area, offering gorgeously scenic trails to be explored.

Time however, seemed to be racing by as my month in Turkey neared its last few days. A cold snap dumped fresh snow on the mountains above the campsite, and an easterly wind blowing over massive snowy mountains in the distance brought freezing temperatures. I was layered up in all my warm gear as it was close two

degrees Celsius in the campsite, and yet when we got to the crag (Anatolia) it was completely sheltered, and being in the sun, we soon found ourselves climbing shirtless in shorts! I set about trying to dispatch my part-time project, and hardest route of the trip, *Turkish Airways* (31). Pleasant, but powerful tufa climbing leads to a marginal kneebar rest, before the desperately technical upper crux that leads to the chains. This was day 26, but I gave it everything. Unfortunately, the knee bar wouldn't stick and on the last go I slipped and sliced my finger on the razor hold on top. Time was running out.

A skin growing day was required, but on day 28 we were back. Warming up on some of the very pleasant moderates nearby, *Pyjama Party* (21) and *Anatolian Highway* (23), the shirts were off and I was back at it. An unnecessary slip on the delicate traverse just below the chains was infuriating. Tony sent his project and offered boundless psych. Third go of the day and it finally came together! Celebrations were had with a communal supper of the people I had met; it was amazing to have met people from so many nationalities.

At 4.45 am the following morning, we were taken to the airport by taxi as I continued my climbing adventures – Italy was next on the cards. ♫

Notable ticks of the trip:

Turkish airways 31
Chaine Reaction 30 (second go)
Metallica 30
Monkey Business 30
Les Couleurs de l'eau 29 (second go)
No more Mr Nice Guy 29 (second go)
Three happy three friends 28 (onsight)
Mevlana 28 (onsight)
Into the Wild 28 (onsight)
No Money No Dance 28 (onsight)
Yin Yang 28 (onsight)
Black Moon 27 (flash)

Fact File:

Location: Geyikbayiri, Turkey

Where to Stay: JoSito (my personal recommendation as there is the option to camp, rent a tent, or stay in a cottage of varying sizes. Very well managed). There are however many options in the valley.

Best time to visit: October–April

Restaurants: JoSito restaurant (good food and pizza, but European prices); Garden food truck (falafel and possibly the best chocolate cake on earth); Geyikbayiri Alabalik Restaurant (very good local fish restaurant).

Guidebook: Local guidebooks are available at JoSito.

There are also communal copies you can take pictures of, and The Crag and 8a.nu websites can be useful. If you're super well connected, there is 'The Spreadsheet'.

Getting there: Best beta would be to fly to Antalya. From there one can arrange a shuttle with the accommodation you are staying at or renting a car (although this is really not necessary unless you are planning to visit crags further afield as well).

Alternatively, you could take a local taxi. For public transport, Turkey is pretty good once you figure out what you're doing, there are trams and busses to get around Antalya and three busses a day that run from Antalya to Geyikbayiri. Or hitchhiking.

Shopping: There is a variety of local markets that happen in the villages nearby. Enquire at the campsite. There are bigger shops for more staples in Antalya, Migros is pretty good. Hitchhike to the markets or find a friendly van that is going into town.

Money: Most bigger shops accept card, but cash is better for the markets. There are ATMs, just double check the fees that are displayed before you withdraw and shop around for the cheapest one. Euros can be accepted, but change might be tricky.



Richard Halsey on *Enter Sandman* (22/6c), Metal Haven Crag, Rock n Roll Kloof, Montagu. Photo TONY LOURENS



Visiting Namibian climber, Roland Graf, on the never-ending journey of *Welcome to the Machine* (20/6b), on the Crazy Diamond Tower, Rock n Roll Kloof, Montagu.
Photo TONY LOURENS

RAW
OUTDOORS



Climbers enjoying themselves on the Heart of Gold Wall, Lost World Crags, Montagu. Photo TONY LOURENS

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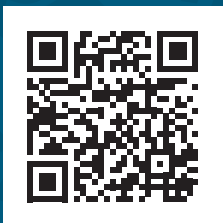
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GOING FOR IT ON SLANGOLIE FRONTAL

by Hans-Peter Bakker

For me the best trips have always been the 'let's-go-for-it-anyway' kind.

Francie Bührmann, Dirk Versfeld, Tessa Cousins and I were having a roof-wetting braai at my place. Whisky and wine flowed freely and someone suggested climbing *Slangolie Frontal* on TM the next day.

Dirk muttered something about his brother, Tinie, saying it would rain, but he didn't look very convinced and we didn't want to hear it anyway, so we agreed to meet early and to 'go-for-it-anyway'.

The next morning was windy with high clouds. The spectacular drop-offs of Slangolie Ravine and the natural forest through which the path snakes over the river and on up to the foot of the imposing buttress set our resolve to have a fun day in the mountains.

As we approached the frontal ridge, the strong, icy-cold northwesterly wind should have made us reconsider.



HEY
GOD! US A
BERRY
ROPE EXE.

Sharon

Nobody wanted to be Dr Killjoy, so we headed upwards. Climbing in two parties and alternating leads we progressed quickly enough for the first few pitches.

The near gale-force and buffeting winds blowing in ever more strongly from the Atlantic made it virtually impossible to hear one another and threatened to blow us off our feet. We continued up as wisps of cloud started racing in over and under us. Still no one suggested turning around. Visibility was okay and Ross Suter's new RD, published in an early issue of *SA Mountain*, made sense.

Three pitches later the temperature had plummeted dramatically, visibility was down to a few metres and the rock was getting wet, very wet. We were only four pitches from the top, with the crux just ahead. Retreat? No way!

I started with only a few metres visible in front of me and struggled to counterbalance against the force of the wind. Fortunately, the route is quite logical and I ended up below the crux quite easily, but it was wet and slippery and I took extra time to get more gear out before having the bottle to go for it, followed by an anxious and shivering Francie. When Dirk got to the crux the wet rock was slippery as hell. He started worrying about his bond repayments, and employed his formidable voice in yelling for a rope from above.

Having surmounted this hurdle by means fair and foul, we joined forces, not wanting to lose each other in the mist and to reduce the lead risks by having only one person on the sharp end.

On wet rock you can't trust your feet anymore. Friction, smearing and even much of the smaller edging that you may have done quite comfortably on dry rock is out of the question. You have to concentrate harder, you have to keep more of your body on the rock, you have to hold on more tightly to positive grips and you have to step much higher to get the larger foot grips.

We splashed up the remaining three, normally easy, pitches with wind howling, rain pelting down and spirits barely hanging on. Topping out brought a sense of relief and achievement and we hugged each other like surviving sailors.

Then came the walk down. My thoughts: *should be easy enough – follow the crest of the buttress, turn right at the first path, right again at the second and we will be back in the forests in a flash. No problem.* I felt even more confident when Dirk produced a compass, unused since his trip to Scotland in 1986. So, *visibility . . . no problem either.*

We proceeded down the 'vague' path of the route description until we reached what seemed like a bigger path. Confidently, I took a right, only to be stopped by a compass-wielding Dirk declaring that we were 180 degrees off route. After some persuasion we headed off in my direction only to find that the path fizzled out. Dirk was suitably chuffed and couldn't quite keep the "I told you so" tone out of his voice . . . or maybe, my injured pride was imagining it.

We walked around in circles for a while trying one vague path after another with Dirk pointing out in turn where the cable station and Cape Point lay in the thick cloud. It was getting dark fast and after some more passionate debate with finger drawings in the mud and a compass waved around in the rain, we agreed to retrace our steps and stay on well-trodden paths until we got to the cable station or to Cape Point – which ever came first.

After a while we reached a T-junction. We stopped again, the compass came out again, I started getting ready to draw in the mud again . . . Imagine the ignominy of spending a night out having an epic wandering around on Table Mountain!!

Then Tessa suggested that we should all have a turn at being right and that this was her turn. Francie concurred and Dirk and I, secretly relieved, agreed with the compelling logic and followed meekly.

After some fast walking, with the darkness setting in, we soon realised that we were going down in what began to feel like the right direction, and happy to be heading home to hot baths, more whisky, mixed feelings about compasses and ever more respect for Table Mountain, not to mention Tinie-the-weatherman.

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Tony Lourens on the exposed traverse on pitch 5.
With the Sentinel car park far below his heels.
Photo GAVIN RAUBENHEIMER



Angus-Leppan Sentinel Peak Drakensberg

by Duncan Souchon

Mention the Drakensberg in climbing circles and many craggers will voice their feigning disapproval. Bad rock, big lead outs and long walk-ins are often the deterrent, and many climbers will spend their entire climbing careers giving southern Africa's highest mountains a wide berth.



Tony Lourens checking out the possibilities on pitch 4. Photo GAVIN RAUBENHEIMER

However, there are lines in the 'Mountains of the Dragon' that endure the title of *Classic*. The *Escarpment Arête* on Column, the *Northern Arête* of the Western eNjesuthi Triplet, Devil's Tooth's sinister line and Thomsen's 1945 Mponjwane route spring to mind. But these routes all have long walk-ins, big lead outs and more often than not, suspect rock conditions.

The Sentinel's *Angus Leppan* route on the other hand, while undoubtedly one of the 'Berg's finest lines, does not require a 12-hour uphill slog, the rock is of fair quality and protection also reasonably safe.

WHY IT'S A CLASSIC

The major drawcard of this unlikely line is its spectacular and exposed setting. Starting in a gully between a subsidiary peak

(known as the *gendarme*) and the northern face of the Sentinel, the route proper begins in a tiny saddle between the two peaks. A traverse in and out of the north face's north-western chimney brings the climber high onto the sheer north face. The exposure is wild, while the climbing never gets more difficult than 17 (F3).

The route has it all: a grand setting high above the Tugela Valley; exposure; balance moves; friction; traverses; a short *arête* pitch, and a small overhang-cum-bulge to finish. Once on top, views of the Tugela Gorge, Amphitheatre Wall, Devil's Tooth, the Maluti Mountains and the valleys of KwaZulu-Natal are an added bonus. Don't forget to sign the summit book.

To make life even easier, a quick and easy descent down the back of the mountain with one safe abseil brings climbers to the path, only half an hour

from the car, which is ten minutes from the beers at the Witsieshoek Mountain Inn.

The *Angus-Leppan* route can be done in a day, with little of the preparation that other big 'Berg routes would require (for example tents, food for three days and overnight gear). It is also quite feasible to do it in a day from Johannesburg and back if you start early and climb quickly.

THE HISTORY

The route was opened by Peter and Pam Angus-Leppan on 17 February 1958. The couple were notorious in their day for putting up bold and committing lines. In 1962 they made the first ascent of the Bell's north face with J. Thompson and W. Keating; and in 1957, together with Des Watkins and company they forged a new route up the South Face of the Rhino.

The route discussed in this article was originally referred to as the *Gendarme Route* and was unquestionably their finest hour. Over the years, the line has simply become known as the *Angus-Leppan* route, an honour bestowed in light of the quality and popularity of the climb.

More recently, variations of the route have been established. R. Dodding, C. Lesley-Smith and S. Kelsey missed the traverses by climbing a recess after the 'grotto pitch' in 1998. Many climbers feel that this variation, while safer should one fall, misses some of the more memorable moments of the climb.

The deep chimney/break accessed briefly on the climb was ascended in its entirety in 1970 by B. Shuttleworth and R. Fuggle. Graded G/A2, this 'impressive line that is fairly serious' as the original description puts it, looks nasty. Sentinel Peak was originally climbed in 1910 by W. Wybergh and N. McLeod. They scaled the low angled south-western face, which today is a popular beginners climb and the most practical means of descent.

THE PRECAUTIONS

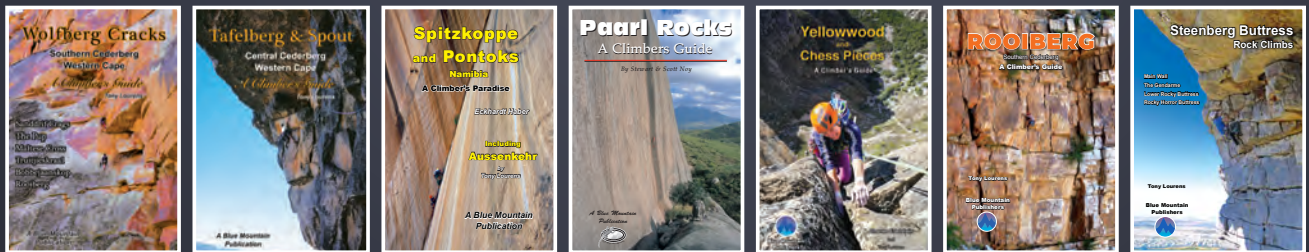
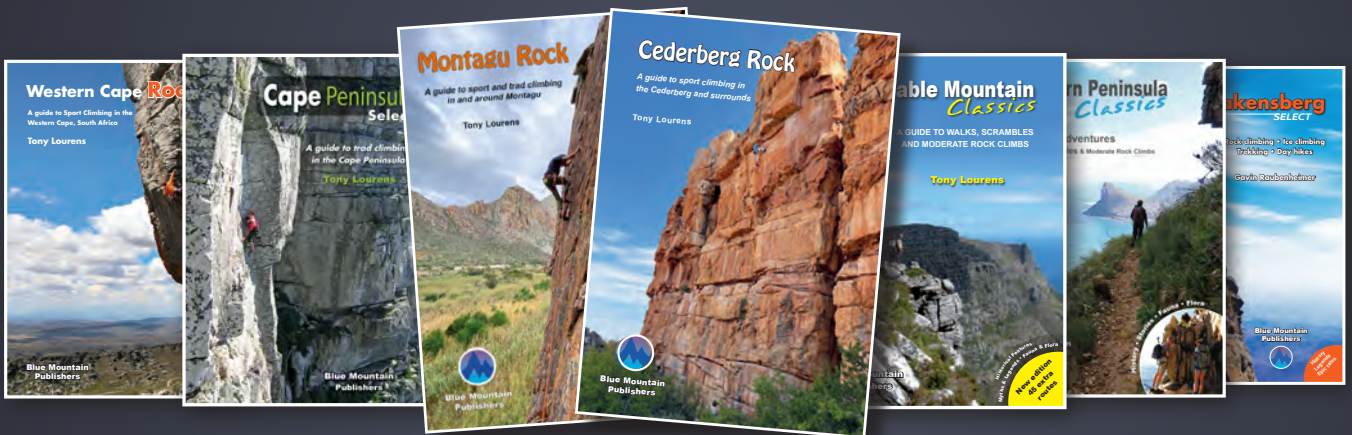
It would be prudent to have some experience with 'big mountain routes' before attempting the *Angus-Leppan* route. Because of the traverses, the implications of a fall may be problematic. Be wary of old looking pitons – the first ascent happened way back in the '50s when *Be-bob-a-Loola* was top of the charts. In recent times however, some newer pegs and bolts have been placed in strategic spots to facilitate safer belays and for better protection. >>

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Moving around the corner after the exposed traverse on pitch 5.
Photo GAVIN RAUBENHEIMER

HOW TO GET THERE

From Harrismith take the road to Phuthaditjhaba, Qwa Qwa and Bethlehem. After a short distance, turn left to Bergville. Continue on this road to Phuthaditjhaba. Turn left at the sign to the town, pass the university and over a set of lights. Continue on this road (which turns to gravel) through the town, to arrive at Witsieshoek Mountain Inn, where you will find good accommodation.

From here it is advisable to take the shuttle to the Sentinel car park. One can drive it, but the road is VERY rough. A permit can be obtained from the warden at the car park and make sure you sign the mountain rescue register.

APPROACH 1 HR 30 MIN

From Sentinel car park, follow the *Chain-Ladder* trail until you reach a vague zigzag path heading up the slope just before the first short steel ladder section. Take this path up and then contour west, parallel to the main path below. After about 150 metres, a scree slope can be seen above, with a steep grassy gully above that. Scramble over the scree and hike up the gully. The sheer rock wall on the left is the Sentinel Gendarme. About 200 metres up the gully, a short rock step is encountered which is sometimes wet during the summer months.

THE ROUTE 4 HR

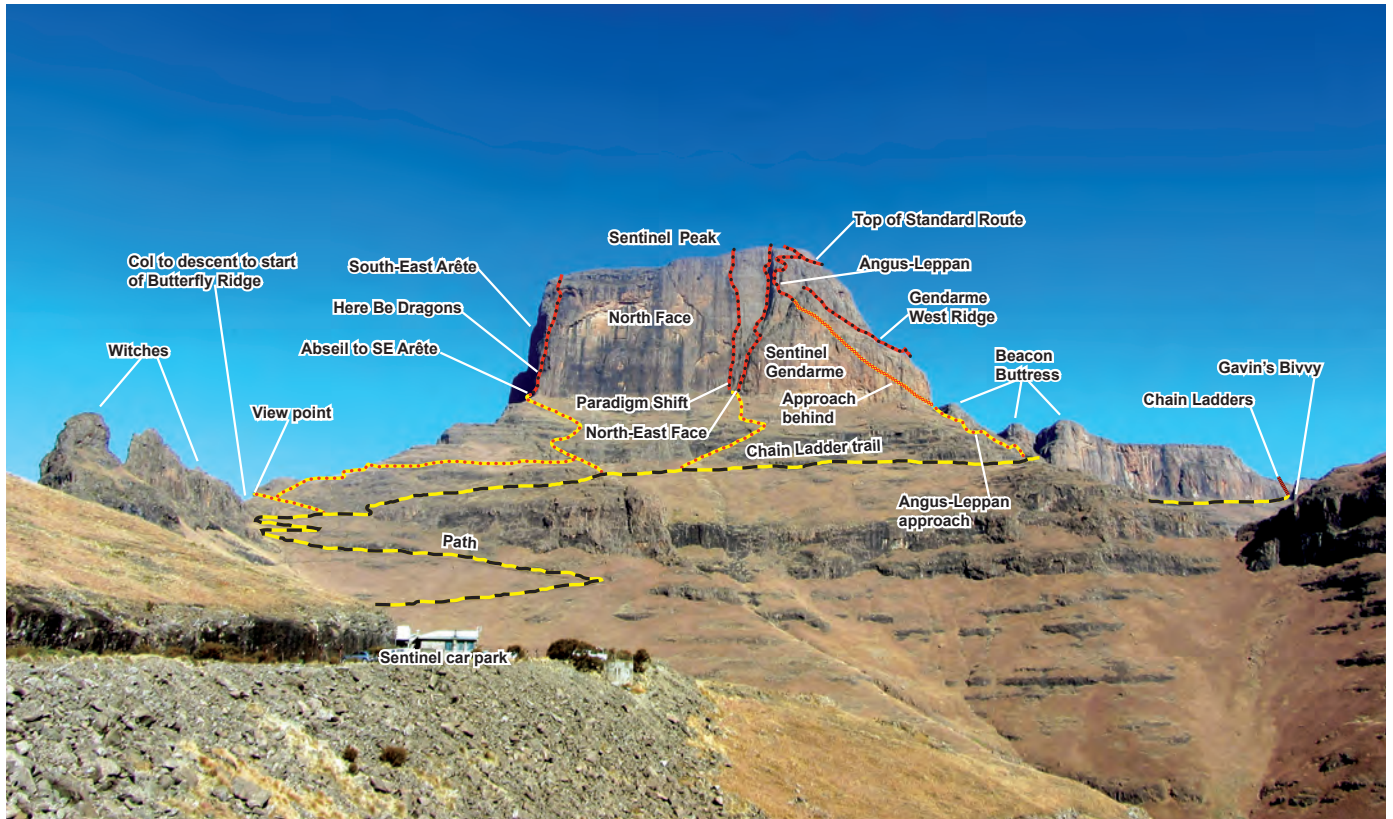
Start: At the base of the rock step

1. 8m (F2): The rock step consists of a loose chimney on the left and a sloping ramp on the right. Start up a tricky take-off onto the ramp and then finish left, above the chimney. Belay up in the gully above. Well protected.

Alternatively, from below the chimney, climb easy rock on the Gendarme wall for 2 metres, then traverse back left for 10 metres. Climb a nose of rock and scramble to the rock band above. From here, traverse back right into the gully above the chimney. This is an easy alternative (E1) on reasonable rock. However, there is virtually no protection, and most people who take this route do so unroped.

From the top of the chimney, scramble up for 80 metres in the gully, negotiating one more minor rock step until the saddle between the Gendarme and the north face is reached.

2. 30m (D): From the saddle, scramble up grass to the wall above, then move left to a short wide crack. Climb this and scramble to a wide ledge and belay at the far end.



3. 20m (E2) – ‘The Grotto pitch’:

Climb the short, steep wall above on good holds to a small cave. Traverse left for 2 metres, around a corner, then up a grassy gully to a stance on a ledge with 2 bolts.

4. 20m (E3):

Traverse left on the ledge to an arête. Move around and slightly down, then rise back up to the ledge to an exposed corner and piton. Keep traversing to a step-over, then ascend a blocky ramp (usually climbed on the outer edge) to a small stance with 2 bolts high in a recess.

5. 20m (F1):

Traverse right, across the easy but unprotected slab for 7 metres, stepping down at one critical point (protection can be found just beyond the slab in a large crack at foot level). Traverse right to the skyline, and climb the arête, past a piton to a large pedestal of rock. Climb onto this and then to the ledge above. Move left into a recess with a huge crack behind and a piton in the floor (a large cam gives good protection in the crack). From this stance, the traverse below can be virtually top-roped.

6. 45m (D):

Traverse right, along a big ledge into the next recess, then further to the arête. Go around the arête or nose and move slightly up, then right a few metres, from where an easy recess gives access to the ledge above. From the ledge, scramble up the easy gully above to a stance on blocks. This stance is directly above the large crack at the stance below. Watch out for rope drag on this pitch.

7. 10m (F3):

Above the stance you will see a short vertical wall. Move slightly left into a cubbyhole (protection deep in the undercut), then move out to the right, past a dubious-looking flake and mantleshelf onto a ledge. Scramble up to the next rock band. **OR:** (F3) From the stance climb to the right up a steep, short wall, passing several pegs which can be used for aid.

Above pitch 6, there is another pitch in an awkward chimney (E), but this is seldom, if ever climbed these days. Most parties walk off to the right after pitch 7, along the grass, to join the *Standard Route*.

Descent – 1 hr

Down the *Standard Route*. One 15-metre abseil.



Fact file

First climbed: 1959

Opening party: Peter and Pam Angus Leppan

Area: Sentinel Peak, Drakensberg

Route grade: 17 (F3)

Number of pitches: 7

Approach time: 1 hr 30 min

Climbing time: 4 hr

Descent time: 45 min plus 45 min return walk

Round trip time from car: 7 hours

Best time of year: April to October

Aspect: Mostly sunny

Guidebook: *Drakensberg Select* (Blue Mountain Publishers)

Gavin Raubenheimer coming up the second last pitch.
Photo TONY LOURENS



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 CEDERBERG, WOLFBERG

OFF THE WALL

by Brenda Marx



SPINAL INJURIES

(neck and back)

In my previous articles we spoke about shoulders, arms, and hands. Mostly these injuries are self-inflicted by pushing too hard or over-training and not enough rest.



Spinal injuries, however, are mostly caused by falls. The most likely 'over-use' injury of the spine can be expected while belaying. Watching your climber work moves on steep routes can wreak havoc with one's neck. Luckily, we now get things like belay specs, which should really be part of anyone's kit if you're ever belaying a climber working a route for hours on end or indeed belaying in general.

Falls are part of our game and can cause spinal injuries in climbing. The fall itself is not really the problem – it's the landing, or how the fall is arrested.

- **Falls with impact:** The most obvious cause would be bad belaying, or no belaying (free soloing). Hitting the ground or a ledge is what we all instinctively try to avoid, as this can transmit significant force to the spine, resulting in compression fractures, especially in the thoracic and lumbar regions. In some cases, we probably all have seen a climber's foot get caught behind the rope, or stuck in a jam and the climber flips upside down during a fall. These are horrifying falls to witness and even if the climber is wearing a helmet, this can result in neck injuries.
- **Sudden stops:** A tight, non-dynamic belay can cause a significant jolt when a climber is caught. While this might be essential to mitigate impact in some very specific cases, falls with a sudden stop on a tight rope can cause serious whiplash in the neck.

While injuries like these mostly occur to the spine, the secondary impact on the spinal cord and nerve damage is what is most serious, difficult to treat and takes the longest to recover from.

If you experience any symptoms after a fall, such as localised pain in the back/neck, any tingling, numbness, weakness or clumsiness in the legs or arms, best would be to seek professional medical help as soon as possible. Early diagnosis can prevent further damage and improve the chances of a full recovery.

The treatment for spinal injuries in climbing varies depending on the severity of the injury. Here's a general breakdown:

- **Compression fractures:** These typically involve immobilisation with a brace or cast for several weeks, followed by physiotherapy and rehab to strengthen core muscles, and improve stability.
- **Stress fractures:** Rest and activity modification are key. Again, physiotherapy and rehab to focus on strengthening the core and addressing any underlying technique issues.

- **Whiplash (hyperextension injuries):** Treatment may involve a cervical collar for short-term stabilisation, followed by physiotherapy to regain proper range of motion and strengthen the neck.
- **Spinal cord injuries:** Treatment depends on the severity of the injury. It can involve surgery, extensive physical and occupational therapy, and potentially long-term management.

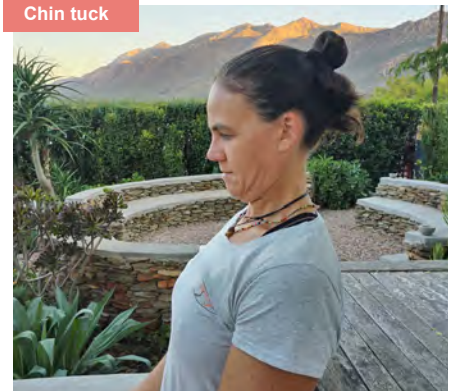
Rehabilitation after a spinal injury is crucial for a full recovery and a safe return to climbing. Physiotherapy plays a vital role, focusing on:

- **Pain management:** Techniques like massage, electrical stimulation, and anti-inflammatory medications can help manage pain.
- **Strengthening:** Building core and neck strength and stability is essential to protect the spine. Exercises targeting abdominal, back, and hip muscles.
- **Flexibility:** Maintaining good spinal flexibility is key for proper movement and injury prevention.
- **Balance and coordination:** Rehabilitation exercises help regain balance and coordination.

Because the spine is such a delicate part of the body, I would recommend that you work with a professional to help you return to your optimal physical form. However, for a simple condition such as belayer's neck there are some basic stretches and strengthening exercises that you can do:

Chin tuck: You can easily do this at the office or while watching Netflix, literally anywhere, sitting or standing. Sit/stand up straight focusing on making your spine and neck as long and straight as possible. Pull your shoulders down and back. Imagine getting the top part of the back of your head as high as possible, so don't bend your neck forward or your chin down. Now use your neck muscles to force your chin up and back until you feel a stretch in the back of your neck or down into your lower trapezius muscles.

Chin tuck





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Once approved by your doctor or physio, core exercises such as planks, superman, side planks and reverse planks might feel like torture, but are so beneficial for regaining strength.

Normal (forward) plank: Lie on your tummy, feet hip-width apart. Tuck in your toes and push yourself up on your elbows (shoulder-width apart). Balance on your elbows and toes, focusing on keeping your forearms parallel to each other, bum tight (imagine someone is poking you in the butt hole), don't forget to breathe, and hold for 30–60 seconds.



Forward plank

Superman: On your hands and knees, lift your left arm so your bicep is by your left ear, and straighten your right leg backwards so that it's parallel to the ground. Hold for 5 seconds and do the same on the opposite side. Repeat 10–15 times. To make this extra hard, tuck in your toes, and lift your knees slightly off the ground to do this exercise.



Superman

Side plank: Lie on your side, with the bottom elbow perpendicular to the ground supporting your body, lift your hips so that only the outer edge of the bottom foot is on the ground and supporting your whole body on the one elbow and edge of the foot. Hold 30–60 seconds. Don't let your hips sag. Repeat on the other side. Lift up the upper leg to make this extra spicy.



Side plank

Reverse plank: Lie back with your elbows on the floor. Lift your hips up, supporting your weight only with your heels and elbows. Keep your neck long and straight. Hold for 30–60 seconds. If this is too easy, lift one of your feet and alternate.



Reverse plank

When returning to climbing, listen to your body. Don't push yourself too hard. Any pain is a warning sign to slow down or rest.

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THE WHEELHOUSE

by Terence Livingston

Within reach is no problem – beyond that becomes a challenge!

Another top out, another pat on my back, another tick in the column. With age comes wisdom. And my vast expertise and the niggle in my shoulder has led me to believe that 19 is my grade. Anything below that is not worthy, anything above is another trip to the chiropractor! So, I safely crank my diminishing biceps up the rock, being careful to avoid the nasty 23 that leers at me as I pass by.

Don't get me wrong, a roving eye does glance left at the crimp holds and the lunge needed for the crux, but like someone admiring the array of a scantily-clad, bronzing beach, I know it's out of my league. It's just not in my wheelhouse.

Watching tennis, I hear them throw this word in when Djoko plays his signature shot. Cricket, when AB de Villiers strikes another superb six. Commentators fall over themselves to use it as though they were scoring Google points for the number of times it's used.

The revered Trad Climber's Bible by John Long and Peter Croft doesn't escape the expression as the authors elude to managing within the "climber's wheelhouse" when they talk about leading proficiencies. Jonathan Siegrist goes further in one of his articles on CLIMBING.com to sensibly caution people like me "...to lower your expectations when climbing outside your wheelhouse."

So, what exactly does this buzzword mean?

It sprang up in the 1950s with baseball announcers referring to the batsman's swinging arc of the bat where he could hit with the most power. It soon became a catchphrase that has even found its way into politics and media. Now it's pretty much everywhere.

Most likely, it originally comes from the name of the compartment on a boat where a captain is situated. Instead of cleaning decks or fixing leaks like the other plebs, he

is firmly in control of his vessel. He is where he is meant to be, doing what he does best.

Today, it has come to mean something that you are naturally, really good at or a zone that you are extremely proficient in.

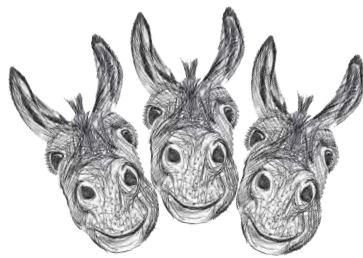
Encountering a crack? For some, they just lean back into air, arms stretched out, and shimmy on up. Laybacking and/or jamming is right up their alley. Others seem to be born with the ape-like ability to lunge straight over roofs, while there are those that effortlessly scurry around overhangs upside down without breaking a sweat. When it comes to grades, we all know our limits within which we function like a beast. Like a grade 19! Outside of that, well...

If the analogy is true and we perform best steering the boat within such parameters, then why bother going outside to simply end up scrubbing the decks?

Collin Jewett says that staying inside is all good and well, but there are significant benefits to stepping out and surmounting the oncoming squall head on. In his book, *Out of Your Wheelhouse*, he awakens a sense of embracing adversity that will help us "expand the boundaries of possibility." The gammy shoulder disagrees with the idea of expanding! Somewhere deep inside though, a sleepy youngster wakes up and flexes forgotten muscles, ready to have a crack at ignored (but often dreamed of) routes.

Since I wasn't chosen (for reasons I cannot fathom) to beat out the stiff competition for gold at the Olympics, who am I up against? My own worst rival – me! And Jewett concurs that there's only one way to conquer yourself – and that is by "opening the door and getting out of your wheelhouse."

Time to dust off that fingerboard, stretch those tendons and turn beyond the boring row of ticks in my climbing guide to a new page of more demanding, challenging (and rewarding) crevices.



Tre Asini Designs

R160



CRAG UTILITY BAG

26cm wide X 36cm high

- Light, but durable cotton twill on the outside and lined in funky African Shwe Shwe fabric.
- The perfect bag for your lunch, snacks, stove, and/or tea kit. Or other nik-naks you may need at the crag.
- Pulls closed with a draw cord and toggle lock.

R120



HARNESS BAG

21cm wide X 38cm high

- Light, but durable cotton twill with a funky African Shwe Shwe inlay on the one side.
- Perfect size and streamlined for your climbing harness, or your shoes.
- Pulls closed with a draw cord and toggle lock.

R200
(Standard)

R220
(Large)



CELLPHONE POUCHES

- Funky design.
- Light and padded.
- Two loops to hang from your harness or pack.
- Two sizes – for standard and large phones.

ROPE BAG

1 metre diameter

- Durable hardwearing denim on the outside and lined in funky African Shwe Shwe fabric.
- Two grab handles for attaching your rope and for carrying the bag around the crag.
- Pulls closed easily with a draw cord and toggle lock, to a neat package to fit in your rucksack.
- Can double for many other house-hold storage uses.

R550



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