Dent-Davies, Green Pillar, Keurkloof, Montagu (20)

This 280m route climbs the impressive Dru-like, Green Pillar from the kloof. It starts with the arête that leads directly into the tower above. Many variations to this route have been climbed, but this description is the most aesthetic.

Approach: Hike a few kilometres up Keurkloof and cross the stream as for Heaven Crag. Swing left and continue up the riverbed for 100m and then steeply up the right bank. Swing left and stay low on the slope for 100m. Drop down and after 20m cross a stream. Clamber over a boulder and along a path cut through the bushes. Go up the rocky slope and angle left to contour around the slope. Enter the riverbed and continue up the riverbed on the righthand side. Reach a white string and follow this to the left through the bush to cross the riverbed. Go up the steep opposite slope for 30m then angle to the right. Contour around the slope and then drop down to the stream below a huge boulder. Clamber up the boulders on the other side and angle leftwards through the cutting in the bush. Go left and then follow the cairns up leftwards to gain the rockface after a couple of hundred metres. Mostly hug the rock face and continue up on the right to reach a flat, cut platform for camping. Here you can find a barrel with a canvas tarpaulin for use as a groundsheet. Mind the rubber snakes!

Start: From the campsite continue upstream hugging the rockface on the right. Where the path reaches the rocky streambed, cross the stream to the other side and hike up a steep slope for 15m to reach the rock face. The route starts immediately on the left at a small, table-top rock platform.

P1: 18 35m Climb the prominent arête into a recessed feature and then up a crack. Then up the steep orange and green face on the right and then around and up the arête to more broken ground a little to the left. Up to a sloping ledge. Walk a couple of metres to the right and around the corner to reach the fixed anchors.
P2: 17 33m Traverse 3m right into the big dihedral. Climb the wall on the right. Continue up the appealing hand crack. Continue straight up over grey slabs and then traverse a couple of metres to the right behind a small tree. Climb up and leftwards over easy ground. Continue straight up to fixed anchors at the base of the steep wall ahead.

P3: 17 17m Climb straight up recessed cracks. Trend left to the gnarly old tree and a broken ledge. Find fixed anchors up on the right on the steep orange wall, with a directional for use on the abseil. Do not remove the cord and biner.

P4: 19 35m The Monkey Face Pitch (see the ape face outline from Better World Camp). Climb the hand crack that leads steeply up leftwards. Bypass the two jammed white blocks by crossing underneath and then up. Head up towards the roof. Traverse on a sloping ledge to the right then up onto grey slab. Climb up easy grey rock to the left then traverse right to a broken ledge behind a small tree. Find fixed anchors on the steep orange wall up on the right.

P5: 18 20m Climb up leftwards over slabs and big flakes to the arête and then steeply up the blocky arête and then a couple of metres left on the face. Continue up to a comfortable seat on the right, for a natural stance.

P6: 19 20m Continue up the recess above and get up onto the ledge below the steep 10m high, orange and green headwall. Climb the attractive hand crack to get onto a superb ledge. Make a natural stance a few metres to the left. Note: the fixed anchors for the abseil route are out of sight at the end of the ledge to the right. This is a good time to check them out.

P7: 20 25m Climb over huge blocks up and to the left, bypassing the cave up to the right. Climb the obvious crack up the steep brown wall to the roof. Go left to the arête and step around it. Head up a few metres then right onto the second ledge that has an orange wall above it.

P8: 20 25m Clamber onto the platform up to the left. Climb up rightwards for two levels to a broad ledge. Walk a few metres left to a point a couple of metres from the left arête. Climb up the middle of the orange wall then leftwards to small roofs. Either climb up to the right else go left around the corner and then up a steep wall for a few metres. Get onto a good ledge. Climb the recess and block, to a stance with fixed anchors up on the right.

P9: 20 25m Climb up then right for 5m to a platform. Here there are three options. Up the arête with dangerous blocks on top (easy), or a metre or two right up the weaknesses (moderate) or 4m off to the right up an attractive vertical hand crack (hard). Reach a big platform. On the left climb a recess next to a thin scimitar-shaped flake to get up then traverse to the righthand arête. Climb the arête and the grey face around the corner. Then climb the arête and then a clean vertical finger crack a metre or two around to the right. Meander up the front face to reach a good stance with fixed anchors. Note: It is probably more pleasant to break this pitch into two, by stancing on the big platform.

P10: 17 45m Climb up the front face of the pillar to the summit, doing the last three metres on the right-hand edge.

Descent: Using fixed anchors do eight abseils to the base. Rappel the top four pitches using a directional in the huge blocks of P7 to land on the ledge. Walk along the ledge to the anchors around the corner. This rappel accounts for P6 and P5, to land at the top of Monkey Face pitch. This rappel has dislodged flakes. Stay alert and stay close into the rockface for protection. Rappel and clip the white directional cord and biner at the bottom of Monkey Face to continue down another pitch. Be sure that the second abseiler has the correct rope clipped into the biner! (The correct rope is the one that is going to go up, when the other rope is pulled down). This rappel accounts for P4 and P3. Rappel down the slope and then down the big dihedral of P2. Exit to your left onto the stance of P1. Rappel straight down P1 to regain the base of the route. Be careful of being beneath an abseiler above.

First Ascent: Carolyn Dent and Hilton Davies, 24 February 2022