

MARATOTO

by John van der Werff & Cliff Ellery

Introduction

With tonnes of exposure and fantastic surrounds Maratoto makes for a great days climbing. If you make the effort to venture up to the base of this impressive looking rock feature you will be rewarded with some classic sports routes in an amazing location. Maratoto means river of blood and was named after a Maori battle. The block was mined at the early 1900's with some relics still visible. The first climbing occurred in the 70's with an aid route on the top tier, however there is very little details about who did this route or where it goes. The crag was rediscovered by Dean Maxwell in 1996 and with the help of John van der Warff the pair set about, clearing a track, cutting steps, cleaning rock and placing over 200 bolts. This mammoth effort took place over a couple off summers and often saw the pair camped out at the cave bivvy at the base of the crag for weeks on end. The crag faces south west so gets the late afternoon sun.

Access

The Maratoto road is situated on the Thames-Paeroa road (SH 26). From Thames bridge drive 16kms past old Maratoto road till you come to Maratoto road on your left, or from Paeroa take the road to Thames and after 10km to 15km you will come across Maratoto road on the right. Drive up Maratoto road for about 10 km and park on the bend directly beneath Maratoto. The track can be a bit hard to find, either walk up the road 250m to a small culvert (drain) scramble down to the river and pick up the track up from here, or cross the paddock and river by the car park then climb the hill moving right until you pick the track up. A 30 minute walk up the hill step in places brings you to the base of the cliff (allow an hour you'll probably get lost a couple of times).

GEAR

You will need up to 15 -18 Quickdraws . A couple of the routes have Trad gear (Cams and wires) but most are sport.



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Figure 1 - Map

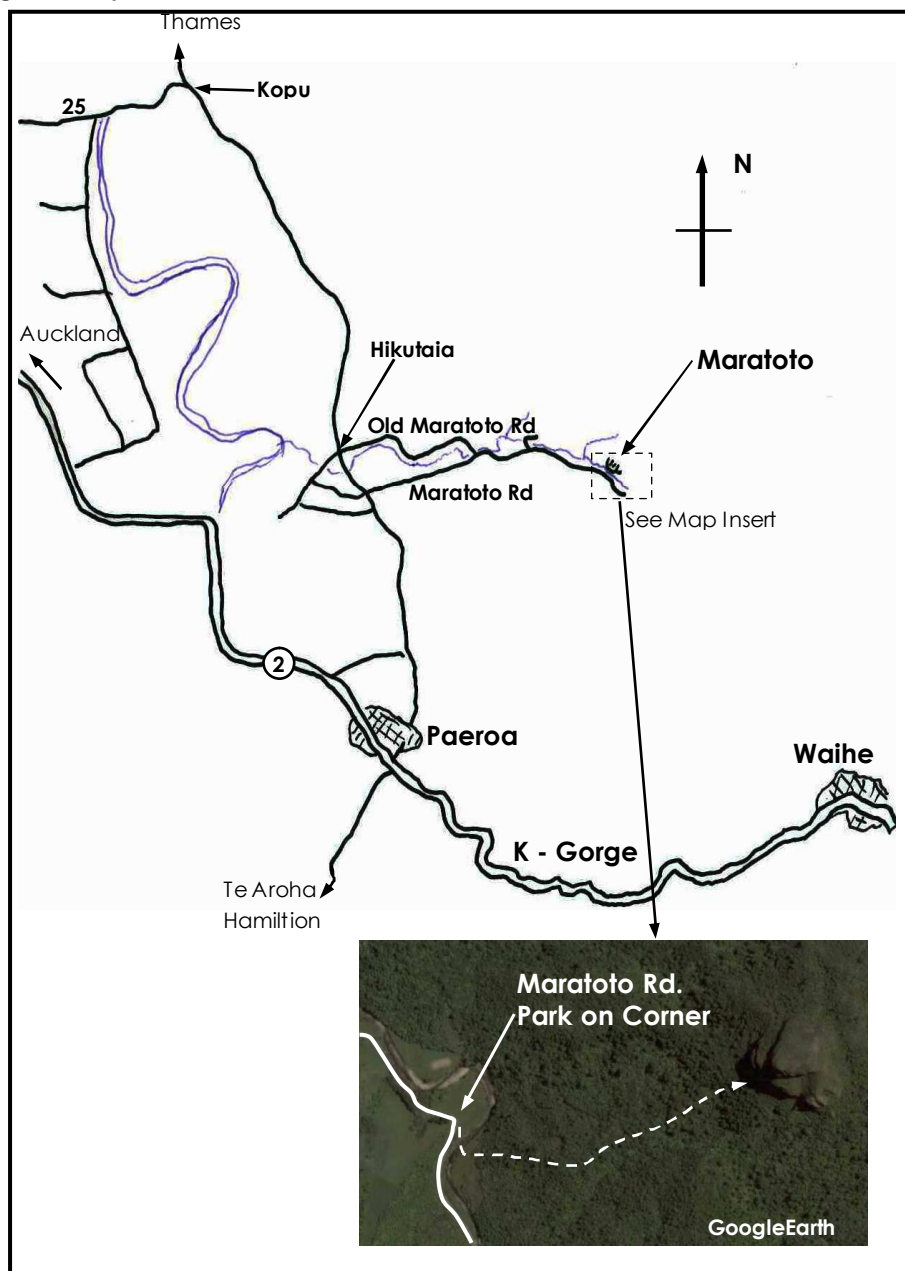
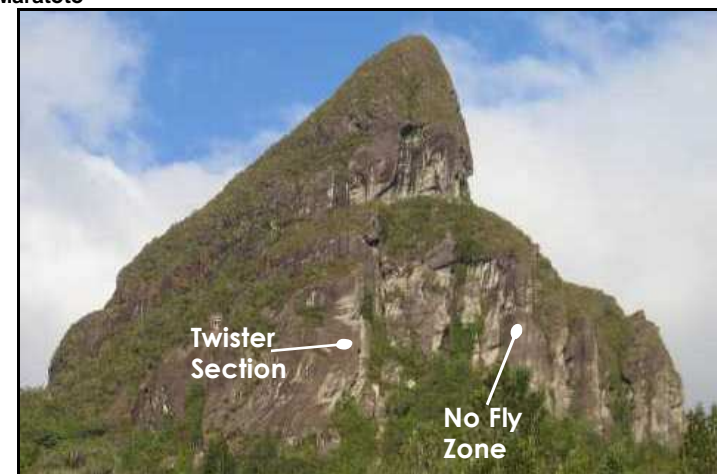


Photo 1- Maratoto



Twister Sector

The large left hand buttress,

* **Twister (20) 25m**

Climb the groove to below the overhang. Move slightly left to surmount the crux overhang to bigger and bigger holds. Slabby finish with an exciting ending. Rock quality is not good as the rest of the crag but still a fun climb. [Pro 11 Bolts]

Wet Panties (18) 12m

The second pitch at the hanging belay in the middle of this wall. Climb to the right underneath the overhang to the crux above the second bolt and then cruise cruise to the top of the honeycomb head wall. Descent is best in two abseils. [Pro 5 Bolts]

Scorpion Tail (20) 40m

Climb the groove and keep on going through the widening crack and chimney to reach the steep headwall and chain. Long and airy with a good balance of moves. DBC Belay [18 bolts]

400 Ft Bastard (17) 22m

The climb is on the wall named slab City. Its starts at an off width crack to the right of Scorpions Tail near a convenient belay perch. Chimney or bridge out on the pillar adjacent to the wall then face climb up to crux at half height. The pillar can be used for a bridging rest at the crux then on up on wonderful holds to the chain. [Pro 8 Bolts]

Dean Maxwell

Blue (29?) 18m

A very steep climb that up at the main camp area. A route that caused or sort of controversy, with allocations of chipped hold, questions over the first ascent. [Pro. 7 Bolts]

No Fly Zone

No Fly Zone (19) 25m

The most left hand route on the main No Flyzone wall. Curve up past a well protected crux at halfway to a belay on the left of a small roof. The top section of the neighbouring *Coller de Hors* can be used as a second pitch of 10m going at grade 16: Step out right to first bolt and continue on up big holds.

*** Coller De Hors (23) 35m

The first and longest route on this sector, with excellent quality rock. Climb through the overhang to the crux *la rose* move and steep head wall. Either satic or dyno for the pockets out right (crux) then continue to the top. The grade eases off the higher you get but remains steep and exposed. Great climbing in a fantastical position., one of my favorites. [Pro 15 Bolts]

John an der Werff

Feariswheel (23) 25m

This climb is sustained but well protected. The crux involves pulling over the overhang and getting established on the steep wall above. Steep climb on good rock. [Pro 12 Bolts].

John an der Werff

Climb this you Bastard (22) 30m

An intimidating line that gets harder the higher you climb, with its crux headwall and bold finish. A bit of everything in terms of climbing, slabs, cracks, faces and an overhang. Rock a bit soft at the start. [Pro: 12 Bolts]

John an der Werff

Le Stix (24) 35m

The pronounced streak on the last buttress of this sector. This climb has two cruxes, one high and one low. The highr you get the steeper it is and the resr quickly disappear. The second bolt is tricky to clip due to the nature of the rock but good side pulls are there if you can find them. [Pro 14 Bolts]

John an der Werff

Photo 2: No Fly Zone Area



Top Tier section

The top tier is an extensive area with all kinds of rock features including a very large roof and overhang. Access to the top tier is difficult but a track does exist starting at the left hand of the crag passed the base of Twister. Skirt round the base of the cliff till you reach a bush ramp leading up between the two tiers. Access to the top of Maratoto is possible by following this ledge across to the right then skirting around the back and up to the summit. Back on the upper tier there is a 30 year old aid route, details unknown as well as the line of

Bolting Aphrodisiacs (A1) (18) 70m

Starting to the left of the big overhang this aid route goes right to the top of the crag. Exposed and overhanging, 5-6 pitches. Descent can be done in four abseils. [Pro 80 bolts!, wires, hooks]

Dean Maxwell

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