

Walk:

Wollemi National Park: Between Wollangambe River and Bowens Creek

Leader:

Yuri Bolotin

Maps, etc:

Wollangambe, Mountain Lagoon. GPS setting WGS84.

Description:

Day 1. Park at GR 652 942 at the start of Tessellated Pavements access track. Walk north along the ridge separating Wollangambe River and Bowens Creek. Establish camp at around GR 669 002. Find water and explore the area nearby.

Days 2 and 3. Day walks from the base camp.

Day 4. Walk back to the cars, making a few exploratory detours along the way.

Mostly exploratory. Scrambling and exposure.

Rating:

6M. M333E

Gear Issues:

Full pack gear, in addition to day-walk gear. Water will be carried only for Day 1.

Dates walked:

24-27 July 2025.

The Party:

Yuri Bolotin (leader), Ella Ballhausen, Ari Shestopal, Oliver Guerrisi-Watson, John Grey, Kevin Songberg, 6.

The Weather:

Day 1 – A cold day with a very strong wind. Temperature range 5 to 16 degrees C, but it felt much colder due to the wind.

Day 2 – A cold morning followed by a beautiful mostly sunny winter's day. Light breezes. Cloud started to gather in late afternoon ahead of the weather change overnight. Temperature range 0 to 17 degrees C. Ideal walking conditions.

Day 3 – Rain fell between 0300 am and 0530 am, making the bush wet and unpleasant. A cloudy, misty, windy morning, gradually becoming drier and sunnier, with light to moderate breezes by mid-to late afternoon. Cold wind in the evening. Temperature range 6 to 16 degrees C.

Day 4 - A cold day with a very strong wind. Temperature range 6 to 12 degrees C, but it felt much colder due to the wind.

Track Notes

Note: time references in the text relate to Grid References in the table at the end of these Track Notes.

Day 1 – 24 July 2025

Cars were parked at the start of the Tessellated Pavements access track, GR 6521 9419, 750 m, and, after a quick safety gear check, our adventure began at 0852.

The first segment of the walk to Tessellated Pavements was on a well-defined path, and our only challenge along the way was fighting the stiff cold wind that made an otherwise pleasant and straightforward journey feel rather uncomfortable.

The party arrived at Tessellated Pavements by 0925. This huge tessellated rock platform on top of a long ridge running north, north east between the Wollangambe and Bowens Creek gorges boasts stunning views and several important Aboriginal sites, including grinding grooves and a petroglyph of a female figure. It is looking towards the sacred Mount Yengo on the far horizon, so one interpretation is it is an image of Baiame deity. Another one is that it represents a woman dancing, probably a mother and her grieving at letting go of her son as he begins his manhood initiation ceremony. It would have been worth a separate trip of its own, but for us today, it was just the beginning of the adventure to the more distant and less known lands to the north.



Tessellated Pavements. Photo: Kevin Songberg.



The view north towards Bowens Creek gorge from Tessellated Pavements. Note Mount Yengo above the horizon line. Photo: Oliver Guerrisi-Watson.

After about 15 minutes of enjoying the scenery, we came down steeply to a large area of rock below the Tessellated Pavements. Beyond that, the ridge narrowed significantly and went through a few knolls and saddles. Between 1004 and 1016, the group stopped for morning tea in a spot partially protected from the wind, before continuing down to a much deeper watershed, which was reached seven minutes later.

Here, a high rock wall barred any further progress along the ridge, and the way around it was by traversing on the left-hand side. Having been through this point on several other trips, I remembered the highly ornate decorations along the wall. They were indeed here, but appeared a bit dull in the shade of the winter morning. I thought, perhaps on the last day, when we would be passing this area in the afternoon, the sandstone weatherings might look much better lit by the western sun. What I did not know was that by the last day of our trip we would have had a visual overload of incredible rock formations. More about it in due course.

After a short sidle underneath the cliffs, a way up appeared, at 1029, and we climbed back to the top of the ridge, then continued ascending towards a high knoll marked on the map as spot height 734 m. Before leaving this area, I thought it was a good idea to come to the brink of the bluffs on the right-hand side and enjoy a tremendous view across Bowens Creek gorge towards Mount Tootie and Little Tootie. They were about three kilometres away but seemed so close we could touch them. At 1038.



The view across Bowens Creek gorge towards Little Tootie and Mount Tootie. Photo: Oliver Guerrisi-Watson.

Seventeen minutes later, the group climbed to the top of the knoll. Just before the summit, we had traversed a few small tessellated platforms and flat rock shelves with interesting animal-shaped erosion residuals scattered on the surface.



Tessellated platform. Photo: Kevin Songberg.



Oliver admires a rock sculpture. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

The descent from here was via a narrow spur with great views to both the Wollangambe and Bowens Creeks valleys. By 1122, we reached the saddle, from where a short side trip was made to visit an Aboriginal site.

Resuming sixteen minutes later, the party quickly came to another high wall in the middle of the spur. At 1142. Here, we scrambled on the left-hand side to a ledge and then found a ramp that led us through the main obstacle. An old cairn was noted on top. At 1152. After another thirteen minutes of climbing, we

arrived at the top of the hill, which, as often happens in the Wollemi, was covered in thick scrub and did not offer any view rewards for our efforts.

Our compensation came soon after, at 1219, as we came out to a long stretch of open rock containing several water holes. Aboriginal grinding grooves were noted nearby. A rock arrangement or cairn was recorded a bit further along the ridge. At 1235. More beautiful water holes, grinding grooves, as well as expansive views were found at 1250 on top of spot height 716 m. As the wind seemed to have died down a bit, we decided to have a lunch break here, which finished at 1312.

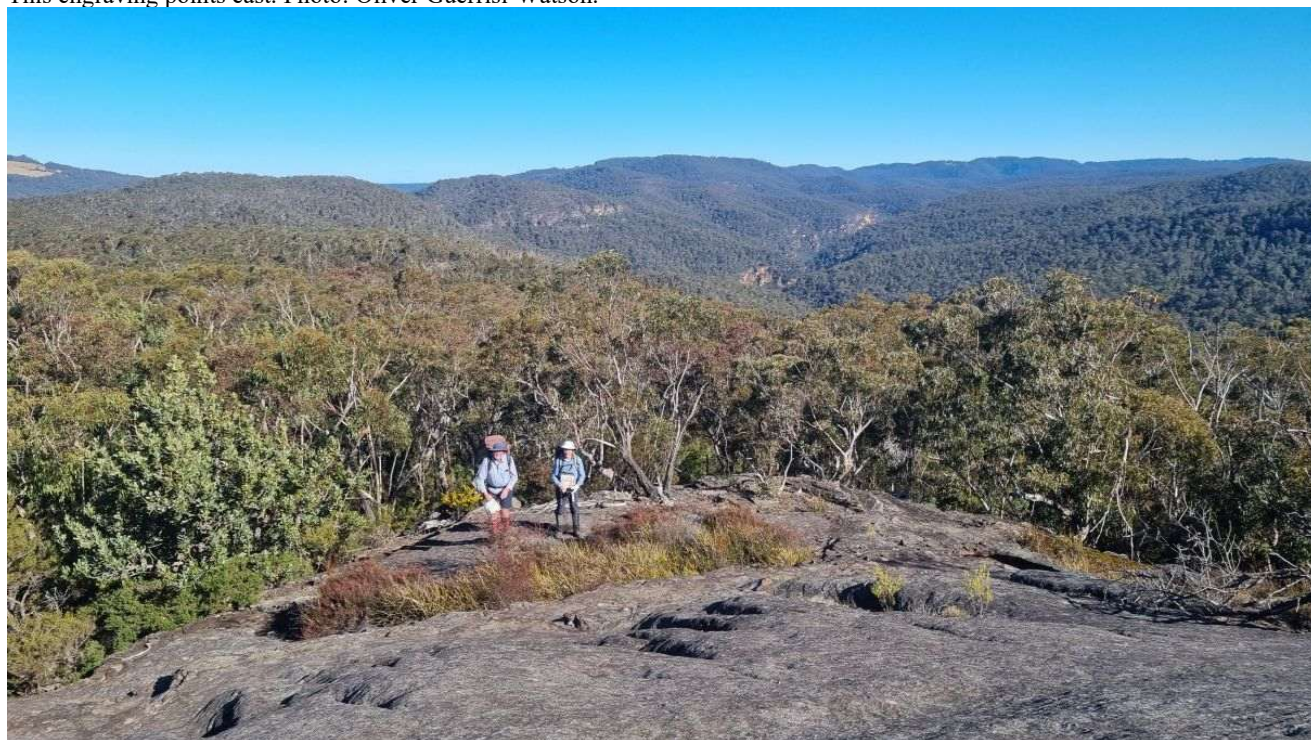


A water pool along the way. Photo: Oliver Guerrisi-Watson.

The ridge from here on was gently undulating and open. It featured long rock platforms interspersed with areas covered in small trees and shorth undergrowth – ideal walking conditions. Along the way, we spotted a dead fox. It seemed to have died a couple of weeks ago, perhaps a result of NPWS fox baiting program? A curious engraving was spotted on top of a small knoll at 1354 – a letter N with an arrow, but it was pointing east rather than north.



This engraving points east. Photo: Oliver Guerrisi-Watson.



The view south from one of the high points. John and Kevin are happy to stop for a photo. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



John, Ari, Kevin, Ella and Oliver on top of a high knoll. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Thirteen minutes later, we made a 90-degree turn to the east in order to stay on the main ridge. I planned to explore northwards from here tomorrow. As we were approaching our intended camping spot, we decided to have a quick look at the area facing north east below the brow of the spur, to try and find shelter from the cold wind we expected to return by tonight. There was nothing suitable there, so, after a short while, the party climbed back to the top and continued eastwards.

The ridge here had extensive open platforms, so, having spent some time searching, we settled on an area with plenty of space for all of us and a choice of spots on top of the rock or in the bush down slightly below the ridge crest on the northern side, which we hoped would offer some protection from the wind. At 1440.

The next task, even before establishing the camp, was to find water, as we had only carried enough for the day walk. There were several pools on top of the ridge in our immediate vicinity, but we did not think they would be enough for six people. Whilst exploring the area, we had spotted a steep gully on the southern side of the ridge just 50 metres east from our camp, and it appeared a natural place to check first. Dropping the backpacks on the ground, we grabbed our water collecting gear, getting ready to go exploring. Here, I made a silly error of judgement, which one should not do in the Wollemi, let alone if that person is the group leader. I was so sure we would find water straight away that I neglected to take anything else with me. A minimum requirement would be the first aid kit, tape, some drinking water. Luckily, I had not forgotten my map and compass, and other people took all necessary bits.

At 1447, the party descended into the cold, shady gully that was holding our hopes. In the area immediately below the cliff line there were a few patches of moist earth but not a drop of running water. From here, we plunged down into an awful sea of Ferns, abundant Lawyer Vine and debris, hiding deep dangerous holes. We progressed about 200 metres in half an hour. Still, there was no water. Looking at the map, I thought we might as well continue down for another 200 metres to the junction with a much bigger creek instead of reversing our steps and starting again somewhere else.



Yuri, looking for water in the sea of Ferns. Photo: Kevin Songberg.

Running water appeared just before the rainforest-clad junction, reached by 1531. I could at last have a drink! It was very dark here, both because of the time of the day and the depth of the gorge. Nobody could stand the thought of returning the same way up the dreadful gully we had just descended. Instead, we decided to walk up the main watercourse and exit using one of the spurs on the northern side.



The rainforest in the main gorge. Photo: Oliver Guerrisi-Watson.

This had worked out much better, as the journey upstream through the rainforest was easy and pleasant. At some stage, just before our intended exit, we stopped to collect water. As we continued to climb, now with heavier backpacks, along the steep slippery creek bed hemmed in by lofty walls, it was not unexpected that we were soon stopped by a waterfall. Luckily, it was only about four metres high and the bottom part could be scrambled. Also, luckily for the leader, Oliver had not neglected to bring his tape. By 1605, everyone was up above the obstacle.



At the tape-assisted ascent on the way back. Photo: Oliver Guerrisi-Watson.

We now used a few switch-back ledges to scramble above the ravine and then continued towards the camp. The vegetation here was of the normal Wollemi density and not a problem compared to the horrible wet gully we had taken coming down. Ironically, we found water on the way up, and it was much closer to our base. At 1622. By 1641, the party made it back to the camp. Considering the arduous two-hour expedition we had just returned from, these shallow water pools on top of the ridge near our tents did not look too bad. There was still a bit of sunshine left in the day, and our next and urgent priority was now setting up the camp before it became dark and cold.

Day statistics: total distance 12.2 km; total ascent 639 m.

Day 2 – 25 July 2025

Last night had been cold, but, fortunately, the wind was not too strong, and it almost ceased by the morning. By 0803, our warm layers still on, we were ready to step into a glorious blue sunny morning and begin our explorations of the area north of the base.

The party first moved west along the lovely ridge we were camped on, with its extensive stone shelves, pools of water and sculptural rock formations. Crossing a hanging swamp, we quickly reached the top of another ridge, trending north to south, a few steps away from the point where we had left it yesterday. At 0817. There were water pools and Aboriginal grinding grooves nearby.



Kevin at a curious rock formation along the ridge. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

The ridge here was in the shape of a giant arc that gradually swung from the north east to the west. A long stone platform with water-filled round holes was passed next, before entering a forested area. Oliver pointed out a tree species abundant here but relatively new to me, Silvertop Ash, *Eucalyptus sieberi*. Soon, the watershed became narrower, and attractive vistas appeared towards the Wollangambe River and Bungleboori Creek junction to the west.

A little further along, we stopped at the edge of the south-facing cliffs. We could only see a small part of the overhang below, but something (sixth sense?) drew me there, so we went down to investigate. What we found still stays in my memory as one of the highlights of this trip – an overhang of striking honeycomb formations – brown, grey, beige, and orange, and touching it in a tender embrace, a slender Angophora tree. At 0846. Wow! We followed below the cliffs for about 40 metres and then climbed back up on the ridge, leaving this area till later as continuing now would mean missing out on a big part of today's carefully planned agenda. Once on top, we also noticed long rock platforms extending above the overhang in the same direction. Another reason to come back here when opportunity arises.



Angophora embracing the tafoni. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



Tafoni overhang detail. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

For now, at 0857, the group turned eastwards to begin our descent underneath a major cliff line a couple of hundred metres further down. Twenty-two minutes later, after negotiating a 40 metre drop at the end by using a few ramps, we made it to below the row of cliffs running above a tributary of the Wollangambe River. The rocks here showed no erosions, but the gully had a beautiful-looking rainforest at the bottom and a thick cover of Ferns above at our level, all gorgeously sunlit at this time of the morning, as we were facing the east.

The plan from here was to walk at this (hopefully) more or less constant level below the cliffs for as long as the time would allow. Less than one hundred metres into our traverse, there was a challenging gully crossing as we first had to crawl on a ledge that did not go at the end, then reverse-crawl to the start of it; this was followed by head-on plunge into a thick mess of Ferns and Vines. Feeling glad we only had day-packs with us today, I was also hoping the conditions would improve soon. Gradually, we worked our way back to the cliff line.



Rainforest below the cliffs. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

A short distance along, we saw a perfect ramp leading up through the bluffs. With the benefit of hindsight, we could have used it to come here from the top of the ridge, avoiding the nasty bit we had just been through. At 0932. But the best news was the sight of a glorious honeycomb overhang above us. Although a bit difficult to reach, it was a sign of better things ahead.

Indeed, ten minutes later, we came to a gorgeous cave, about 20 metres across, sporting many layers of tafoni panels in an astonishing spectrum of colours, from black to white via yellow and brown. On the white wall nearby, was a small section of exquisite Liesegang Rings. As the group traversed below the cliffs, the aspect changed to the north-facing, and the quality of the overhangs improved dramatically.



The first stunning overhang of the day. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

At 1001, we recorded a 25 metre long dry cave with flat floors. No signs of habitation could be found, however the wall decorations were wonderfully rich. More beautiful overhangs followed during the next 200 metres.



Overhang detail. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

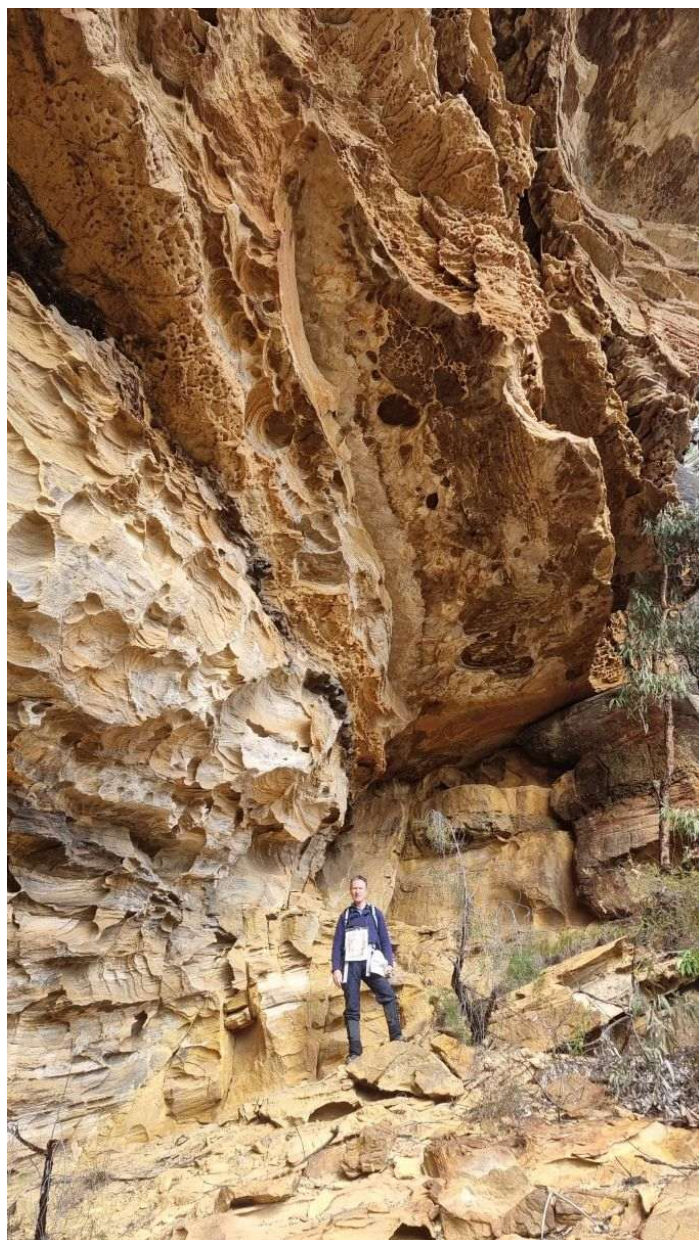


Overhang detail. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

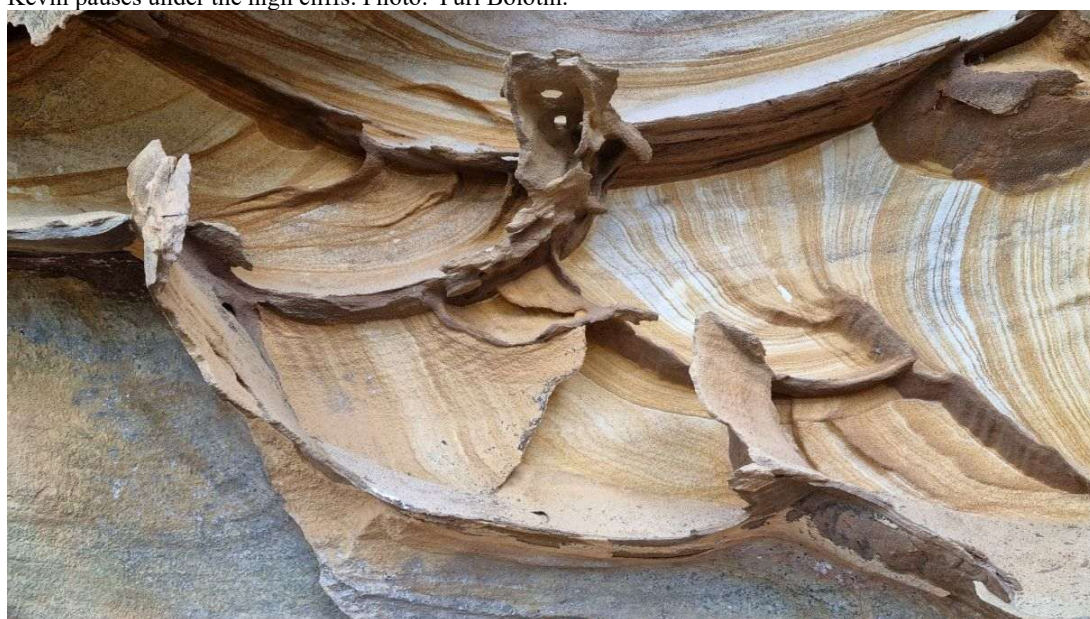


Ari, John and Oliver traversing above Wollangambe River. Photo: Kevin Songberg.

At 1022, we crossed a small gully that had water dripping down the cliff wall. Nearby, an Aboriginal art site was noted. We had morning tea at that location, from 1030 till 1050.



Kevin pauses under the high cliffs. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



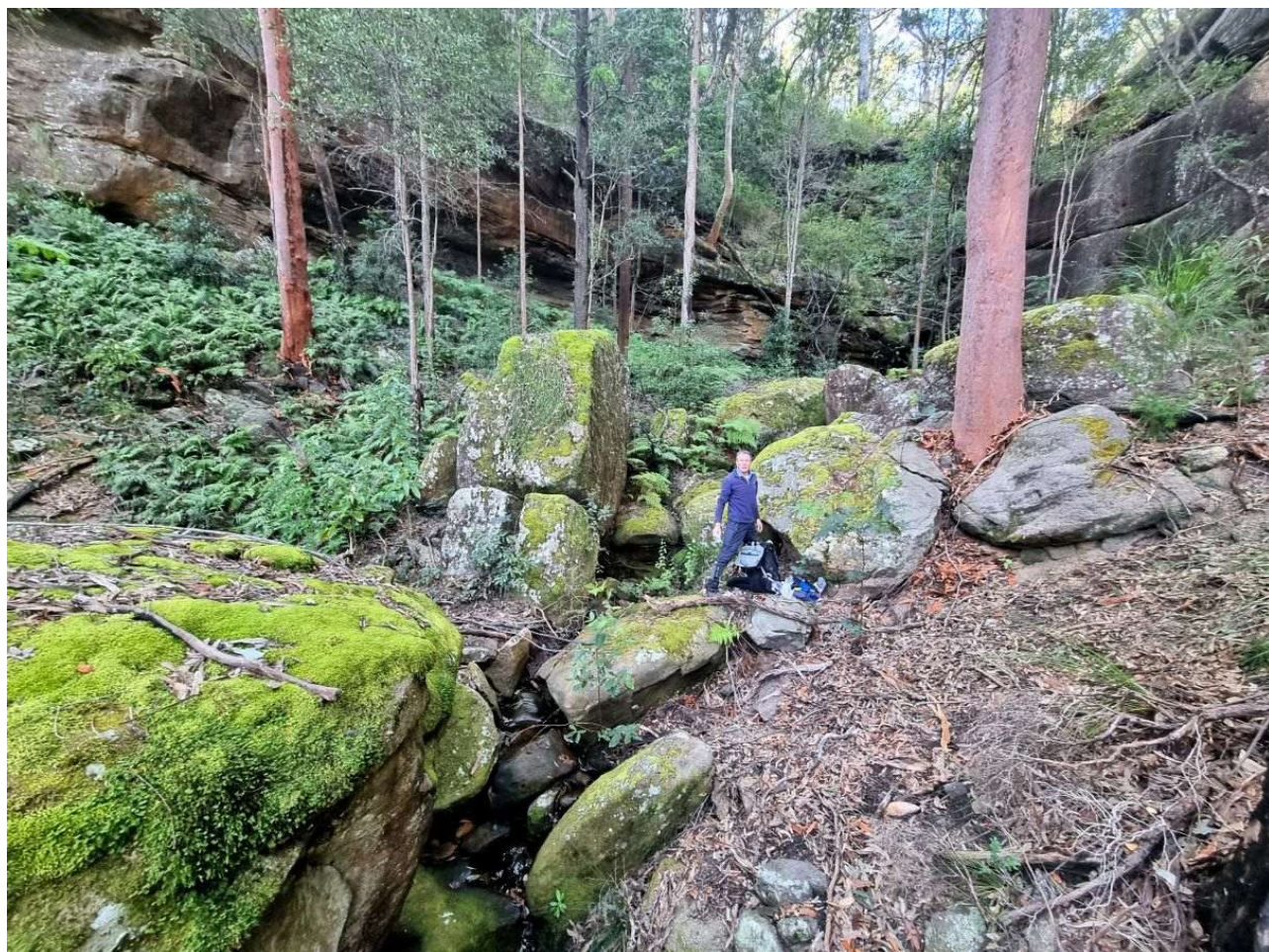
Liesegang Rings and more in this cave. Photo: Kevin Songberg.

Dry, beautifully eroded overhangs continued for the next 800 metres of the journey. Just before crossing a big tributary gorge, we crawled through a 15 metre long tunnel. This was for fun rather than necessity as we could have easily walked around it. The gorge had majestic Angophoras, moss-covered boulders and running water. According to the map, here was one of our very few exit opportunities as the cliffs all along the traverse looked impregnable.

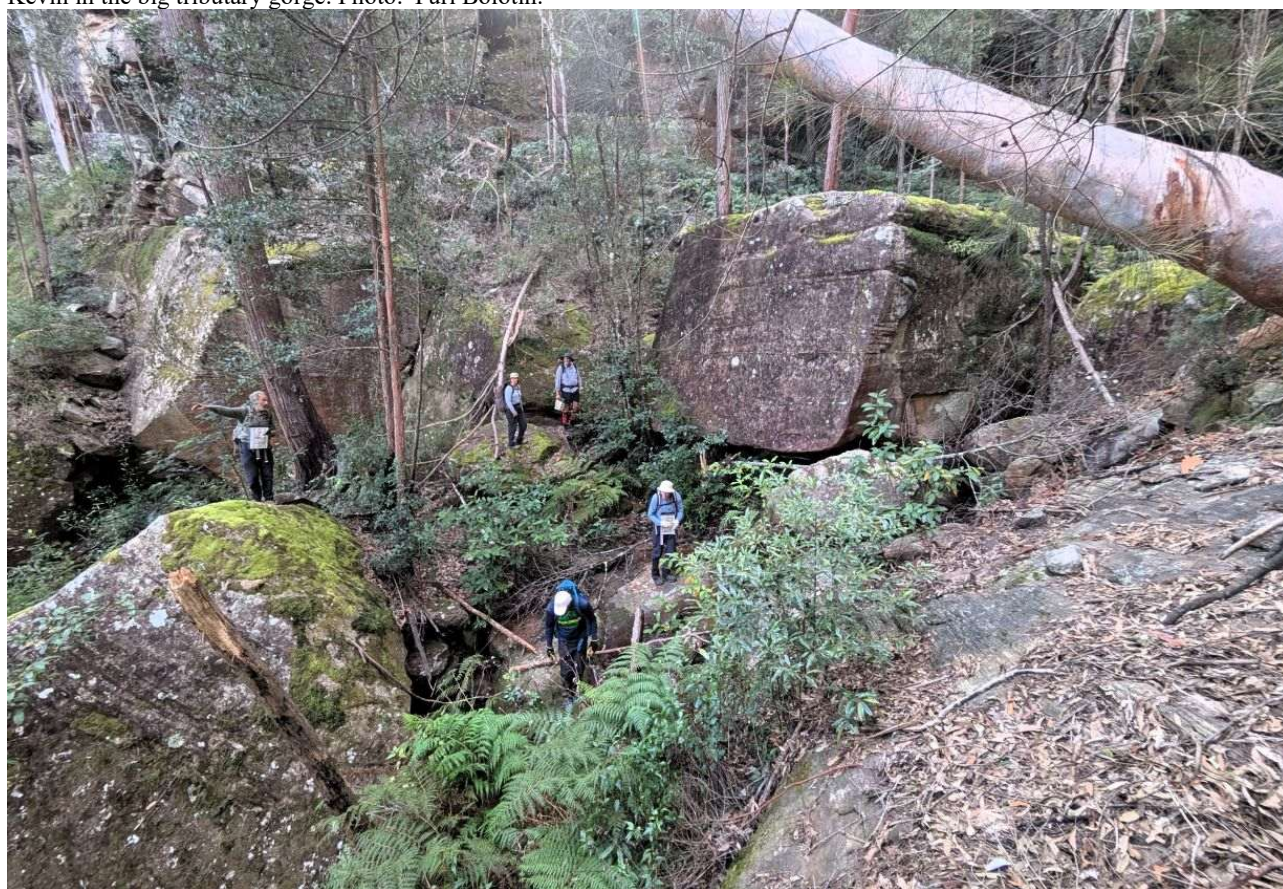


Ari in the tunnel. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

There was still a lot of time left in the day, and, especially given a very scenic run we had experienced, I was not sure I wanted to get out now, but John sensibly suggested that we should at least climb up the gorge and check it out. I am glad we did, as we quickly came to a non-negotiable waterfall. At 1208. Just before that point, we had noted a good camping cave. As I did not know if we would find such nice, or any, water further on, the party had a refilling stop here, to take enough for the rest of the day and tomorrow morning. Until 1224.



Kevin in the big tributary gorge. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



The group in the big tributary gorge. Photo: Oliver Guerrisi-Watson.

The adventure continued as we traversed below the high, beautifully eroded cliffs. Another Aboriginal habitation site was noted along the way. We stopped for lunch in one of the sunlit caves, from 1235 till 1300.

At 1310, we reached a slot promising a way up through the cliffs. Consulting the map, I considered our options. The next 'guaranteed' (nothing is guaranteed in the Wollemi) exit point was about two kilometres away. This was where I had been planning to get to whilst preparing for this day; however, bearing in mind our speed so far and the available daylight hours, it would now be a very unlikely target, so the decision was made to leave the exploration of that area for another time.

The slot quickly took us above the first wall, but there was a much bigger one looming ahead. After a little scramble and a switch-back, we followed a narrow ledge for a short distance, then used a ramp to climb to another ledge that led us all the way back above the gully where we had filled up with water. Significantly, we were now above the waterfall that had stopped us earlier. A long overhang was noted here with flat floors but not a big roof cover. At 1344. There was still a healthy stream of water in the gully; we also found some grinding grooves.

Next, the party headed up a tributary ravine of the main watercourse. Surprisingly, it was also flowing. A small arch-like formation spanning the creek was photographed here. Reaching the next cliff line, we traversed below it. An Aboriginal habitation site was noted in this area.

Continuing on this level, the party reached (at 1439) the amazing honeycomb overhang embraced by Angophora tree that we had inspected this morning. Hoping to find more, we carried below the cliffs. There was a small tafoni panel about 300 metres along, and then one more little but striking chamber within a stand-alone boulder a little further away. At 1505. A few metres from it, we took photos of another cave with interesting and unusual ceiling decorations – red orange rings on a chalky white background.



The cave with red rings. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Seven minutes later, with the cliffs now diminished, it was time to make our way up to the top of the ridge to a stunning panoramic view towards the junction Wollangambe River and Bungleboori Creek and all the way to Mount Irvine. We could hear the two rivers roaring as they met. It was definitely the view of the day.



Wollangambe River and Bungleboori Creek junction. Photo: Kevin Songberg.



Oliver, Ella, Ari and Kevin at the lookout. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

The way back from here was via a beautiful flat watershed covered in hanging swamps and extensive rock formations. At 1602, we reached the take-off point to the ridge where our camp was, and fourteen minutes later, very happy with our achievements today, the party made it back to our temporary home in the bush.

Day statistics: total distance 9.2 km; total ascent 405 m.

Day 3 – 26 July 2025

The rain overnight fell exactly as per the forecast. It started at 0300 am and was over by 0530 am; however the morning did not feel very pleasant, with howling wind, wet bush and little visibility. As the weather was supposed to improve later during the day, I had agreed last night with the proposition that a little extra sleep in the morning would be a sensible thing to do.



Some accommodation (including mine, on the left) was in the forest, whereas others chose to set up on the rock platform above.
Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

At 0830, the team set off from the camp to explore the area to our east. Ten minutes later, we reached the junction of two ridges and turned northward. Although the rain had stopped a fair while ago now, the conditions were still not great, especially whilst we had to push through frequent stands of dense water-laden scrub.



Setting out for the day. Photo: Kevin Songberg.

After only eighteen minutes of going north, it was time to slide off the ridge and start coming down eastwards into the headwaters of a major tributary of Bowens Creek. The descent was made harder by slippery surfaces, but the team was just above the creek by 0918, inspecting some small, not very remarkable caves.

Coming around a corner, we saw below us, at the junction of two streams, an overhang that appeared really promising. At 0948, we stopped there to have morning tea and a good look around. This 40 metre long cave with flat floors had some pretty sandstone formations but, to our great surprise, nothing much else.



The morning tea overhang. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

At 1007, we continued our journey, now northwards, slightly above the main watercourse, which had plenty of running water and quite a few flat rocky shelves. Further on, we examined a string of pretty caves before coming to an Aboriginal habitation site.

The party continued under the cliffs, stopping at an overhang with strikingly yellow-golden formations. Being an overcast day, this was the natural colour of the rock, not enhanced by the sunlight. Next, we crossed a tributary gully and then the main gorge, to emerge at a dry west-facing cliff line. At 1116. Just at that time, the wind began to blow the clouds away, and tentative beams of sunshine appeared.

The sandstone formations here were of the highest quality, culminating, at 1125, by a stunning overhang featuring an overwhelming variety of layers, colours, shapes and sizes, from leopard skin-like rock patterns to alcoves of gypsum-white shapes. GR 6753 0110, 565 m. The leopard spot designs looked particularly unusual, so I called this overhang Leopard Spots Cave.

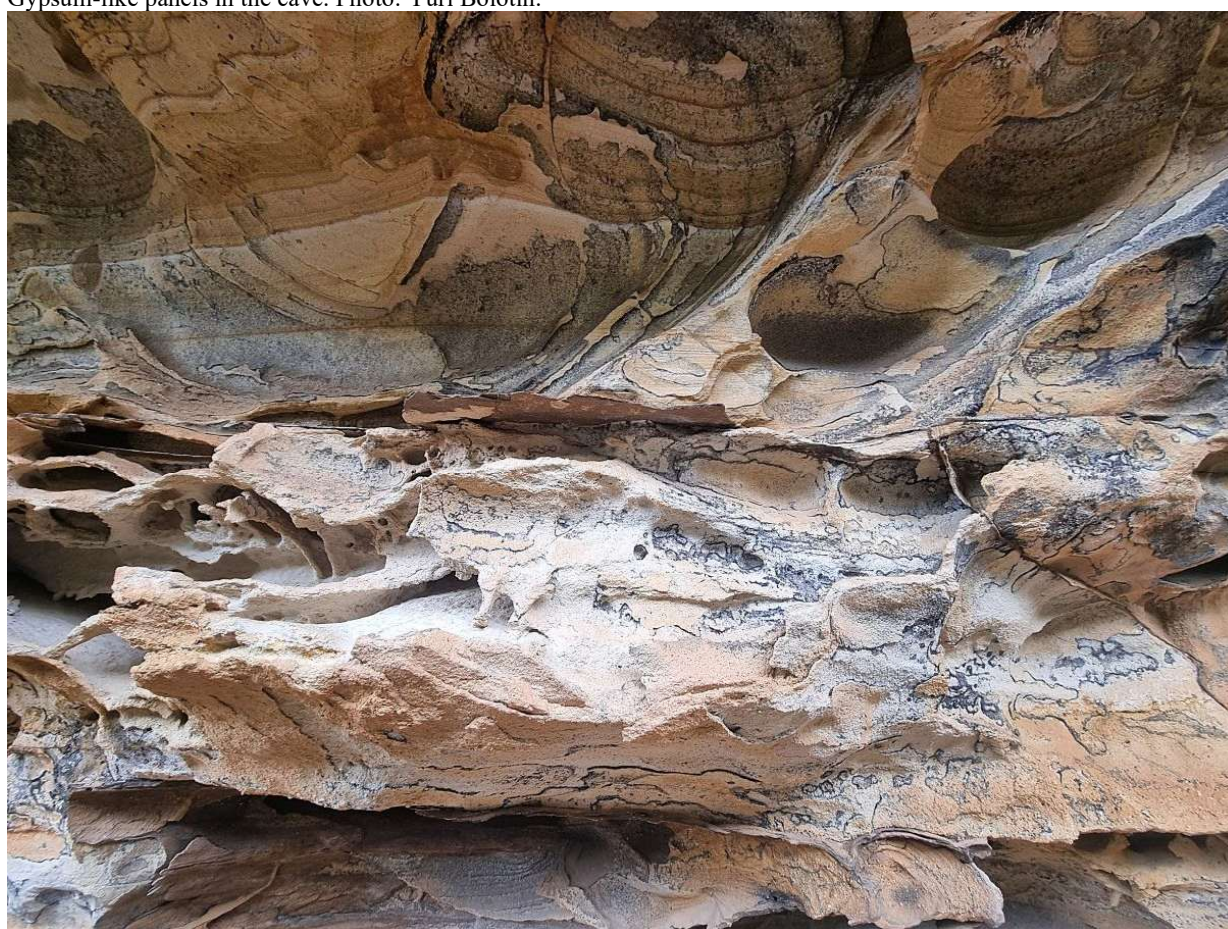
Shortly after, I noted we had just crossed onto the Mountain Lagoon topographic map, my 'home' one; however, I had only once before visited its extreme northwestern corner.



Leopard skin patterns in the cave. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



Gypsum-like panels in the cave. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



Cave detail. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



Cave detail. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

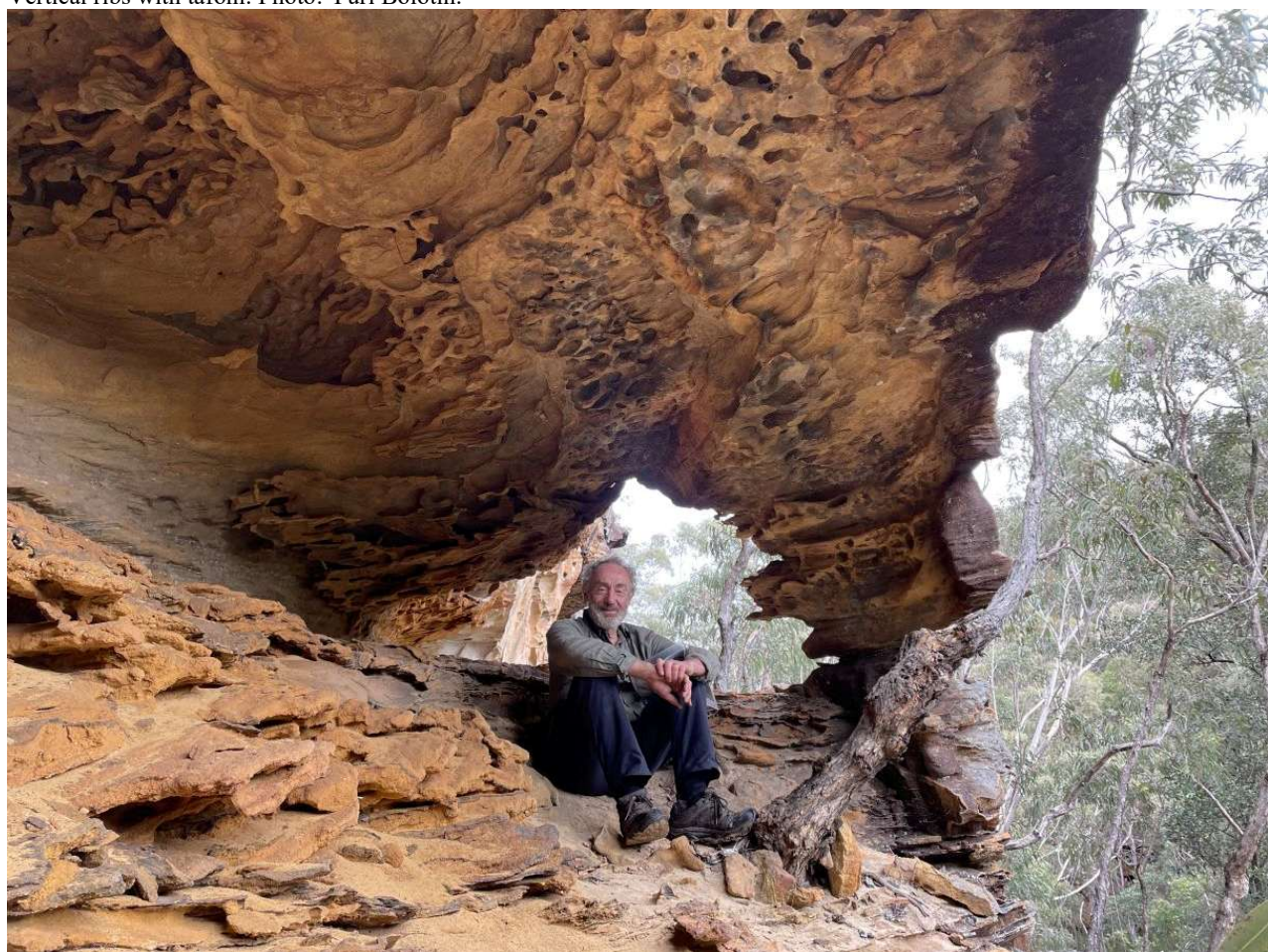
Whilst we were traversing the next string of beautifully eroded overhangs, including a 20 metre long one with flat floors, the sun came out fully from behind the thinning clouds. Being on the north-facing side of the ravine, we were receiving a fair portion of its warmth and felt grateful for it after a period of wet and cold weather.

Between 1203 and 1216, at a cool and shady tributary crossing containing a running stream, we took an opportunity to refill our water containers to last for the next 24 hours. There were grinding grooves further down in that ravine.

Coming out of the gully, the sandstone walls and erosions continued in all their glory. Of special note, was a cave with a large window and a panel of exceptional vertical twisting mesh-like ribs that I had not seen anywhere else. This feature was located less than 50 metres east from our water collecting point. Another cave with a window was encountered soon after.



Vertical ribs with tafoni. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



Yuri in the window cave. Photo: John Grey.

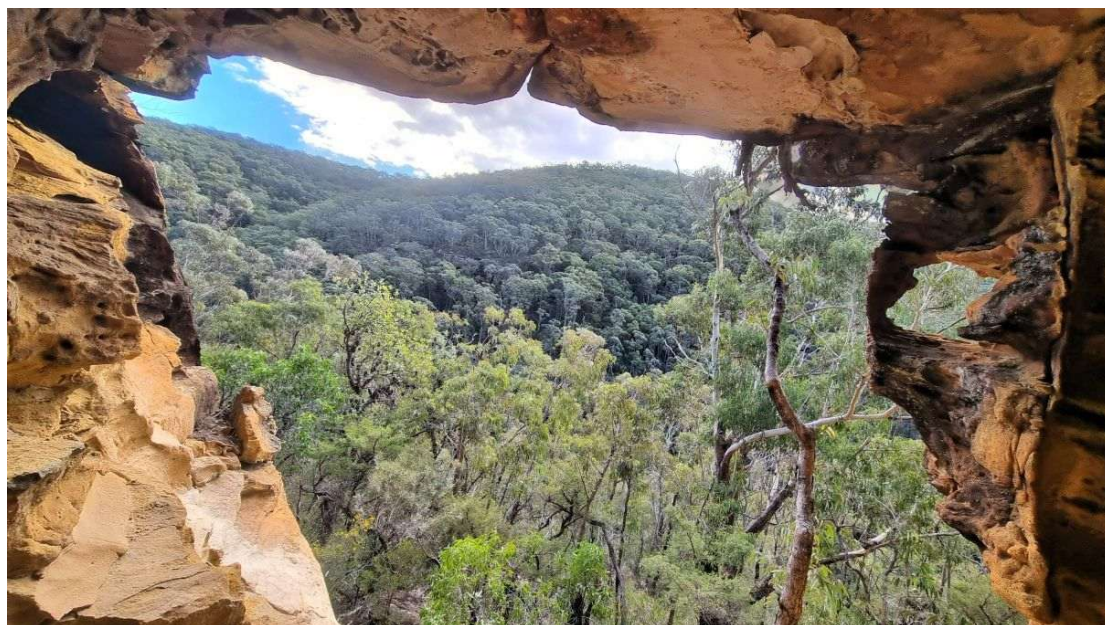


John in the window cave. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Between 1240 and 1305, we stopped for lunch in one of these sunny overhangs. The weather continued to be quite unstable, with a fair amount of wind, shifting clouds and even a tiny shower falling down whilst we were eating; this was followed by periods of sunshine.

Tantalising glimpses of the huge Bowens Creek gorge appeared to our east as we continued on our adventure, encountering more remarkable geology along the way. An Aboriginal habitation site was inspected in this vicinity.

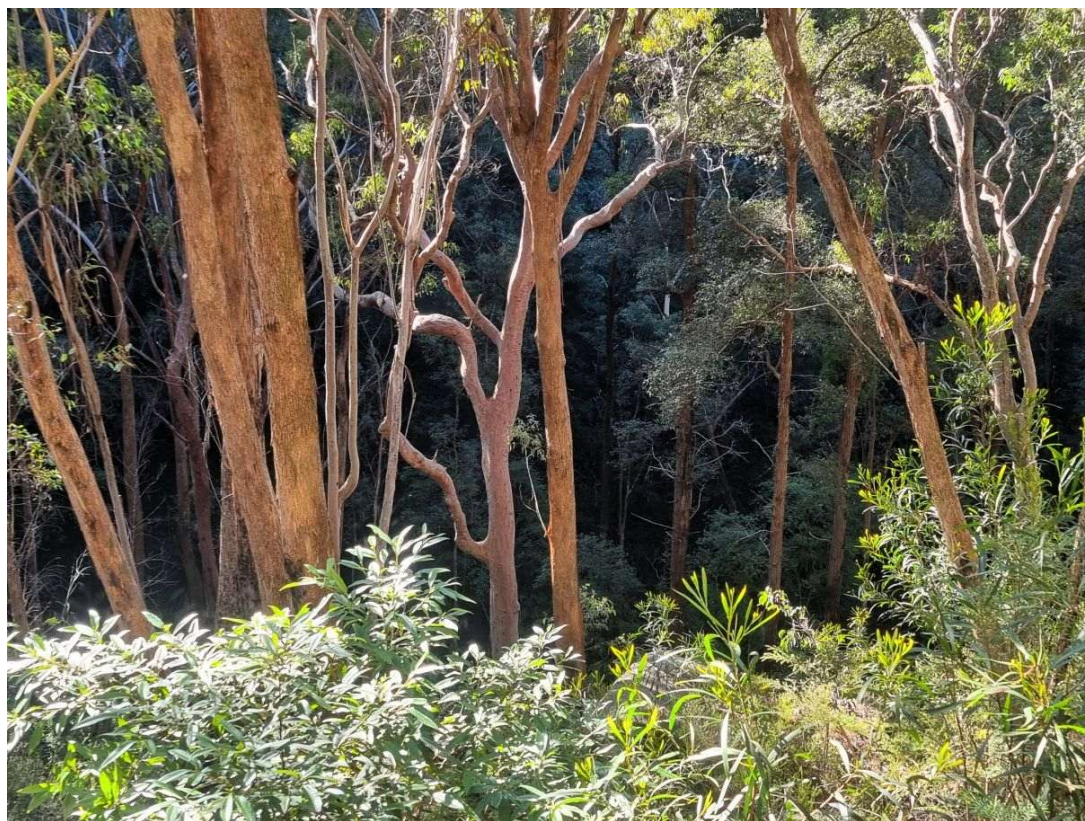
After traversing through another section of beautiful overhangs, at 1355, we came to a deep, high and narrow cave that had a very unusual rock arrangement within it – two narrow parallel pointing rocks, one above the other, both delicately balanced on a pile of stones. None of us had ever seen something like that before.



Cave with a view. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Consulting the map, I could see that a larger cliff line was going to develop within the next hundred metres or so below us, and now was our only opportunity to get under it. We decided to head down. We will not know what we missed at the upper levels by doing this until we go back and check, but this is one of the exciting and challenging aspects of Wollemi explorations.

At 1412, after a few steep scrambles, the party was at the right level, just above the tops of the rainforest trees within the gorge. What the map did not tell us was that after about 100 metres of sidling, we would be forced to cross a hellish gully, full of Lawyer Vines and Ferns. Luckily, the ordeal only lasted about ten minutes, and the conditions improved from then on as we once again began traversing underneath high, dry, intricately eroded walls, beautifully lit by the afternoon sun.



Dark rainforest below us. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

1448 saw the party reaching a narrow tip of a knife-edge spur that I had hoped would provide a way back up to the camp. A few scrambles were required here and there, but it was a straightforward and brilliantly scenic ascent. The views were getting better and better with every metre of elevation gained, and there were frequent rock platforms to stop and enjoy them. The crisp winter afternoon air allowed us to enjoy a breathtaking panorama of the Bowens Creek gorge at its best, all the way to the Wollangambe River confluence and further away, to the Colo River junction, where Island Mountain stood out on the far horizon.



Climbing the knife-edge spur. Photo: John Grey.



The panoramic view towards the Bowens Creek and Wollangambe River confluence, and, further away, to the Colo River junction. Island Mountain is on the left side of the horizon line. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Whilst climbing, we saw several old pointing stones, which to our eyes looked non-Aboriginal, although we are not experts. This is obviously a convenient access route from the ridge we camped on to Bowens Creek and beyond, so it may have been used by bush explorers in the past.

At 1530, the end of the knife-edge section was reached, and the dramatic views disappeared, but the ridge, with its combination of stone platforms (some, very extensive) featuring many rock pools, open forest and hanging swamps was still a delight to walk on.



Oliver making his way across a hanging swamp. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

The team made it back to the camp by 1649.

Day statistics: total distance 7.9 km; total ascent 390 m.

Day 4 – 27 July 2025

The wind had come back yesterday evening. It blew hard all night and into the morning, bringing in thin itinerant clouds of light rain and many rainbows. The camp was struck, and we departed at 0800 on the dot. Despite the sun shining in the open blue sky, it felt cold, mainly due to the continuing stiff gusts.



Rainbow at our camp site. Photo: John Grey.

It only took 13 minutes, including some photography stops, to reach the main south-trending ridge. Seven minutes later, the group stopped at a lookout on top of a high point.

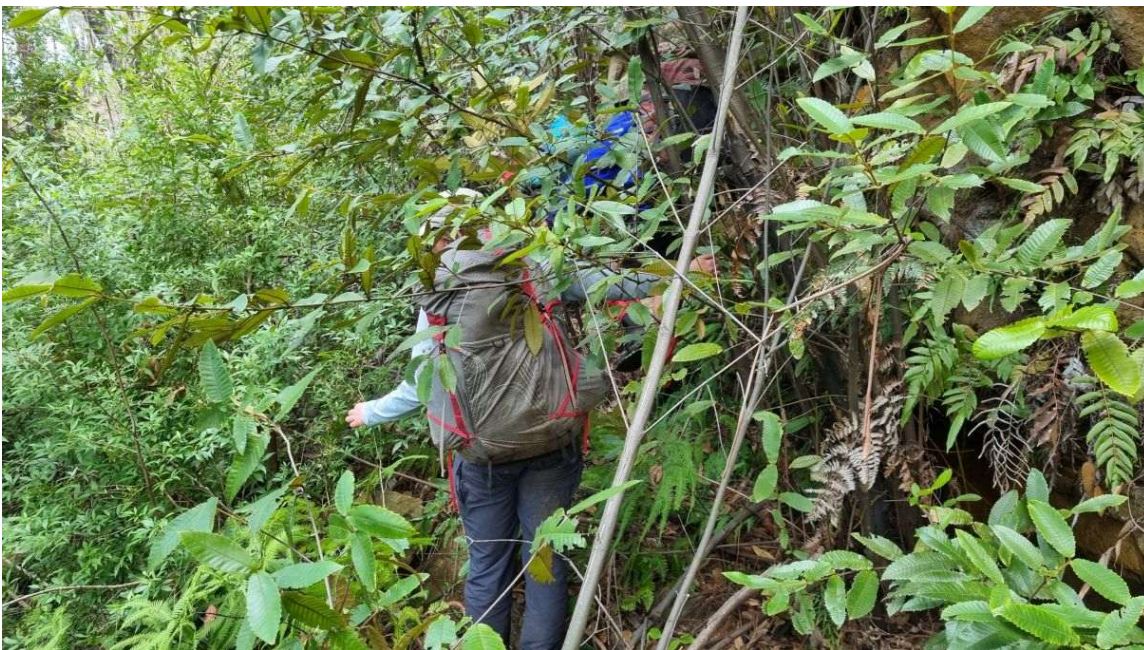
From here, instead of continuing south along the ridge, we headed south east into the headwaters of the gully where we had taken the water on Day 1, to begin the first exploratory detour of the day. Reaching the first cliff line, the party sidled under it, without finding much more than a couple of small, ordinary-looking caves. We had to stay at the present level because below us, the creek was already clothed in rainforest. An attractive six metre long overhang with flat floors and tafoni-decorated walls was noted at 0918. Seven minutes later, at the point where all cliffs ended, we decided to start getting back to the main ridge, which was reached by 0944.

A quick stop at a high point lookout 100 metres along the way, and the group commenced our second exploratory detour, by once again sliding off the ridge southwards. Before continuing further down, we had a quick morning tea break from 1002 till 1011, in a spot partially protected from the wind.



View south from a high knoll towards Mount Irvine. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

The next 50 minutes or so, traversing below a 500 metre long east-facing cliff line, were the most dreadful experience of this multi-day walk – the seemingly never-ending, excruciatingly slow battle with Lawyer Vine, thick Black Wattle jungle, Ferns, debris, and nothing to show for it. It felt like Wollemi made us pay a price for the amazing discoveries during the previous few days. Still, I had no regrets, as the only way to find anything is to keep looking. There was one useful discovery, at the very end, a deep pool and a running stream in a gully close to the main ridge. At 1055. This also happened to be very close to the planned exit of Day 2 undercliff traverse that we did not complete. As the party headed back up to re-join our main route, I was thinking of a return trip using this information.



Wollemi scrub at its worst on this stretch. Photo: Kevin Songberg.

We made it to the main ridge by 1116, and twelve minutes later, at the top of the steep descent through a significant cliff line, turned south to try another pass down (to follow our trip on the first day, we would have needed to go south west).

The new (for us) way down was OK, but in one spot, some way down, we started to traverse too early and ended up on a dead-end ledge above a 30 metre drop. Reversing out of it, we descended a bit further down a steep faint track, to the correct spot from where it was possible to sidle below the cliffs, at 1146. Four minutes later, we made it to the saddle.

A steep ascent followed, which took us to the top of spot height 734 m. Nearby, we sought shelter from the continuing fiercely strong and cold northwesterly wind, to stop for lunch, at 1224. Luckily, the views towards Bowens Creek gorge and Mount Tootie from the south east-facing escarpment line were great.

At 1246, our journey back continued. Walking over the familiar ground, my attention turned to all the wildflower species we had encountered during the last few days. This incomplete list included Sunshine Wattle, *Acacia terminalis*; Prickly Moses Wattle, *Acacia ulicifolia*; *Boronia* sp.; *Hovea* sp.; *Leucopogon* sp.; Grey Spider Flowers, *Grevillea buxifolia* ssp *buxifolia*. An amazing variety, considering the middle of winter!

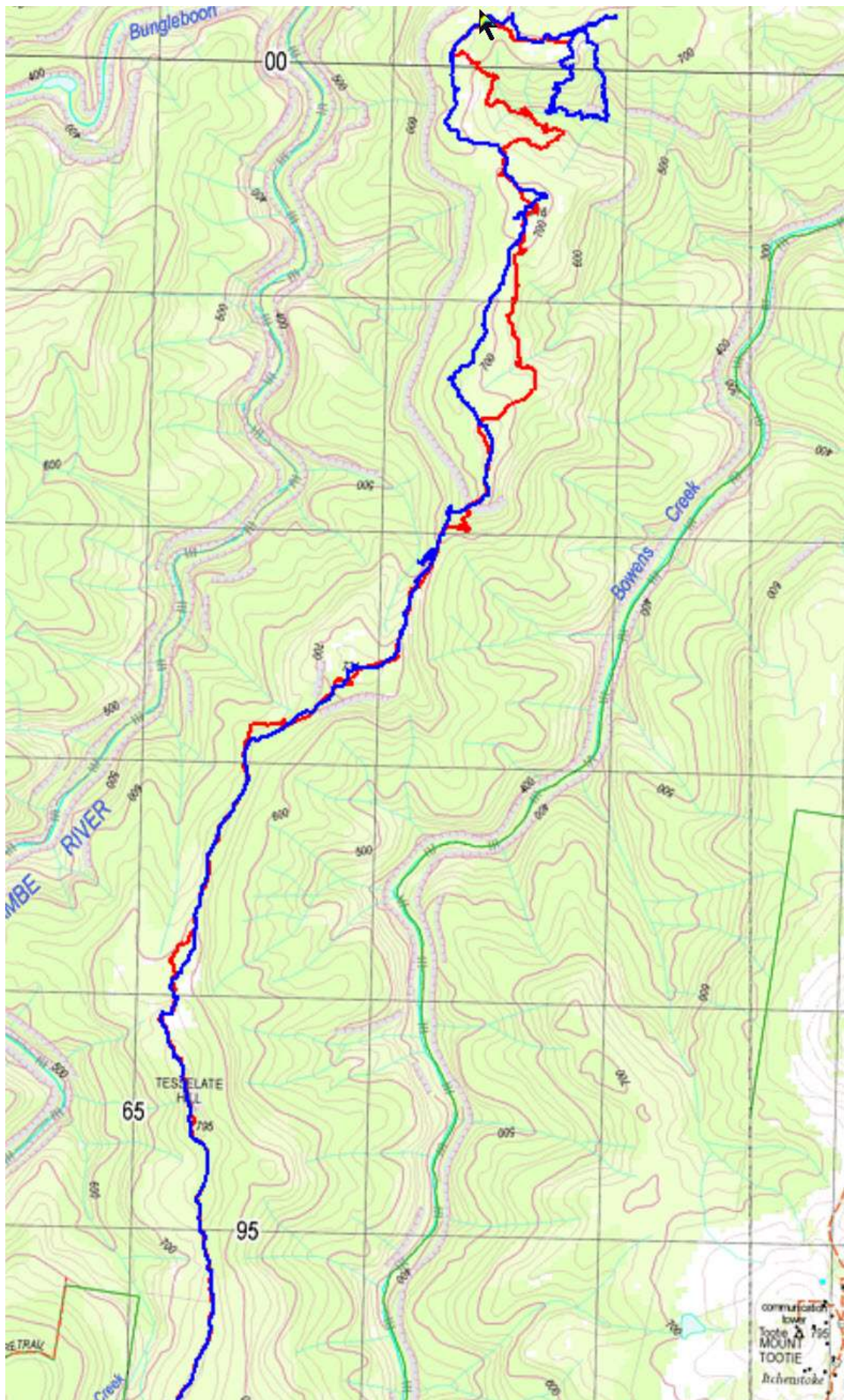
At 1315, the group was below the ornate overhangs that had been in deep shadow on Day 1. They looked much better today, with the sun on them. By 1403, we came to Tessellated Pavements, stopping there for a few minutes to have a drink and enjoy the amazing views. The cars were reached at 1445.



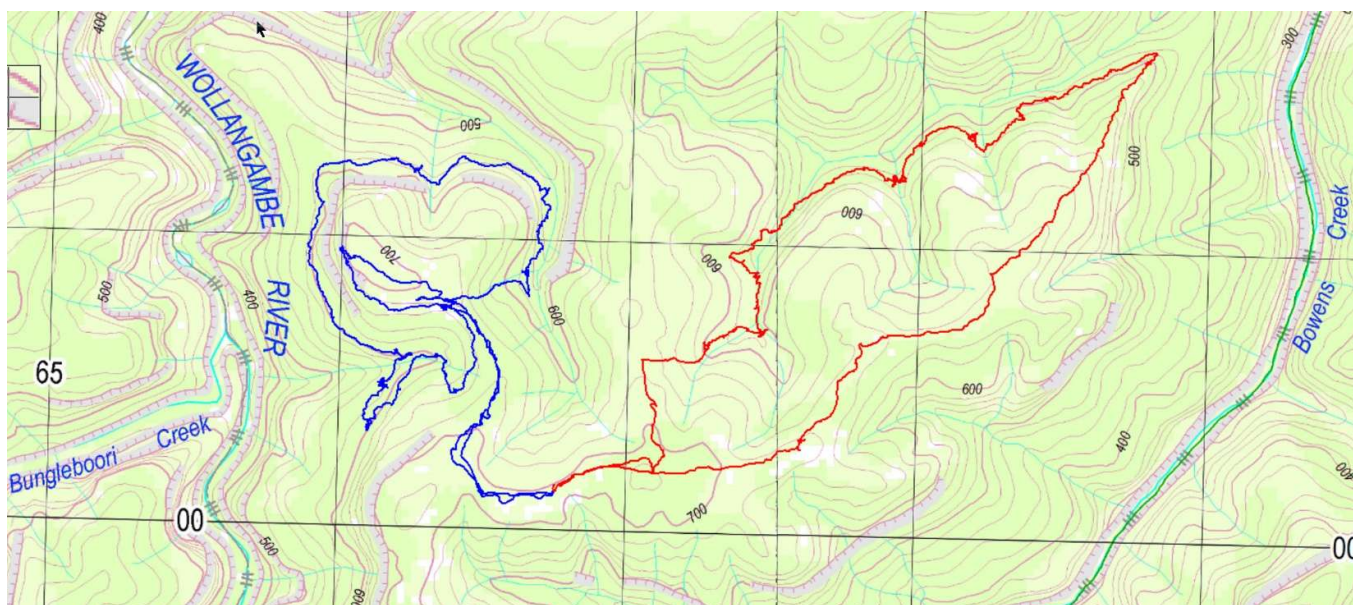
Ella at Tessellated Pavements. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Day statistics: total distance 10.8 km; total ascent 540 m.

Trip statistics: total distance 40.1 km; total ascent 1,974 m.



Walk topographic map: Day 1 (blue) and Day 4 (red). Recorded and prepared by Yuri Bolotin.



Walk topographic map: Day 2 (blue) and Day 3 (red). Recorded and prepared by Yuri Bolotin.

Table of Times, Locations and Grid References

Time	Location	Grid Reference	Elevation
Day 1 – 24/07/25			
0852	Cars parked and the walk started	GR 6521 9419	750 m
0925-0940	Tessellated Pavements	GR 6512 9590	736 m
1004-1016	Morning tea	GR 6540 9681	677 m
1023	Saddle	GR 6545 9698	655 m
1029	A way up	GR 6549 9710	662 m
1038	Lookout	GR 6573 9722	689 m
1055	Top of the knoll	GR 6594 9742	734 m
1122-1138	Saddle and side trip	GR 6623 9793	608 m
1142	Cliff wall	GR 6628 9804	631 m
1152	Old cairn on top of the cliffs	GR 6632 9810	673 m
1205	Top of the hill	GR 6643 9330	730 m
1219	Rock platform	GR 6629 9866	731
1235	Rock arrangement	GR 6646 9904	710 m
1250-1312	Spot height 716 m, lunch	GR 6656 9938	716 m
1354	Engraving	GR 6625 0005	738 m
1407	90-degree turn on the ridge	GR 6641 0022	712 m
1440	Dropped backpacks at the camp site	GR 6676 0015	719 m
1447	Heading down a gully to look for water	GR 6681 0017	723 m
1531	Water found near two creeks junction	GR 6691 9979	544 m
1605	Tape-assisted ascent (top)	GR 6666 9982	609 m
1622	Water noted closer to the camp	GR 6670 9993	662 m
1641	Back at the camp	GR 6676 0015	719 m
Day 2 – 25/07/25			
0803	Left the camp	GR 6676 0015	719 m
0817	Top of the north-south-trending ridge	GR 6640 0025	710 m
0846	Tafoni and Angophora overhang	GR 6636 0076	673 m
0857	Start of the descent	GR 6637 0079	691 m

0919	Below the cliffs	GR 6665 0085	586 m
0932	Ramp up (for future reference)	GR 6667 0094	577 m
0942	Overhang	GR 6670 0107	579 m
1001	Long cave	GR 6659 0125	591 m
1022	Gully crossing	GR 6632 0119	604 m
1030-1050	Morning tea	n/a	
1208	Waterfall in gully	GR 6625 0060	600 m
1214-1224	Collecting water	GR 6625 0060	600 m
1235-1300	Lunch	n/a	
1310	Slot	GR 6609 0037	590 m
1344	Overhang	GR 6626 0057	621 m
1439	Back at tafoni and Angophora overhang	GR 6636 0076	673 m
1505	Tafoni chamber	GR 6603 0091	707 m
1512	Panoramic viewpoint on top of the ridge	GR 6001 0096	713 m
1602	Turn-off point	GR 6644 0024	717 m
1616	Back at the camp	GR 6676 0015	719 m
Day 3 – 26/07/25			
0830	Left the camp	GR 6676 0015	719 m
0840	Ridge junction	GR 6709 0024	724 m
0858	Start of the descent	GR 6705 0060	690 m
0918	Just above the creek, sidling	GR 6728 0065	622 m
0948-1007	Morning tea in a large cave	GR 6746 0071	598 m
1116	At the west-facing cliff line	GR 6751 0106	571 m
1125	Leopard Spots Cave	GR 6753 0110	565 m
1203-1216	Collecting water	GR 6792 0124	535 m
1240-1305	Lunch	GR 6800 0137	565 m
1355	Rock arrangement	n/a	
1412	Under the next cliff line	GR 6835 0152	502 m
1448	At the tip of the knife-edge spur	GR 6880 0170	490 m
1530	Top of the knife-edge section	GR 6861 0134	596 m
1649	Back at the camp	GR 6676 0015	719 m
Day 4 – 27/07/25			
0800	Left the camp	GR 6676 0015	719 m
0813	Turned south along the ridge	GR 6639 0021	717 m
0820	Lookout, start of the first exploratory detour	GR 6628 0004	736 m
0918	Cave	GR 6667 9976	641 m
0925	Start of the ascent	GR 6674 9973	641 m
0944	Main ridge and end of the first exploratory detour. Start of the second exploratory detour	GR 6649 9959	716 m
1002-1011	Morning tea	GR 6658 9926	707 m
1055	Pool and running water pool in the gully	GR 6656 9874	686 m
1116	Back on the main ridge and end of the second exploratory detour	GR 6641 9847	737 m
1128	Top of the descent	GR 6637 9811	693 m
1146	Bottom of the descent, started sidling	GR 6638 9803	626 m
1224-1246	Lunch	GR 6588 9735	730 m
1315	Overhangs	GR 6544 9705	656 m
1403-1407	Tessellated Pavements	GR 6512 9590	736 m
1445	Cars	GR 6521 9419	750 m

