

Walk

Wollemi National Park: Wave Cave and Sirens Caves

Leader

Yuri Bolotin

Maps

Mountain Lagoon. GPS setting WGS84.

Walk Description and Route

Park at GR 772 960 on Mountain Lagoon Road and walk down a gully, a tributary of a larger ravine flowing north. Once in the main ravine, visit Wave Cave, then continue north either above the watercourse or in the rainforest below. Cross to the western bank at around GR 765 972 and walk to the Sirens Caves complex. Depending on the time taken to explore it, exit either via Tootie Creek Trail or the ridge west of it. About 7 km. Scrambling and exposure. Partly exploratory.

Rating

6M. S323E

Gear Recommendations

2 litres of water, GPS, PLB, appropriate head and footwear, electrolytes, maps, compass, first aid kit, tape (leader only). Change of gear for afterwards.

Date walked

5 August 2026.

The Party

Yuri Bolotin (leader), Avi Sanjoyo, Yidan Saladine, Melanie Stray, Rachel Wright, Allison Ksiazkiewicz, 6.

The Weather

A sunny, dry, cool winter's day. Almost no wind. Temperature range 7 to 14 degrees C. Perfect walking conditions.

Track Notes

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

Cars were parked near the intersection of Mountain Lagoon Road and Tootie Creek Trail, GR 7713 9602, 530 m, and our adventure got underway by 0845. The initial section was down a shallow slope dotted with mature trees. Easily making our way through waist-deep understory, we soon reached the edge of a narrow ravine and had to negotiate our way into it via a series of rock ledges. It was good to see some sizeable pools at the bottom, but care had to be exercised whilst walking on slippery surfaces.



The picturesque narrow ravine at the start of the day. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Our progress slowed down significantly due to dense vegetation and plentiful debris that demanded constant ducking and weaving. A cluster of bright Scarlet Bracket Fungi, *Trametes coccinea*, decorating one of the fallen logs, was photographed along the way. At 0934, GR 7656 9608, 440 m, near the junction with the main ravine, we noted a large cut stump, the first one of several found this morning. Hardly surprising, bearing in mind the long history of timbergetting in the area and our proximity to Mountain Lagoon Road, Brendon Trail and Tootie Creek Trail.



Cut stump. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

We now took a brief detour upstream, finding the first picturesque overhang of the day. At 0945, GR 7651 9603, 445 m. This series of caves stretches for about 50 metres. It contains multilayered wall formations and a section of spheroidal-shaped tafoni ceiling. Due to being in a narrow, dark ravine, green and black Lichens cover many of the features. Another old stump was spotted in this area.

Walking back above the main ravine, I noticed what looked like some placed rocks. Almost straight away, at 0954, GR 7654 9608, 435 m, we came to the start of a retaining wall that delineated an old trail made by timbergetters. The stonework was more than half a metre high (four courses) in places and continued on the left-hand side of the gorge for about 100 metres. What a wonderful find! In the creek nearby, there were suspected (faint) Aboriginal grinding grooves.



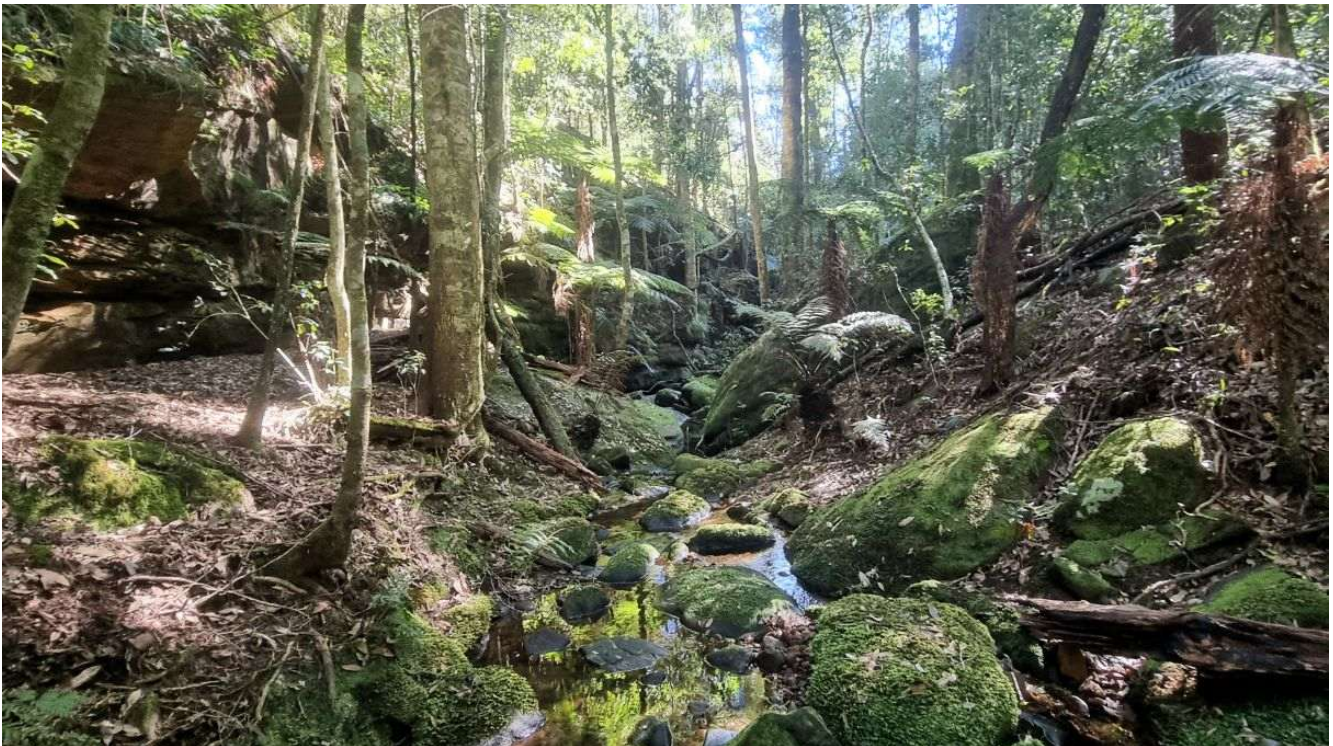
Old stone retaining wall. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Twelve minutes later, the party arrived at Wave Cave. GR 7651 9622, 445 m. It is a 30 m long, 8 m high overhang of beautifully eroded sandstone that Bill Beck and I had discovered during our walk of 30/07/21. It had reminded me of a huge surging wave – hence the name. This east-facing overhang was gorgeously lit by the morning sun, and we spent seven minutes here on photography and observations.



Wave Cave. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

The cliff line containing the Wave Cave soon stopped, and the terrain became very scrubby, so I decided to head down to the bottom of the gorge, which was reached promptly at 1018. GR 7654 9625, 430 m. The air temperature dropped a few degrees compared to the sunny slopes above. We were now in a completely different world. The surrounding scenery featured magnificent tall Turpentines, rainforest tree species and abundant Ferns. The creek had plenty of water, which flowed through gurgling cascades and languid pools framed by mossy green boulders. This captivating landscape was lightly touched by the warm dappled sun light.



The rainforest gorge. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



Yidan and Avi in the gorge. Photo: Melanie Stray.

Between 1037 and 1044, we had morning tea on the bank of the creek. GR 7658 9645, 400 m. As our adventure resumed, the gorge tightened and became even more picturesque, but our pace slowed down because the obstacles - collapsed trees, boulder block-ups, bigger pools, Liana and Lawyer Vine nets - multiplied. On this stretch, we photographed a commune of white Splitgill Fungi, *Schizophyllum sp.* gracing a fallen log.

Our more than one kilometre long journey down this tributary of Timbergetters Ravine had been a delightful one, but by 1143, GR 7648 9723, 380 m, we advanced to a spot where we needed to leave the gully and make our way up towards the cliffs on the eastern side of it. As this watercourse led us to Sirens Caves (more about that name origin in a minute), I would like to call it Sirens Ravine.



Liana mesh. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



Rachel and Allison in Sirens Ravine. Photo: Yidan Saladine.



Splitgill Fungi, *Schizophyllum* sp. Photo: Rachel Wright.

The next 350-400 m were tricky as we tried to locate a safe enough ledge under the highly irregular cliff line above us, more like a series of narrow and slippery cornices, most of them, hard or impossible to negotiate. The first striking cave was recorded at 1210, GR 7660 9750, 365 m. It was 5-6 metres above our heads. Bill Beck and I had come here on 02/08/21, enduring some serious (mis)adventures after being lured up a variety of tricky and unstable ledges towards these beckoning overhangs, gleaming in glorious warm sunlight. At that time, I had decided to call this string of caves Sirens Caves to reference sailors being lured to their deaths by Siren songs, as described in Book XII of the *Odyssey*. Back then, I had also resolved to return here and to explore further, whilst staying out of trouble. This is why today, as we came to the first cave of the series, we had to settle for taking pictures from the ledge below.

Fifteen minutes later, GR 7664 9755, 355 m, a brilliant chocolate-and-cream-coloured overhang appeared within a short and easy scramble. The colour palette and the complexity of shapes was simply staggering. Immediately next to it, was a wall of Liesegang Rings and Wayang cutout puppet-like paper-thin ironstone blades. The setting was so perfect, we decided to stop here for lunch, from 1233 till 1249.



Liesegang Rings and Wayang ironstone formations wall. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

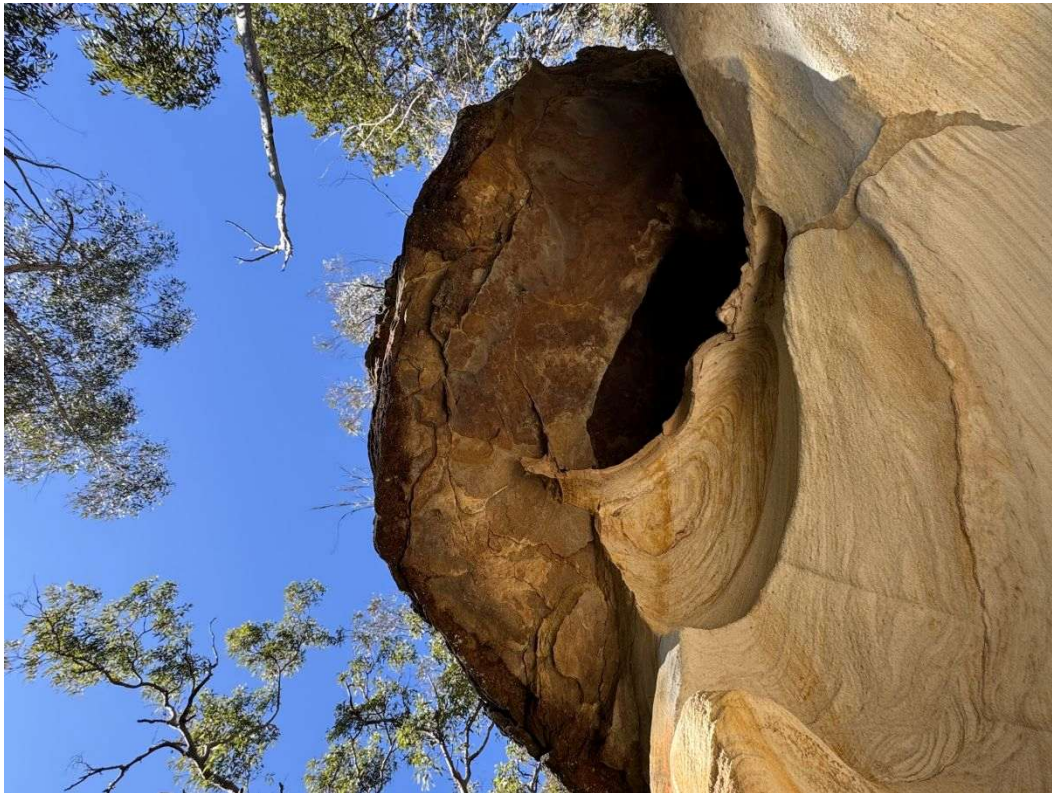


Wall detail. Photo: Yidan Saladine.

Only eight minutes after resuming, another interesting cave presented – this one was deep and featured a large window. Exceptional overhangs now followed one another in an amazing display of sandstone weathering. It was also good that the ledge here was very well-defined and easy to follow.



Window in a cave. Photo: Yidan Saladine.



Overhang. Photo: Rachel Wright.



Overhang wall. Photo: Yidan Saladine.

At 1319, GR 7679 9769, 360 m, the party paused below a 3-4 metre high wall of smooth brown rock, with a most amazing overhang visible above it. I knew this place only too well! Here is what I recorded after our previous trip here,

We soon saw a very beautifully-looking overhang above (at 1040). It was not easy though to get to it. We could have (and should have, in hindsight) scrambled the 3-4 m wall at the bottom, but the first person should be a confident scrambler and would need some support from underneath. Instead, we went back and scrambled up some dubious slots and ended up being too high. A tape-assisted descent onto an intermediate ledge followed, from where there was another three metre drop to get down to the cave – and no place to secure an anchor. Bill went down first, whilst I sat on the tape, then I tried to arrange for Bill to assist me down, but it did not work and I ended up having a small fall – not smart! The cave was pretty but maybe not worth all this trouble. We then had to use the tape to descend back to the original level (by 1117).



The alluring overhang that gave rise to the name, Sirens Caves. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Reading the above account, you will see that this little excursion had taken us almost 40 minutes and three tape descents. I was not going to repeat this experience today, especially as I knew there were better things within a few easy steps along this ledge. In fact, one of the most outstanding overhangs was quickly and easily spotted just before the nose at 1333, GR 7683 9773, 350 m. It presented a mind-blowing riot of overlapping multi-dimensional sandstone forms in beige, brown and pink that is quite impossible to properly describe.



Overhang detail. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



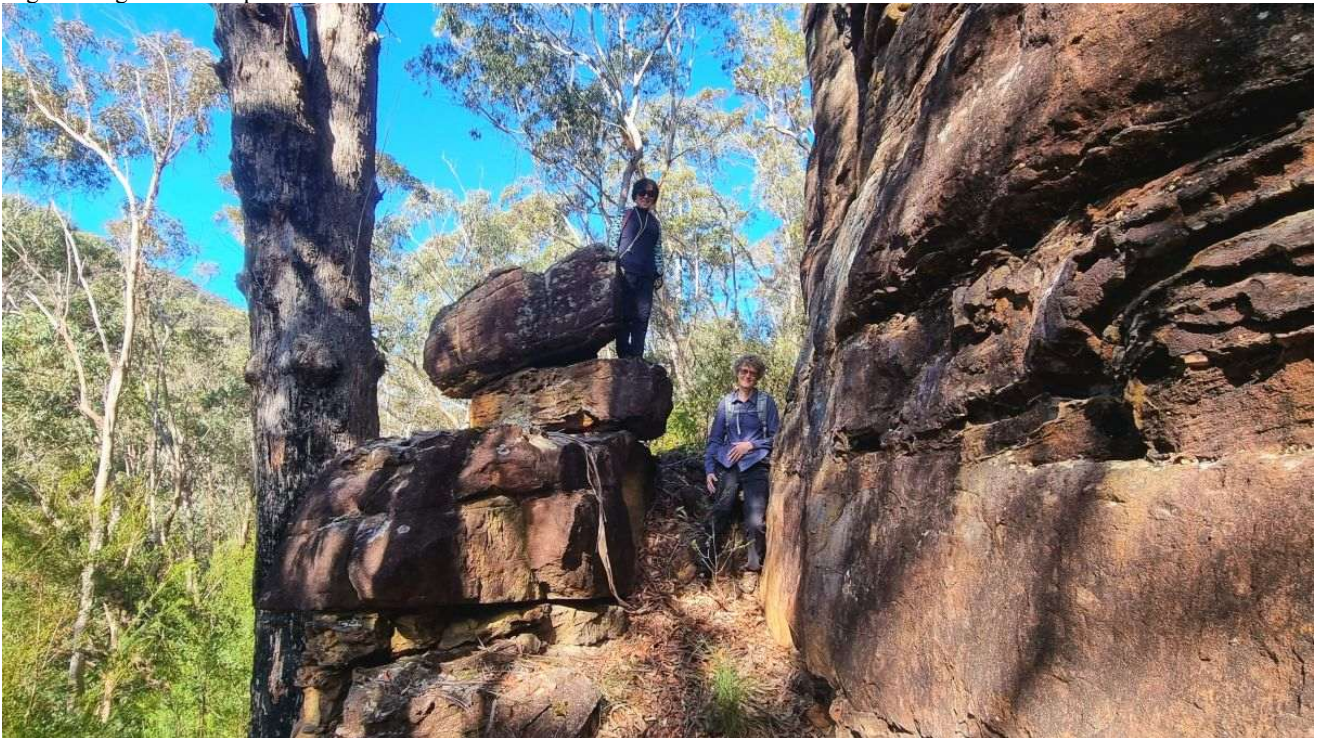
Overhang detail. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

One could spend hours, no, days studying it, but we had to move on after only ten minutes. The group now rounded the 90-degree bend in the walls, situated above the junction of Sirens and Timbergetters Ravines. There was not much of interest at our level, but the overhangs seemed to continue about 20 metres higher. Up we went, using a steep ramp. However, it stopped well short of the required elevation, necessitating a tape-assisted ascent. At 1400. GR 7678 9777, 360 m (bottom).

Once above the obstacle, we located a comfortable ledge that took us past a curious rock sculpture resembling a giant tongue protruding four metres out of the wall. At 1411. GR 7691 9774, 380 m. A little further along, the group stopped at a three metre high mini-totem to pose for a few pictures. Another wonderful, chocolate-coloured overhang soon followed; it had a Lyrebird nest along one of its ledges.



A giant tongue-like sculpture. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



Yidan and Mel pose on a totem. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



The chocolate overhang. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

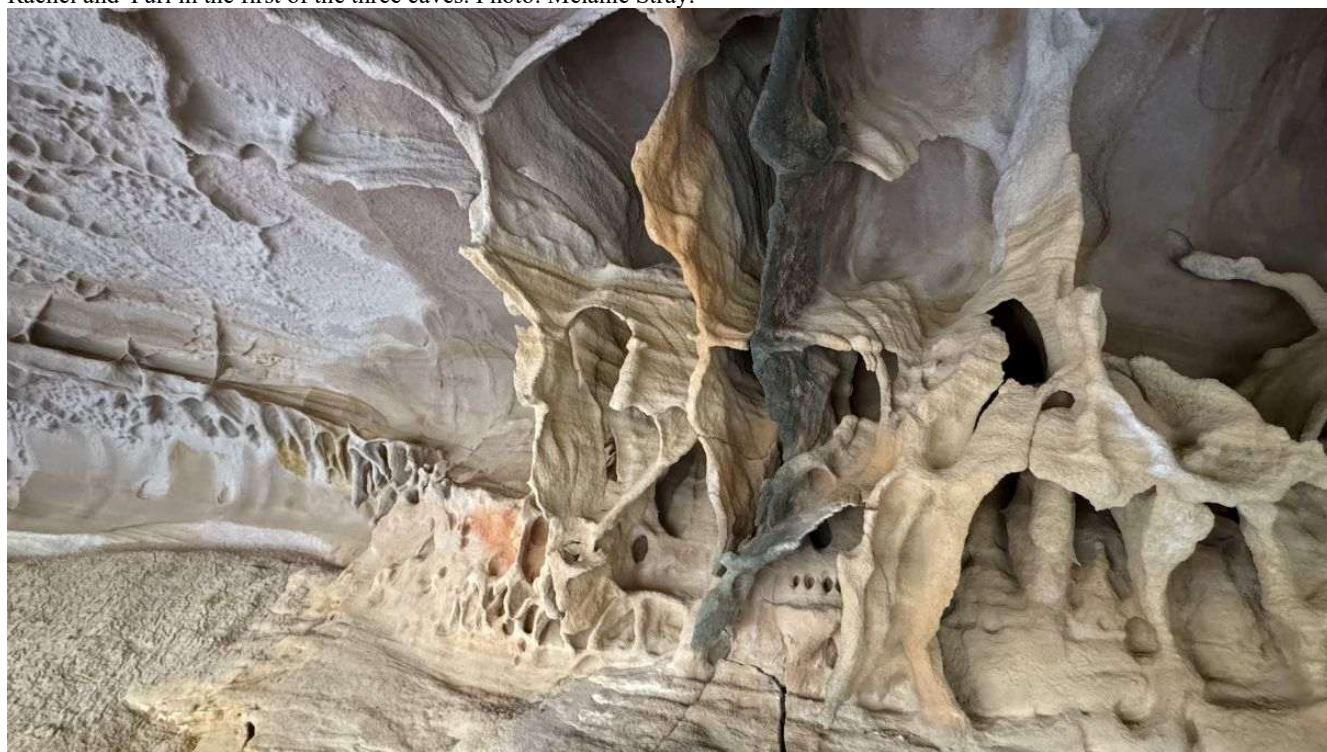
Soon, I could see some very seductive overhangs 10-15 metres above our heads, but how to get to them? A few very dodgy-looking options were tried that included rock climbing/scrambling as well as unacceptably narrow and exposed ledges. They were all discarded as I was not going to allow the Sirens to lure us into mortal jeopardy. Gradually moving south, we caught up with Tootie Creek Trail, coming down almost onto it for a distance of about 20 metres, when a Eureka! moment occurred – a promising ramp leading up! At 1450. GR 7706 9762, 400 m.

Having taken nearly 40 minutes to find it, this was a real breakthrough and a great reward for our persistence. Ten minutes later, the team came to the first cave along the high ledge. GR 7702 9764, 412 m. The most striking feature of this ten metre long beige-coloured overhang was a panel of long tafoni rib-like formations occupying the far corner. The ledge had a few sloping and narrow spots where extreme care had to be exercised to avoid a very fast and lethal change of elevation down a ten plus metre cliff to the area where we had spent 40 minutes looking for a way up.

The second cave along the way had almost no colour except for white and light cream but sported abundant tafoni formations – a true masterpiece of nature. The third cave, brown, pink and cream, had brilliant honeycombs and, above them, a series of protruding animal-like stone heads. Beyond it, at 1520, the ledge stopped. GR 7699 9768, 410 m. Wow, these three glorious overhangs were a great finale at the end of the Sirens Caves complex! We had been so entranced by this sandstone feast that we forgot to look across the gorge to the east, which we now did as we followed the ledge back. Here, for our enjoyment, was a great view towards Long Ridge, with spot height 538 m dominating the landscape. That area had been subject to a number of walks in the past.



Rachel and Yuri in the first of the three caves. Photo: Melanie Stray.



The first cave detail. Photo: Rachel Wright.



The second cave wall. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



The second cave ceiling. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

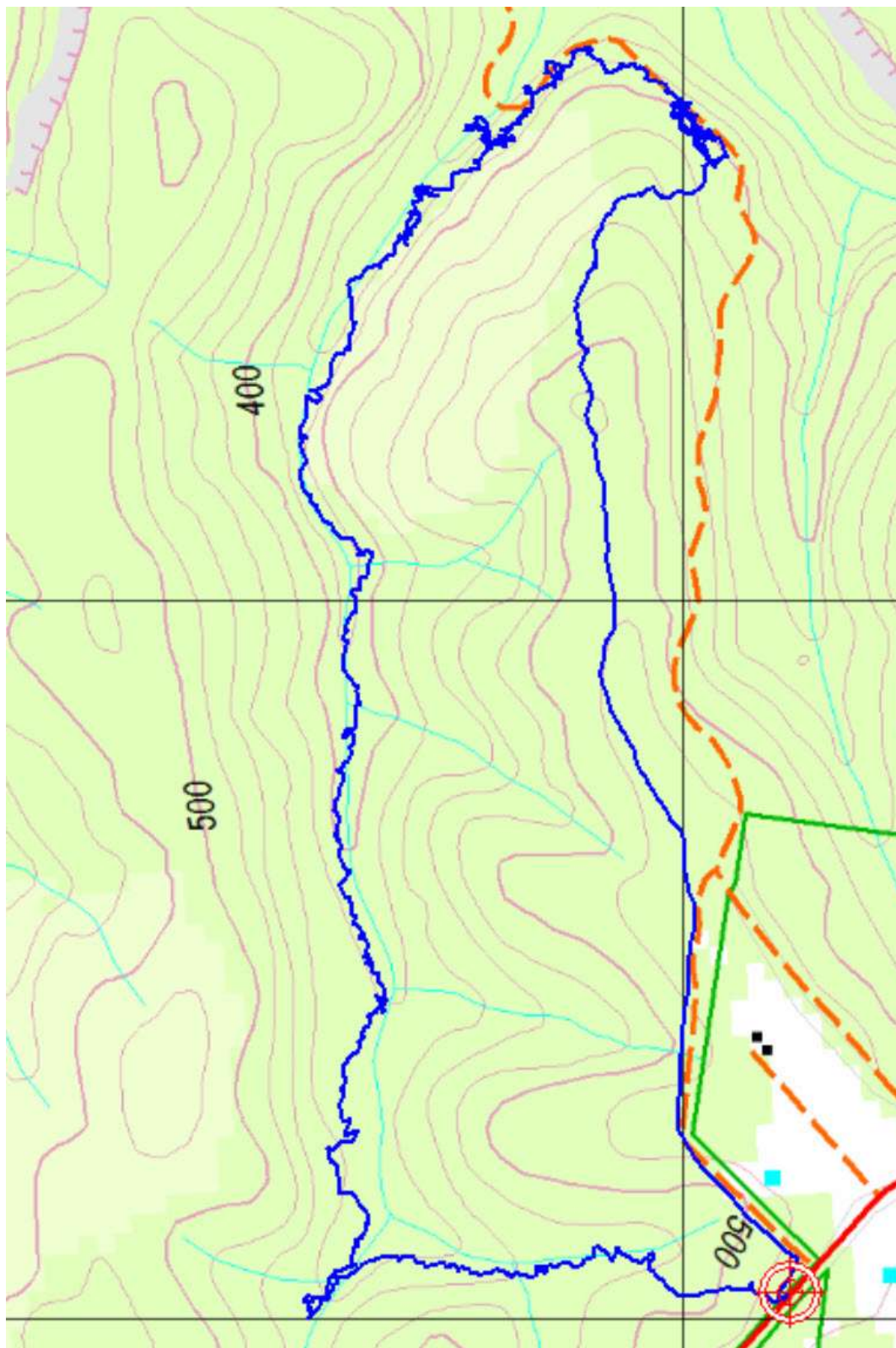


Animal-shaped heads and tafoni in the third cave. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Once we had made it back to the top of the ascent ramp, there was a choice of coming down to Tootie Creek Trail and using it to walk back, but as most of my readers know, I do not like following made tracks, so my preferred route was to use the ridge to our west. After a sustained and straightforward climb, the party reached it by 1537, GR 7693 9757, 450 m. We continued to gain elevation and eighteen minutes later attained a high point. GR 7687 9727, 525 m. It was almost level walking from then on, although the ridge had patches of dense understorey that slowed our progress.

1612, GR 7694 9677, 530 m, saw us following along a faint old man-made track that soon joined Tootie Creek Trail (at 1616, GR 7702 9658, 530 m). We made it back to the vehicles by 1625, as winter's chill began to set in.

Trip statistics: total distance 7.3 km; total ascent 497 m.



Walk topographic map. Recorded and prepared by Yuri Bolotin.

Table of Times, Locations and Grid References

Time	Location	Grid Reference	Elevation
0845	Cars parked and started walking	GR 7713 9602	530 m
0934	Creek junction, old cut stump	GR 7656 9608	440 m
0945	Overhangs	GR 7651 9603	445 m

0954	Stone wall	GR 7654 9608	435 m
1006-1013	Wave Cave	GR 7651 9622	445 m
1018	In Sirens Ravine	GR 7654 9625	430 m
1037-1044	Morning tea	GR 7658 9645	400 m
1143	Exited Sirens Ravine	GR 7648 9723	380 m
1210	Start of Sirens Caves	GR 7660 9750	365 m
1225	Chocolate overhang	GR 7664 9755	355 m
1233-1249	Wayang cave and lunch	GR 7664 9755	360 m
1319	Rock wall and overhang above	GR 7679 9769	360 m
1333-1343	Overhang	GR 7683 9773	350 m
1400	Tape-assisted ascent	GR 7678 9777	360 m (bottom)
1411	Protruding rock and totem	GR 7691 9774	380 m
1450	Ramp up	GR 7706 9762	400 m (bottom)
1500	The first of the three caves	GR 7702 9764	412 m
1520	The last of the three cave, ledge stops	GR 7699 9768	410 m
1537	Top o fridge	GR 7693 9757	450 m
1555	High point	GR 7687 9727	525 m
1612	Tootie Creek Trail	GR 7694 9677	530 m
1625	Back at cars	GR 7713 9602	530 m