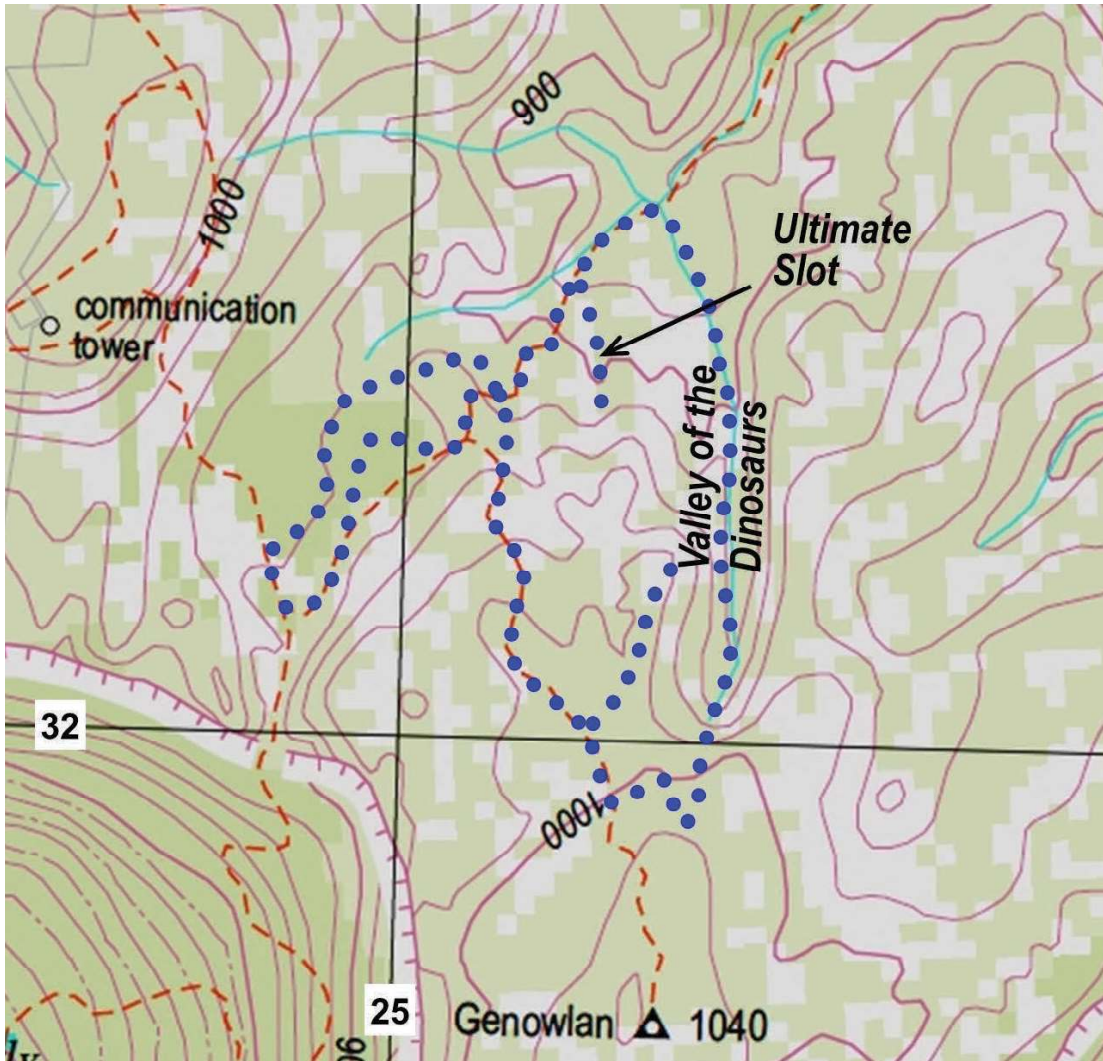


WALK 30

Valley of the Dinosaurs and a Visit to Ultimate Slot

Source: Department of Lands, Glen Alice Topographical Map 8931-4N; 1:25000





The weather

A bitterly cold day with variable strong gusts of wind. Total cloud cover and occasional brief flurries of light sleet. Temperature range 6 to 11 degrees C, but it felt a lot colder due to the wind exposure.

Comments

This is a tough challenge. There are several significant exposure situations. Rock hopping, scrambling and rope work may be involved. Wet feet are a possibility.
Date walked: 11 May 2015.
Re-walked 18 July 2020.

Maps, etc.

Department of Lands topographic map Glen Alice 8931-4N, 1:25,000, second edition. GPS setting WGS 84.

Walk description and route

Park on the road from *Airly Mountain* to Genowlan Trig at about GR 248 315. Walk up the road to the top of the plateau and then take the road to Genowlan Trig. Leave this road at about GR 253 320 and head east to the top, southern end of the Valley of the Dinosaurs. Proceed down the valley, stopping to explore as many slots as possible. Keep walking down the creek system to either until the Point Hatteras road is reached at approximately GR 253 328, or, if the group still has energy, follow the cliffs around to visit Ultimate Slot and then return to the road at approximately GR 253 325. Return to the vehicles.
About 5 km.

Gear issues

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



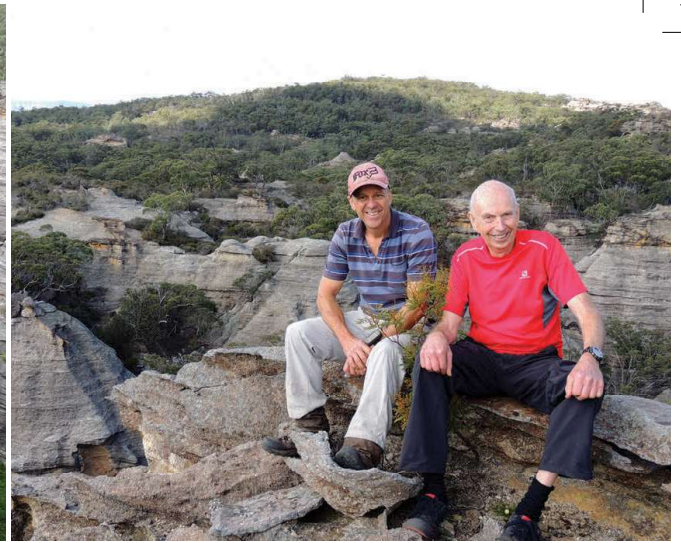
Track notes

This day out started with an unplanned but exciting drive up an old mining road constructed by Col Ribaux when he was operating *Mine in the Sky*, c. 1960s. The road has grades that took my AWD to the limit of its ability and me close to the limits of my driving ability. It also saved about 25 minutes of steep uphill walking.

The time saved was in part lost because one long-wheelbase AWD vehicle was unable to complete the ascent. So it was that walking commenced at 0937 along the

access road to the Genowlan Trig. The cold conditions invited fast walking, and we made rapid progress. During this section, I conferred with Brian and we agreed that to set the scene it would be good to visit the spot where we had had lunch on a previous walk and looked down into the Valley of the Dinosaurs.

At 0954, packs were left trackside and, armed with cameras, we walked across the pagoda tops to a cliff edge and at 1002 looked down into



Previous pages: First view of the day. Wonderful rock formations with Airly Turret in the distance.

The astonishing Valley of the Dinosauars. Photos: Yuri Bolotin.

Left: Enormous pagodas fringe the valley

Photo: Yidan Saladine. **Above:** Are these

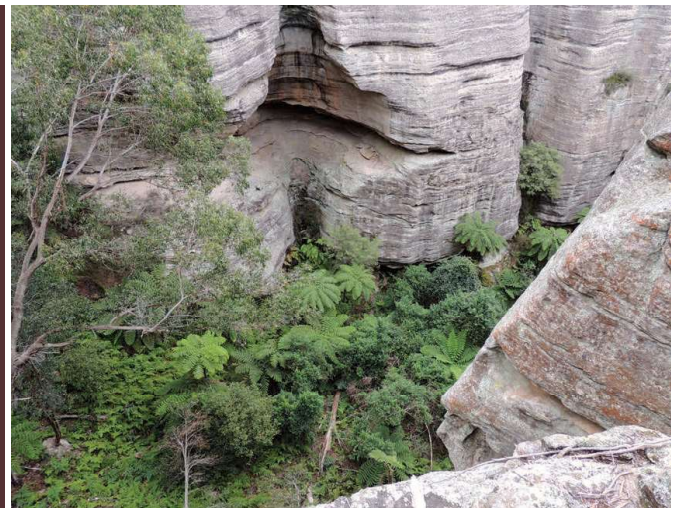
the bones of a gigantic ancient creature?

Photo: Yuri Bolotin. **Right, top:** Brian Fox

and Michael Keats take a seat above the

Valley of the Dinosauars. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Bottom: Cavernous weathering in the Valley of the Dinosauars. Photo: Brian Fox.



the grand, almost hypnotic view that includes the best section of the valley and its stunning formations.

Despite the bitter wind, the group spent more than five minutes here. The slots between the pagodas that we hoped to explore all proved to be very shallow with long non-negotiable vertical sections. In another walk planned for this area east of the Valley of the Dinosauars, attempts will be made to explore this terrain in more detail.

We returned to collect our packs and then headed east towards the top of the access slot. Unfolding views of great clarity north to Capertee National Park and north east to Tayan Pic added something special to the day. The wind was unwelcome, but it did mean that long distance views were of close to perfect clarity.

At the top of the slot, we noted it was 1020 and morning tea was overdue. A nearby pagoda level with the top of the slot was visited, as the view was superb. The chosen position was too icy for me and I moved back under



the protection of a small Casuarina forest. The ten minute break passed quickly and then it was time to start the descent.⁷²

For 50 metres or so, it was all quite easy, then we had a drop of about 1.5 metres to negotiate. Of itself it was not much, but coupled with a lack of good hand- and footholds and the ground falling away quickly below, it was a 'packs off' job to get down. Brian acted as the backstop, and, after three of us descended, a tape was set to speed up the process. We had no idea what other obstacles we might encounter, so this was the best option.

Once down, exploring below began in earnest. Most noteworthy were the very large and old Rough Tree

Ferns, *Cyathea australis*. In the valley, these Ferns often exceeded six metres. Significantly, there were no young plants observed anywhere in the whole length of the valley. This does not augur well for the future. The main ground cover Fern was *Blechnum sp.* After about 40 metres of steep slope covered in Blechnum Fern, an easily negotiable ledge appeared on the western wall. This went nowhere but was excellent to take photos from.

High up on the cliffs, and later in several locations on the valley floor, there were significant bushes of Wild Raspberry, *Rubus moluccanus var. trilobus*. Some of these plants measured over three metres high as they used other trees and bushes to gain access to sunshine. Also prolific

throughout the valley on rock faces were drifts of the common Rock Lily, *Thelychiton speciosus*, formerly *Dendrobium speciosum*.

Soon after we had reached more level ground, a tempting slot climb appeared on the eastern wall. As it was our intention to explore everything that we could, we climbed up and were rewarded handsomely. Looking south, it appeared that there were other and possibly easier ways of route into the valley and there were isolated pagodas that could be climbed. Even better, there was a parallel-sided slot to the north that seemed to be negotiable. Exploring it was soon underway. Only a few GRs were recorded here, as everything was so close together.

After enjoying some scrambling and clambering, we made our way down a parallel-sided slot. Yuri was up the top asking all of us to look up, while Brian was near the base of the slot wanting us all to look down. We finally got it right. This slot had its own charm, and soon it joined up with the main ravine that forms the Valley of the Dinosaurs. This junction was reached at 1123.

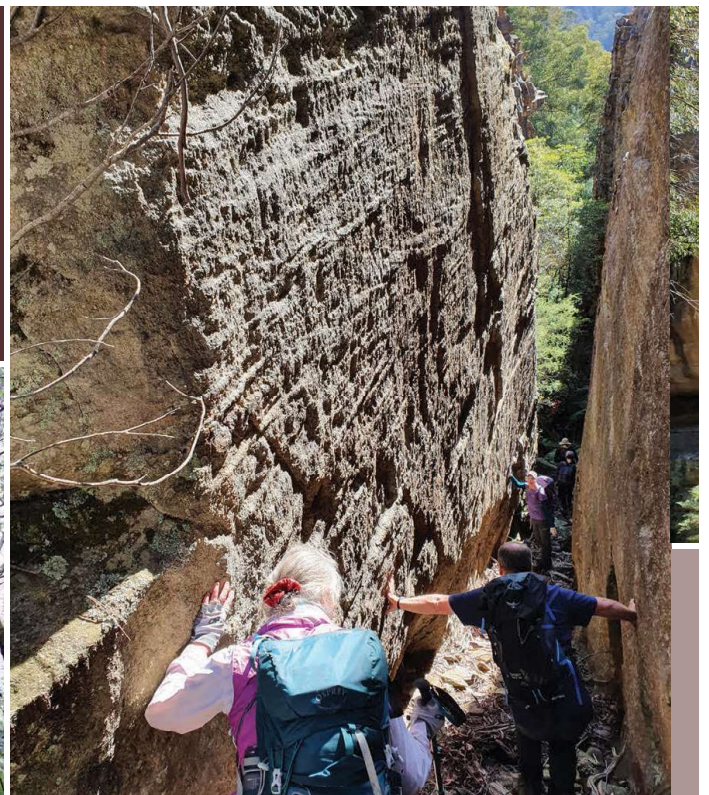
At the junction, there is a great stand of Rough Tree Ferns artistically positioned. Another similar clump is located on the western side of the valley. In the centre of the valley floor, there are occasional extremely large Eucalypts and a number of diminutive specimens of Coachwood. All the vegetation looked short on both nutrients and water.

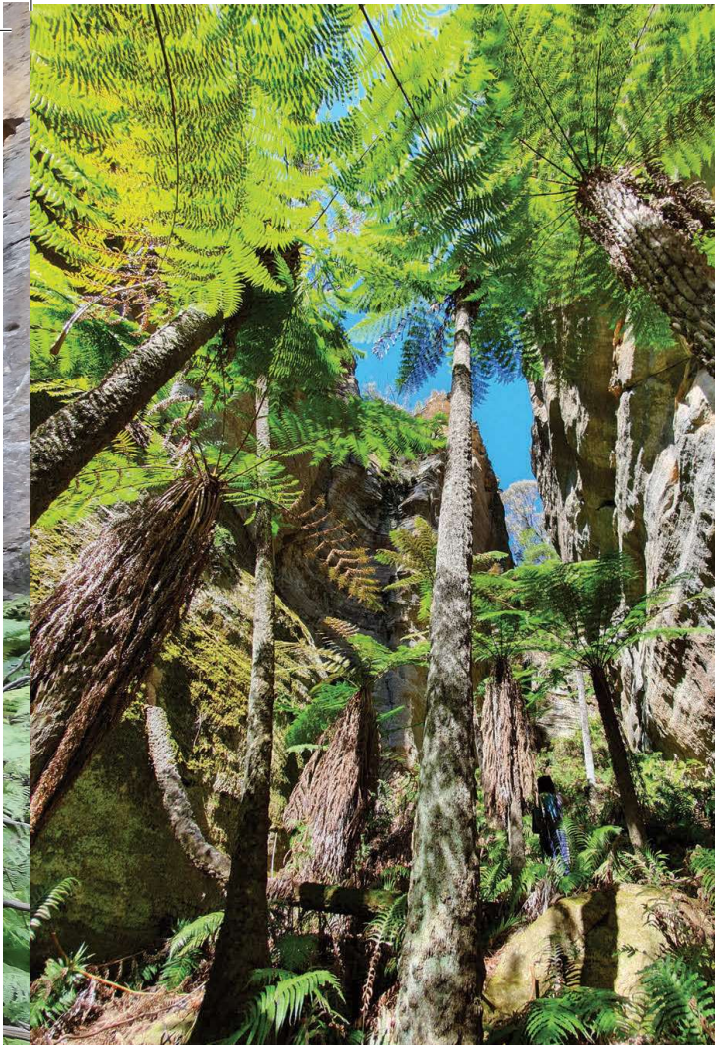


Opposite: The Valley of the Dinosaurs from the air. Photo: Bruce Upton.
Above: Brian Fox lends a helping hand to Harold Thompson. Scott Marshall is next. A challenging way of descent to the bottom of the valley.
Photo: Chris Sterling.



Above: Single file as bushwalkers explore the Valley of the Dinosaurs. Photo: Yuri Bolotin. Below: Yuri Bolotin in the Valley of the Dinosaurs. Photo: Peter Medbury. Right: In a long slot within the upper part of the valley. Photo: Diah Hendarwan.





To assess the situation at a basic level, several old rotting logs were briefly lifted to check for signs of life. It was disappointing as the area presently is quite barren. Bird life was confined to a small but rowdy group of Wrens who were incensed that we had invaded their territory.

Our progress was deliberately slow as we wandered across the valley floor from wall to wall. We were disappointed that not one potential slot led to anywhere. Most were less than a metre in depth and the few overhangs were extremely dry.

By 1148, the valley had opened out significantly. Great pictures could be taken looking south up the valley where the walls were mostly in excess of 50 metres. Further north from here, the valley became quite bland, which was disappointing. We had been hoping for much more adventure in exploring the slots, but the best we could do was a short fake tunnel caused by a rock fall. It was now 1200, and Brian and I decided that we should take the group to Ultimate Slot for lunch.

The road to Genowlan Point was intersected at 1204, and a few minutes later, at 1210, heading south west was the track to Ultimate

Top: Giant Tree Ferns in the Valley of the Dinosaurs. **Bottom:** The western cliffs of the Valley of the Dinosaurs.
Photos: Diah Hendarwan.



Slot. Even though there had only been two parties visiting the slot previously, it is amazing how two dozen walkers in and out can quickly flatten the herbage and develop an identifiable track.

Ultimate Slot was reached at 1220. To allow plenty of time for first-time visitors to enjoy the slot, we combined lunchtime with the visit, and 35 minutes was spent in the area. During the lunch break, we became very conscious of the cold, and so, at 1300, we made our way back to the road network and to the vehicles.

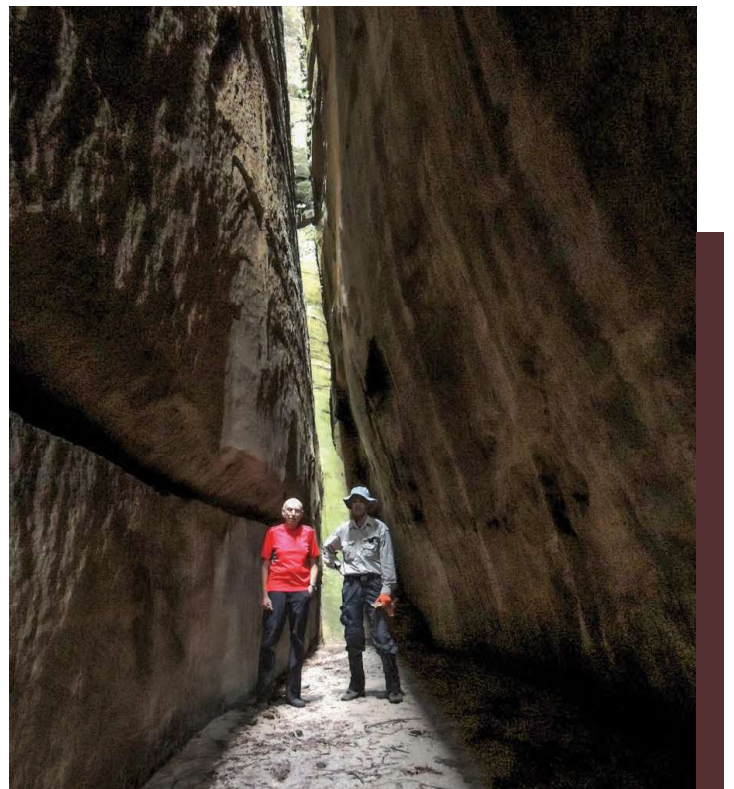


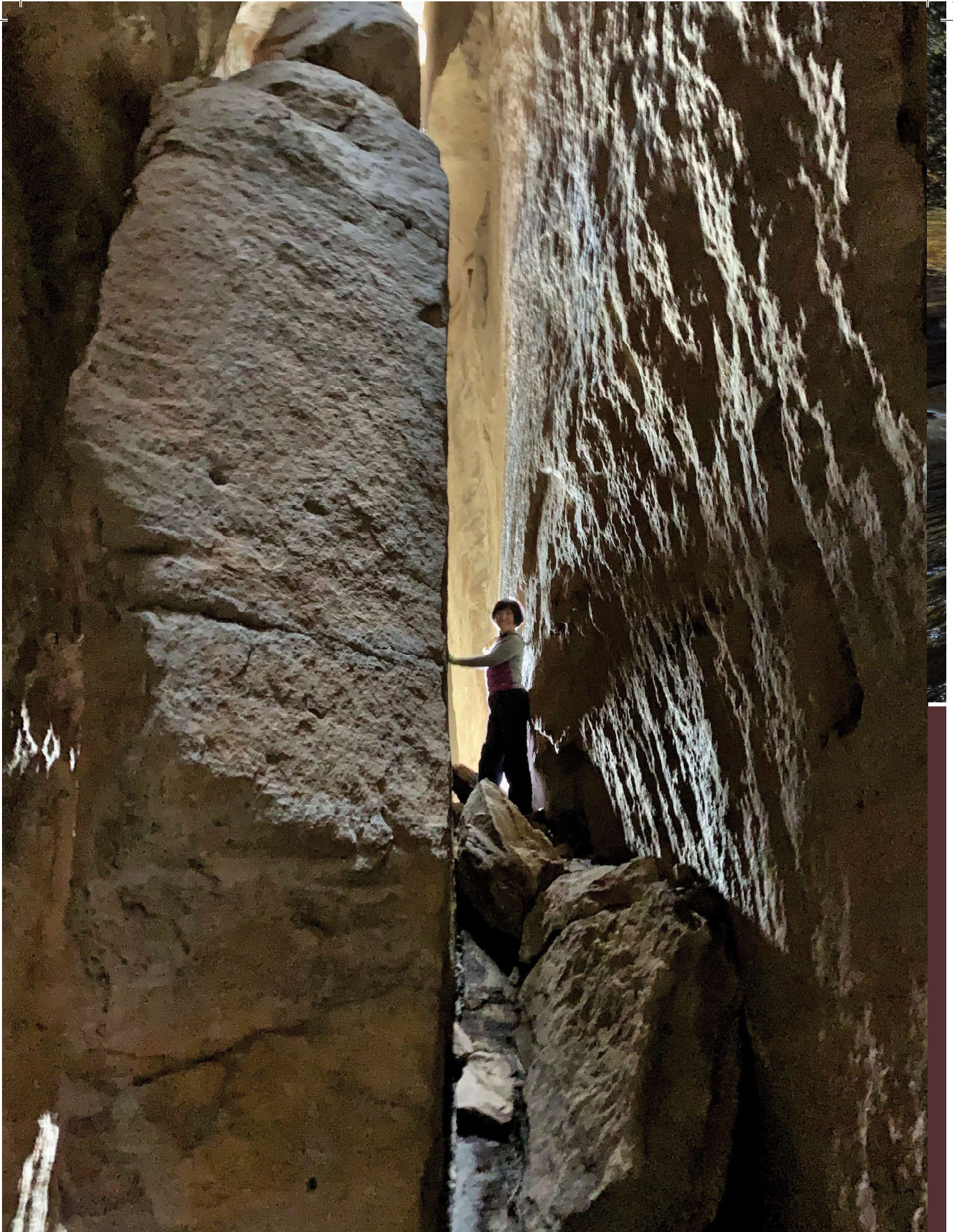
Table of times, locations and grid references

Time	Location	Grid reference	Elevation
0920	Park vehicles on plateau	2477 3222	920 m
0937	Start walking	2477 3222	910 m
0954	Leave road to view the Valley of the Dinosaurs from top	2523 3203	995 m
1002	Above the Valley of the Dinosaurs	2537 3224	962 m
1020	Morning tea at top of descent slot, 10 min	2538 3190	1,018 m
1104	Down from jump/rope assisted drop	2541 3205	945 m
1113	Exploring a pagoda wonderland + side slot descent	2543 3207	938 m
1123	Side slot and main valley junction	2542 3219	950 m
1148	Valley starts to open out	2544 3237	915 m
1200	Tunnel and start Valley of the Dinosaurs exit	2543 3256	895 m
1204	Junction with road network	2531 3267	875 m
1210	Track take-off for Ultimate Slot	2523 3256	895 m
1220	At Ultimate Slot + lunch, 35 min	2523 3240	920 m
1300	Rejoin road network	2523 3256	895 m
1312	At vehicles	2477 3222	920 m

TRIP STATISTICS:

**Total distance 5.8 km;
total ascent 250 m.**

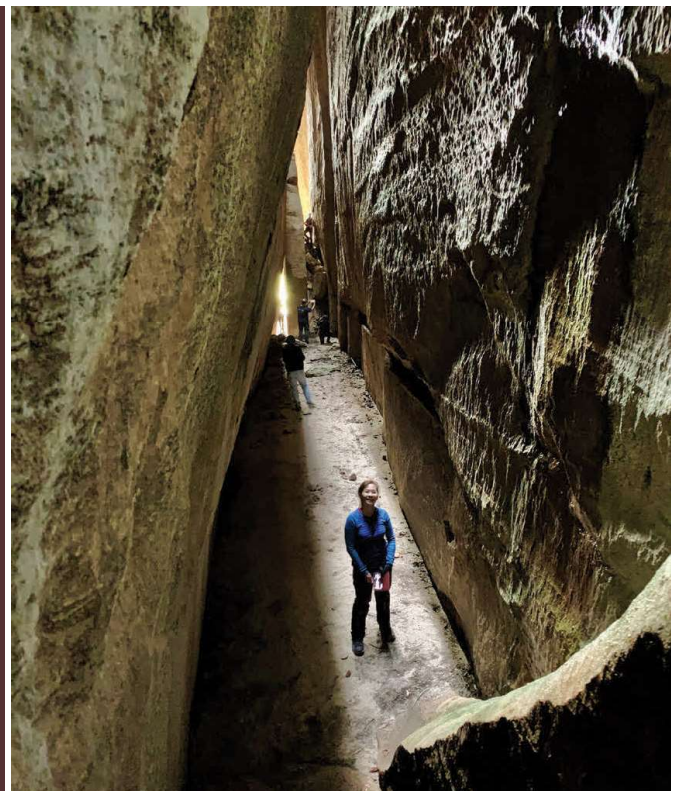
Opposite, top: The lush growth at the base and the soaring cliffs within the Valley of the Dinosaurs. Photo: Diah Hendarwan. Bottom: Michael Keats and Harold Thompson in the Ultimate Slot. Photo: Brian Fox.



592 Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area A Bushwalking Paradise



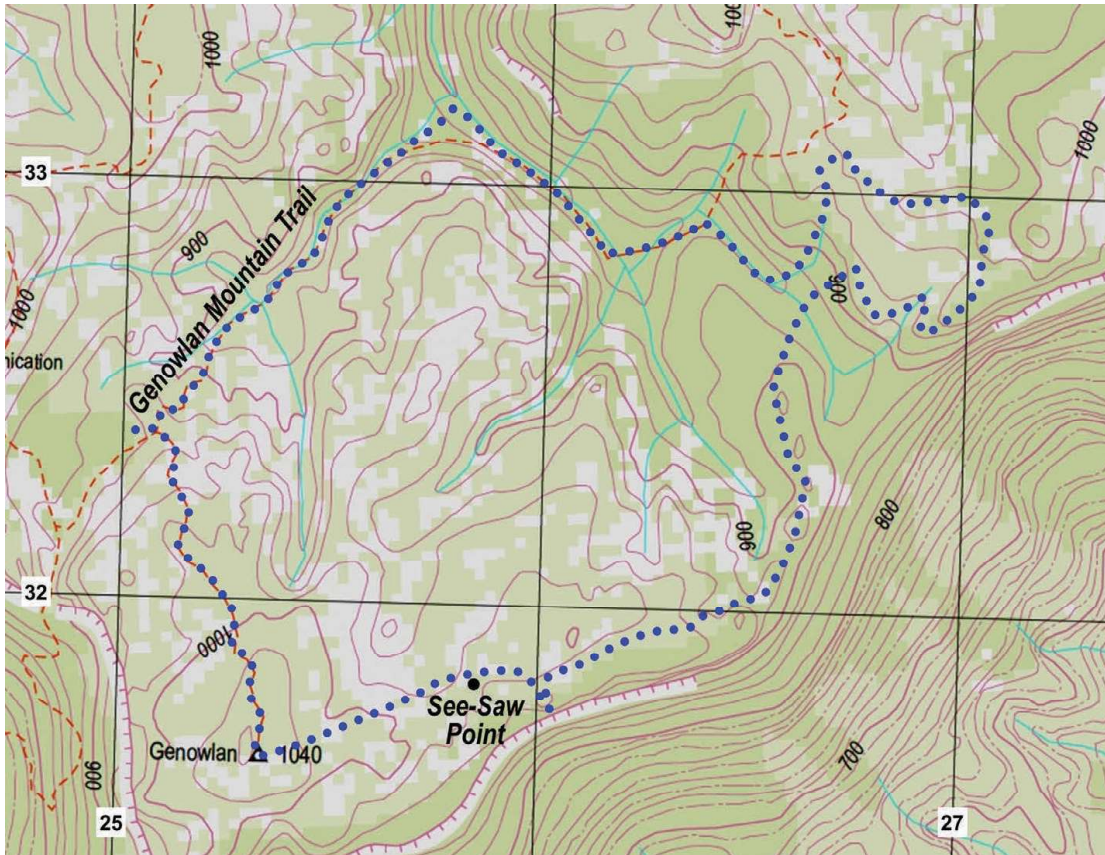
Opposite: Yidan Saladine above the entrance to the Ultimate Slot. Photo: Yuri Bolotin. **Above:** On the floor of the Ultimate Slot, looking up. Photo: Yuri Bolotin. **Right:** Diah Hendarwan in the Ultimate Slot. Photo: Yidan Saladine.



WALK 31

South East Genowlan Mountain and Pagoda Heaven

Source: Department of Lands, Glen Alice Topographical Map 8931-4N; 1:25000





The weather

A few brief periods of drizzle early in the day, clearing to 30% cloud cover with sunny breaks. By late morning, the clouds returned. There was a short shower or two, then the clouds dissipated in the afternoon. Very strong winds at the exposed tops. Temperature range 15 to 20 degrees C.

Comments

This is big country.
Partly exploratory.
Scrambling and exposure.
Date walked: 4 May 2018.

Opposite: Negotiating this part is challenging, but Brian Fox finds a way.
Above: From Pagoda Heaven, you can see, in one frame, the pagodas on the spur leading to Treasure Point; behind them, Treasure Chest Spur and the pagodas of City in the Sky; behind that, Point Hatteras pagodas.
Photos: Yuri Bolotin.

Maps, etc.

Department of Lands
topographic map Glen Alice
8931-4N, 1:25,000, second
edition. GPS setting WGS 84.

Walk description and route

Park vehicles on top of the escarpment above *Airly Mountain* and follow the Genowlan Mountain Trail as far as GR 266 330. Climb north north east to the tops, then explore a highly dissected, pagoda-studded area to the south east and south. Descend underneath the cliff line in a southwesterly direction at GR 267 328. From here, climb a narrow south trending ridge. Continue to the top of the escarpment and follow it south west all the way to Genowlan Trig. Take the firetrail from there to reconnect with the vehicles. About 10 km.

Gear issues

First aid kit, PLB, GPS, maps, compass, appropriate head and foot wear, two litres of water, electrolytes, tape (leader only).
Change of gear for afterwards.