

ANGELUS HUT

Topo50 Map: BR24 Kawatiri & BS24 Mount Robert

Topo250 Map: Sheet 18

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: It takes about one and half days to get from Taupo to St Arnaud without any rushing and with adequate time to visit places such as the historic cob construction of Tophouse with its colourful past and very colourful owner who tells a really good tale. Tophouse is on the map and only a few km before St Arnaud. The tramp starts in the Mt Robert car park which is about 20 min driving on sealed then gravel road from St Arnaud.

Rough description: A moderate to fit tramp covering 33km in a walking time of almost 17 hours, ascending 1,515m and descending 1,673m. A pretty grunty start up the Pinchgut track, a long hard semi-technical slog along and up Robert Ridge before a descent to the hut. The exit route down the Cascade Track is very steep and technical but the sandflies are a delight when the Coldwater Hut is reached. Coldwater back to St Arnaud is straightforward on forest track with some gnarly, rooty sections. The access route is shown opposite and the three days' tramping route on the map below. Red is Day 1 up the Robert Ridge, Brown is the semi-technical descent down the Cascade Track whilst Yellow is Day 3 back along the lake from Coldwater Hut.

As noted above this is pretty much a fit grade of tramp with most of the way "route" rather than "track". There is very good track for the first hour or so on Day 1 up the Pinchgut Track but the track deteriorates once above the bushline. From then on it slowly becomes a poled route with some sections not to be tackled by the inexperienced as there are many boulder sections involved. The faint-hearted could be phased by their first look at the start of Day 2 as this really is a semi-technical, very steep descent of 500m to be made in a about 1.5k but "slow and sure" does work well. From the Cascades after this descent it is into the beech forest with undulating slopes and many gnarly roots to negotiate but the route does become a track. Day 3 does not really present any great challenges.

Day 1: Robert Rd to Angelus Hut

From the Mt Robert car park (**WP1**_{898m}) it is pretty well upwards from the word "go" but this is all on a very good track with nothing too steep due to the well benched zig-zags. For the weary or unfit there is a seat in the thinning mountain beech (**WP2**_{1196m}) with great views after 45-50min. The open, tin Bushline Shelter (**WP3**_{1391m}) is reached in 1:25min at the top of the zig-zags and it is on to the poled route. Another, older shelter - this one with a door - called the "Relax" is gained after 1:40min and about 75m beyond this there is a junction (**WP4**_{1433m}) with Paddy's Track going off left towards Bushline Hut whilst the route of the day continues SW up the Robert Ridge.

Uphill zig-zags



Exposed tussock Ridge



Angelus Hut Tramp



This area is a very exposed tussock ridge with massive scree slopes on the right NW face. After 2:20min there is a slight change in direction when the route bears to the right at a sign (**WP5**_{1564m}) for the Robert Ski field in the valley below to the left. For the next hour it is easy walking slowly gaining height to reach the high point (**WP6**_{1692m}) on Christie Ridge. From here on things do get a little bit "hairy" or even "scary" for some as there are seemingly endless scree slopes/boulder fields around on this rocky ridge (**WP7**_{1748m}). From here the next target is a high pass (**WP8**_{1753m}) reached after a sidle below bluffs via huge boulder fields – ankle turning is a possibility.

Great sidle Terrain

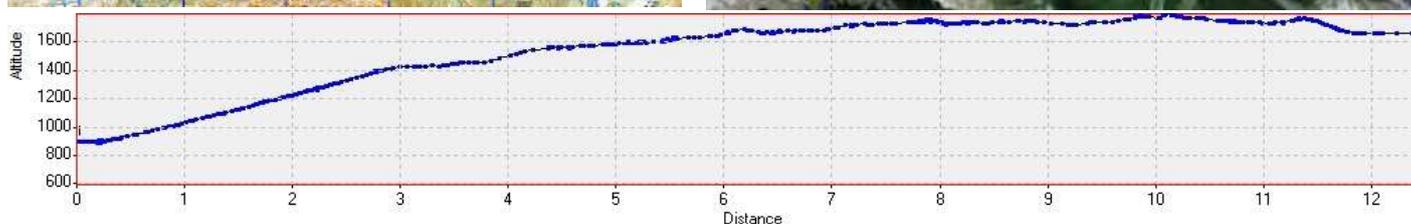


Access



About 20 min drive from St Arnaud on sealed then gravel road

Day 1 Map and Google Earth Image with GPS data



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1584095	5370007	898	Mt Robert car park, St Arnaud
02	1584271	5369305	1196	52min (1.76km); Pinchgut Track at seat with views in beech forest
03	1584287	5368914	1391	1:25min (2.77km); Doorless Bushline Shelter then on poled track
04	1584133	5368481	1433	1:40min (3.30km); Junction with Paddy's Track 75m past Relax Shelter
05	1583467	5367549	1564	2:20min (4.47km); Bear right at sign above Skifield in valley below
06	1582232	5366606	1692	3:15min (6.18km); High point on rocky Christie Ridge
07	1581245	5365456	1748	3:57min (7.81km); Exposed rocky ridge before big sidle through boulder field
08	1580891	5364707	1753	4:25min (8.83km); High point on small pass after rocky side
09	1580338	5363897	1788	5:55min (9.87km); Rocky high point after rugged section
10	1579537	5363034	1742	6:55min (11.0km); Angelus Speargrass junction, 5min on for view of hut and lake
11	1579143	5362591	1666	7:25min (12.03km); Angelus Hut

Rough and rocky



The really hard work is not over yet for during the next hour more height is gained as the route passes through a very rugged rocky section to get to another high point (**WP9**1786m). After this the slopes are less but the terrain remain rugged and within another hour the Speargrass- Angelus Junction (**WP10**1742) is reached where the route goes left to the SW uphill and five minutes later Lake Angelus and the hut are seen. Angelus Hut (**WP11**1666m) is reached in slightly less than seven and a half hours which may be slightly longer than the quoted time for the trip but the party in question were slightly past their prime with the oldest at 76 years and the group of nine with an average age of 68 years.

Huge scree slopes



At one point during the day "vegetable sheep" were seen on the slopes – eventually one of these plants was passed close enough to get a photograph.

Vegetable sheep



Angelus Lake and Hut



Day 2: Angelus to Coldwater Hut

The Angelus Hut (**WP11**_{1666m}) is in its third incarnation and the views of Lake Angelus from the hut are spectacular – it would be a good walk round the rim ridge above the lake. This is a new hut for which booking is essential; it really seems to be full most nights. Good accommodation and social area, huge decks but the toilets are a tad disappointing but seemingly it is difficult to get a secure place for them – they have to be tied down. At present the track to the toilets is rough and muddy and not pleasant overnight. The day starts by passing the toilets back upslope a few metres then heading on the level for a very short distance eastwards and then the route disappears over the edge! This is the Cascade track and it is rather steep but nothing that a seasoned trumper cannot handle and the parachuting section is behind within an hour or so when the bridge (**WP12**₁₃₃₃) over the actual cascades is reached.

The descent

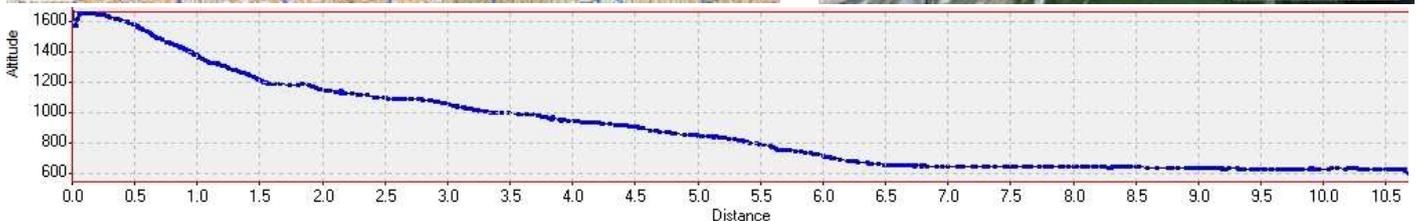
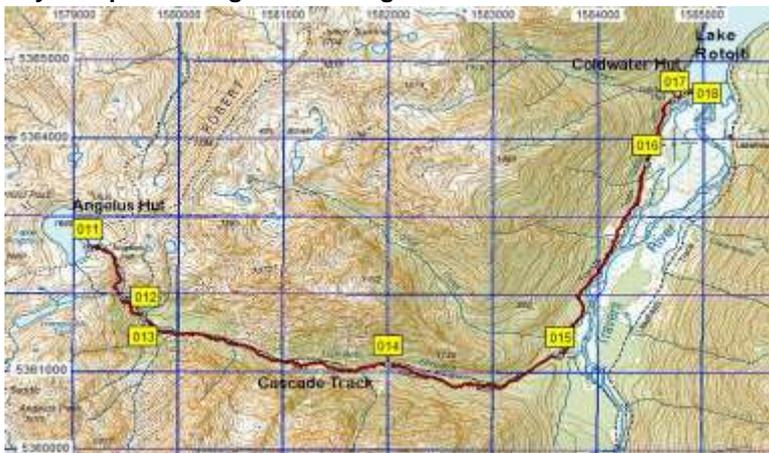


The relief of getting off the slopes is tempered by the trickiness of the root infested section of wind blasted mountain beech but everything soon eases by the time the next stream line is crossed (**WP13**_{1193m}) and the terrain improves. Soon it is a pleasant walk in beautiful forest with a couple of stream crossings. For the next hour and a half there is good, steep in places track (**WP14**_{918m}) parallel to the river which must go under-ground at some point as the flow was suddenly noticed to not be there any longer.

Bridge at the cascades



Day 2 Map and Google Earth Image with GPS data



12	1579471	5361963	1333	Day 2 1:13min (1.11km); At Cascades on Cascade Track with very steep slopes
13	1579678	5361694	1193	1:40min (1.56km); Off steep slopes at stream line then rough walking in beech forest
14	1582014	5361097	918	3:23min (4.39km); Good steep track in beech above river which has been dry for 30min - underground
15	1583654	5361210	662	4:25min (6.50km); Junction with John Tait to right and Coldwater 1 hour ahead
16	1584475	5363673	635	5:35min (9.49km); Junction with Lakehead Hut to right & Coldwater Hut 20min straight ahead
17	1584735	5364502	633	5:55min (10.43km); Bridge with Coldwater Hut minutes ahead
18	1584830	5364597	629	6hrs (10.57km); Coldwater Hut with sandflies galore, robin & possible kiwi

The route really now is a track as it continues downhill in an easterly direction till at around four and a half hours a junction (**WP15**_{662m}) is met with right for John Tait Hut and left for Coldwater, stated as being an hour away. Almost exactly an hour later there is another junction (**WP16**_{635m}) with Lakehead Hut to the right – crossing the Travers River – and Coldwater some 20 min ahead. A bridge is crossed (**WP17**_{633m}) and almost immediately the hut (**WP18**_{629m}) is reached in a total of 6 hours. This is a neat little hut on the lakeshore with good screening against the rapacious sandflies, a nice jetty if water travel appeals, a boat possibly looking for a crew and birdlife included a visiting robin and possible kiwi calls overnight.

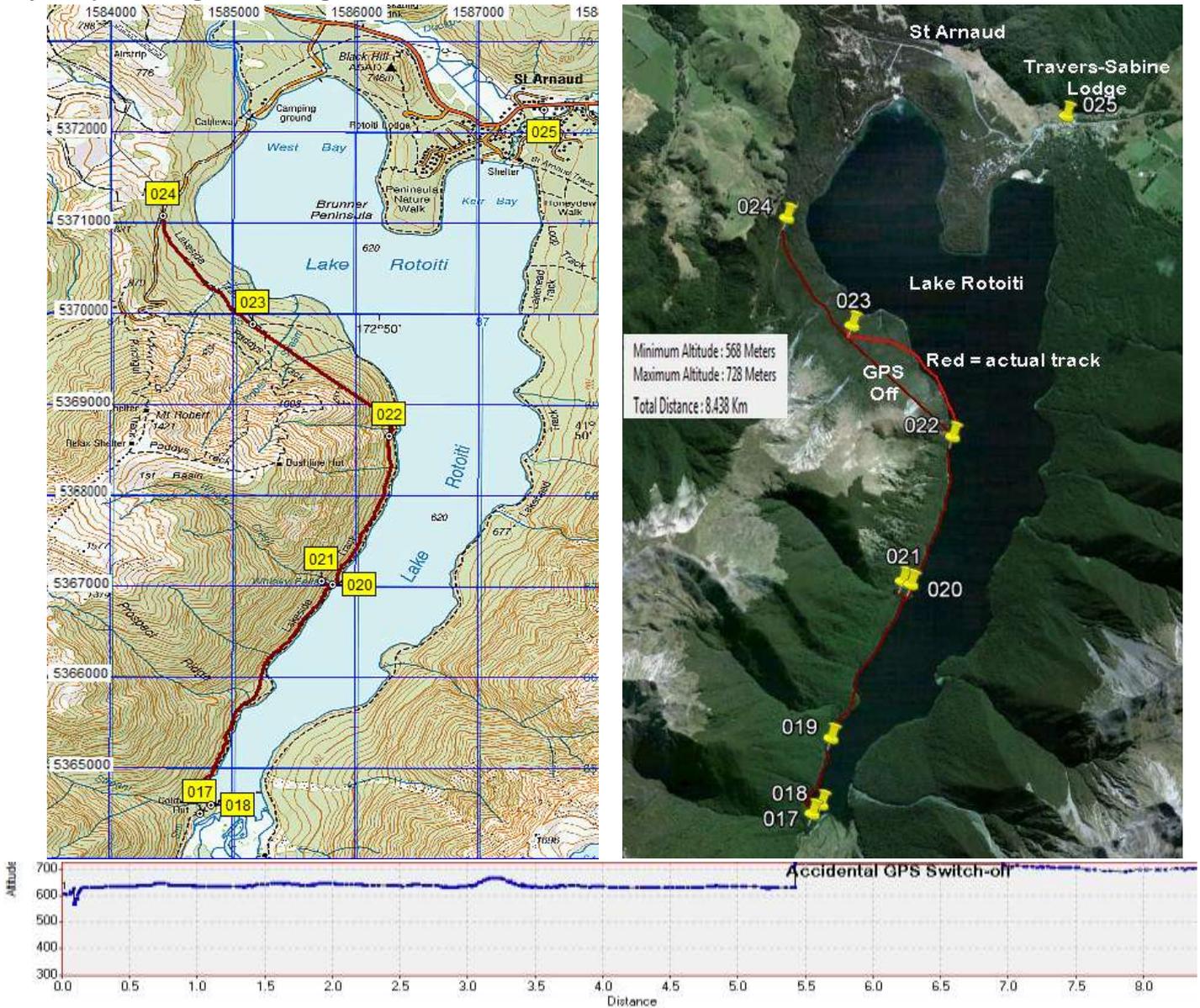
Not waiting for a water taxi



Day 3: Coldwater Hut to Mt Robert Rd and St Arnaud

From Coldwater Hut (WP18629m) the early morning views over the lake from the water taxi jetty are very pleasant and the track is easy going to reach a bridge (WP19639m) within about 15minutes but there are some slopes plus a few young lancewood can be seen growing in this dense beech forest.

Day 3 Map and Google Earth Image with GPS data



19	1584942	5365340	639	Day 3 15min (0.97km); Bridge on rolling track in beech forest with some lancewood
20	1585813	5367025	639	1hour (2.99km); Junction for Whisky Falls with robin & bellbids. Drop packs
21	1585722	5367062	670	5min up steep track for view of falls in matures beech forest
22	1586272	5368660	629	1:45min (5.26km); Bridge on rolling slopes then ascend away from lake in kanuka on quad bike track
23	1585155	5369883	718	2:42min (7.23km); Junction with Paddy's Track left and Robert Road 30min ahead
24	1584423	5371082	703	3hrs (8.75km); End of track on Robert Road

The junction to Whisky Falls (WP20639m) is reached in an hour and it is worth the minute or two to go up the track and view the falls (WP21670m) in the mature beech forest, appreciate the robins hopping around and hear the bellbirds calling. The track continues paralleling the lakeshore and is generally undulating – not steep – but there is the odd scree slope to cross. When a small bridge (WP22629) is approached slopes become rolling rather than undulating terrain and from here the track heads more to the NW – the real route can be seen on the Google Image whilst the Map shows a section when the GPS was inadvertently switched off – as it heads upslope in kanuka on what is now a quad bike track. Short of three hours there is a junction (WP23718m) with Paddy's Track off left and Robert Rd indicated as 30min straight on. Within three hours the track end (WP24703m) on Robert Rd is reached.

Landslip scree on Lake Rotoiti



Notes: • **GPS** = Garmin GPSMap 60CSx **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit **masl** = metres above sea level