

## ROUTE BURN TRACK

Topo50 Maps: CB09 Hollyford

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

### How to get to START:

- There are clear road signs marking the 25km road route from Glen Orchy (WP14 324masl) to the start of the Routeburn Track
- As can be seen opposite the route heads due south then, with a series of dog-leg turns, crosses the wide gravelly Rees River then heads NW following the Route Burn
- In approximately 20 minutes the Mount Aspiring National Park is entered and five minutes later the Routeburn Shelter (WP15 477masl) with car park and toilets is reached.

**Rough Description:** A moderate 2 nights and 3 days tramp which, though best done in good weather, can be tackled when Fiordland throws all the water it can at you. Day one comprises 11km of steady climb of 530metres through beech forest on a good track passing the Routeburn Flats Hut (WP22 704masl) then up to the Routeburn Falls Hut (WP25 993masl).

Overall on Day 2 the 5 hour / 11.6km walk leads to an overall loss of about 90metres with about 600metres of climbing to reach a high point of 1307metres over the Harris Saddle where there is a shelter hut (WP30 1251masl) which proves most welcome during inclement weather. The final few kilometres down to the Mackenzie Hut (WP36 906masl) seems to take for ever.

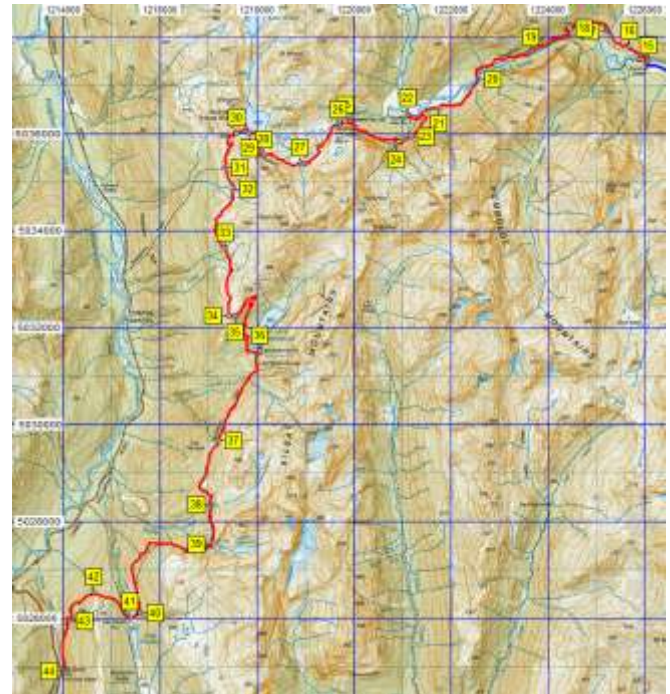
Day 3 does have some good scenery but all that was on show for the TTC were waterfalls – and they were magnificent, though it did mean getting wet. Overall this 11+ km day takes 4 hours with altitude dropping from just over 1000 to 544 metres at the Divide car park at the end. The Earland Falls in particular were spectacular to scary in volume and noise.

### Access Road



The total distance walked was just over 34 kilometres in a total walking time of just over 12 hours

### Google and Map with GPS data



### Day 1: Routeburn Shelter to Routeburn Falls Hut

The Routeburn Shelter (WP15 477masl) in the car park at the start is well worth browsing round before setting out; for a start the toilets must be the most luxurious ever built by DOC for a use by out-door people. However there are a lot of good information boards and these should be studied as there is plenty of time.

From the car park the first feature on the track is a Didymo information board plus hand sprays for use by walkers and trampers. Within minutes there is swing bridge on this manicured track through rather wet, beech forest and within 20 minutes there is a T-junction (WP16 490masl) with the Sugar Loaf Track. Five minutes later there is another T-junction with a Nature Walk just before a swing bridge over the Sugar Loaf Stream – there are no slopes involved at all so far. After about 50 minutes there is a wooden bridge (WP18 596masl) over a mini-waterfall at the top of long ascent then the track climbs again to reveal the Route Burn in a fabulous gorge on the left hand side; the route parallels this gorge for about 30 minutes. The track now levels off about 50 metres before a minor Y-junction (WP19 668masl) – using the right (straight ahead) option leads on to the Falls Hut which is signposted and 5 min down here there is a waterfall on the bluff on the right hand side.

### Routeburn Shelter

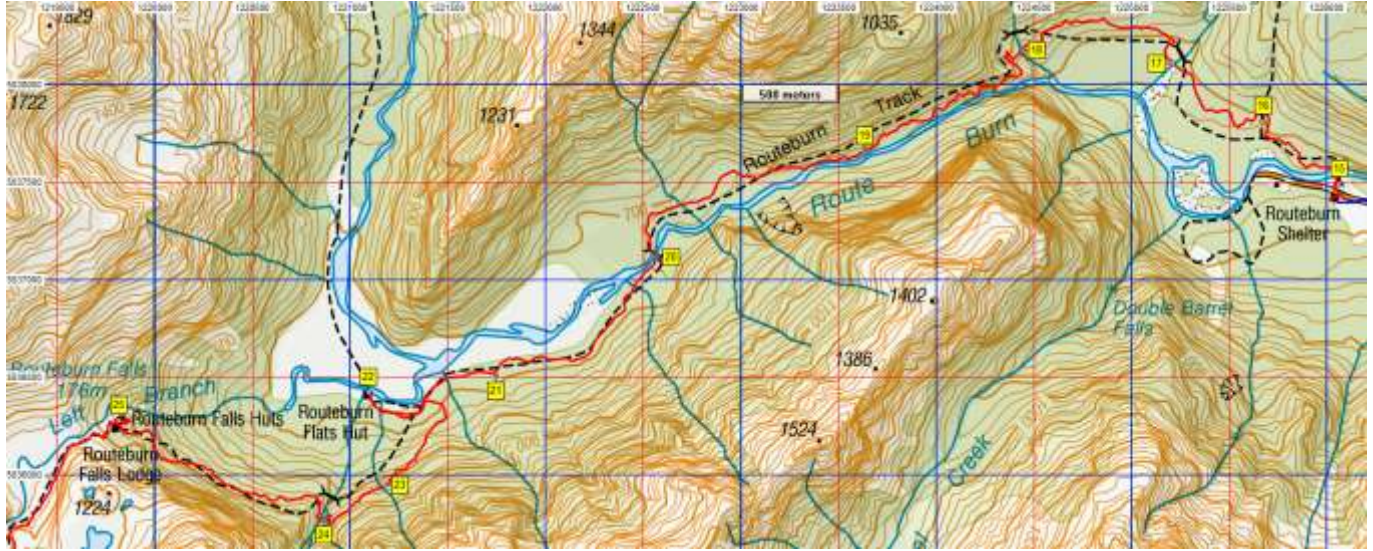


A long swing bridge (WP20 694masl) is crossed short of two hours then five minutes later there is another, smaller bridge before the valley opens up and the "flats" are entered (WP21 706masl). The path is then pretty level and easy going through pleasant woods to arrive at the Routeburn Flats Hut (WP22 704masl) minutes after passing a T-junction on the left which is the route to follow to get to the Falls Hut. Smoko can be had at the picnic table in front of the Flats Hut. This hut has 20 beds and is not a Great Walk Hut.

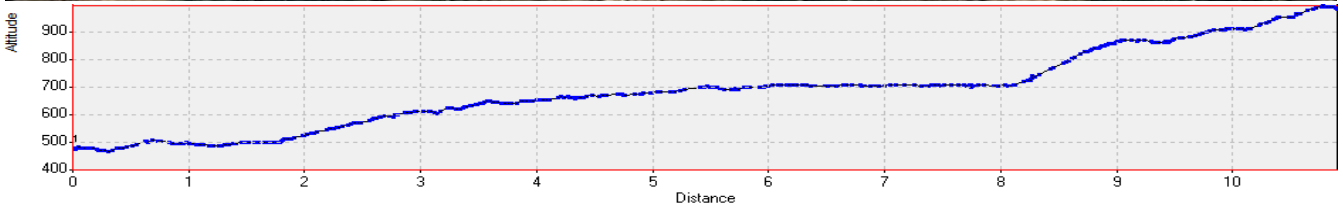
### Routeburn Flats



### Map & Google plus GPS data: Day 1



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
15	1226062	5037492	477	Start Mt Aspiing Park, Didymo spray then swing bridge on manicured track
16	1225673	5037813	490	833m (0:25min); T-junction for Sugarloaf Mountain
17	1225207	5038110	499	1.65km (0:32min); T-junction with Nature Walk then swing bridge over Sugar Loaf Stream
18	1224437	5038177	596	2.77km (0:50min); Wooden bridge on mini falls after long ascent. Up again with gorge on LHS
19	1223633	5037661	668	4.18km (1:28min); almost level 50m short of Y-junction to Flats Hut
20	1222566	5037119	694	5.72km (1:49min); Long swing bridge with another 5min later
21	1221745	5036510	706	6.95km (2:04min); On the "Flats" in the open
22	1221093	5036425	704	7.74km (2:30min); Picnic table i front of Flats Hut, back-up then uphill to the right
23	1221177	5035951	840	8.79km (2:54min); Swing bridge after fair "grunt" then tough track to wood bridge on tumbling stream
24	1220864	5035773	866	9.31km (3:05min); Swing ridge on Emily Creek then rock-fall area (1994) and up steep rock staircase
25	1219814	5036281	993	10.91km (3:42min); Routburn Falls Hut



## Emily Creek



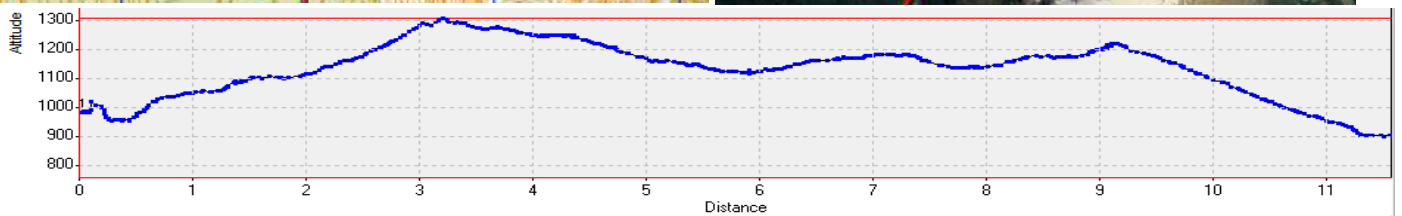
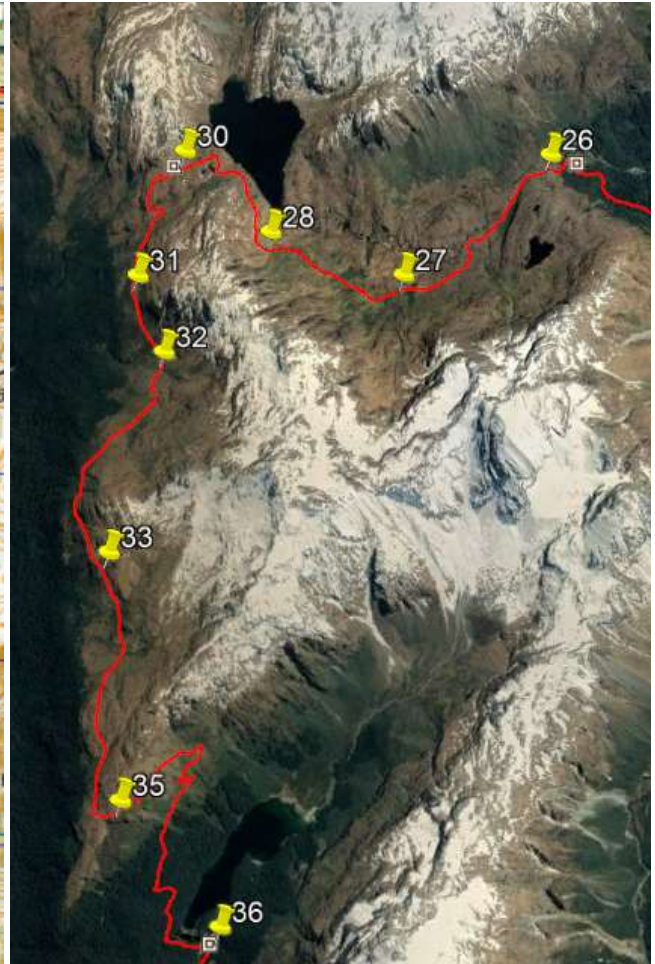
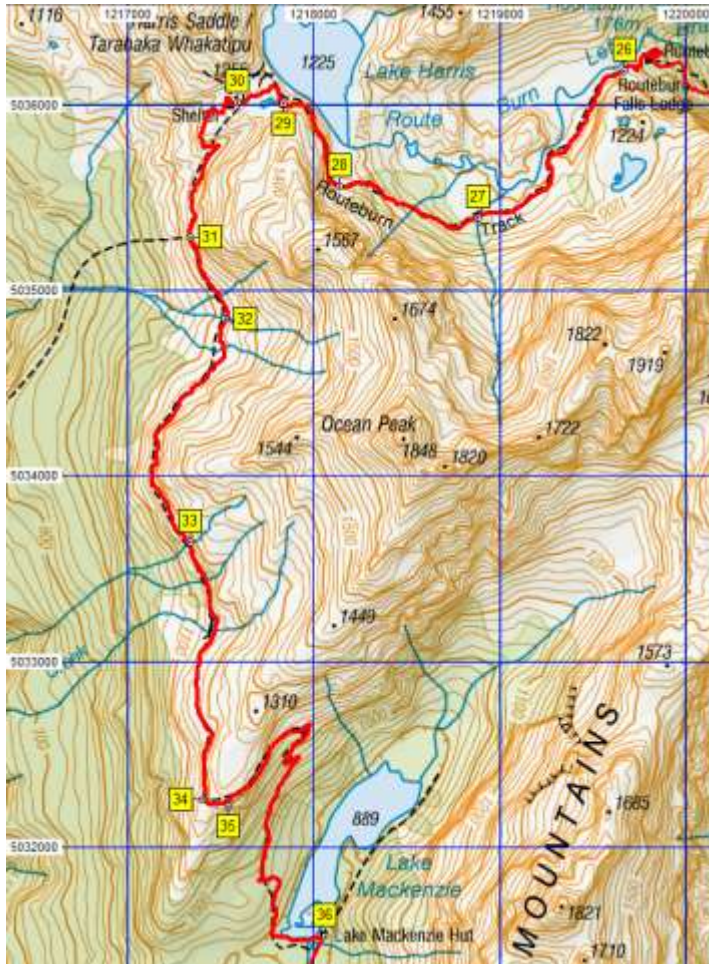
Flats Hut is a normal back-country hut and less expensive than the great walk huts and there is no need to book. After smoko backtrack to the T-junction and go right uphill where a fair "grunt" commences and leads to a swing bridge (WP23 840masl). Immediately after this there is tricky grunt up a very rocky section of track to a high wooden bridge over a tumbling stream. Emily Creek (WP24 866masl) is crossed at about 3 hours walking and the view back to the "flats" is good. After this the track runs under the bluffs then a huge "rock-fall" or land-slip area is crossed and 15 minutes later there is a wet, tricky rock staircase to negotiate – take care. After about 3:40 walking the Routeburn Falls Hut (WP25 993masl) is arrived at. The Hut with the curtains upslope is the high class accommodation of the guided walks!

## Rock-fall Area



The Falls hut is modern with good accommodation though the upper bunks are pretty high for Hobbits.

## Day 2: Routeburn Falls Hut to Lake Mackenzie Hut



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
25	1219814	5036281	993	10.91km (3:42min); Routburn Falls Hut
26	1219671	5036188	1028	DAY 2 683m (0:15min); Steep grunt to top of the Falls
27	1218883	5035392	1116	2.01km (0:45min); Bridge
28	1218138	5035561	1270	2.95km (1:21min); Long grunt up to overlook Lake Harris on RHS
29	1217833	5036010	1269	3.56km (1:40min); Holding elevation to pass DoC "Fragile Area" notice
30	1217588	5036019	1251	3.95km (1:55min); Loop round to lose elevation to reach Harris Saddle Hut
31	1217334	5035291	1150	5.43km (2:27min); Junction with Deadman's Track
32	1217520	5034850	1123	5.93km (2:40min); No visibility apart from horizontal air-borne water (rain) - bridge
33	1217334	5033648	1173	7.41km (3:13min); Yet another waterfall and bridge
34	1217402	5032260	1194	8.93km (3:47min); Track goes hard left on orange marker to cross rocky ridge the descend
35	1217537	5032226	1209	9.10km (3:55min); High point and see Mackenzie Hut in valley below via zig-zags
36	1218062	5031523	906	11.58km (5:00min); Mackenzie Hut after never-ending zig zags the rocky through forest

It has to be admitted that the notes for Day 2 were taken virtually under-water as Fiordland demonstrated what a wet day is like and the TTC considered establishing the High Level Sub-aqua Walkers. Despite the conditions this is a good day especially if one likes waterfalls.

The day starts with a 15 minute grunt uphill to pass the Routeburn Falls then it is a steady grunt of a climb until Lake Harris (**WP28**<sup>1270masl</sup>) appears (through the cloud) off to the right (North). From here the track holds its height to pass through a "fragile area" on the Harris Saddle which is marked by a DOC notice.

After this there is a gentle descent as the path loops round to reach the Harris Saddle Shelter (**WP30**<sup>1251masl</sup>). There is a toilet behind this very welcome hut and the toilet has a "flushing" loo operated by a pump! Refer to the last page of this document for a small side trip which can be done from here.

The descent starts immediately on leaving the shelter with some steep zig zags and steps all of which are a bit exposed but the track is soon in the lee of the hill and the rest is pretty well protected from any wind blowing. The waypoints taken from here on were more for "time checks" as little could be seen in the driving rain. **WP31**<sup>1150masl</sup> is at the T-junction with, one assumes the appropriately named, "Deadman's Track".

The next very obvious feature (**WP34**<sup>1194masl</sup>) is where the track turns hard left with large orange markers to cross a rocky ridge before the serious descending commences.

The track is a bit narrow, steep and tricky here but soon eases and, if there is any view, the Mackenzie Hut and the endless zig zags ahead can be seen from an obvious high point (**WP35**<sup>1209masl</sup>). The track goes almost 1 kilometre to the NE before starting zig-zagging to the south.

This descent takes an hour with 200 metres of altitude being lost on the endless zig zags which eventually enter the tree line. However, from here on it seems more frustrating and never ending on pretty rough track – but DOC are currently upgrading this. The Mackenzie Hut (**WP36**<sup>906masl</sup>) was reached in exactly 5 hours walking from the Falls Hut.

The Mackenzie Hut (50 beds) is in need of replacing as it is not too smart or designed to deal with the numbers of, often wet, trampers that pass through this area. Pegs on the wall behind a mini-solid fuel stove are no match for a ceiling mounted rack as found in most huts nowadays. The kitchen area is OK but social and dining areas are inadequate. There is one bunk room above the kitchen and another in a separate building.

### Routeburn Falls



### Wet Wet Wet



A ten minute walk along parallel to Lake Mackenzie comes to the DOC campsite from where there are very good views of Lake Mackenzie.

## Day 3: Mackenzie Hut to the Divide



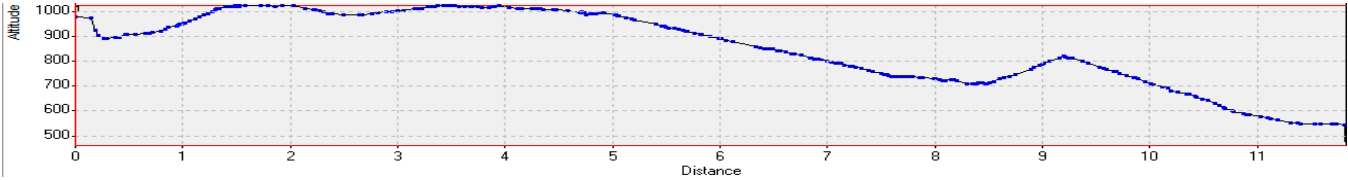
### Chinese Laundry

From here it is a reasonably gentle descent to reach the Howden Hut (**WP41**<sup>708 masl</sup>) arriving there just within the predicted walking time of 3 hours. The Howden Lake was so high after the non-stop rainfall that it was actually over-spilling and starting to flood the area close to the hut. The Howden Hut is smaller with only 28 beds, is not a Great Walk Hut and, on this tramp, TTC had smoko here in the shelter of the verandah. The tramp continues with quite a steep grunt up a rather wet, muddy tack for 15 minutes or so to reach a T-junction (**WP42**<sup>817masl</sup>) where, by going left, Key Summit can be visited. The walking is then easier and a generally gentle descent continues for 45 minutes or so. The end of the track is being approached after crossing a bridge (**WP43**<sup>600masl</sup>) and road traffic can be heard. The track then closely parallels Divide Creek to emerge into the Divide car park on the Te Anau to Milford highway.

On leaving the hut there is a bit of level walking to pass a couple of buildings including the new, palatial Guided Walks Hut then there is a fair grunt up the rather rough track which is currently being upgraded by DOC.

About 45 minutes into the walk there are views (on a good day) from a valley head (**WP37**<sup>1005masl</sup>) just before entering the sign-posted "orchard" – meadows!

A moderately large waterfall on Sunny Creek (**WP38**<sup>1020masl</sup>) is but one of many great falls on this day with the most spectacular – if not frightening – being the Earland Falls (**WP39**<sup>996masl</sup>), the noise and "air-blasting" from these falls being so great that only the foolish would have ventured too close on the normal path before routing downhill on the flood detour path. This little detour was an adventure on its own with the full force of the water continually beating down.



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
37	1217207	5029669	1005	DAY 3 2.26km (0:45min); In valley head with some views just before "The Orchard"
38	1217063	5028348	1020	3.91km (1:16min); Waterfall on Sunny Creek
39	1217072	5027544	996	4.74km (1:34min); Detour downstream to get past thundering earland Falls (very wet)
40	1215598	5026122	722	8.07km (2:38min); Waterfall on Pass Creek
41	1215378	5026037	708	8.35km (2:41min); Smoko at Howden Hut with over-spilling lake
42	1214633	5026545	817	9.43km (3:18min); T-junction with Key Summit off left
43	1214142	5025952	600	10.49km (3:45min); Bridge
44	1214041	5024920	544	11.84km (4:00min); The Divide and end of the wettest tramp ever!!

The end of the track is being approached after crossing a bridge (WP43<sub>600masl</sub>) and road traffic can be heard. The track then closely parallels Divide Creek to emerge into the Divide car park on the Te Anau to Milford highway.

**Wet detour under Earland Falls**



**Side Trip**

A side trip that can be done on a clear-weather day is up to the top of Conical Hill whilst at the Harris Saddle Shelter. The track for this extra small extension walk goes off right from the main track just past the shelter. As can be seen whilst walking though there are two shelters at Harris Saddle; the one on the left is the normal DOC hut whilst the one on the right is for the "guided walkers".