

## Published

Summer 2017

### Route overview

4 – 7 days

Expert/Difficult

Navigation skills required

No Huts

Water availability  
excellent

Snow on passes outside  
of summer

Access from Glenorchy via  
Queenstown

### Track Times

Car - Rockburn Shelter via  
Sugarloaf 4-7hrs

Car - Rockburn Shelter via  
Lake Sylvan 2-3hrs

Rockburn Shelter - Beans Burn  
2.5-4hrs

Beans Burn - Rock Biv  
5-9hrs

Rock Biv - Fohn Saddle 3-5hrs

Fohn Saddle - Olivine Ledge 1-  
2.5hr

Olivine Ledge - Fiery Col 2-  
3.5hrs

Fiery Col - Cow Saddle 2-4hrs

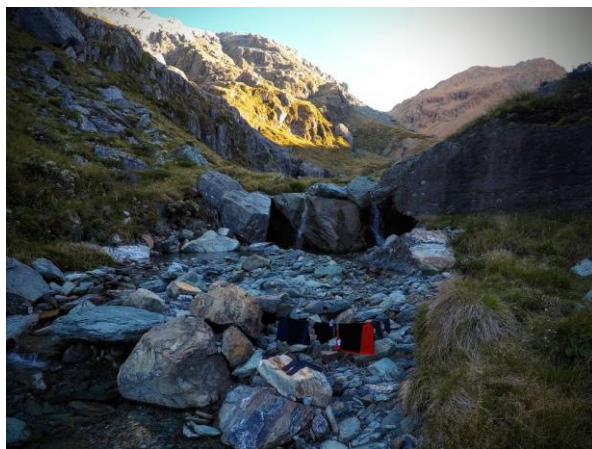
Cow Saddle - Park Pass 5-9hrs

Park Pass – Theatre Flat 3.5-  
6hrs

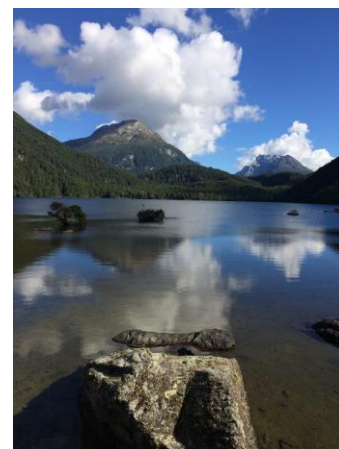
# The Five Passes

## Trip Notes

This route can be walked in either direction but we recommend travelling anti-clockwise (up the Beans Burn and out via the Rock Burn). Your starting point if you want to loop perfectly should be the Routeburn Shelter which will mean climbing Sugarloaf at the start and end of the trip. Alternatively, begin at Lake Sylvan campsite and loop back to the Routeburn Shelter and then along the road back to Lake Sylvan, only climbing Sugarloaf once. The distance along the road is about 4km and you should note that camping is not permitted at the Shelter. Lake Sylvan campsite has toilet facilities and ample room to tent.



*Looking towards Fiery Col*



*Lake Sylvan*

### CAR TO ROCKBURN SHELTER

Starting at the Routeburn Shelter, walk for 15min along the Routeburn track until you reach the signposted turnoff for Sugarloaf Pass. The track heads north and climbs to 1154m. The first section is relatively easy going then becomes steeper once you cross over sugar loaf stream. The Pass itself is wide and flat but very boggy in places. Follow markers across to meet the track again which drops more steeply down the other side. A signpost marks the junction with the Rockburn Shelter track which sidles above the river before popping out on the flats in front of the shelter. 4-5 hours.

If you're beginning from Lake Sylvan campsite enjoy the perfectly groomed trail leading to the lake before stepping onto the less groomed but easy to follow track to the Shelter. There are some hilly sections but no real climbs in this section. 2 hours.

Theatre Flat – Carpark via  
Sugarloaf 5.5-8hrs

Total Time: 36-61hrs

Range in times reflects  
differences in fitness, pack  
weight, weather and  
navigation skills. Faster times  
were set in perfect conditions  
with light packs with very  
minimal breaks. Allow time for  
route finding between Fohn  
Saddle and Park Pass.

### **ROCKBURN SHELTER TO BEANS BURN**

Ford the river in front of the shelter and cross onto the grassy bank of the Dart River. Orange track triangles are interspersed with trapping line markers along the same track a few metres into the trees. Follow this from the clearing as it stays above the river and sometimes higher up the slope before dropping back down at the confluence with the Beans Burn. This section is still easy to follow track although it's not marked on the map. Ford the Beans Burn close to where it meets the Dart River in a wide shallow section. Find the track on the opposite side which initially heads away from the river and up the true left of the Beans Burn. This crosses over a solid bridge before climbing steeply into the bush and then down to meet the river in a large clearing. 2.5 hours.

### **BEANS BURN TO ROCK BIV**

Track markers and a fairly obvious track winds its way up the Beans Burn on the true right of the river. The track is uneven and hilly in places making it a slow progression up the valley. Navigation becomes more difficult 1.5km from the Rock Biv as the track begins to disappear and trapping lines are the only obvious route through the bush if you want to stay above the river. Follow the pink markers just above the river through this last section and they'll lead you out onto the tussock and across to the biv. The Rock Biv has multiple "rooms" to sleep in or ample tent spaces out the front. 5 - 6 hours.

### **ROCK BIV TO FOHN SADDLE**

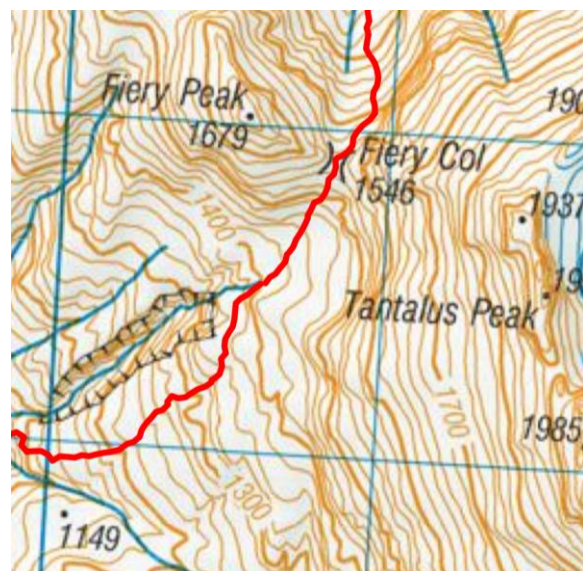
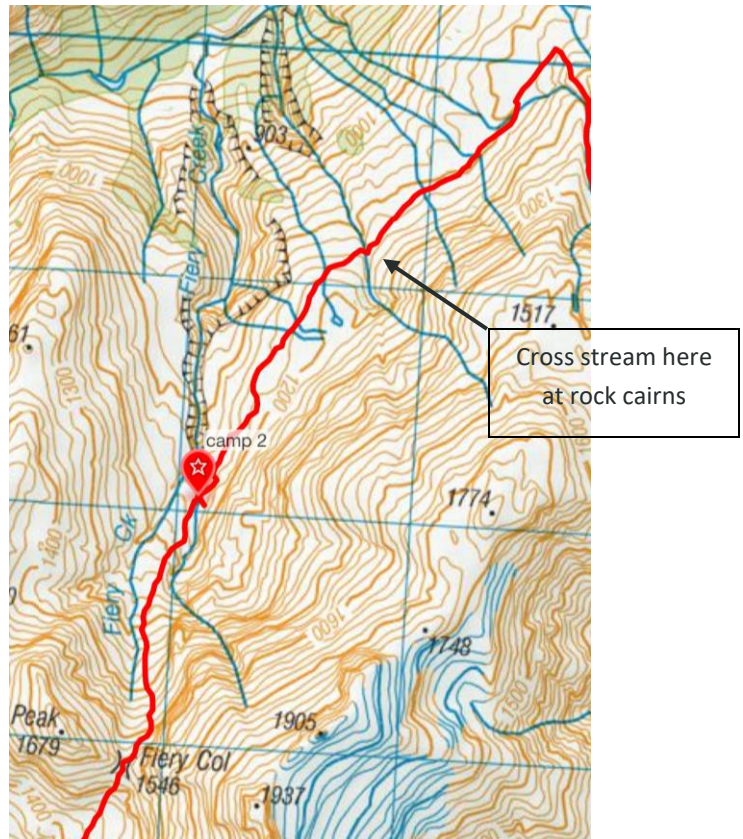
Cross the river to the true left outside of the Rock Biv and follow it around the bend and through the tussock. A very short bush bash may be necessary to get through the first section of denser bush before it opens out into easy to negotiate grass and rock. Head across the river at the stream immediately below Fohn Saddle and pick up the rock cairns heading straight up the stream bed. Stay on the far side of the stream initially before continuing straight up to just past 1300m. From this height, after passing above the bluff to your left, begin to sidle to the west and around towards the saddle. Rock cairns mark the way to the saddle itself but it becomes obvious at this point. Coming in the opposite direction would be more challenging and you should make sure you've sidled around to the stream before losing too much height. 3 hours.

### **FOHN SADDLE TO OLIVINE LEDGE**

From Fohn Saddle drop down towards the river running out of the Fohn Lakes. The way is marked by cairns and easy to pick out from above. Once at the river continue to follow the cairns or make your own way to the fork before crossing to the true right before descending further. The river begins to gorge and you want to be on the spur to the east where a faint track will take you down to the Olivine Ledge. There are a few small bluffs towards the bottom of the spur but these are easy to avoid by zigzagging down. 1 hour.

### OLIVINE LEDGE TO BOTTOM OF FIERY COL

The Olivine Ledge is open tussock country and again cairns are strategically placed to lead you across rivers where appropriate. There are plenty of places to camp along here or continue around towards Fiery Col. The river running through the gorge can be crossed at about 1150m by a track leading up and down both sides. Continue around at this height until you hit Fiery Creek and follow the east stream up towards the Col. We camped here next to the stream at one of the small waterfalls. 1.5 hours.





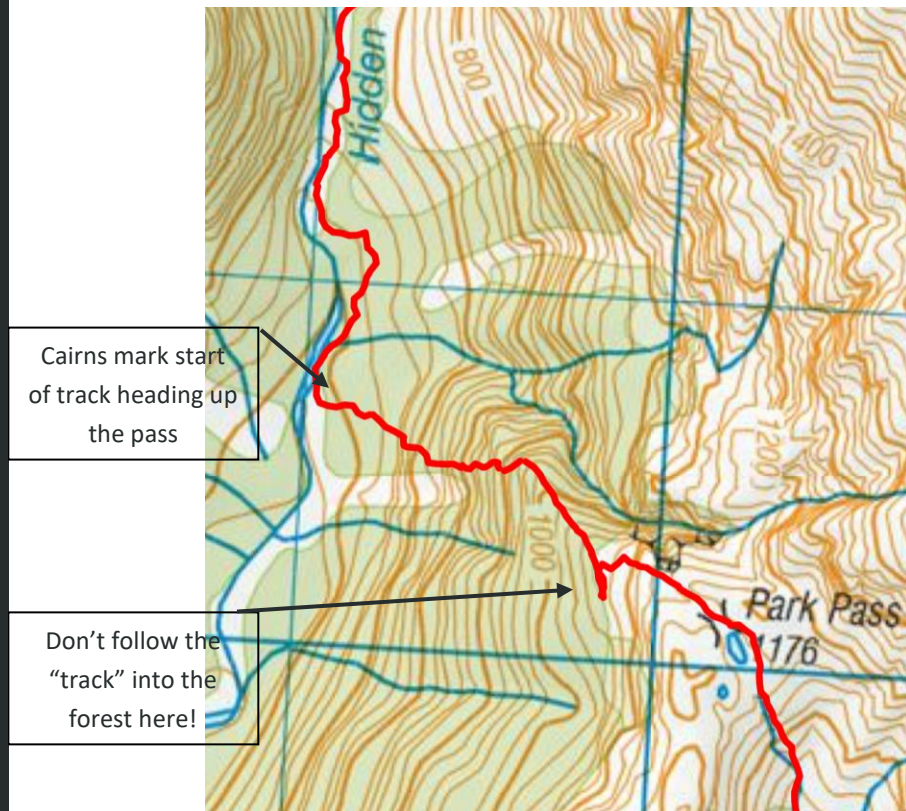
### BOTTOM OF FIERY COL TO COW SADDLE

Follow the stream on the true left up the grassy spur and towards the left side of the Col. Sidle across towards the middle when just below the top and pick your way over scree towards the saddle itself. When we dropped over the far side there were some patches of snow around but these were easy to avoid. Rock cairns form a route down from the Col and to the south of the gorge. Follow these in a relatively straight path down the spur and west out onto the flats between the fork in the river. Cow Saddle is an easy stroll through tussock up a short rise to 1025m. 2 – 2.5hrs

### COW SADDLE TO BOTTOM OF PARK PASS

A track drops down into Hidden Falls Creek on the true left of the River and hugs the bottom of the shingle scree below point 1687. Continue to follow the cairns downstream before crossing the river to pick up a faint track through the bush on the true right. This makes its way to an obvious clearing on the east side of the river opposite the stream coming down from point 1469 in the west. This spot would make a great campsite and has been well used as it unfortunately has a confusing number of tracks leading in different directions away from it.

Make your way back down towards the river and pick the route up again further along where it leads you through the bush towards the stream below Park Pass. If you're out on the river at this point then climb up into the bush on the south side of the stream to pick up the cairned route to the Pass. If you're following a path through the bush it will take you across the stream about 100m in from the river. The route then curves around to begin the climb 200m south of the stream up the obvious spur. 3hrs



**PARK PASS TO THEATRE FLAT**

The climb to Park Pass is steep and steady with a fairly straight route heading directly up the spur through a sea of ferns. There is nowhere to get water until you reach the top so fill up before you start. When you emerge from the trees at about 1050m continue heading straight up through the tussock rather than following what appears to be a track heading into the forest to your right. Even bush bashing this section takes very little time before you find yourself on easier ground up at the Pass. Expect 2hrs from the river up to the tarns.

You can easily camp on the tops or continue over the other side to pick up the track heading down into the Rockburn. The easy walking is short lived as the track comes and goes on the journey towards Theatre Flat. Navigation is straight forward as you just follow the river fairly closely on the true left as you hop from clearing to clearing making your way through the long grass and boulders. When you reach the bend in the river before the knoll at 908, look for Orange Blazes on the trees to your far left where a track takes you up and over to Theatre Flat. This is the last of the route finding on the trip. 5.5hrs

**THEATRE FLAT TO CAR PARK**

Camping options are ample at Theatre Flat although the sandflies are much more annoying than at some of the higher up locations throughout the trip. From here find the track on the very far side of the clearing which takes you over a swing bridge and onto the true right of the river. 2hrs of easy walking along the clearly marked track on the flats will bring you to the bottom of your last climb. The track up and over Sugarloaf is steep but relatively short. From the Rockburn river to the Routeburn Shelter on the other side should only take 3-3.5hrs with the last 15mins on the Routeburn Track. The Shelter has toilet facilities and water.

Either finish your trip here or if you started at Lake Sylvan car park, walk 4km back to the campsite or hitch a ride depending on how bad you smell at that point.

