



OTAGO TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



Five Pass Trip

Route Description (as at February 2018)

The Five Pass Trip

The Five Pass trip is a classic 4-7 day tramping trip located in the Mt Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks. The normal Five Pass trip includes crossing Fohn Saddle (1506m), Fiery Col (1546m), Cow Saddle (1025m), Park Pass (1176m) and Sugarloaf Pass (1154m). The trip starts at the Lake Sylvan campsite on the banks of the Routeburn River, and ends at the Routeburn Shelter (start / finish of the Routeburn Track).

It also possible to start at Chinaman's Bluff, but this requires crossing the Dart River (not recommended). Another option is to use a commercial jet boat service and get dropped off at the Dart / Beans Burn confluence.

The following description is based on the anti-clockwise direction, and was written following an OTMC trip around the circuit early 2018. Times given are our actual times (for a group of 10 total) between points, and includes all stops.

Lake Sylvan Campsite to Rock Burn

After crossing the Route Burn River via the swing bridge, a recently upgraded track leads to a new lookout at the southern end of Lake Sylvan. At the loop track junction take the left-hand track, which leads directly to Lake Sylvan.

From Lake Sylvan the wide benched track continues to just past the junction that leads back to the Lake Sylvan campsite. The Rockburn track traverses the eastern side of Lake Sylvan and follows a shallow gully until passing over a low saddle about 500m from the Rock Burn itself. There is a junction just before the new Rock Burn Shelter - you can choose to have a look at the chasm from the Rock Burn Bridge, or head further upstream. For the Five Passes, drop steeply down to river (if the Rock Burn is high, cross via the bridge - bush bashing may be required for a short distance to reach the Dart River flats).

Times: Lake Sylvan Campsite to Lake Sylvan Lookout: **30 mins**
Lake Sylvan Lookout to Rock Burn Shelter: **2hrs 15mins**

Rock Burn (shelter) to Beans Burn (Dart Confluence)

Cross the Rock Burn (use the chasm bridge if required) and head out to the large flat on the true right hand side of the Dart. When the Dart River cuts into the true right river bank opposite Chinamans Bluff, look for a good track on the terrace immediately above the river (just below the 400m contour shown on the Topo50 map). This track provides a good high level route right through to the Beans Burn, and is also used as part of the trapping programme in the area. Cross the Beans Burn to the true left hand side. There is a toilet here maintained by Dart River Jet.

Time: True Right Rock Burn to True Left Beans Burn: **2 hrs**

Dart / Beans Burn to Lower Beans Burn Flats

The marked track up the Beans Burn starts immediately behind the Dart River Jet toilet. The track is typically across tree roots and rocks, but is well marked with the odd windfall. The track remains on the true left for about 1.5km, before crossing an impressive gorge via two bridges. It then climbs to a small saddle on the true right and enters the large flat.

Times: Beans Burn Confluence to Bridge: **1 hr 15 mins**
Bridge to Lower Beans Burn Flats: **45 mins**



Pool beside the Dart River, near the Beans Burn

Lower Beans Burn Flats to Upper Beans Burn (Bivvy Rock)

Despite what is shown on some recent editions of Topo50 map CA09 (Alabaster Pass), there is a marked track from the lower Beans Burn Flats to near the treeline just below the top Beans Burn Flats. The track remains on the true right hand side of the Beans Burn all the way, and in January 2018 was generally easy to follow. There were some places where vegetation has overgrown along the track (especially at side-creeks) - take care to look out for markers here.

Once the treeline is reached (right beside the river), either continue to follow the right hand bank of the river if conditions allow, or look for the predator control track on top of the bank, but still close to the river. Both routes will lead you to the upper flats. It is easier to follow the river from here to avoid the waist deep tussock, crossing the river as required.

In January 2018 the Beans Burn has cut in quite close to the large bivvy rock, reducing the area available for camping. There are flat campsites on the true left of the Beans Burn,

slightly upstream of the bivvy rock (these campsites are fine weather only, they will flood during periods of rain).

Times: Lower Beans Burn Flats to Upper Beans Burn bivvy rock: **7 hours**



Camp site in the upper Beans Burn Flats

Upper Beans Burn Flats to Fohn Lakes

From the Beans Burn bivvy rock, the best route appears to be initially on the true left side. Cross the river to avoid large rocks at the upper end of the flats, and when on the true left hand side look for a faint track that traverses a scrub and boulder field 20-30m from the river itself. Once through this section, head back to the river and criss-cross as required to make use of the river bank.

The route to Fohn Saddle is approximately 2km upstream from the bivvy rock. The start of the climb was well cairned in 2018, and is slightly upstream of the saddle itself. The cairned route takes you up a rib before entering a series of basins - these basins provide easy travel to the saddle itself.

From Fohn Saddle, head down slightly towards the river draining the larger Fohn Lake, and then sidle around to the lake, maintaining your height as much as possible (this will take you just below a series of bluffs). At Fohn Lakes there are multiple campsites in the area, both near the larger lake, as well as on terraces between the two main lakes.

If you have time, it is worthwhile to follow the streams feeding the larger lake until you are overlooking the head of the Beans Burn. Both Sunset Peak and Fohn are normally easy

scrambles in summer with great views.

<i>Times:</i>	Upper Beans Burn Bivvy Rock to Fohn Saddle turnoff:	1hr 15m
	Fohn Saddle turnoff to Fohn Saddle:	2hr 15m
	Fohn Saddle to Fohn Lakes:	30min



Fohn Lakes

Fohn Lakes to Fiery Col

There are two good routes from Fohn Lakes heading towards the Olivine Ledge. One is from the bay to the east (true left) of the outlet of the larger lake (this outlet creek descends steeply and cannot be followed itself). From the lake, descend through easy terraces, aiming for the prominent 90 degree bend in the outlet creek. Cross here to the true right, and pick up a good track that leads all the way to the Olivine Ledge.

Alternatively, start from the terrace between the two larger lakes, and climb slightly before descending slopes to the south-west until coming across the track on the true right of the creek draining the larger Fohn Lake. If dropping straight down from Fohn Saddle, head for the same 90 degree bend in the creek draining the larger lake and cross to the true right side.

The Olivine Ledge is a broad terrace at the 1100m contour. Once the ledge is reached, you need to cross the creek draining the larger Fohn Lake near the north end. Once crossed maintain the same height as you sidle along the ledge (the rough ground trail in places can be hard to find). As you approach Fiery Creek climb slightly to be nearer the 1200m contour, and pick up a good track that sidles into Fiery Creek near the foot of Fiery Col (this was well cairned in 2018).

There are some passable campsites in Fiery Creek (beware of flooding in heavy rain). From Fiery Creek head for the tussock rib on the true right of the creek - there is a good foot track in this section. Once you reach the rock you can either scramble through to the Col (easy going), or follow the tussock higher on the true right and sidle across to the Col.

<i>Times:</i>	Fohn Lakes to Olivine Ledge:	1hr
	Olivine Ledge to Fiery Creek:	1hr 30m
	Fiery Creek to Fiery Col:	1hr 20m

Fiery Col to Hidden Falls Campsite

The south facing (Cow Saddle) side of Fiery Col can quite often have snow on it, so take this into account when planning this trip.

The route down from Fiery Col is steep for the first 100m or so. From here the terrain eases, providing two options to Cow Saddle. A slightly more direct route is to the west, keeping to the true right of the creek draining Fiery Col to avoid bluffs.

The standard route continues to the south (true left of the Fiery Col creek), and is normally cairned. This route meets the Olivine River floor at it's upper-most tributary. Both routes travel extensively over ultramafic rock, which provides good grip, but can be dangerous if you slip.

Once the Olivine River is reached, it is a gentle climb to Cow Saddle. Travel through the saddle and aim for the true right of Hidden Falls Creek. Remain on the true right of the creek. Once you pass a flat section you will come to a huge scree slope below Frenchman Peak (still on the true right) - descend the scree slope right down to it's lowest point, where you will be beside the creek itself. Cross here to the true left and look for a rough track through the bush. After about 600m, this track will enter a large flat which provides great campsites close to the river (GR CA09 191 518) - this is about 1km upstream from the stream draining Park Pass.

<i>Times:</i>	Fiery Col to Cow Saddle:	2hr
	Cow Saddle to Campsite at CA09 191 518:	2hr 15m



Hidden Falls Creek, below Cow Saddle

Hidden Falls Campsite to Upper Rock Burn Flats

From the campsite at CA09 191 518, continue downstream on the foot track through the bush (remain on the true left of Hidden Falls Creek). About 200m below the stream draining Park Pass this track turns to the east (towards Park Pass) and follows a steep ridge in the bush to Park Pass. Although not marked, the track is generally easy to follow. Once the bushline is reached, a well worn ground trail leads to Park Pass.

Descend from Park Pass on the well established track. There is a large rock bivvy rock immediately upstream of the creek draining the Park Pass Glacier terminal lake. This bivvy rock provides good shelter for all weather except that from the south.



Upper Rock Burn from the Rock Garden

Below the bivvy rock, the normal route is to cross the creek from the Park Pass glacier - this can be a tricky crossing in good conditions (and uncrossable in heavy rain), so care is required. It should be possible to bash through the scrub and find a crossing point lower down where the terrain flattens out a bit if required.

Remain on the true left of the Rock Burn as you pass through the top flat section - at the bottom of the flats look out for the start of a marked track (orange triangles) over a spur and through the bush. This descends to the upper grassy flats, about 2.5km upstream of Theatre Flat. Campsite described here is at GR: CA09 213 487.

<i>Times:</i>	Hidden Falls Campsite to Park Pass	2hr
	Park Pass to upper Rock Burn Flats:	2hr

Upper Rock Burn Flats to Routeburn Shelter

From the campsite at GR: CA09 213 487 head down the flats, remaining on the true left hand side. There is a marked track over the spur near pt 908m (Rock Garden), that leads right through to Theatre Flat. A visit to the Rock Garden is well worth it - from the highest point of the track it is a very short scramble to the garden itself.

From Theatre Flat there is a well marked track all the way to Sugarloaf Pass / Routeburn Shelter. At the lower end of Theatre Flat the track climbs above the river (on the true left) and leads to a bridge across the Rock Burn to the true right. From here the track remains on the true right all the way down the Rock Burn.

3.5km below the bridge the track starts climbing to avoid a gorge. Keep an eye out for the marked junction - one track leads to the Dart River, and the other continues to climb to Sugarloaf Pass. After a steep climb beside a small creek, Sugarloaf Pass is reached (good views through to Park Pass and Mt Earnslaw, as well as over the lower Dart and the head of Lake Wakatipu). After travelling through some boggy sections, the track descends through the bush to the Routeburn Track, about 600m upstream from the Routeburn river bridge.

<i>Times:</i>	Campsite to Theatre Flat (incl. Rock Garden stop):	1hr 30m
	Theatre Flat to Sugarloaf Pass:	3hr 30m
	Sugarloaf Pass to Routeburn Shelter:	2hr



Rock Burn Valley from Sugarloaf Pass