

Ballarat Hut, Mt Aurum Recreation Reserve and Ballarat Creek Conservation Area

WILD FILE

Access Follow Skippers Road to the car park at Skippers Creek Homestead and campsite. Take Bullendale Track

Grade Moderate

Distance 32km

Total ascent 3221m

Time Car park to Archie's Hut, 3hr; Archie's Hut to Ballarat Hut, 4hr; Ballarat Hut to car park, via Bullendale Hut, 8hr

Accommodation Archie's Hut, three bunks; Ballarat Hut, three bunks

Map CB11

Description

A solid day's walk to the goldfields, up from the old homestead at Skippers Creek, travelling through the gorge, pushing through giant stands of beautifully weedy lupins in shades of pink, purple and white.

Bypass a small dam – one of many remnants of the pioneering past of this place, which included as its feats not only gold mining, but also the first hydroelectric power plant in New Zealand.

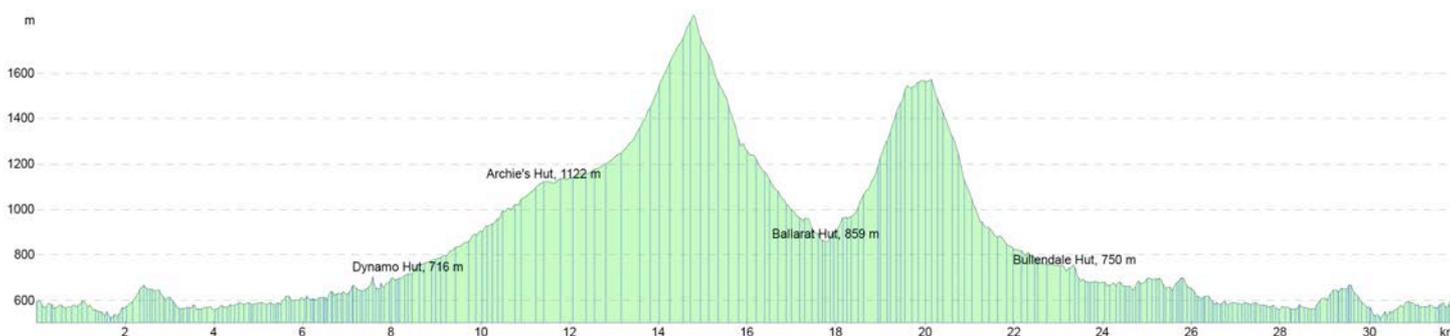
The blue pool at the confluence of Skippers Creek Left Branch offers a good place to take a dip. Bypassing Dynamo Hut, and the gloomy Dynamo Red Hut, wander on up-valley, side-stepping the odd clump of Spaniard, to emerge in the lovely tussock basin that is home to Archie's (or Copper Creek) Hut. This is a real character place, with beech pole framing and bunks.

Push on up to the head of the valley, sidling incised gullies and edging up chunky scree towards the saddle west of Pt1872. Reaching the ridgeline, drop down the other side on a series of steep spurs running into Ballarat Creek. Travel is a little less user-friendly here, with Spaniards, a few steep bits, and then little grovels around cascades in the stream.

Eventually, the contours level out as you climb onto the edge of a small terrace to appear directly beside Ballarat Hut. Legend has it that the hut was built by a local runholder using materials salvaged from the Bullendale settlement when that was abandoned after the goldrush.

Retrace your steps to a spur coming down from Prince of Wales, 1734m, and take this to below the summit, crossing into Skippers Creek Right Branch. Down in the valley once more, it's an easy plod out among more gold mining relics and races.

Elevation Profile



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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, Wilderness Magazine does not accept responsibility for any errors in the route. Users should use discretion when planning their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing. The GPX file associated with this route has been drawn using Memory-Map software, version 6. Users should use discretion when following the route, as it is an approximation only. Memory Map shows purple tracks and hut icons as verified routes and huts – meaning they are where they say they are and should be passable. If a purple track is shown on the maps in this document, it is the route from the Memory-Map software. If a red or blue route is shown, it has been drawn by Wilderness.

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