

Kirwans Hut, Victoria Forest Park

WILD FILE

Access From the end of Boatmans Road, 16 km north of Reefton

Grade Easy

Time 4-5hr to Kirwans Hut; 1.5hr return to Kirwans Hill

Distance 12.1km

Total ascent 1477m

Accommodation Kirwans Hut, 12 Bunks

Map BS21, BS22

Description

To go tramping on the West Coast is to explore history. Everywhere you turn there are monuments to miners who carved a living from the earth. In their search for gold and coal, numerous tracks were created by those intent on finding wealth and that elusive big payday. Kirwans Track, near Reefton, is one such trail rich in mining history.

The track starts at the end of Boatmans Road and the former site of Caplestone, a town of 1000 people and seven hotels in 1877. Head over farmland to an old benched road that marks the start of the track proper.

Soon, there's a swingbridge, with the track continuing gently along the true right of Boatmans Creek. It isn't long to the first historic relic: a short tunnel where water was diverted through a cliff for the combined Fiery Cross Gold Mine and Just In Time site. Today, the tunnel leads to a modern swingbridge; replaced in the last few years to better accommodate the mountain bikers who also use this track.

Following the river's true left, the track narrows but is clearly an old miner's trail. The grade is easy and climbs steadily. It crosses Topffer Creek before rising through pleasant mature bush.

More than 1000m of ascent is required to reach Kirwans Hut. The final 2km is spent traversing a broad face in open forest. There are a few patches of treefall but otherwise the going is good. The hut is situated in a small clearing below the bushline and has a panoramic view over the Inangahua and Grey valleys as well as the Main Divide as far south as Aoraki/Mt Cook.

At 1315m, Kirwans Hill is a modest climb from the hut, first through silver beech then along a tussock ridge.

Elevation Profile

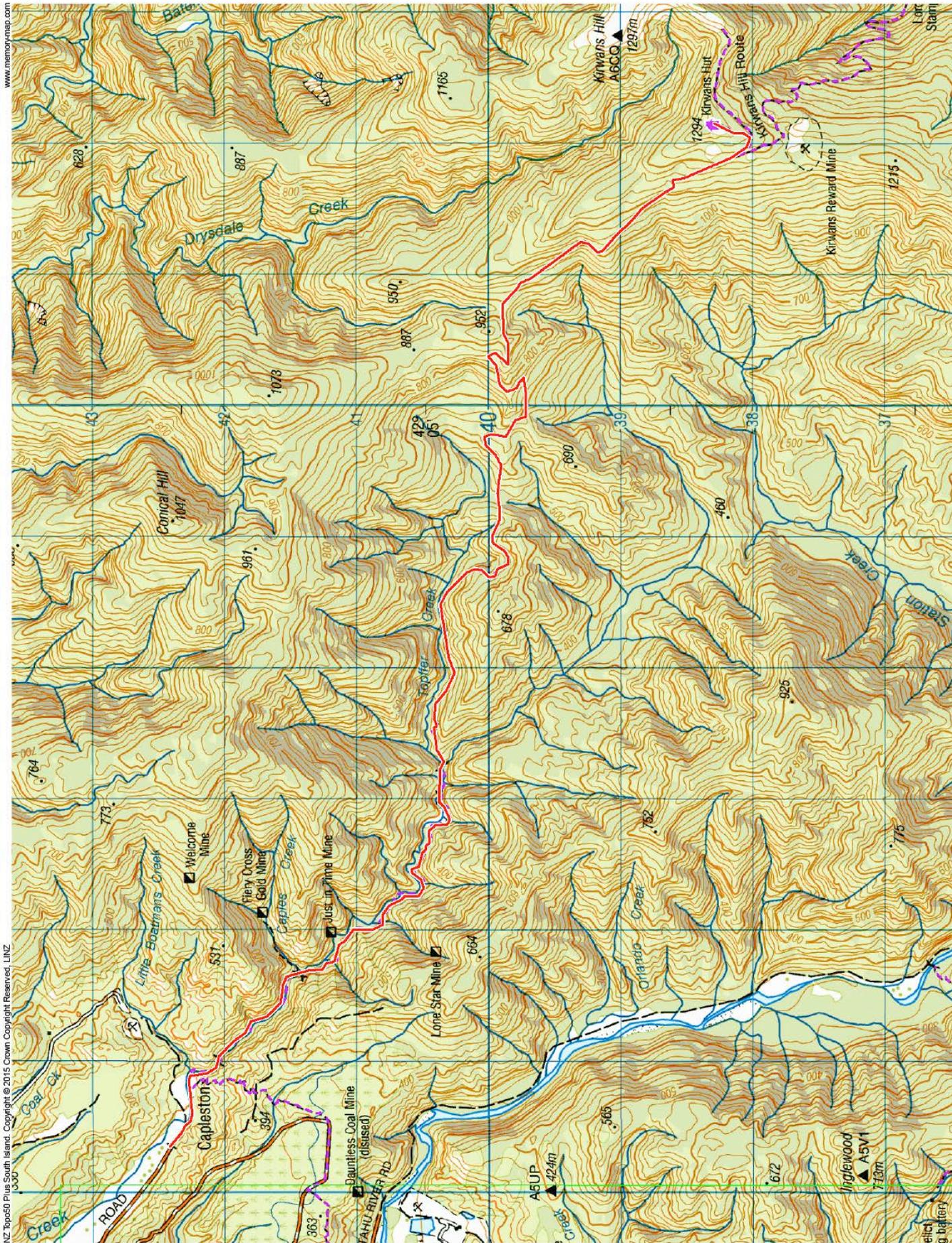


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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, Wilderness Magazine does not take responsibility for any errors in the route. Users should use discretion when planning their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing.

Maps are created with Memory-Map software, version 6. This software 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, 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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