

Great Southern Cycle Route METHVEN TO GERALDINE TOUR

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This map and the accompanying narrative describe one of eleven proposed all-day cycle tours (Tour 1 through 11). Together, they take you from Christchurch to Dunedin on a route I call The Great Southern Cycle Route. Included in each tour are, when found, accommodations (including camping grounds) along the way that allow you to pick and choose in planning a day's ride. To that end you can either subdivide a tour into two days or combine into one day all or a portion of two or more succeeding tours.

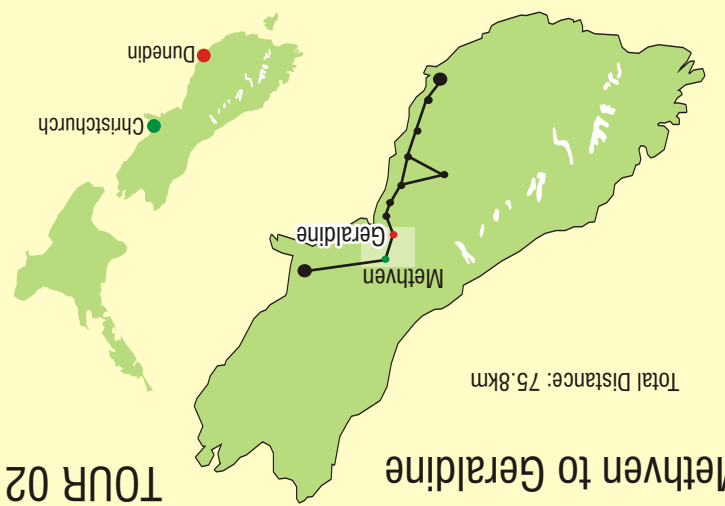
Some tours are significantly shorter than others because they are hillier and more demanding or because they are more conducive to tempting diversions on the way and/or further exploration at days end. For overseas cyclists, “Backpackers” is a lodging (sometimes with only bunk rooms) that features a communal kitchen, a “Domain” is a community park that normally provides toilets and often allows camping, and a “Holiday Park” provides sites for camper vans and tent camping and often motel units.

Most of The Great Southern Cycle Route is on quiet backcountry roads almost all of which (with 1km exception) are sealed (paved in USA lingo). The trip first traverses the fertile farmland of the level Canterbury Plains, then winds through rolling pastoral countryside with stop offs in picturesque cities and towns. Three memorable gorges and some classic coastal scenery add spice to the route. At all times the rugged Southern Alps that morph into other mountain ranges (foothills in Kiwi speak) as you proceed south, serve as a stunning backdrop.

Admittedly the route meanders a bit (at times even doubles back). But who cares so long as the scenery is soothing, the route is (mostly) untrammeled and the road is sealed! Savour the solitude and enjoy! Cycle in authentic New Zealand – off the beaten path.

If you are cycling with friends, consider leapfrogging with your vehicles so that at the end of the day you will have advanced those vehicles to where you are spending the night. I did that, and it worked quite well (though admittedly it helped that my wife was more than happy to drive most of the route, join us for lunch and cycle to meet us as the muse moved her).

State Highways are designated SH followed by a number. The heavily trafficked SH1 is used sparingly and only when unavoidable. The Area Code for all the telephone numbers herein given (e.g., 302 8955) is 03 if the call is made within



New Zealand. If calling from overseas, the Country Code is 64 and the Area Code is 3.

The total distance of the route is about 579km (always taking the Preferred Route when given a choice). This distance assumes that you have decided to take the Waimate to Kurow Tour and then the Kurow to Oamaru Tour instead of the alternative Waimate to Oamaru Tour. If you choose the latter, the distance is about 518km. All distances are good faith estimates based on odometer readings but are not guaranteed.

All accommodations, eateries and cycle shops (if any) mentioned herein were confirmed as of April 2010. No assurances can be given that they will remain open. Nor can the author warrant the safety of the route. The recommended roads have no special provisions for cyclists. You must therefore assume the responsibilities and risks for your own safety when cycling the route. There, the mostly retired lawyer-author has spoken. Now go and have a good time.

Methven to Geraldine Tour


Methven is an attractive and popular resort town for outdoor lovers (with the Mt Hutt snowfields nearby). It offers a broad array of accommodations. They include lodging with upmarket units such as The Lodge on Chertsey (302 2000/ www.thelodgenz.com), Southern Cross Lodge (302 8464/ www.southern-x.co.nz), Ski Time (302 8398/www.skitime.co.nz), and Beluga Lodge B&B (302 8290/ www.beluga.co.nz), numerous other B&Bs, homestays and nearby farmstays, several motels, including Methven Motels & Apartments (302 9200/ www.methvenapartments.co.nz), backpackers including Pinedale Lodge (302 8590/www.pinedalelodge.co.nz) and Methven Camping Ground (302 8005). Big Al's Snow Sports (302 8003) provides a cycle repair service. For more information, check out the Methven i-SITE Visitor Centre ([!\[\]\(4b7a79268f6ba26c1471d4232fffa85a_img.jpg\)](#) 302 8955/www.methveninfo.co.nz.)

Summary Description

Except for one dip in and out of a river bottom, this tour is flat as a pancake, aided by a barely discernable descent most of the way. The route's saving grace is its pastoral setting framed by the Southern Alps rising to the west and its sparkling river crossings. This is a big plus that makes for a relatively traffic free and soothing ride.

Total Distance: 75.8km.

Detailed Description


Kilometres	Description
K 0.0	At the intersection of Main St (SH77) and Forest Dr in Methven head west on Forest Dr that becomes Pudding Hill Rd after 1.3km.
K 4.0	At the intersection where several roads converge, stay on Pudding Hill Rd as it turns right (Northwest) in the direction signposted for Mt Somers.
K 9.6	At the intersection with the Inland Scenic Route (SH72) - Arundel Rakaia Gorge Rd , turn left (Southwest) onto the Inland Scenic Route.
K 10.4	Cross on the first of two narrow bridges that span in quick succession Pudding Hill Stream and the North Branch of the Ashburton River. Then experience the only climb (a gentle rise) for the day's tour.
K 14.7	Picnic grounds and public toilets  are on you right, followed by the comfy Alford Forest Coffee Shop.
K 20.0	On your right is the entrance to Birchlands Farmstay (303 0827/ birchlandsfarmstay@xtra.co.nz)
K 20.6	At the sole intersection in the wee settlement of Staveley you will find on the southwest corner the entry to the Staveley Café and General Store and the immaculately maintained Korobahn Lodge (303 0828/ www.korobahnlodge.co.nz) - dinner available by arrangement. A few kilometres west of town on Flynns Rd is the trailhead for the popular Sharplin Falls Track and other scenic destinations. On the way are other attractive accommodations where meals are provided upon request, namely Tussock & Beech Cottagestay, Ross Cottage (303 0880/ www.nature.net.nz) and Alpine Views Farmstay B&B (303 0800/ www.alpineviews.co.nz). For booking and more information about the Staveley area go to www.mtsomers.co.nz .
K 24.0	Shaded picnic grounds are on your right nestled next to Bowyers Stream.
K 27.8	On your right is the Mount Somers Old School House B&B(303 9714).
K 27.9	Turn off on your right onto the road signposted for Mt Somers. Within about a kilometre are, in the following order, a general store (on your left across a verge) and, upon reaching the intersection with Hoods Rd, to the south (back to the Inland Scenic Route): Mount Somers Holiday Park (303 9719/ www.mountsomers.co.nz) and Mt Somers Domain ( a camping ground : 303 9030/cell phone no - 021 1760677). The Mt Somers Tavern beckons across the street from the holiday park and camping ground . For booking and more information about the Mt. Somers area go to www.mtsomers.co.nz .
K 28.9	Just before a second turnoff for Mt Somers onto Hoods Rd is the driveway on your right to Stronechrubie High Country Cuisine & Chalets (303 9814/ www.stonechrubie.co.nz).
K 40.6	Picnic area, including  public toilet, on your right along the South Branch of the Hinds River.
K 41.8	After entering Mayfield, the Domain and  public toilets are on your left, followed by the Mayfield Tavern, also on your left and Udder Dairy & Cafe.
K 61.2	Cross the braided Rangitata River. On the opposite side on your right is access to a picnic area along the river.
K 61.5	Decision Point: Either stay on SH72 or, after crossing the river, turn right (West) onto Ferry Rd for an overnight (or two) diversion. Ferry Road eventually leads to Peel Forest Rd (after 2.1km – via Bridge St, North Boundary Rd and a right on Pratt Rd). Head north on Peel Forest Rd for another 6.9km to a turnoff on your left that leads by gravel road to the finely appointed log built Peel Forest Lodge (696 3703/ www.peelforestlodge.co.nz – meals available by arrangement) another 1.5 km away. The lodge is nestled at the fringe of a native forest hemmed in by the Southern Alps and the Rangitata River. About 3km further on is the Peel Forest camping ground (696 3567) – a popular tramping destination. If you succumb to this diversion, when you return stay on Peel Forest Rd, which eventually enters SH 72 further south at K 66.3.
K 69.6	SH79 (signposted for Ashburton) enters on your left and joins the Inland Scenic Route. Turn right (Southwest) onto SH72/79 as it threads across a narrow bridge across the Orari River.

Alternative Route

If you are up to a much longer trip, at K 73.2 turn right (Northeast) onto Woodbury Rd for a stunning tour of sweeping countryside framed by the mountainous Four Peaks Range. Rivendell B&B (See below) is on your right about 0.6 later. After 5.5km, enter the hamlet of Woodbury, note the Domain [!\[\]\(19d44b37fb4fa155bf9d60c77a3d3cb2_img.jpg\)](#) with public toilets on your right (camping permitted) and turn left (Southwest) onto McKeowin Rd. After 2.8km, turn right (Northwest) onto Wooding Rd and go 4.4km to a Y intersection where both roads turn to gravel. (The iconic and grandiose Four Peaks Lodge is about two kilometres away. Though now under new ownership and closed to the public, the lodge may be reopened in 2011 for paying guests in a separate building.) Double back to the T-intersection with McKeowin Rd. At the T-intersection, turn right (Southwest). After 2.4km to where

McKeowin Rd bends south and intersects with Pleasant Valley Rd, bear left (Southeast) onto Pleasant Valley Rd and proceed 5.7km to the T-intersection with SH79. Turn left (Northeast) onto SH79 and ride 2.6km into Geraldine to the T-intersection with Talbot St – the day's end, thus increasing your trip from 75.8 km to 102.1km.

Of course the Alternative Route could serve as either a bypass for cyclists who wish to carry on to Pleasant Point on the same day or as a circular side trip for those who decide to spend an extra day in Geraldine.

K 75.50	Cross the Waihi River and enter downtown Geraldine.
K 75.8	The tour terminates at the point where SH79 turns right (Southwest) (Cox St) while SH72 (Talbot St) continues Southeast. The Geraldine i-SITE Visitor Centre ( 693 1006) is on the southwest corner.

Geraldine is worth a wander through its downtown area, along the Waihi River bank and up into the nearby Talbert Forest. Quaint shops (stocked in part by the community's gifted artists and craftsmen) and ample accommodations abound. In or near the downtown area are several B&Bs, including The Downs (693 7388/www.thedowns.co.nz). Also available are Geraldine Heritage Hotel (693 8458/geraldine-crown@xtra.co.nz), and Rivendell B&B (693 8559/www.rivendellnz.co.nz) several motels, including Geraldine Motels (369 8501/www.geraldinemotels.co.nz: the motel located closest to the Town Centre) and Four Peaks Motels (0800 473 257/ www.fourpeaksmotel.co.nz), Rawhiti Backpackers (693 8252/host@rawhitihouse.co.nz) and three holiday parks, including Geraldine Holiday Park(693 8147/ www.geraldineholidaypark.co.nz).

The Village Inn provides attractive in and outdoor dining next to a small park square. Four Peaks Suzuki (693 9107) repairs cycles.

For more information contact the Geraldine [!\[\]\(206536f97fdb267876a3a10ea42b0254_img.jpg\)](#) i-SITE Visitor Information Centre at 693 1006 or geraldine@i-SITE.org or go to www.southisland.org.nz

About the Author and His Wife

Peter Seed and his wife, Linda, divide their time between White Bear Lake, Minnesota, Vero Beach, Florida, and Dunedin, New Zealand. Peter co-authored a cycle touring book for Minnesota/Wisconsin (Biking With The Wind) and a walking book about the South West Coast Path in England (A Coastal Affair). Linda tries to keep Peter reined in. Both love the outdoors and cycling. Peter can be reached at slinda5938@aol.com.

How To Get More Maps

You may download this or any of the other maps of the Great Southern Cycle Route free at www.southisland.org.nz/maps.asp or www.seftonhomestay.com by clicking Cycle Tourism. The maps are also available at most visitor centres and cycle shops along the route.