

- Be Aware - New Zealand drivers are not as used to cyclists as their European counterparts - cycle with care
- Wearing high viz clothing increases your visibility
- Share the road - be a courteous road user
- Make sure you are familiar with New Zealand road rules - read the road code

Start Here

Finish Here

State Highway

Information Centre

i-SITE Visitor Centre

Toilet

Preferred Route

Alternative Route or Side Trip

Previous or Following Tour

# Great Southern Cycle Route KUROW TO OAMARU TOUR

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## Series 07

By Peter Seed

# Great Southern Cycle Route KUROW TO OAMARU TOUR

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.

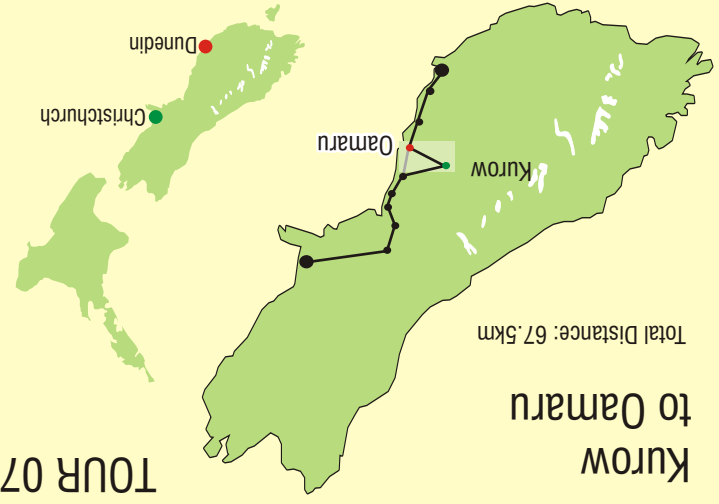
Some tours are significantly shorter than others because they are hillier and more demanding or because they are more conducive to tempting diversions on the way and/or further exploration at days end. For overseas cyclists, “Backpackers” is a lodging (sometimes with only bunk rooms) that features a 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 bicycling 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 bicycle 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.

## Kurow to Oamaru Tour

Kurow has a colourful funky feel to it. For a town of less than 500, it offers a nice variety of accommodations. They range from a comfortable B&B, just 2.5km southeast of town on SH83, the historic Western House (built in 1871 initially as an inn to serve gold diggers) (436 0876/ www.westernhouse.co.nz) and another B&B River Valley Cottage (436 0668 - 1km north of Kurow), Kurow Hotel (436 0850), Waitaki Hotel (436 0650), Kurow Motels (436 0655), Kurow Holiday Park (436 0725), to a full range of accommodations at one site, at K09.5 below, Glenmac Farmstay and Backpackers (436 0200/ www.farmstaynrezealand.co.nz: dinner available) – a hill country farm with Merino sheep and beef cattle. From SH83 you get there by turning right (Southwest) onto Gards Rd and following that road for 5km.

While in Kurow take the Kurow Heritage Trail that mostly features the town's limestone buildings erected in the 1880s. Or, for a bit more vigorous exercise, take the 250m Hill Walk at the end of Grey St. For more information about the town contact the Kurow Museum & Information Centre at 436 0950/museum@kurow.co.nz. See Waimate to Kurow Tour 06 for description of side trips.

## Summary Description

This tour starts off easily as it heads straight east 15km downstream on the south side of the flat Waitaki River Valley. In due course soothing panoramas are offered of the low slung foothills on both sides of the valley. After that things get even more interesting as the road begins to wind a bit and soon provides a Must See attraction – Maori Rock Drawings only 40 feet away from the shoulder.

At Duntroon the real fun begins. You initially take the road heading for Danseys Pass but soon peel off to ascend the first of two hills, one a gradual climb, the other – more daunting. Exposed limestone rock formations offer visual relief. And you are of course rewarded with exhilarating descents.

After the second plunge into Ngapara, a broad fertile valley leads you mostly downhill to the sea and Oamaru. On the way you are treated to rolling pastureland and expansive vistas.

**Total Distance:** 67.5km.

Kilometres	Description
K 00.0	From the intersection of Bledisloe (SH83) and Wynard Streets head southeast on <b>Bledisloe St (SH83)</b> , traversing now the opposite side of the Waitaki River Valley.
K 02.5	Western House on your right. (See description above about Kurow.)
K 04.4	Kurow Winery (open in season from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM) is on your left.
K 09.5	Turn off on your right onto Gards Rd to Glenmac Farmstay & Backpackers 5km ahead of which 3km is gravel. (See description above about Kurow.)
K 12.4	School Rd enters on your right. About 4km along a combination of this road and Doctor's Creek Rd is Mt. Otekaike Backpackers (027 433 7725). (About a mile of the road is gravel.)
K 15.0	Windhaven B&B and Backpackers Accommodation (431 2788/www.windhaven.co.nz) is on your left.
K 18.9	Access on your right to Maori rock drawings.
K 22.0	Enter Duntroon. 🚻 Public toilets, found by the village goal (jail) are on your left. Check out the Vanished World Centre on your right for insights about some evocative rock formations that lie ahead of you in an area transformed by so-called earthquakes. (In fact the transformation resulted from slumping, which in turn was caused by the erosion of softer sediments underlying the limestone). Meals are available at Flying Pig Café and Duntroon Tavern. Overnight camping is provided at the Duntroon Domain (431 2850): includes public toilets 🚻.
K 22.7	Turn right (Southwest) onto <b>Island Cliff Duntroon Rd</b> signposted to Danseys Pass in the heart of the Kakanui Mountain Range.
K 26.7	Turn left (Southeast), staying on Island Cliff Duntroon Rd. (Signposted to Ngapara)

**Option:** If you want to explore in greater detail this area of unique limestone formations, split this day's tour into two days, forget the turn and continue instead straight on the road heading to Danseys Pass (At this point the road becomes **Livingstone Duntroon Rd**, which in turn forks onto **Danseys Pass Rd** about 4.5km ahead). Accommodations can be found at either (1) Danseys Pass Holiday Park (431 2564), nestled in a gorge next to the scenic Maerewhenua River and located about 4.9km ahead on Danseys Pass Rd or (2) Ben Sheiling B&B (431 2574) located on Danseys Pass Rd about 2km beyond Danseys Pass Holiday Park. Whichever place you stay, return to the regular route at K 35.6 (shown below) by taking Dip Hill Road east to the town of Tokarahi, turning left (North) onto Tokarahi Rd and traveling 9.3km.

K 26.7	After turning left a long gradual ascent on Island Cliff Duntroon Rd ensues. As you ascend look to your right for the Elephant Rocks, huge boulders sculpted by erosion, accessed with a little walking from parking bays at K 28.2 and K 29.0.
K 29.8	The summit is reached and, after being topside for about 2km, an equally long descent follows. Ahead in the narrow valley below, a dramatic horizontal escarpment catches the eye.
K 32.2	The valley floor is reached. Level riding is short lived.
K 33.5	At the Y intersection turn left (East) onto <b>Tilverstowe Rd</b> signposted to Ngapara. Straight along the valley would take you onto Tokarahi Rd. Brace yourself for a steep daunting 2.2km climb out of the valley.
K 35.7	As you reach the top, a parking bay on you left provides a convenient stop for advancing vehicles or catching your breath.
K 36.0	At the intersection where Tilverstowe Rd turns northeast a hard left, bear right (South) onto <b>Tokarahi Ngapara Rd</b> for an interminable winding plunge into Ngapara, reaching the bottom at K 40.5.
K 42.1	At the intersection in Ngapara, bear right (Southeast) on the main road, now named <b>Weston Ngapara Rd</b> signposted for Oamaru. For the next 20km, this road (known as the Heritage Trail) leads mostly downhill (with two significant uphill noted) through scenic rolling farmland.
K 49.1	Windsor Rd enters on your right. Climb for 0.6km.
K 52.7	Pigs Island Rd enters on your right. For an overnight in a magnificent century old mansion, take this road about 3km (1.7km is gravel) to Burnside Homestead (432 4194/www.burnsidehomestead.com), a B&B with luxury antique suites.
K 53.1	On your right, take a break and tour the Eldersite Estate Historic Gardens, the remains of what was once a gracious and spacious homestead built in 1865, as more fully described in www.burnsidehomestead.com.
K 55.4	Need to refuel? Fort Enfield Tavern (open only after 4pm) is on your right.
K 56.1	Climb for another 0.6km.

K 60.0 At the point where Commacks Kia Ora Rd enters on your right, Weston Ngapara Rd becomes **Main St** - a seeming misnomer given the stark absence of any housing, though you soon enter Weston's outskirts.

**Option 1:** If you are in a hurry and want to avoid Oamaru altogether, a tempting option at this point is to circle west then south to the sea on a very scenic arc through rolling countryside with the Kakanui Mountains rising in the distance. For this purpose turn right (west) onto **Cormacks/Kia Ora Rd**. After 5km turn left (south) onto **Round Hill Road** and 6.3km later turn left (east) onto **Clarks Rd** (a gravel road about 0.8km after passing the sealed Woolshed Rd on your left). 0.3km later cross SH1 onto **Teschmakers Rd** and follow it towards the sea. After 4.6km turn right (south) onto **Fortification Rd** that T-intersects with **Beach Road** 1.9km later, just outside Kakanui (K 10.2 on the Oamaru to Waikouaiti Tour 10). This route cuts out the scenic Beach Road and is shorter by only 1.4km than the bypass to Beach Road described below. Bottom Line: Each bypass has its merits though I would choose this option based on overall scenic appeal.

K 60.9 At the Y intersection go straight (east, rather than bear right to the south), cross the intersection with Airedale Rd and continue east straight onto what is initially **Charles St** but a little less than 1km later becomes **Homestead Rd**. (A grocery store is located two blocks south on Airedale Rd into Weston's sparse commercial centre.)

K 62.8 At the intersection with Parsons Rd, turn right (Southeast) onto **Parsons Rd** and soon begin a winding descent.

K 65.1 At the intersection with Salesyards Rd, turn left (East) onto **Salesyard Rd (that soon becomes Chelmer St)** as you enter residential Oamaru, eventually passing the Oamaru Top 10 Holiday Park and then Oamaru Public Gardens 🚻 on your right.

**Option 2:** You could bypass downtown Oamaru altogether by continuing straight onto what becomes **Putticks Rd** and after crossing railway tracks bearing left up what becomes **Solway St**. After 0.9km, at the T-intersection with SH1, cross the street and take a pedestrian ramp up to **Perth St** that dead ends at SH1. Following that street east 1.5km all the way to Beach Rd (K 01.3 in the Oamaru To Waikouaiti Tour 10) where you turn right and head south to Kakanui.

K 66.8 At the T-intersection, turn right (South) onto **Cross Street**.

K 66.9 At the T-intersection turn right on **SH1 (Severn St)**.

K 67.1 Just after crossing railway tracks, turn left (East) onto **Itchen St**.

K 67.5 **At the intersection with Thames St**, your journey ends with the Oamaru i-SITE Visitor Centre located just before the railway tracks on your right at the northeast corner. Across the street and also around the corner from the centre are 🚻 public toilets.

Oamaru is another bustling port city renown for (1) its extraordinary array of 19th century Whitestone buildings clustered in the downtown area and in the adjacent historic precinct, (2) the antics of its penguins at the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony and (3) the childhood home of Janet Frame, a world famous author. Among other attractions are the Oamaru Public Gardens.

The city offers a feast of choices for accommodations – a luxury lodge, Pen-y-bryn Lodge (434 7939/www.penybryn.co.nz), a variety of B&Bs, including Federation House (434 9537/www.federationhouse.co.nz: dinner by prior arrangement), Anne Mieke Guest House (434 8051/ www.theoamarubnb.com) and 41 on Tyne B&B (434 5066/carolandads@xtra.co.nz), all of which are located closer to the city centre, Kingsgate Hotel (0800 782 548/ www.kingsgatehotels.co.nz), Criterion B&B Hotel (434 6247/ www.criterion.net.nz), numerous motels, several Backpackers, including Empire Hotel Backpackers (434 5546) in the centre of town, and a camp/holiday park at Oamaru Top 10 Holiday Park (434 7666) next to the Oamaru Public Gardens.

For atmosphere and good food, a meal at either The Last Post or Fat Sallys (a pub) will serve you well. For great window scenery the Portside Restaurant and Bar is the place to be. Martyn's Cycle (434 8416) and Victor Nelson Oamaru (434 9077), both on Thames St, provide any cycle repair service you may need.

For more information contact the Oamaru 📍 i-SITE Visitor Centre (434 1656/www.visitoamaru.co.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.