

BIRCH

Creek v4a4IV ★★★

Location

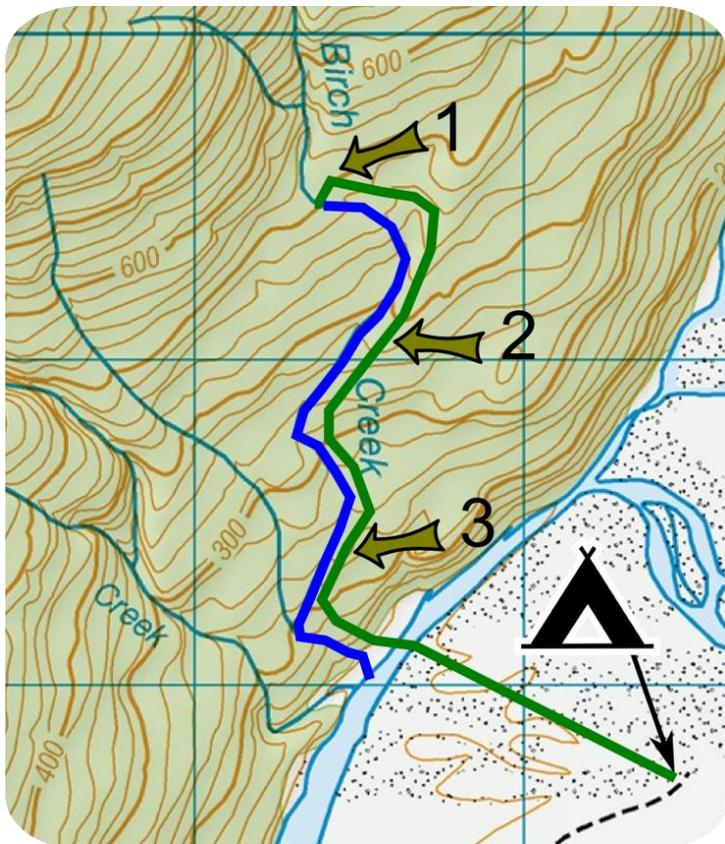
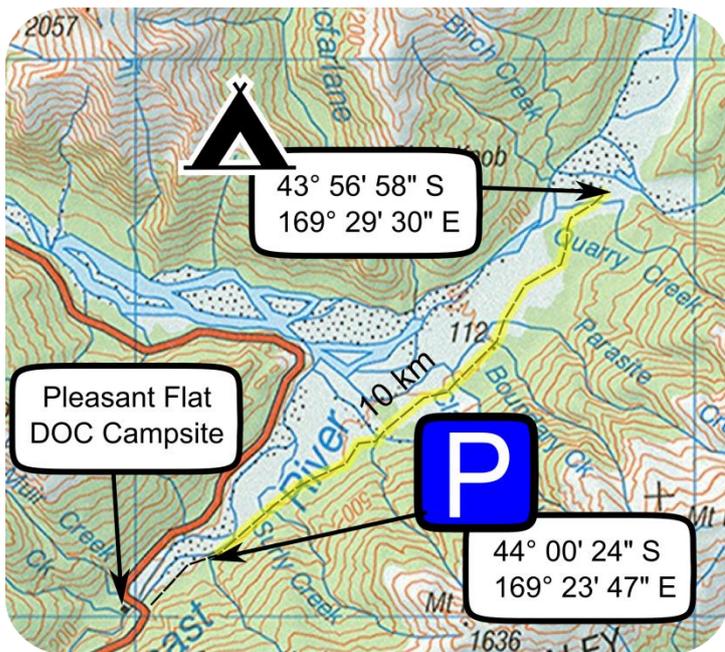
Lower Landsborough Valley

Character

Wilderness adventure canyon, medium gradient, with a little bit of everything.

Map

BY13 Lake Paringa



Approach by 2WD Car

From Haast Pass, travel north on SH6 for 14km towards the Pleasant Flat DOC Campsite. Immediately east of the Pleasant flat highway bridge, take the vehicle track. 2WD cars can safely go about 1km to Patsy Creek, where the 'P' symbol is drawn.

Approach by 4WD Car or Mountain Bike

From the 2WD park, follow the rough vehicle track up the valley for about 10km. The track is muddy in places. As the track crosses side streams, the route can be easily lost amongst the gravel. There is definitely a track all the way to the suggested campsite. The campsite is reasonably flat, but would be threatened if the Landsborough began to flood.

Approach on Foot

From the campsite, cross river flats directly towards the canyon. Cross the Landsborough River, which is only possible with very low water levels. About 100m north of the canyon, steeply climb a bushy face. Keeping very close to the canyon rim, continue up the TL through open Beech forest. Cross a gully at about the 450m contour. Enter the stream about the 500m contour. It is possible to enter lower down if a shorter day is desired. The locations of the numbered access points are approximate.

Rock

Solid Schist.

Water

Moderate volume, several deep pools

Catchment

5.2 km²

Anchors

Some natural anchors that are tricky to access. Some single bolts.

Gear

Minimum of a pair of 30m ropes. Anchor kit.

Route Description

The first descent party entered at approximately the 560m contour. Above this point there was a series of waterfalls, in a more open stream way, probably all the way up to the 800m contour.

The best entrance is at the 500m contour. The canyon is generally not very deep, but there are some deeper sections with very nice pools. Between canyon sections, there is some stream walking with short gorges, scrambles and small jumps.

The first descent party escaped on the TL, approximately 100m above the Landsborough River. Expect a series of further rappels, down climbs, with some quite narrow sections near the end.

Topo by Daniel Clearwater
www.KiwiCanyons.org

Time

2WD park campsite (by Mountain Bike)	1hr
Campsite to Landsborough	30min
Landsborough to Canyon entrance	2hr30min
Canyon descent	5-6hr
Return to campsite	30min
Campsite to SH6 (by Mountain Bike)	1hr
Total	11-12hr

Flash Flood Danger

Moderate. Reasonable drainage, though the inescapable sections aren't very long.

Escapes

Shown on the topo. There are perhaps other places where a strong climber could exit.

Notes

First descent:

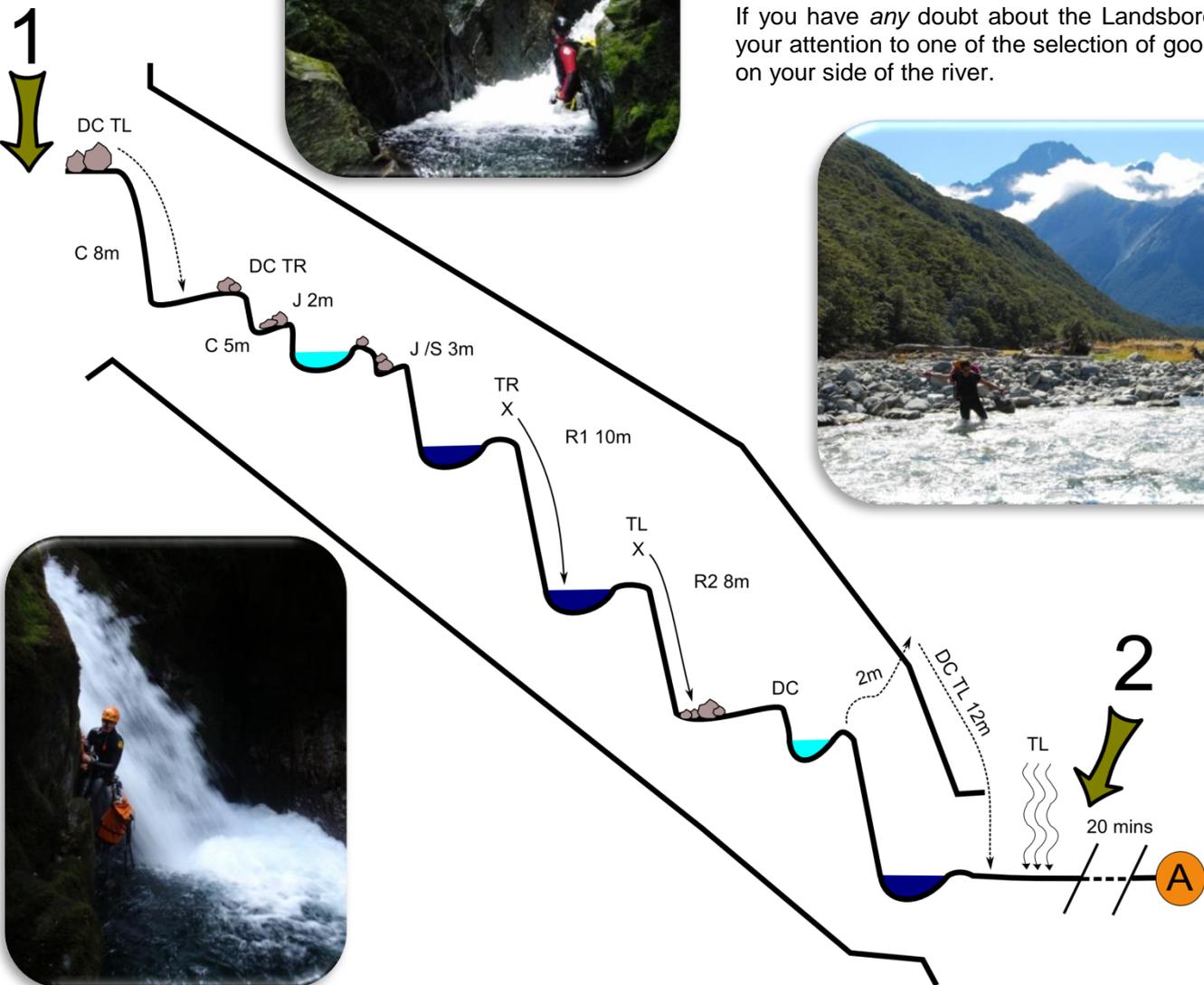
9 January 2012, Alain Rohr, Annette Phillips, Pip Furness, Daniel Clearwater, Toine Houtenbos, Jethro Robinson.

This canyon is best enjoyed as a multi-day trip. From your base camp a number of canyons in this valley can be done.

Crossing the Landsborough River

Access is heavily dependent on the level of the Landsborough River, which is a major west coast river. It has 530 km² of catchment above the crossing point. Considerable experience, excellent judgment, route selection, strength and technique are required for a safe crossing. **Do not** underestimate the difficulty in crossing this river. It is fed by several glaciers far up the valley, so expect that river flows will increase from mid morning to dusk due to glacier melt.

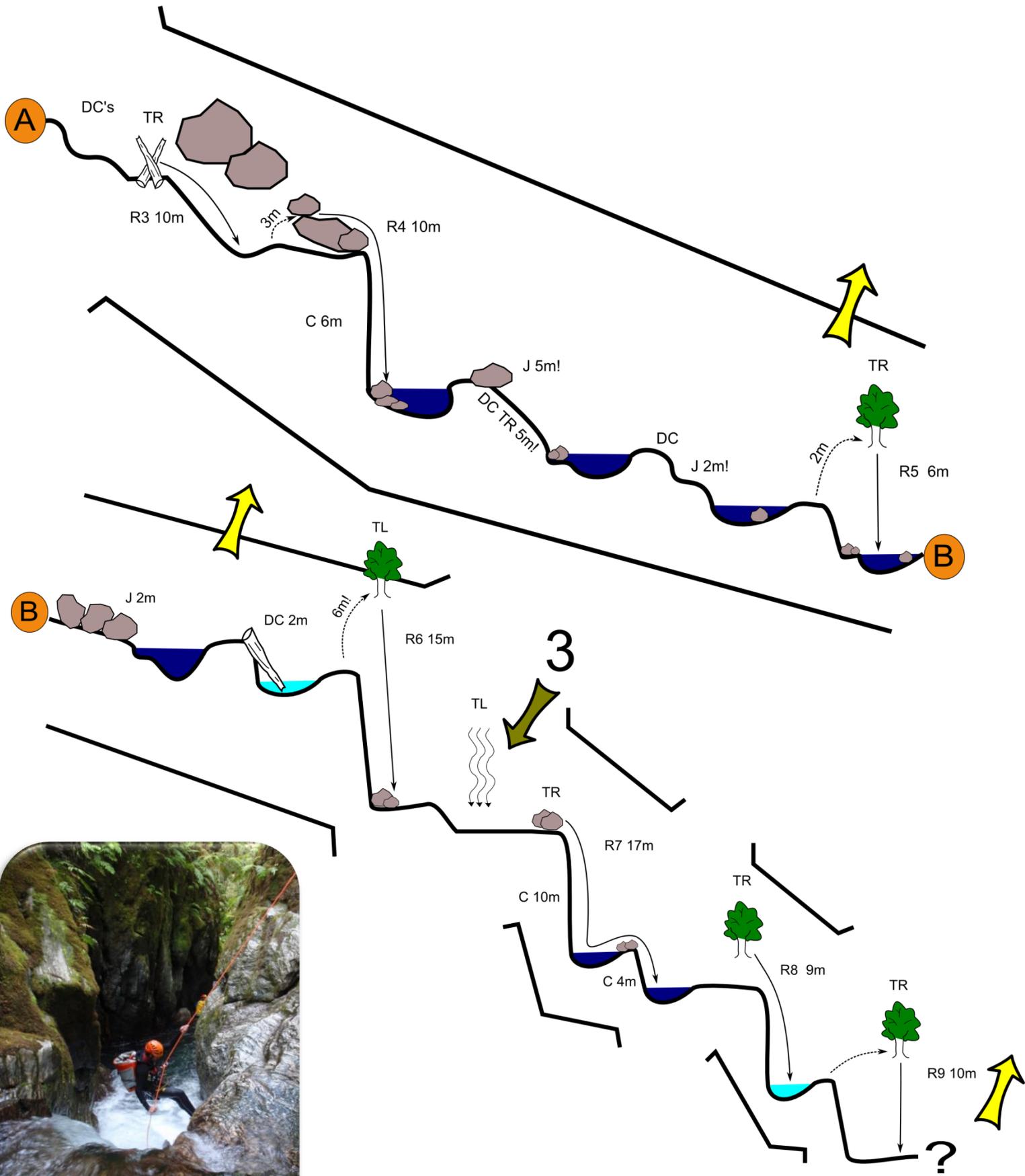
If you have *any* doubt about the Landsborough, turn your attention to one of the selection of good canyons on your side of the river.



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