

## Mount Bealey

As part of our South Island trip I wanted to stay at Arthurs Pass and hoped to do a little walking or climbing. I had in mind Mt Temple but only because it was on the Eastern side of the valley where I had never been before. The day set aside for the ascent started in an unprepossessing way because when I got up around 6 am it was snowing heavily, a bit soon in the Autumn for heavy snow falls but it has been a funny year! I was going to leave early but became undecided and in the end thought I would change my objective to Mt Bealey (6,024') which I had never climbed and looked easier than Mt Temple with a long approach through forest up to around 4,500'. I thought I would go up to the bush-line anyway and see what conditions were like. The start was at 2,440' so the climb was a bit more than Snowdon from sea-level but 1,000' less than Egmont.

It was still snowing when I started but only lightly and it was very pleasant walking up through the snow-laden trees. By the time I reached the bush line it had stopped and the clouds had lifted so I carried on. From the map I was expecting rounded, scree-covered slopes but there was quite a sharp, rocky ridgeline, all snow-covered of course. Parts were quite steep but mostly it was pleasant scrambling and walking, a bit like Crib Goch in Winter, but without the crowds. I had the whole place to myself and saw only one other person near the beginning of the track on the way down.

I tried to pace myself a bit better than I usually do (not go too fast) in the hope of avoiding getting stiff, but I got to the top in 3 hours and took 2 hours to come down which is a reasonably fast time for anyone let alone a pensioner! And of course, I was stiff as board next day.





Mt Bealey from the North showing my route and a map with the GPS track

