

Avoca Homestead

(The following is an extract from 4WD South: 115 Off Road Adventures in New Zealand's South Island, by Mark Wilson)

Vehicles: 1

Terrain: gravel then rough track, river crossing.

Access: legal public access

Distance: 45.8km return

Camping: yes

Maps: K34, L34

To get there: Drive on SH73 to Cass. Craigieburn Road is 0.3km towards Springfield from Cass Road.

This scenic drive through Canterbury high country ends at a DOC hut, giving options for a Sunday drive or an overnight camping trip.

For much of the route you are following the Midland Railway, and great care is needed at the many line crossings – remember, coal trains run at all hours.

The end of the route gives access to the old Avoca Homestead, which the Department of Conservation has restored. The homestead – now a six-bed DOC hut – was built in 1909 to serve Avoca Station, one of the most inaccessible in the Waimakariri Basin.

DOC advises not to use the nearby derelict stockbridge – it can't be trusted.

Craigieburn Road passes through private land; you must therefore not wander from the track.

NORTH TO SOUTH

0.0km: Intersection of SH73 and Craigieburn Road. Turn into Craigieburn Road.

0.5km: Hill on left is Remus.

1.4km: Wooden bridge over stream from Lake Grasmere.

1.5km: Cross Midland Railway. Take care.

1.6km: Cattle stop and gate, leave as found.

2.0km: Lake Sarah on left.

3.3km: Waimakariri River out to left. The next three hills on the left are Og, Gog and Magog.

4.8km: Cattle stop.

6.5km: Cattle stop.

9.5km: Cattle stop.

- 10.1km: Cattle stop. Cross Midland Railway; take care. Cattle stop with gate, leave as found.
- 10.3km: Cross Slovens Stream. 4WD track to Lake Hawdon on right. Foot access only.
- 11.3km: Craigieburn railway station on left.
- 11.6km: Craigieburn station homestead on left.
- 11.7km: Continue straight ahead.
- 11.8km: Gate, leave as found.
- 13.0km: 4WD track on right to Lake Marymere. Foot access only.
- 13.2km: Gate, leave as found.
- 13.7km: Cross Slovens Stream.
- 13.8km: Gate, leave as found.
- 13.9km: Cross Midland Railway. Take care.
- 14.0km: Gate, leave as found.
- 14.8km: Gate, leave shut.
- 15.5km: Ford.
- 16.6km: Gate, leave as found. Cross Midland Railway. Take care.
- 17.0km: Cross Slovens Stream.
- 17.5km: Gate, leave shut.
- 17.6km: Ford.
- 18.1km: Continue straight ahead. On right is a private track to Flock Hill homestead. Do not use unless you have permission from station management.
- 19.0km: Gate, leave as found.
- 19.1km: Avoca railway station on left and remains of old Avoca township.
- 19.3km: Continue straight ahead. Track on right leads to Winding Creek (permission required from Flock Hill Station).
- 19.4km: Hut on right.
- 19.7km: Gate, leave as found. Cross Midland Railway. Take care.
- 19.8km: Continue straight ahead. Track on left leads to Blackwater Lake (permission required from Flock Hill Station).
- 20.8km: Bear right. Track on left leads to Waimakariri River (permission required from Flock Hill Station).
- 21.3km: Gate, leave as found. Track crosses the railway line here and at 21.4km, then follows the railway line to 21.9km. Stop and look before crossing the railway line.
- 21.9km: Gate with orange triangle marker; leave gate as found.
- 22.6km: Ford, Slovens Stream, and pass under railway viaduct.
- 22.7km: Ford, Slovens Stream.

22.9km: Broken River, ford with care. The Avoca Homestead is upstream beyond the bridge.

Return to SH73.