



Methven WALKWAY



Along its whole length, the Methven Walkway demonstrates man's modification of the original Canterbury Plains landscape. The Canterbury Plains are a classic example of a piedmont alluvial plain built by rivers transporting silt and glacial outwash gravel from the mountains, the resulting fans eventually joining to form a plain. The inland mountains and foothills are of Triassic greywacke and argillite.

The Walkway's basic feature is the man-made Rangitata Diversion Canal, a dual purpose irrigation and hydro-electric channel carrying water from the Rangitata River to the Highbank Power Station on the south bank of the Rakaia River. Although shelter belts, drains, roads and bridges impinge on the immediate surroundings, the Walkway is given a certain grandeur by the natural panoramic backdrop of the Southern Alps.

The walkway opened in 1979, is 11 kilometres long, and is intersected by various country roads so that it is possible to arrange transport to avoid retracing one's steps. The walk from beginning to end takes 3 to 3 1/2 hours. Beginning at the Methven i-SITE Visitor Centre, proceed down Chertsey Road to the Methven Cemetery, through the iron walk gate and cemetery to the A & P Association showgrounds, and walk through the ground's central trees and then diagonally across the open paddock to Barkers Road, which in turn takes you along track on the grass verge to Holmes Road where the walkway enters a drain reserve planted with evergreen exotic trees including the Wellingtonia, *Sequoiadendron gigan*. The trees form stands dense enough to encourage birds to nest there, and there is some undergrowth.

Across Mt Hutt Station Road the path passes the Methven Racecourse, a popular trotting centre. Having crossed the drain twice on footbridges the walkway leaves the trees as it reaches the Rangitata Diversion canal, the bank of which is followed all the way to the end of the walkway beside the North Branch of the Ashburton River. Being on the plain the walkway is on virtually level ground and out in the open apart from the stretch within the drain reserve, although groups of trees have been planted along the canal, and clumps of toitoi, *Cortaderia richardii*, soften the lines of the banks.

The canal attracts many kinds of ducks. Canada Geese and Paradise Duck may be seen near the Ashburton River. Along the way there are unimpeded views of the Southern Alps including, as well as the Hutt Range, Mt Taylor Range and the Pudding Hill Range in the foreground, Mt Winterslow (Pothook), Mt Somers (Te Kiekeie) and Mt Hutt (Opuke). Midway to the Ashburton River Road bridge the walkway crosses the opposite bank west side of the canal before entering the picnic area at the river where the walkway ends.

Methven was a convenient halt for coaches travelling between Alford Forest and Rakaia, Methven was moved in 1878 to its present site to take advantage of the branch railway line ending there. The town was named by Robert Patton after his home town in Perthshire, Scotland. A farming centre, Methven has benefited from the development of Mount Hutt Ski Area, providing amenities for farmers and skiers as well as fishermen and hunters. Many varied and beautiful reserves of mountain landscape, lakes and native bush lie within reasonable distances of Methven.

Methven Walkway is a popular option for mountain bikers, with a 11km loop (refer to start/finish on map). There is an additional 11km to the Ashburton River North branch from the i-SITE and return. Mt Hutt Forest is close by, offering many options for biking in this area.

The Rangitata Diversion Canal provides irrigation water in summer, power in winter. Designed in conjunction with the Ashburton County Irrigation Scheme, the foundations of the 25,000kW Highbank Power Station were laid in 1939, but World War II delayed the completion of the station until 1945.

The 66 kilometre canal carries water from the Rangitata to the Rakaia River, inverted siphons taking it beneath the intervening rivers, with gates along the way controlling irrigation water out. A trap near the beginning of the race collects sand which would otherwise build up downstream and reduce Highbank's output. A screen in the tailrace leading into the Rakaia prevents fish entering the machinery.

New Zealand Walkways system is a concept designed to provide a network of accessible tracks from Cape Reinga to Bluff and catering for all ages and abilities, especially family groups.

Walkers are asked to observe the gazetted by-laws for New Zealand Walkways. Particularly relevant to the Methven Walkway are:

- All wildlife, plants and natural features are protected.
- Rubbish or litter must be removed from the walkway by the person concerned.
- No unauthorised vehicles are allowed on the walkway.
- Horses are permitted along the canal section of the walkway only. All other animals are prohibited, as is the carrying of firearms.
- Mountain Bikes are permitted. It may be necessary to lift them over some fences.
- Dogs must be on a leash

Much of the walkway is over land used for irrigation and is mainly adjacent to private farmland. Please respect these properties and do not interfere with, or damage, livestock, crops, fences, or the irrigation installations.

Classification: Walk

Time: 3 hours

Distance: 11 kilometres

Location: On the outskirts of Methven, 94km west of Christchurch between the Ashburton and Rakaia Rivers.

Start/Finish: Methven i-SITE Visitor Centre

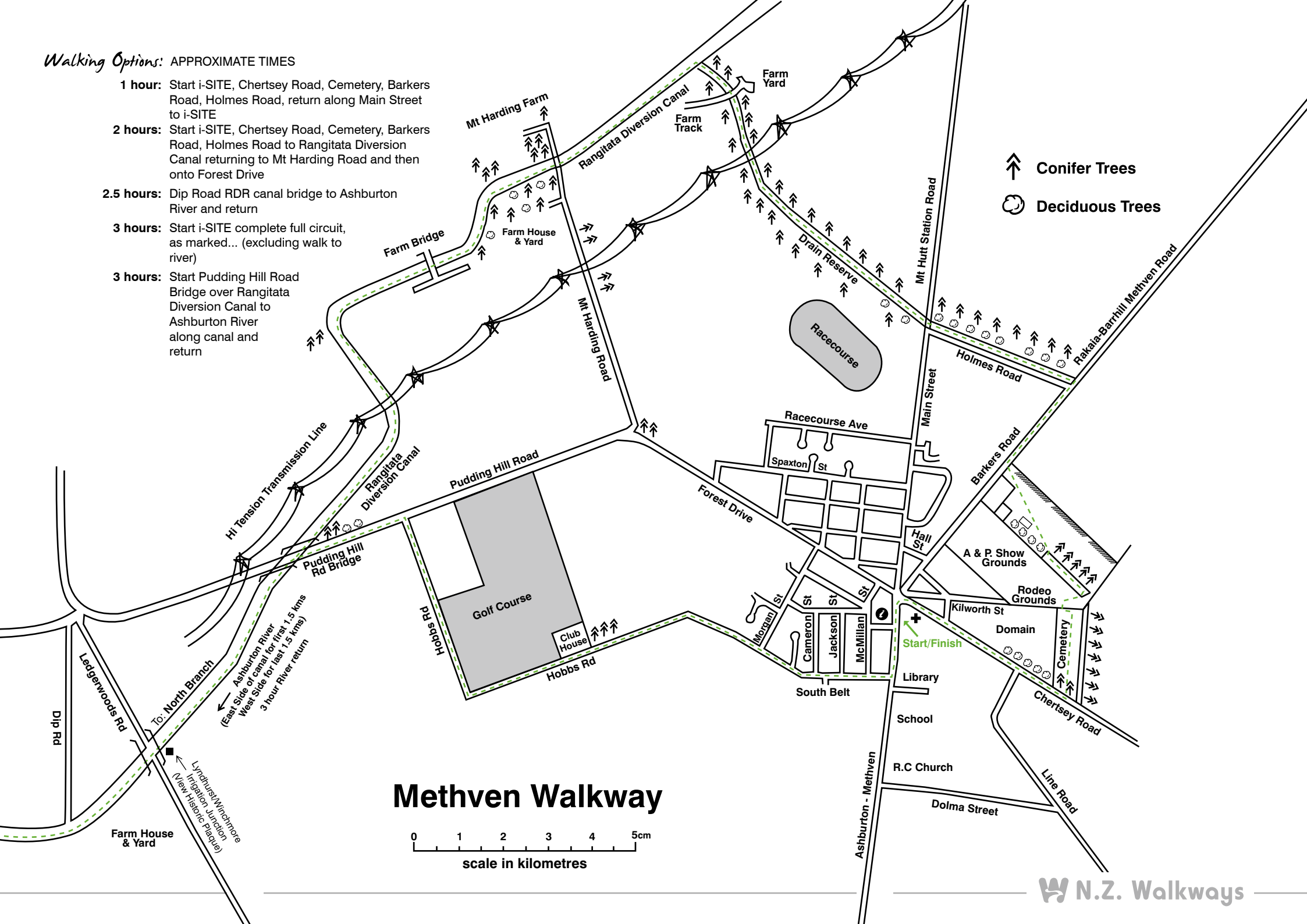
Facilities: Parking at beginning and end of Walkway and at points between, where roads cross the canal. No facilities on the Walkway.



Joint Project - Methven Lions Club and Methven & Mt Hutt District Promotion Association

Walking Options: APPROXIMATE TIMES

- 1 hour:** Start i-SITE, Chertsey Road, Cemetery, Barkers Road, Holmes Road, return along Main Street to i-SITE
- 2 hours:** Start i-SITE, Chertsey Road, Cemetery, Barkers Road, Holmes Road to Rangitata Diversion Canal returning to Mt Harding Road and then onto Forest Drive
- 2.5 hours:** Dip Road RDR canal bridge to Ashburton River and return
- 3 hours:** Start i-SITE complete full circuit, as marked... (excluding walk to river)
- 3 hours:** Start Pudding Hill Road Bridge over Rangitata Diversion Canal to Ashburton River along canal and return



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