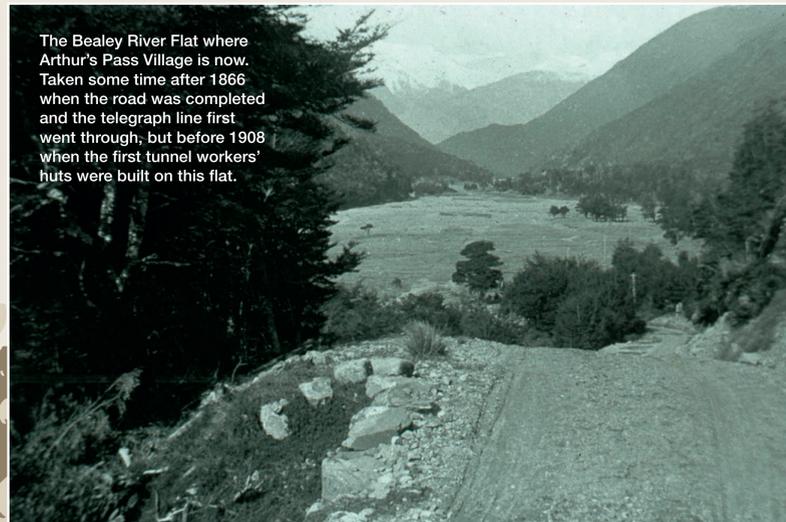


In 1864 Arthur Dudley Dobson and his brother Edward, set out to find the alpine pass occasionally used by Māori hunting or trading pounamu as described to Arthur by a West Coast Māori Chief, Tarapuhi.

The Arthur's Pass Walking Track follows the line of Dobson's climb to the Pass, but today the walk can be done in one to two hours. If you look into the river and forest you may be able to imagine the difficulty Dobson, and Māori warriors before him, had in ascending the Pass.

Arthur Dudley Dobson's journey starts here ...

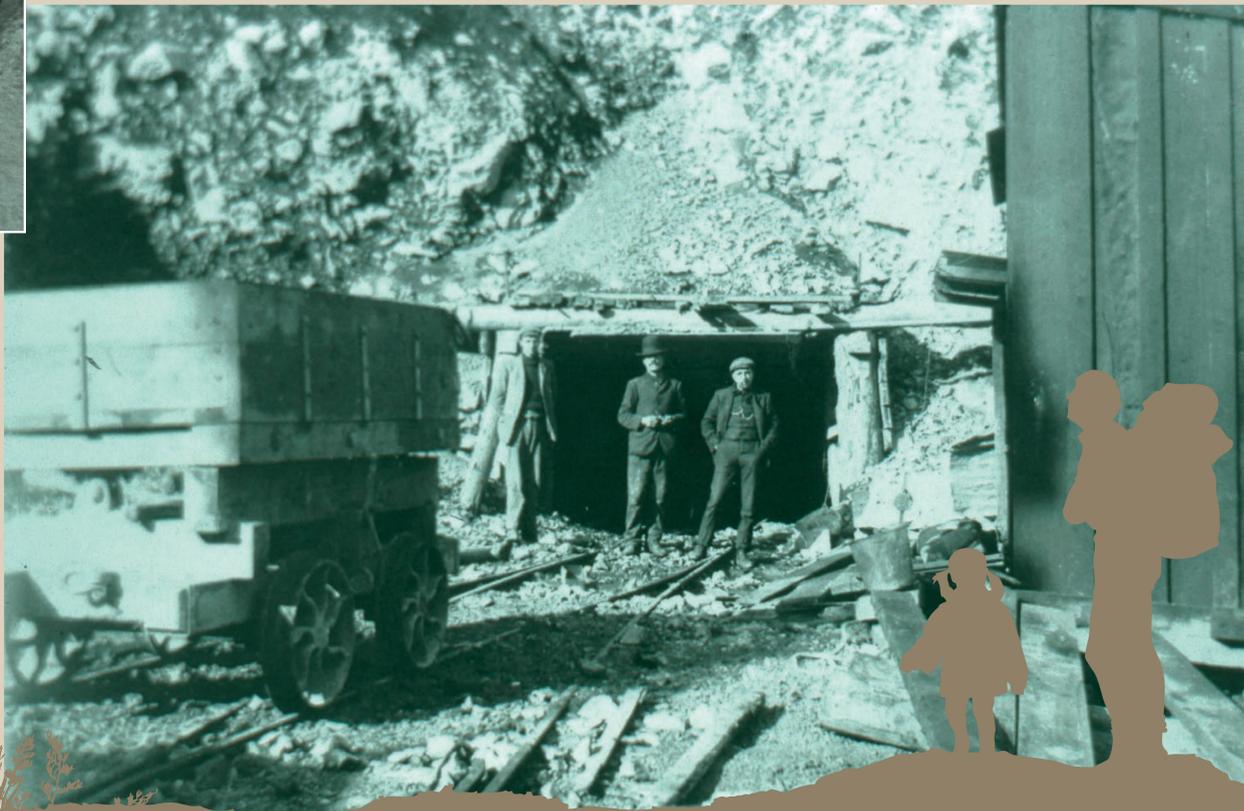


The Bealey River Flat where Arthur's Pass Village is now. Taken some time after 1866 when the road was completed and the telegraph line first went through, but before 1908 when the first tunnel workers' huts were built on this flat.

In places along the track you'll also be standing right above the Otira railway tunnel—built between 1908 and 1918. The 8.5 km tunnel lies approximately 70 m below close to where you are standing now, and will be directly below you at the top the pass.

The tunnel has a gradient down to Otira of 1 in 33 (just less than 2 degrees). It was drilled from both sides and when the two headings met in 1918, the alignment and levels were accurate to within 3 cm.

Building the Arthur's Pass to Otira railway tunnel—1908



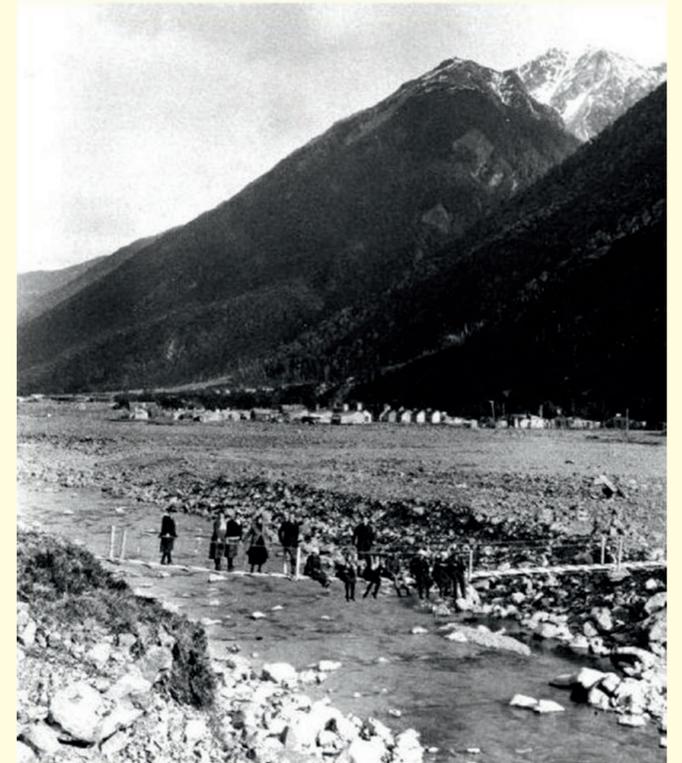
"We camped in this valley at a point beyond which we could not take horses. Next morning we went up a stream as far as it was possible, and then through the bush at the side, cutting our way with billy-hooks.

"It was hard work, and though we had light swags, it took the greater part of the day to get out of the bush into the scrub, where we found we had arrived at a swampy valley about a mile in length, which evidently had once been the bed of a glacier.

"We pitched tents in the scrub, and had a good meal, then went on to the end of the flat, where we found the moraine, which had blocked the north end of this valley. The barometer registered about 3,000 feet above sea level."

"Reminiscences of A. Dudley Dobson"
(Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1930)

Bealey Swingbridge



WAKennedy photograph, Sharpe Collection, Canterbury Museum

Walking to the Devils Punchbowl waterfall (131 metres) has always been popular with visitors to Arthur's Pass. Here a group pause on an earlier bridge in the 1920s. Behind the bridge you can see the new Arthur's Pass village on Bealey River Flat.

Plaque
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