

3-4 Kilsyth area to Falkirk

36

37

40

41

Distance 12-8 miles (20-5 km)

Terrain walkers have stretches of rougher paths (at start and finish) but most of this section consists of smooth canal towpath

Grade almost level, except for modest gradients for walkers near start and finish

Food and drink Auchinstarry, Bonnybridge, Falkirk Wheel, Falkirk (wide range)

Summary another section dominated by canal towpath, leading to a world-class sculpture that overcomes canal height difference by revolutionary means



- From Auchinstarry, continue along the towpath for about 2 km to Craigmarloch Bridge, where walkers rejoin after Croy Hill. Information boards explain the rare species that the canal and its marshland support. Continue the route as described on page 40.



- At the path junction after the kissing-gate, turn right to follow the new path as it doglegs around a disused quarry and joins the 'Antonine Walkway' path up Croy Hill. The views from the top are magnificent, perhaps even better than from Bar Hill: see the photo at foot of page 6.

Croy Hill

- The remains of the Roman fortlet are not obvious, and you are on the descent, having passed below telegraph wires, before you will find a low stone interpretation board (off to the left). However the Antonine Wall is very visible, with its ditch sharply defined.
- Continue downhill, passing under high power lines, then turn left at a T-junction. At the next junction, ignore the broad path for 'Auchinstarry via Nethercroy' and instead take the smaller path that descends steeply to the road at Craigmearloch Bridge.
- Cross the bridge and rejoin the cyclists, resuming the towpath eastward.



Descent from Croy Hill



- There follows 5 km of tranquil towpath from here to Wyndford Lock. On a still day, the water of this lengthy 'summit stretch' can appear motionless. However, the canal water is constantly renewed by natural springs, and teems with life. You may see anglers harvesting perch, roach and tench; they prize above all the predatory pike.
- About 1 km after Wyndford Lock, the canal passes under the M80 motorway and crosses the old Cumbernauld Road before descending through three locks. The final 3 km is marred by traffic noise from the B816, then you reach Bonnybridge, with its bridge whose roadway lifts vertically to let boats pass underneath.
- Just before the bridge itself, leave the towpath and go left down Bridge Street for 100 m; at the end of the railings, turn sharp right into an unpromising dead end. This leads to the Radical Pend, a historic low passage beneath the canal.
- Go ahead on Bonnymuir Place, which leads into Bonnyside Road. After about 1 km, cross the railway and continue along Bonnyside Road.
- After 700 m the routes divide again at the entrance to Rough Castle Roman Fort. Walkers go straight ahead and skip to page 42.
- Historic Environment Scotland does not welcome cycling on the Roman remains. Please dismount to explore the site on foot, or divert around it as described on page 41.
- Turn right on a farm road partly blocked by boulders. This approaches the railway and veers left beside it before cutting underneath through Bonnybridge Culvert.





Impressive ditch, Rough Castle

- Continuing at first beside the railway, the road veers right, climbing. You turn left three times in quick succession to return underneath the track via Roughcastle Culvert.
- Turn right to continue beside the railway, then bear left at a fingerpost 'Falkirk Wheel'. Within 400 m you reach a path junction walkers rejoice from the left: skip to page 42 bullet 4.





- Walk up the avenue lined with boulders and trees to the first of four interpretation boards which help you to understand how the structures were located and used.
- Walk east along the Military Way to see first the Roman fort, then its annex, and to explore the massive ditch of the Antonine Wall. There are several timber footbridges by which to cross the burn. Don't miss the striking array of Roman pits, defensive structures excavated most recently in 1903.
- After exploring the fort, take the path that leads downhill from its north-east corner, descending to the railway. Ignore the footbridge and climb uphill in a curve to meet the path junction where cyclists rejoin.
- From the path junction, the amazing Falkirk Wheel is only 250 m ahead. The path heads east directly underneath the Union Canal, emphasising its height difference above the Forth & Clyde. For more about how the Wheel works and why it was needed, and for details of visits, see page 18.
- After exploring the Wheel, head east towards its main entrance (a tarmac path converges with the access road) and exit right into Lime Road.
- Follow Lime Road across a roundabout and up towards the railway, where it curves left and soon crosses it by a concrete bridge. Immediately afterwards, you cross the Union Canal. If short of time, take a shortcut by descending to follow its towpath east to reach Falkirk within about 3 km.



- Otherwise, continue ahead (south) on a good path through Tamfourhill Wood. After about 500 m the routes diverge again.



- Cyclists continue uphill for a further 500 m. Just before reaching the road, turn left along a cycleway along Greenrig Strip.
- After 300 m, turn right at a fingerpost to go up to the road. Cross over and descend on a farm road for over 1 km past Craighburn Wood, towards the B803.
- Just before reaching the road, turn left along the roadside cycleway for 300 m. Cross the B803 as marked, and follow the recently constructed broad cycleway towards the Glen Burn.
- The cycleway narrows and enters Kilbean Wood. Follow signs carefully at the woodland junctions and cross the Glen Burn by footbridge, skirting the edge of new housing and crossing a pond area.
- Continue to skirt the housing, escaping it by going left across a footbridge to reach a minor road. Turn left to cross the Union Canal by road bridge.
- For the facilities of Falkirk, head north on the B8028, or to continue the Way turn right immediately to descend to the towpath. Skip to page 45.



The Glen Burn

North across the Union Canal and basin





- Walkers turn left in Tamfourhill Wood, heading east with some fine views to the left for 1 km to reach the obelisk marking the 1746 Battle of Falkirk.
- At the right of the monument, take the path downhill signed for 'Union Canal and Bantaskine Estate'. It descends for over 1 km to converge with the Union Canal, with some fine viewpoints on the way down.
- After about 400 m of towpath, leave the canal just before it enters a 620 m-tunnel, and turn left to go under the railway using steps or a ramp.
- Immediately after the railway underpass, climb steps on your right to reach the station car park (Falkirk High). Head for the circular stone-filled roundabout in front of the station.
- For Falkirk town centre, head north-east on High Station Road. To resume the Way, skip to page 45 bullet 2.



Monument to the Battle of Falkirk

Falkirk is famous as home of the Kelpies (giant horse-heads), but they are not easily reached on foot (2 mi/3 km north of Callendar House): see www.thehelix.co.uk for maps and more.

The Kelpies

