

# PWA18 Rough Castle Roman Fort, Falkirk Wheel



## Outline Information

Distance: 2 miles (3 km)

Time: 1 hours

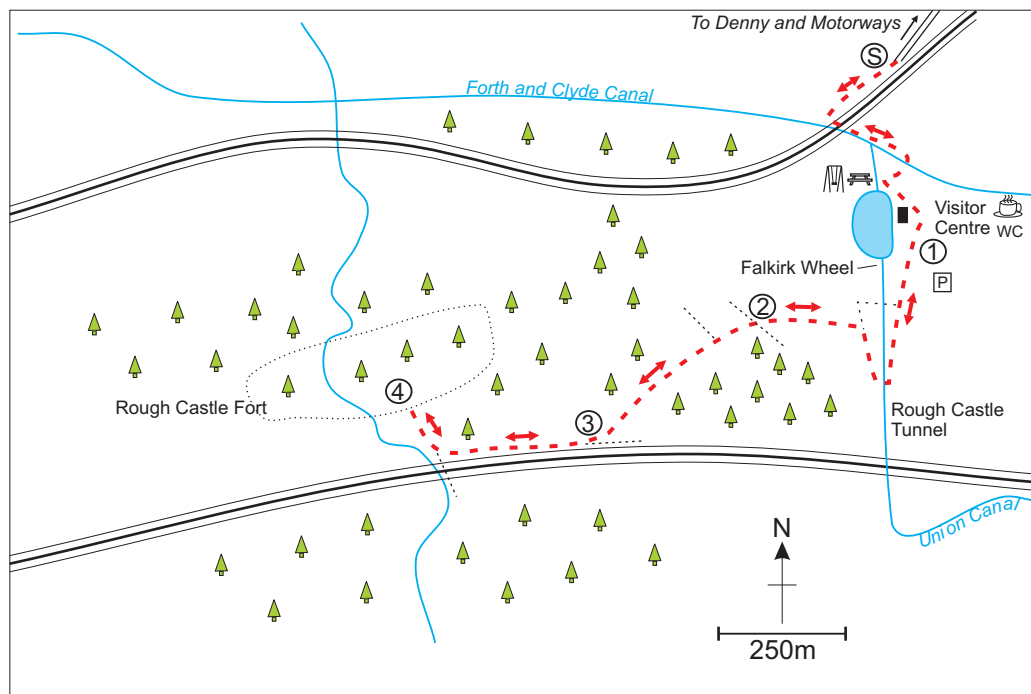
Grade: Easy

Map: OS Explorer OL349

Grid Ref: 853803

Starting at the modern Falkirk Wheel, this walk takes you back through history past woodland planted on an old open cast coal mine to Roughcastle Roman fort on the Antonine Wall. The wall was a defensive barrier before the Romans to retreated back to Hadrian's Wall further south.

This walk is waymarked from the Falkirk Wheel visitor centre, and follows gravel paths all the way to the fort. To explore the fort, you need to go onto short grass and the ramparts have inclines, but it's a great place to let the little ones explore while you relax in the lovely woodland. In addition, the visitor centre has a café, playground and the chance to take a boat ride in the Wheel.



## Getting there

Follow the road signs to Falkirk Wheel and park in the main car park.

**S.** From the car park, walk along the road and turn left up the path to the Forth and Clyde canal. Turn left, and cross the canal by the bridge. Head uphill to the visitor centre. *The visitor centre has a café, toilets, playground and picnic areas.*

**1.** From the visitor centre, walk up the zig-zag paved path past the overflow car park, waymarked "Antonine Wall". Continue uphill to the upper canal basin of the wheel and the entrance to the Roughcastle Tunnel for a great view down onto the Falkirk Wheel.

*The Falkirk Wheel was completed in 2002 as part of the Millenium Link to re-open the connection between the Union and Forth and Clyde canals. Originally connected by a series of 11 locks, it was decided to manage the 35m drop with the world's first rotating boat lift! Rides through the lift and Roughcastle Tunnel can be booked in the visitor centre.*

From the upper basin, bear left to walk along a gravel path over the top of the tunnel and back down the other side. Continue downhill to a junction and turn left, following the path to a cross roads by some fencing.

**2.** Go through the gap in the fence (Roughcastle Woodland) and go straight ahead following the sign to Roman Fort. *Roughcastle Community Woodland is part of land regeneration on the site of the largest open cast coal mine in Scotland. Closed in 1996, the land has been planted with native tree species.*

Continue along the gravel path, ignoring the grassy path to the right.

**3.** At the T-junction by the railway, turn right and walk along the gravel path.

**4.** At the next junction, before the path turns under the railway, turn right to walk through some staggered metal fencing and into the Roughcastle Fort.

*This is one of the best preserved stretches of the Antonine Wall built around AD143 from the Forth to the Clyde. The wall comprised a turf bank on top of stone foundations and formed a strategic and defensive barrier for about 20 years, before the Romans retreated south to Hadrian's Wall. The earthworks surviving are impressive and include the steep ramparts, rows defensive pits and many bumps in the interior which were originally buildings.*

Push up the rampart (quite steep!) and into the fort itself to explore! Once you have finished, retrace your steps back to the Falkirk Wheel.

Enjoyed this walk? Then why not try **PWA16 Cramond, Edinburgh** or **PWA20 Rob Roy's Grave**?