



Falkirk Canals Classroom



Learning Activities for Primary Schools



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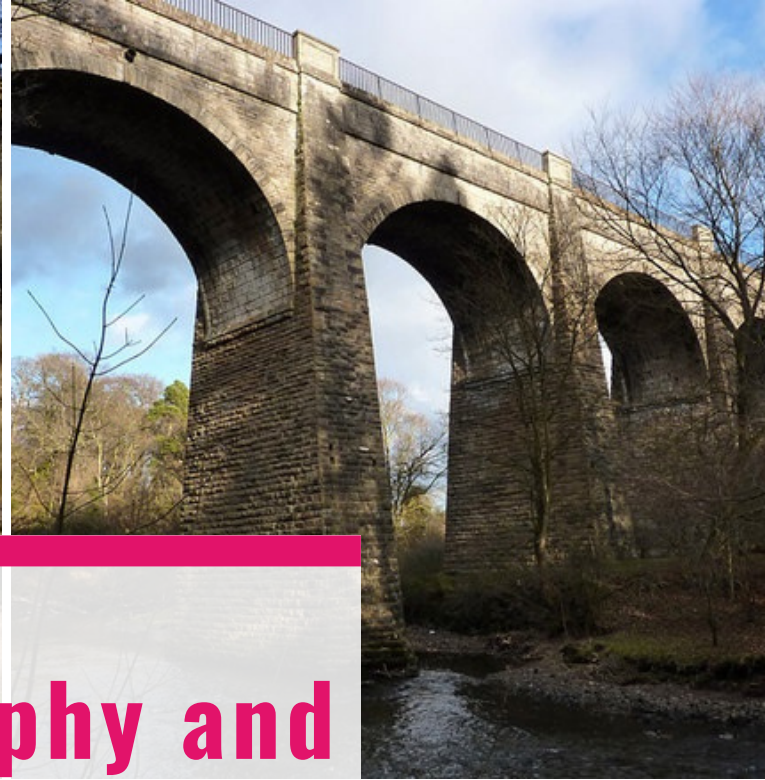


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**Scottish Rural
Development
Programme**





Geography and the Canals



Geography plays a big part in making Falkirk's canals and the special places along them such well-known destinations for visitors from around the world. In this section, students will look at the canals' geographical features, and at what different parts of the canal were used for.

Scotland's Canals

The canals in Scotland can be seen on this map.

These canals are:

- the Forth and Clyde Canal
- the Union Canal
- the Caledonian Canal
- the Crinan Canal
- the Monkland Canal

Scotland's canal network covers 137 miles.



Monkland Canal

Monkland Canal was built to transport coal from the mines around Monklands to Glasgow. It opened in sections from 1771 and was designed by James Watt. It is over 12 miles long. By 1850, 1 million tonnes of coal had been transported along the canal.

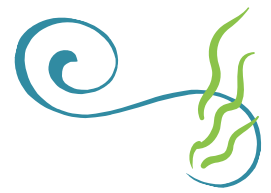
Crinan Canal

Crinan Canal starts at Ardrishaig on Loch Fyne and ends at Crinan on the Sound of Jura. It opened in 1809 and was designed by John Rennie. It is 9 miles long. There are 15 locks on the Crinan Canal and it reaches a height of almost 20 metres above sea level. Queen Victoria travelled along the Crinan Canal on a Scottish holiday in 1847.



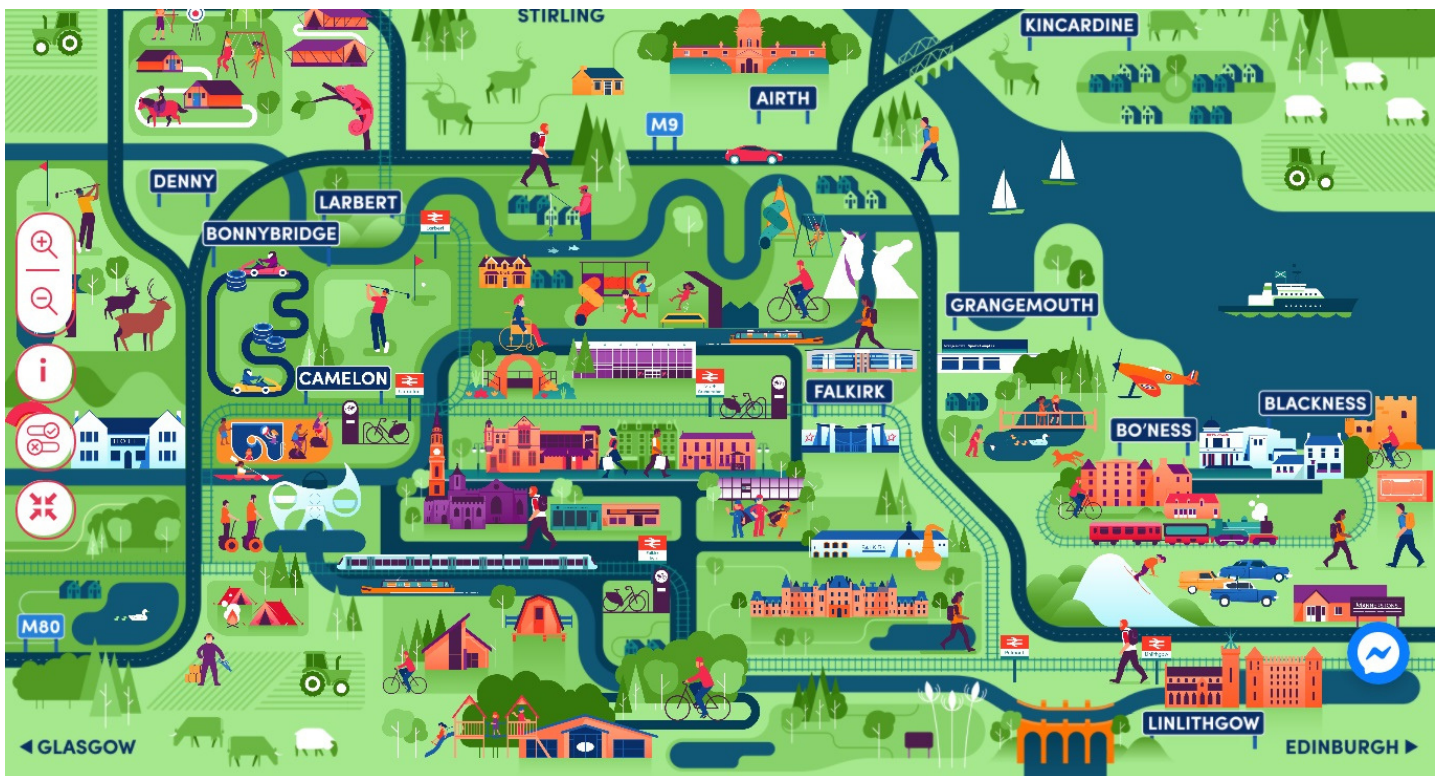
Caledonian Canal

The Caledonian Canal runs between Corpach, near Fort William and Inverness. The canal was opened in 1822 and is 60 miles long. It was built using plans created by Thomas Telford. Parts of this canal route are natural Scottish lochs like Loch Lochy, Loch Oich and Loch Ness. This canal route meant that ships did not have to navigate the dangerous waters of the Pentland Firth at the far north of Scotland.



Mini Activity

Here is a map of the Falkirk canals areas - See if you can spot these local landmarks on it. You could also try adding your own landmarks, like your house, or your school. You could also try to add your own landmarks to the map, like your house, your school etc



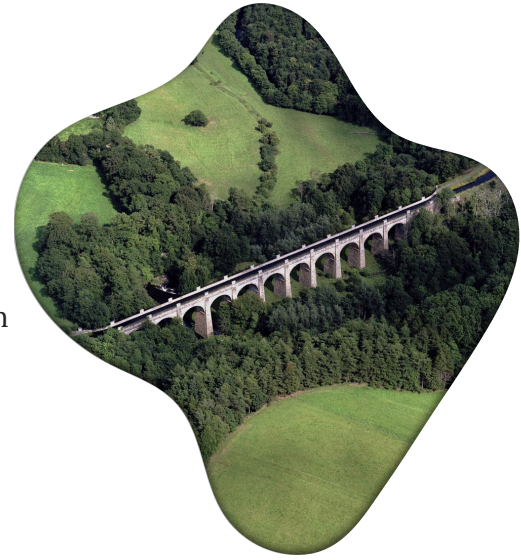
CLICK HERE

for an interactive version

Interesting Landmarks along Falkirk's Canals

Avon Aqueduct

The Avon Aqueduct is like a bridge for water that carries the Union Canal over the River Avon near Linlithgow. It opened in 1822 and was designed by Hugh Baird. Mr Baird got advice from Thomas Telford, who was a very famous engineer of road and canal projects. It is 26 metres high, 250 metres long and has 12 arches. There are stone towpaths 1.2metres wide along each side. It is the longest and tallest aqueduct in Scotland, and the second-longest in Britain, after the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct in Wales. It can be viewed from Muiravonside Country Park.

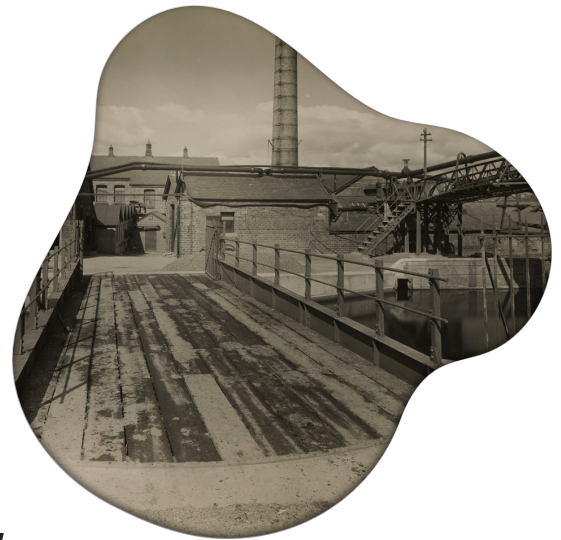


Polmont Basin

From the canal basin at Polmont there is a disused tunnel connected to Quarry Brae in Brightons, where there was a sandstone quarry. Stone was brought through the tunnel to the basin then loaded onto barges and taken into Edinburgh for the New Town's buildings. Brightons Church is also made from this sandstone. The quarry is now Laurie Park (also known as Quarry Park) after Alexander Laurie the quarry owner.

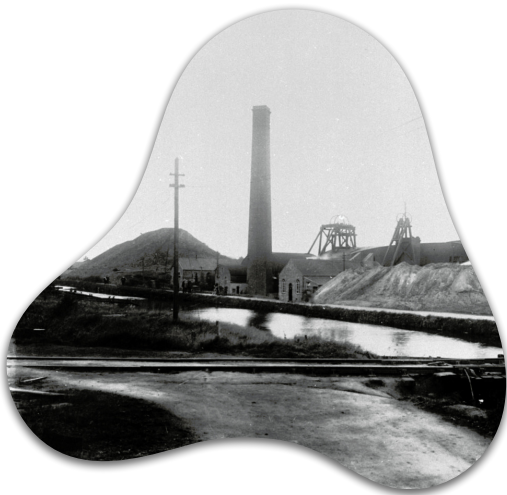
Nobel Westquarter Chemical Works

The old swing bridge on the canal used to link two parts of Alfred Nobel's chemical factory. There was an explosives factory right here on the banks of the canal. In 1876 Nobel began to manufacture detonators at the Westquarter Factory with only six workers. By WWII the factory employed 1700 people, over 3 shifts and produced 73 million detonators!



Redding Colliery

Redding Colliery was a place where coal was produced for the area, and lots of people from the local area worked there. The canal played a huge part in making this happen and in transporting it over 20 miles to the city of Edinburgh. One of Scotland's worst pit disasters happened at Redding pit no.23 on the north bank of the canal. On 25 September 1923 sixty-six men were trapped underground when water burst through into the mine from old flooded workings.



Bridge 62 Bantaskin Bridge

Bantaskin Bridge is one of many bridges along the Union Canal. It is famous however for its great viewing point, where the canal opens up before turning south-east and under the Dark Tunnel towards Hallglen. It is a nice area with lots of trees and nature all around. As you can see from the photo, it was a popular place to enjoy the canal for many years.

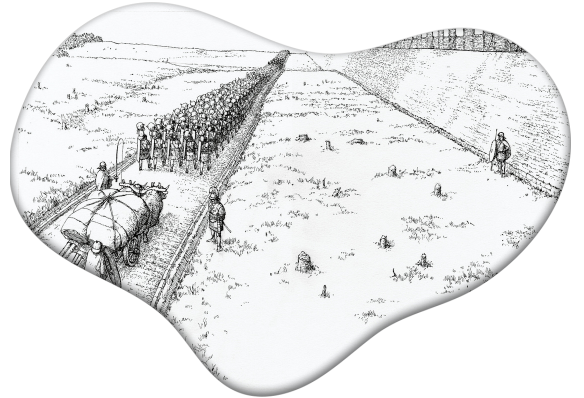


Seagull Trust Boathouse, Bantaskin

This boathouse and reception centre was opened in 1992 by the Seagull Trust. The trust operates the Govan Seagull, a boat specifically designed for people with disabilities. The boat is crewed entirely by trained volunteers who offer relaxing cruises throughout the season. The centre provides secure accommodation for the Trust's boat and comfortable reception facilities for visitors.

The Antonine Wall

From the canal towpath, it's possible to walk along stretches of the Roman Empire's Antonine Wall. It is one of only five World Heritage Sites in Scotland and a lasting marker within our landscape of the power and reach of the Roman Empire. It ran for over 60 km from Bo'ness on the River Forth to Old Kilpatrick on the River Clyde. It is one of only three barriers that the Romans left along their entire borders and is the most northerly and most complex frontier they ever built.



Rough Castle

Rough Castle is the best-preserved Roman fort along the Antonine Wall and offers great views of the surviving Antonine Wall ditch. People can access this by following signs from the Falkirk Wheel. It also has the tallest portion of the rampart. There are really clear sections of the Wall's defences, ditches and gateways and the only known examples of lilia - defensive pits - to the north of the Wall.



The Falkirk Tunnel

The Falkirk Tunnel is situated at the back of Falkirk High Station. It is the canal's link between Hallglen and Falkirk and is well known locally as 'The Dark Tunnel'.

It feels like a cave, with a rough stone interior that was blasted out by "navvies" (canal diggers) around 200 years ago.

It is **630 meters long** and is very dark, so cycling or jogging through the tunnel is actively discouraged - the towpath is cobbled, slippery, has puddles and is only 5 feet wide. Walking or pushing your bike through it is safer and can also give you more time to appreciate the unique environment of the tunnel.

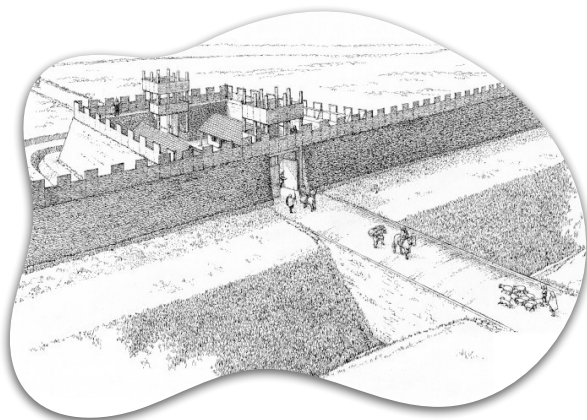


Interesting facts

The canal was meant to be an overland route - but **William Forbes**, the owner of **Callendar House**, said it would ruin his view, so successfully campaigned to have it diverted under Prospect Hill. Construction of the tunnel took place between 1818 and 1822.

When the tunnel first opened there was such a thing as **passenger canal boats**. Some people were afraid to travel through the tunnel so horse transport was provided so that they could get off the boat and meet it at the other end.

There is a spooky association with **Burke and Hare**, the Victorian serial killers who sold their victims' bodies to anatomists in 1800s **Edinburgh**. The two men had moved from Ireland to Scotland to work on the canal and the construction of the tunnel.



Tamfourhill Road Roman Camp

Just east of the Falkirk Wheel is the best-preserved section of the Antonine Wall ditch. The ditch has been preserved to almost its original dimensions, giving the best impression of how it will have looked in Roman times. In an open field between the Union Canal and Tamfourhill Wood there is a temporary Roman camp which can only be seen from aerial photographs. This is an impression of how it would have looked.

Lock 16

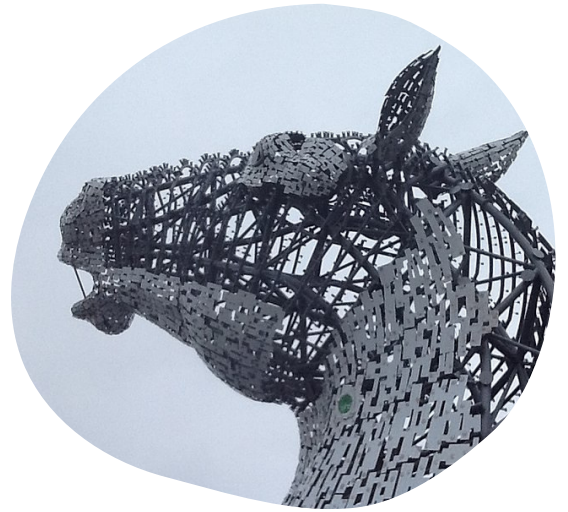
The photo is a view of Lock 16 from 1970. It is quite famous in the area as a place where a lot of people lived, worked and travelled over many years. This section of the Forth & Clyde Canal stopped being used by boats in 1962. The link between this and the Union had gone in the 1930s. Both canals were restored from the mid-1990s as the Millennium Link, with a new connection to the west in the form of the Falkirk Wheel.



The Kelpies

The Kelpies are 30-metre-high horse-head sculptures next to the canal between Falkirk and Grangemouth. They weigh 300 tonnes each and stand next to a new extension to the Forth and Clyde Canal, near the River Carron. This is in The Helix, a parkland project built to connect 16 communities in the Falkirk Council Area of Scotland.

The sculptures were designed by sculptor Andy Scott and were completed in October 2013. The Kelpies are a monument to horse-powered heritage across Scotland and were opened to the public in April 2014.



The canal extension reconnects the Forth and Clyde Canal with the River Forth and improves navigation between the East and West of Scotland. The Kelpies represent the role of the tow horse in Scottish industries and economies, pulling the wagons, ploughs, barges, and coal ships that shaped Falkirk's history and geography as a heavy industrial area. During the first year following the opening, nearly one million people visited the sculptures.



Geography

You will investigate a map of Falkirk and point out various landmarks, as well as make your own map of an area at the canal



Look



- Look at the interactive map on page 12. Look at where your school and home is in relation to the map, and write down what landmarks are around them
- Look at the landmarks on the canal. What can they tell us about how the canal was used? Was it a busy place? Why did people go there?

Talk



- Talk about where all your favourite things to do are in Falkirk
- Talk about any other landmarks you know of that are on or near the canals. These can be well-known, or places that are special to you that you would like people to know about!
- Talk about why the canal might be good for different activities, such as travelling, walking, and transporting goods.

Make



- Make a list of famous landmarks at/near the canal
- Make a sketch of one of the famous landmarks in your scrapbook page
- Using your scrapbook page, sketch some maps, with symbols and a key, of an area near the canal you have been to.



Scrapbook



Congratulations on completing this section of the booklet. Have your teacher tick off your achievements in **Geography**

Subject	Code	Description	Achieved
Geography	SOC 0-15a	I am aware that different types of evidence can help me to find out about the world around me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geography	SOC 1-14a	Through activities in my local area, I have developed my mental map and sense of place. I can create and use maps of the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geography	SOC 2-14a	To extend my mental map and sense of place, I can interpret information from different types of maps and am beginning to locate key features within Scotland, UK, Europe or the wider world.	<input type="checkbox"/>
