GLASGOW'S CANALS UNLOCKED

EXPLORE THE STORY

Introduction

WELCOME TO GLASGOW'S CANALS

Visit the Canals

Walking or cycling along the towpaths will give you a fascinating insight into the rich history and ongoing renaissance of the Forth & Clyde and Monkland canals as they wind through the City of Glasgow.

There are five sections following the towpath of the Forth & Clyde Canal described here from west to east, from Drumchapel towards the centre of Glasgow.

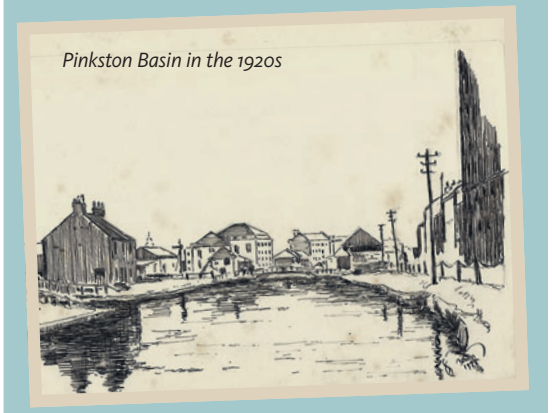
You can walk or cycle them individually, or join two or more together to enjoy a longer visit.

The sixth section takes you on an imaginary journey along the Monkland Canal as it once flowed within the city boundary. Sadly, this section of the waterway is now mostly built over and not suitable for walking.

1. **Drumchapel to Kelvindale**
2. **Cleveden Road to Stockingfield Junction**
3. **Stockingfield Junction to Possil Loch**
4. **Stockingfield Junction to Firhill**
5. **Firhill to Pinkston Basin**
6. **The Forgotten Canals**

Key transport links and access points are noted for each section. This guide is just the start of the story – there's loads more information and pictures online. See the back page for details of how to get involved.

Boats at Spiers Wharf



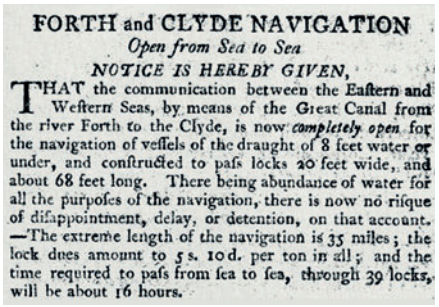
Pinkston Basin in the 1920s

Canal Wildlfe

Glasgow's Canals: A Brief History

Both the Forth & Clyde and Monkland canals were hugely influential in the industrial and social growth of the city two hundred years ago. Today, they are becoming important and relevant once more as we enjoy their heritage, the waterway wildlife and the attractive, traffic-free, green open space of the towpaths.

The idea of connecting the firths of Forth and Clyde by canal was first mooted in 1724 by the author of Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe. Nearly 45 years later, the advance of innovation and industry across Scotland increased the need for an efficient inland transport system and construction work started at Grangemouth in June 1768. After a few pauses when money ran out, the Forth & Clyde Canal or 'Great Canal' as it was known, finally opened with a flourish in July 1790.



FORTH and CLYDE NAVIGATION

Open from Sea to Sea

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN,

THAT the communication between the Eaſtern and Weſtern Seas, by means of the Great Canal from the river Forth to the Clyde, is now *completely open* for the navigation of veſſels of the draught of 8 feet water or under, and conſtructed to paſs locks 20 feet wide, and about 68 feet long. There being abundance of water for all the purpoſes of the navigation, there is now no riſque of diſappointment, delay, or detention, on that account.—The extreme length of the navigation is 35 miles; the lock dues amount to 5 s. 10 d. per ton in all; and the time required to paſs from ſea to ſea, through 39 locks, will be about 16 hours.

The Forth & Clyde Canal was the world's first man-made sea-to-sea canal and the biggest single construction venture undertaken in Scotland at the time. It wasn't long before the 35 mile long waterway was at the heart of industries flourishing between its gateways at Grangemouth on the East coast and Bowling on the West coast, as well as along the three mile spur into Glasgow.

By the mid 19th century, over three million tonnes of goods and 200,000 passengers were travelling on the waterway each year and bankside industries included timber and paper mills, glassworks, foundries, breweries and distilleries (including the biggest in the world at the time at Port Dundas).

The Monkland Canal was constructed to carry coal from the pits in Lanarkshire into Glasgow. It fully opened in 1794, and soon scows were carrying over one million tonnes of coal and iron into the city each year.

Both canals eventually fell into disuse and disrepair as the increased speed and efficiency of road and rail grew in popularity. The Monkland closed in 1942, and the Forth & Clyde finally closed to navigation in 1963 – the same year that Glasgow also lost its trams!

The Forth & Clyde and Union canals were reopened between 2000 and 2001 through the £84.5m Millennium Link Project, which was the largest canal restoration in the UK at the time.

The community-led regeneration of the Monkland Canal is ongoing. It is now becoming an increasingly popular open space for the communities of North Lanarkshire, although there are still some fragments of the canal's past in Glasgow too if you know where to look!

Section 1

DRUMCHAPEL TO KELVINDALE STATION *(3 miles)*

WALKING TIPS:
If you would like a shorter walk of 1.5miles, leave the canal at Westerton Station (8). Whilst much of the towpath has been resurfaced in recent years, walking boots are recommended for this stretch.

1 DUNTREATH AVENUE BRIDGE, DRUMCHAPEL

From Great Western Road, you will find the canal signposted to the left just before Duntreath Avenue Bridge and close to a bus stop. Cross the footbridge and join the towpath on the south side of the canal. Go left.

As the canal passes under the bridge at Duntreath Avenue, it enters the modern boundaries of the city of Glasgow. To the west, the towpath meanders through East Dumbartonshire until it reaches the canal gateway on the Firth of Clyde at Bowling Harbour, about 5 miles away. Our journey takes us eastwards towards Kelvindale Station on Cleveden Road.

2 BOGHOUSE LOCKS (LOCKS 33-36)

The timeless charm of the Forth & Clyde Canal is evident here at Boghouse Locks. When TCF Brotchie described this location in his essay, *'Some Sylvan Scenes Near Glasgow'*, a hundred years ago, he could almost have been describing the atmosphere today:

"A pleasant tramp and we are at the quiet reaches of the canal. It is difficult to realise at this beauty spot that we are so near the populous city, everything seems so calm and restful on the drowsy summer afternoon. The dimpling note of water escaping through the locks, the subdued lowing of distant cattle, the plaintive 'baa' of newly shorn lambs, the hum of winged insects; all these sounds are blended together in a sweetly seductive cadence..."

2

The Forth & Clyde Canal reaches a height of 156 feet above sea level through a system of 39 locks, which lift or lower vessels between each new level on the canal. It takes ten to twenty minutes to journey through a lock.

3 BRICK AND TILE WORKS

When the canal opened in 1790 it was surrounded by open land. It wasn't long before factories replaced fields capitalising on the waterways to import and export goods. Just to the right, for example, stood Garscadden Brick and Tile Works run by Robert & William Horn of Yoker.

4 BASCULE BRIDGE

The small wooden curved bridge here is one of only a few original bridges remaining on the waterway. These bascule or lifting bridges were designed to open to let masted boats pass through in full sail. Look at the side for the hand-operated lifting mechanism. Although the canal is fully navigable once more, some vessels now need to demast at Bowling or Grangemouth before travelling through the lower headroom of the newer fixed bridges like the one under Great Western Road.

4

5 KNIGHTSWOOD PARK

To your right, you can detour from the canal and visit Knightswood Park – originally part of the Old Pollok Estate, which was home to the Maxwell family for over 700 years.

6 CLOBERHILL INFILL

Just after the bridge, the original course of the canal here at Cloberhill was filled in to make way for the modern housing, which now stands on the right. During the Millennium Project to reopen the canal, this was one of the spots where a new section of canal had to be excavated. The towpath still follows roughly the route of the original cutting. It's strange to think that this bit of canal is around 200 years younger than the rest!

Section 1

7 CLOBERHILL LOCKS (LOCKS 28-32)

Rounding the corner, we reach the five Cloberhill Locks. The area of Cloberhill was named after a house that once sat on the hill to the east. At Lock 31, on 12 March 1999, Scotland's first First Minister, Donald Dewar, dug the initial spade of earth to announce the Millenium re-opening project getting underway. Uniquely, between here and Westerton, the boundaries of Dunbartonshire and Glasgow run down the middle of the towpath – so at this point you are in Glasgow, while the canal itself is in Dumbartsonshire!

8 WESTERSTON RAILWAY STATION

If you want to leave the walk for today, the footbridge here takes you to Westerton railway station on Maxwell Avenue.

9 SITE OF FARMHOUSE BUILDINGS

Across the pedestrian swing bridge, the modern housing on a narrow slip of land between the railway and the canal was the site of an old farmhouse.

10 TEMPLE SAW MILLS

Robinson, Dunn and Company's Temple Saw Mills were active between 1874 and the 1960s on the far side, just before the spot where Bearsden Road crosses the canal. The art deco offices, which became a restaurant in later years, can still be seen just south on Bearsden Road.

10

11 BEARSDEN ROAD LIFTING BRIDGE

When the canal opened it was crossed by a bascule bridge at the top of Crow Road which cut right across the middle of Lock 27. To allow trams to run north to Bearsden, the road was realigned and rebuilt in the 1930s and the current bridge was built by William Arrol & Co, the company which made the Titan cranes on the River Clyde. Although the bridge no longer lifts open, you might spot some of the original mechanisms underneath.

11

12 TEMPLE GASWORKS

The two huge surviving Victorian gasometers to the south were part of Temple Gasworks, which was built in 1871 for the Partick, Hillhead and Maryhill Gas Company and considered, at that time, to be the second largest gasworks in Britain. The larger gasometer was built in 1893 and the other completed in 1900.

12

13 DAWSHOLM PARK

On the hill on the far side of the canal you can see the fringes of Dawsholm Park which was created on land partly occupied by Dawsholm Paper Mills up until 1970.

13

14 CLEVEDEN ROAD BRIDGE

This section ends as we reach the bridge taking Cleveden Road over the canal. Although, sadly, the original bascule bridge here no longer stands, if you look closely at the details on the side of this modern vehicle bridge you will get an idea of how it would have looked. You can leave the towpath here. Kelvindale Station is only a few metres away on the far side of the bridge. Alternatively, you can continue towards Stockingfield Junction.

Section 2

CLEVEDEN ROAD TO STOCKINGFIELD JUNCTION *(1 mile)*

15 KELVINDALE STATION

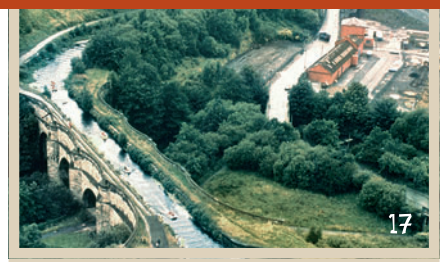
On leaving Kelvindale Station, which runs between Queen Street Station and Anniesland, turn right onto Cleveden Road. You will soon see the waters of the Forth & Clyde Canal immediately below you – cross the bridge to join the towpath.

16 FORMER BRIDGE-KEEPERS COTTAGES

Look over to the far bank and you will see two small cottages. They may look like an old railway station, but they were actually built for canal workers. Perhaps it's telling that they were built when the canal was in the ownership of the Caledonian Railway company.

17 KELVIN AQUEDUCT

When it opened in 1790, this spectacular aqueduct designed by engineer Robert Whitworth was one of the largest to be built since Roman times.



Scots Magazine - August 1790:
"in the course of the voyage from Glasgow to Bowling Bay, the tract boat passed along that stupendous bridge, the great aqueduct over the Kelvin, 400 feet in length, exhibiting to the spectators in the valley below the singular and new object of a vessel navigating seventy feet over their heads – a feature of this work which gives it a pre-eminencce over everything of a similar nature in Europe"

The aqueduct soon became a tourist attraction drawing admirers from far and wide. At a cost of £8,500 though, it almost bankrupted the canal company, and funds from forfeited Jacobite estates were used to fund the continuing construction.

18 KELVINDALE PAPER MILLS

As you walk over the Aqueduct take time to enjoy the great views down the Kelvin Valley. As you look downriver you can also see the remains of old railway bridges. These stone piers hark back to a time when railways criss-crossed the area serving the many factories and industries that used the Kelvin for water or power. Today, you're likely to see waterway wildlife like herons or cormorants using them as a pleasant resting spot.

If you look carefully you can also see the top of a V-shaped weir that once channelled water into the nearby Kelvindale Paper Mills.

19 KELVIN WALKWAY & NATIONAL CYCLE ROUTES

At the end of the Aqueduct you will see a path on the right leading down to the Kelvin Walkway. From here you could walk or ride along the Kelvin Walkway either north towards Milngavie (9 miles) or south to the Botanic Gardens or Kelvingrove Park (2-3 miles). Leaving the aqueduct behind us we head uphill on the towpath toward Maryhill Locks.

20 MARYHILL LOCKS AND BASINS (LOCKS 21-25)

This flight of five locks and connected basins is one of the most picturesque on the Forth & Clyde Canal. A tranquil spot today, it was once a very busy stretch of the canal. Indeed, the basins were incorporated into the design of this lock flight so that numerous ships could travel through it together so avoiding a bottleneck.

Section 2

21 KELVIN DOCK AND BOATYARD

Half-way up the lock flight, on the far bank, you can see the remains of the Kelvin Dock leading from one of the basins. Constructed as a dry dock for repairing canal vessels in the 1790s, by the 1850s it had become a boatbuilding yard owned by Swan & Co. The yard, which was active until the 1960s, is of note for building some of the landing craft used during the D Day Landings in World War Two and the first steam powered 'puffer' boats. Their place in community life was brought to life vividly through Neil Munro's humorous tales of Para Handy and the Vital Spark.

24 THE SUMMIT POUND

The locks climb gently over 39 feet and open out at the final lock into the 'summit pound'. This is the highest point of the canal and it extends fifteen miles to the next lock on the far side of Kilsyth. A great photograph taken during cleanups of the locks in the 1980s shows a tea-party in progress in the empty top lock!

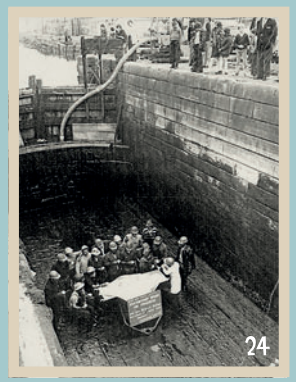
25 WHITE HOUSE INN

Just past the footbridge at the top of the locks, you can see a long, low white building. The White House, built around 1810 by John Walker, was first a pub, then Maryhill's first post office and then a long series of pubs again.

27 MARYHILL ROAD AQUEDUCT

The original small aqueduct by Robert Whitworth had to be rebuilt in 1881 to allow for trams running towards Bearsden and Milngavie. From here, looking to the south, you can see Maryhill Burgh Halls and, in the distance, a flagpole marking the viewpoint at Ruchill Park (Point 58). One of the Maryhill stained glass windows features a canal boatman standing on this aqueduct.

21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22 THE BUTNEY

Maryhill Cross stood on the far side of the Kelvin Dock on the site of the traffic junction. The area nearby is still known locally as the Butney. Many have assumed this to be a reference to locals being shipped out to Botany Bay, but it could also be a reference to the former factory behind the Cross, the Dalsholm printworks – the section of factory that removed buttons from the used fabrics was known as the Butney.

23 COLLINA

The high flats on the hill have become familiar to many over recent years as the home of Jack and Victor in BBC Scotland's comedy 'Still Game'.

26 MARYHILL BURGH HALLS

From the exit here on the right you can visit the recently restored Maryhill Burgh Halls. Walk down Burnhouse Street and left onto Gairbraid Avenue. You will find the former fire station arches which now form the entrance to Maryhill Burgh Halls.

Built as the town hall for Maryhill in 1878, the Halls feature a stunning series of stained glass panels depicting the trades and industries of Maryhill in the late 19th century. The building now features a café, the restored public hall, meeting spaces, nursery, recording studios, offices, and a free exhibition of canal and industrial heritage. Find out more at *www.mbht.org.uk*

28 A MIDGET SUBMARINE AND FORMER ALLOTMENTS

As this photograph illustrates, in the 1950s, a 'midget submarine' journeyed through the canal on its way to Rosyth on the Forth to be decomissioned. Look closely and you can see that allotments once stood on the site of the modern housing on the far bank.

29 EXIT TO LOCHBURN ROAD

From here there is a choice - you can continue eastwards towards the city along the Glasgow Branch (Section 4), or change towpath and head north towards Lambhill along the Main Branch (Section 3). If you want to leave the canal at Maryhill, follow Lochburn Road down until it joins Maryhill Road opposite the Maryhill Burgh Halls, which sits on one of the city's major bus routes.

Section 3

STOCKINGFIELD JUNCTION TO POSSIL LOCH *(2 miles)*

30 STOCKINGFIELD JUNCTION

If you are continuing from Section 2, you need to cross the canal and change towpath. To do so, descend the steps leading down to the right just as the canal turns the corner (or take the ramped exit twenty yards further on). Both exits will take you down to Lochburn Road. From here pass under the narrow canal aqueduct. Please be careful here as the pavement is very narrow. Once through, walk up the path rising to the right until you reach the towpath.

31 STOCKINGFIELD BRIDGE

Construction of the canal began in Grangemouth on the East coast in June 1768 and continued westwards until the money ran out at Stockingfield Junction. Work halted for two years and Stockingfield became the original terminus of the Great Canal opening to boating traffic on 10th November 1775. A floating bridge here once enabled horses pulling barges and boats to transfer swiftly from one towpath to the other. In the future, there are plans for a permanent footbridge connecting the waterside communities and the towpaths, supported by a 'Big Man' designed by sculptor Andy Scott. We now head north on what is, therefore, the oldest part of the canal in Glasgow.

32 STOP LOCK

One of a series of temporary barricades installed along the canal during the Second World War. With the huge volume of water in the canal, held high above Glasgow, the risk of bomb damage causing the canal to flood into the city was great, so extra locks were put in to minimise how much water could escape.

Section 3

33 GIRLS INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL AND THE MAGDALENE INSTITUTION

Two prominent buildings, the Girls Industrial School and the Magdalene Institution, once stood up on the hill to the left where you can now see modern houses. The latter was established by the Glasgow Magdalene Institution for the Repression of Vice and Reformation of Penitent Females. The 'fallen women' rescued by the Institution worked long hours 'for their own good' and for no pay. In 1958, a number of women escaped and the resulting media attention led to an investigation, which ended in the closure of the facility and, later, demolition of the building.

Even before the events of 1958, both the school and institution suffered from a poor reputation. In the 1880s, newspaper reports screamed 'The Glasgow Horror' as they detailed the mistreatment of children at the school. The Matron involved later resigned.

34 RUCHILL GOLF COURSE

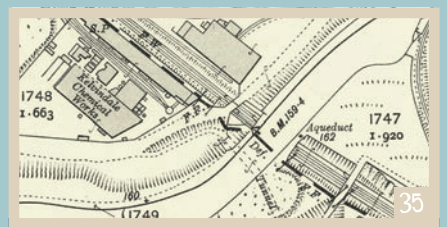
On the far bank you can see the grounds of the nine hole Ruchill Golf Course, which was re-designed and re-opened by Colin Montgomerie in September 2009. It's strange to think that a little of the canal is scattered across the course but during the Millennium Link Project to reopen the lowland canals, the waterway was dredged to remove the silt which gathered over the thirty years of closure. Some of this was recycled on the golf course where it was used to help form new hills and shape the land.

35 HALLOWE'EN PEND

Whilst the formal name of this crossing under the canal is Hillend Aqueduct, it is known locally as the Hallowe'en Pend. It was constructed in 1775 to allow farmers to drive their sheep between the fields on either side of the canal. The design of the tunnel is quite unusual in having a bend in the middle which means you cannot see through from one side to the other.

36 LAMBHILL IRON WORKS

The Lambhill Iron Works were built for R Laidlaw and Sons in 1881. As the iron works expanded, a wharf was erected so that materials could be exported and imported by the canal and later a dedicated railway line was built to join the main line.



37 BALMORE ROAD LIFTING BRIDGE

Balmore Road Lifting Bridge was built in the 1930s and replaced an older wooden bascule bridge. Designed by T Somers, the new bridge was electrically operated and opened to allow ships to pass through in full sail. Sadly, it no longer opens.

You can join or leave the towpath here where it is just a short walk from, or to, Balmore Road, a main bus route into the city centre.

38 LAMBHILL STABLES

Lambhill Stables were built around 1830, when horses pulling barges were the main means of moving goods along the canal. One of a number of stables erected along this stretch of canal, it featured horse stalls on the ground floor, a hayloft above as well as living quarters. It was later a garage, before sitting empty for a number of years.

In recent years, it has been restored to create a vibrant community facility with a café, heritage displays, allotments and community garden.
www.lambhillstables.org

> *"Three men at work in a field at Possil, were alarmed with a singular noise, which continued, they say, for about two minutes, seeming to proceed from the south-east to the north-west. At first, it appeared to resemble four reports from the firing of cannon, afterwards, the sound of a bell, or rather of a gong, with a violently whizzing noise; and lastly they heard a sound, as if some hard body struck, with very great force the surface of the earth."*
>
> Herald and Advertiser, 30th April 1804

39 LAMBHILL CEMETERY

A short walk up Balmore Road, you will find the main entrance to Lambhill Cemetery on your left. The cemetery sits adjacent to St Kentigerns Cemetery and the Western Necropolis and is notable for being the oldest of the three. Built in 1881, it boasts a dramatic archway at the entrance designed by James Sellars.

40 CADDER PIT DISASTER

If you visit Lambhill Cemetery, continue into St Kentigern's Cemetery to see a recently restored plaque commemorating the 22 miners who tragically lost their lives when a fire broke out in Pit 15 on Sunday 3rd August 1913. Only four men on the shift survived.

41 BALMUILDY FORT

Balmuildy Fort on the Roman Antonine Wall stood just north of Lambhill. Also known as Gryme or Graham's Dyke, the wall was built around 140AD and was only in use for about 20 years before the Romans retreated south to Hadrian's Wall. The Forth & Clyde Canal closely follows the course of the wall as it travels further east.
www.antoninewall.org

42 POSSIL MARSH AND LOCH

Dating back to 1931, Possil Marsh is one of the oldest nature reserves in Scotland. Designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), it features the shallow freshwater Possil Loch at its heart amid acres of marsh, swamp and fen. The reserve is home to around 150 species of bird, 22 of which are known to breed on the site. It also supports a number of nationally rare plant species. Here, you can follow the well signposted circular walk around the edge of the reserve and back onto the towpath near Lambhill Stables.
www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

43 POSSIL HIGH METEORITE

If you take the circular walk around Possil Loch, you will see a commemorative plaque marking the Possil High Meteorite, which fell nearby on the 5th April 1804. This was the earliest of only four known recorded meteorite falls in Scotland and the largest surviving fragment is held at the Hunterian Museum within the University of Glasgow.

We now come to the end of the Glasgow stretch of the towpath. It continues to Bishopbriggs (where the next exit is around 2 miles from here) and then on to Kirkintilloch, and eventually the Forth.

Section 4

STOCKINGFIELD JUNCTION TO FIRHILL BASIN *(1.5 miles)*

44 STOCKINGFIELD JUNCTION

If you are continuing from Section 2, stay on the towpath. If you are coming back down from Section 3, pass back under the narrow canal aqueduct. Please be careful here as the pavement is very narrow. Walk up the path rising up on the left until you reach the towpath.

45 MARYHILL IRON WORKS

This area was home to a number of ironworks including Ruchill Iron Works, Maryhill Iron Works (which stood where the modern industrial buildings are on the right) and the famous Shaw & McInnes Iron Works near Firhill, which was in operation up until 2001.

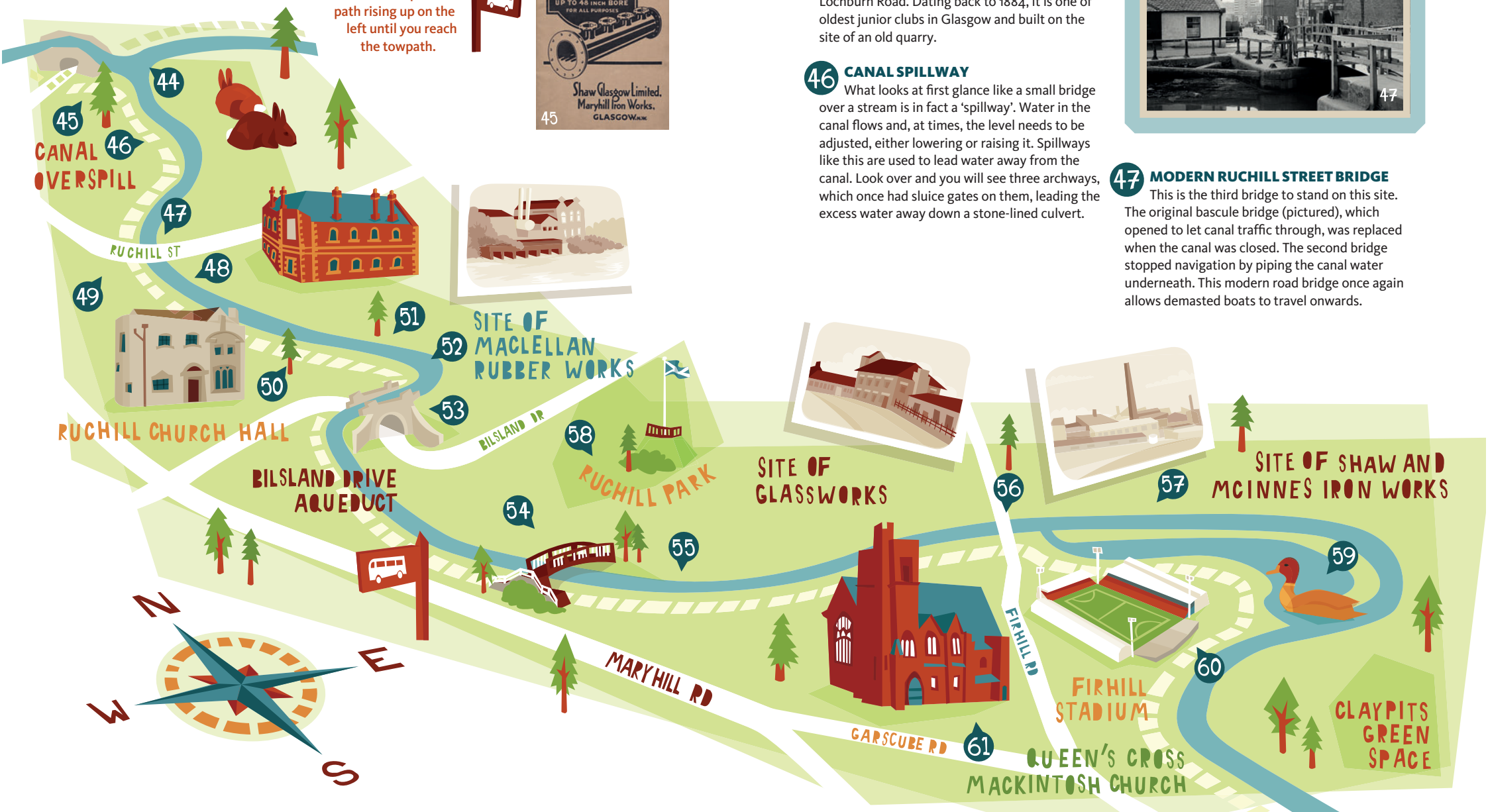
Maryhill Football Club sits behind the canal off Lochburn Road. Dating back to 1884, it is one of oldest junior clubs in Glasgow and built on the site of an old quarry.

46 CANAL SPILLWAY

What looks at first glance like a small bridge over a stream is in fact a 'spillway'. Water in the canal flows and, at times, the level needs to be adjusted, either lowering or raising it. Spillways like this are used to lead water away from the canal. Look over and you will see three archways, which once had sluice gates on them, leading the excess water away down a stone-lined culvert.

47 MODERN RUCHILL STREET BRIDGE

This is the third bridge to stand on this site. The original bascule bridge (pictured), which opened to let canal traffic through, was replaced when the canal was closed. The second bridge stopped navigation by piping the canal water underneath. This modern road bridge once again allows demasted boats to travel onwards.



Section 4

48 GLASGOW LEAD AND COLOUR WORKS

The Kelvin Chemical Works stood on the near bank. The older, brick building next to Ruchill Street was part of the offices of Alexander, Fergusson & Company's Glasgow Lead and Colour Works.

49 MACKINTOSH'S RUCHILL CHURCH HALL

Designed by one of Glasgow's most famous architects, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the church hall here dates back to 1899. If you have time, visit the hall tearoom. The interior has changed little from when it first opened and still features the original, detailed doors, folding partitions and decorative roof trusses. The tearoom is open most lunchtimes.

You can join or leave the towpath here where it is just a short walk from, or to, Maryhill Road, one of the city's main public transport routes.

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50 EAST PARK SCHOOL

East Park School opened in 1874 and today still serves young people with additional support needs. Beyond, you can see the sandstone building that was the school's original home. One of the stained glass windows at Maryhill Burgh Halls features a teacher with some of his pupils. Famously, Roy Rogers and his horse Trigger visited East Park in 1954.

51 GLASGOW RUBBER WORKS

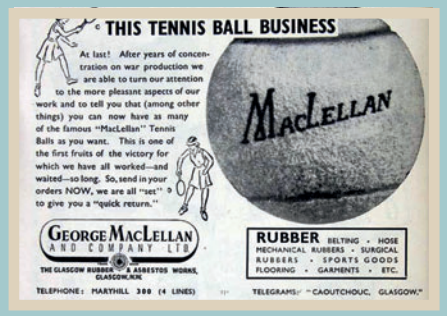
The modern coloured flats on the far side of the canal were built on the site of the former Glasgow Rubber Works, which opened in 1871 and were operational up until 2003. They produced a wide range of materials from pipes to waterproof clothing, tennis balls and acoustic tiles for nuclear submarines. The factory was so important to the war effort that it was targeted, unsuccessfully, for bombing by the Luftwaffe. Although the factory has now been demolished, the company continues to operate in England.

52 GOLD EXTRACTING WORKS

The intriguingly named Gold Extracting Works nearby didn't actually extract gold – rather it produced acid chemicals that were shipped to South Africa for use in the gold mine industry.

53 BILSLAND DRIVE AQUEDUCT

This aqueduct, which follows the same design as those at Maryhill and Possil, was added in 1879 to allow trams to pass underneath.



51

54 RUCHILL OIL WORKS

The University of Glasgow student village at Murano Street was constructed on part of the site of the Ruchill Oil Works. The works were ablaze in 1884, only a year after they were built for John Sandeman. A telegram was sent to Glasgow requesting assistance. It is said that when the city fire engine reached the Burgh boundary, it stopped – only continuing on its way after payment had been guaranteed. By this time, burning oil had reached the canal, spreading on top of the water in both directions. Due to the height of the canal and ferocity of the fire, the blaze could be seen for miles around.

55 CALEDONIAN GLASS BOTTLE WORKS

The glass works here opened in 1874, one of two on the street. With a glass works and canal on the aptly named Murano Street, Maryhill has been dubbed the Venice of Scotland.

56 FIRHILL BRIDGE

The modern bridge taking Firhill Road over the canal here is a replacement for the original, much smaller bascule or lifting bridge.

You can join or leave the towpath here where it is just a short walk from, or to, Maryhill Road or Garscube Road, both of which are served by regular bus services.

54

57

57 SHAW & MCINNES IRON WORKS

Over to the left was once the site of the famous Shaw & McInnes Iron Works which opened in 1865 and continued to operate until 2001. Behind this also stood the Phoenix Chemical Works.

58 RUCHILL PARK

Crossing over the canal at Firhill Bridge, it's a short, steep but rewarding walk up Firhill Road to Ruchill Park. The path to the left in the park leads to a flagpole, which marks one of the highest points in Glasgow and a spot offering excellent views over the city.

59 WESTERN SAW MILLS

Firhill was once a hugely busy industrial area. The large kidney-shaped timber basin once served the nearby Western Saw Mills. Wood was stored here, floating in the basin to prevent it from drying out. The little 'island' was connected to the towpath by small footbridges. Today the island is a haven for wildlife. Keep a look out for heron, swans and even deer.

60 PARTICK THISTLE FOOTBALL CLUB

Although Partick Thistle was formed in 1876, as the name suggests, the club began life elsewhere and it was almost 35 years before it moved here in 1909. The main building dates back to 1927.

61

61 MACKINTOSH QUEEN'S CROSS CHURCH

Mackintosh's only completed church design stands nearby. Built for the Free Church, it opened in 1899 and today it is the home of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society. Although prominent today, the church was once constricted by the enormous Springbank Iron Works which stood directly behind. Take time to see the magnificent stained glass and exceptional wood and stone relief carving within the light and dramatic interior.

The Mackintosh Church is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 10am – 4pm. An admission fee applies except after 2pm on Wednesday when entry is free. www.crmsociety.com

Section 5

FIRHILL TO PINKSTON BASIN *(1.5 miles)*

62 HAMILTONHILL CLAYPITS

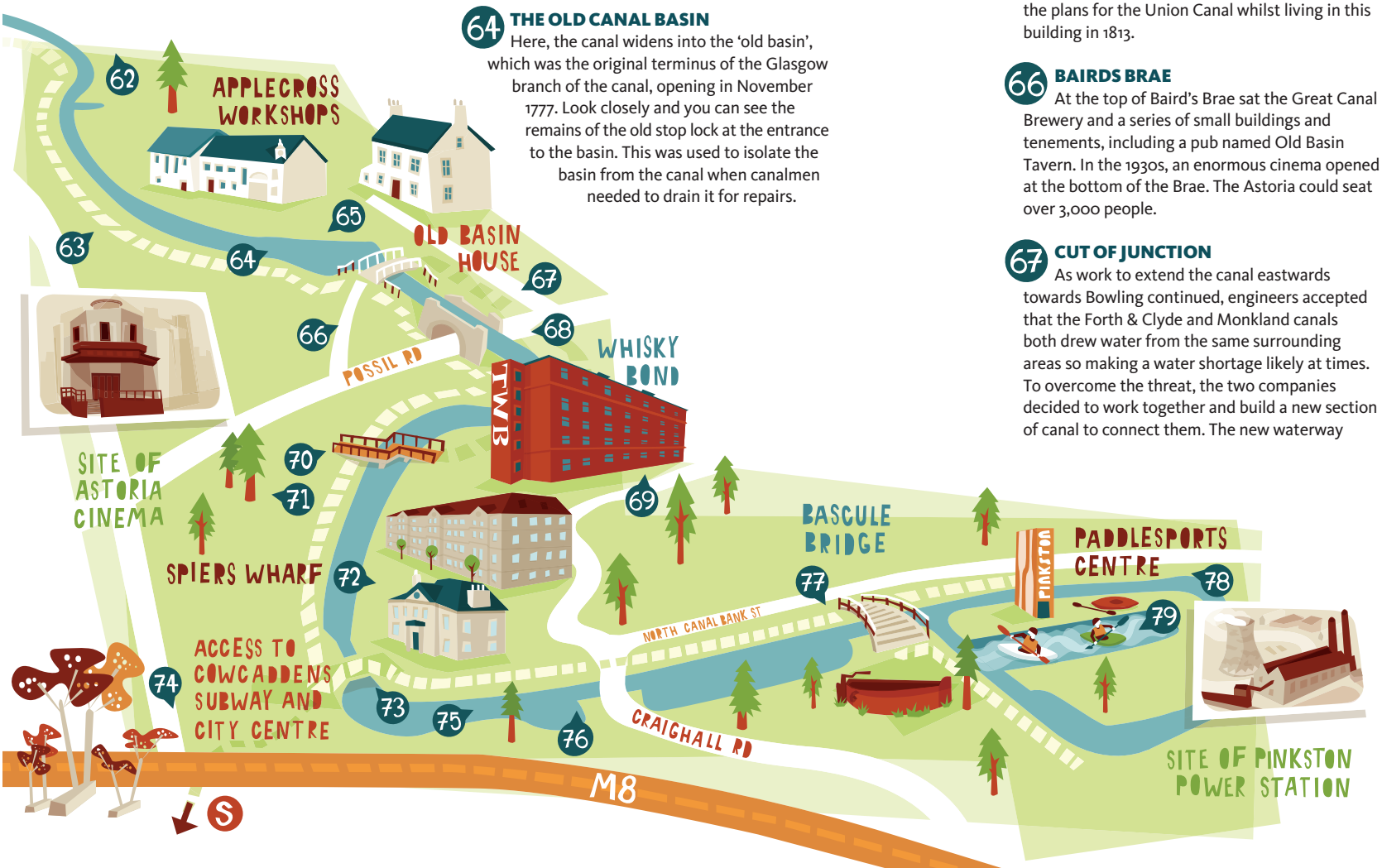
Across the other side of the canal lies Hamiltonhill. The site was once home to a series of claypits which produced the clay used to line the canal and make it watertight. A foundry also once stood here to the east. Today this is a pretty green open space with an abundance of wildlife and plants and a network of footpaths cared for by the Friends of Possilpark Greenspace *www.tinyurl.com/claypits*

63 GREAT CANAL MALTINGS

The area just south of the towpath was once busy with a series of related buildings and industries, including The Great Canal Maltings (pictured) and an Aerated Water Factory. The early water plant was, ironically, demolished after a fire in the 1970s. Built in 1888 for Hugh Baird & Son, The Great Canal Maltings supplied the Great Canal Brewery at the top of Baird's Brae on the canal near Applecross Street. There was also a bottling factory close by.

64 THE OLD CANAL BASIN

Here, the canal widens into the 'old basin', which was the original terminus of the Glasgow branch of the canal, opening in November 1777. Look closely and you can see the remains of the old stop lock at the entrance to the basin. This was used to isolate the basin from the canal when canalmen needed to drain it for repairs.



65 APPLECROSS WORKSHOPS AND OLD BASIN HOUSE

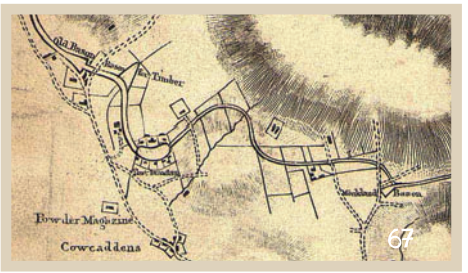
This series of whitewashed canal buildings is probably the oldest remaining on any canal in Scotland. They would originally have been warehouses to store goods shipped in and out by canal. Later, they were used as workshops for the canal company. Behind is Old Basin House. It is claimed that the engineer Hugh Baird developed the plans for the Union Canal whilst living in this building in 1813.

66 BAIRDS BRAE

At the top of Baird's Brae sat the Great Canal Brewery and a series of small buildings and tenements, including a pub named Old Basin Tavern. In the 1930s, an enormous cinema opened at the bottom of the Brae. The Astoria could seat over 3,000 people.

67 CUT OF JUNCTION

As work to extend the canal eastwards towards Bowling continued, engineers accepted that the Forth & Clyde and Monkland canals both drew water from the same surrounding areas so making a water shortage likely at times. To overcome the threat, the two companies decided to work together and build a new section of canal to connect them. The new waterway



extended from Hamiltonhill eastwards to the end of the Monkland and allowed the Monkland's water to feed into the Forth & Clyde. The connecting canal was completed in December 1790 and deepened in 1842 to allow larger boats to travel between the two canals as well.

68 POSSIL AQUEDUCTS

Look closely and you will see that there are actually two aqueducts sitting side by side here. The smaller aqueduct was built around 1790 when the Cut of Junction was constructed. It proved too small for Glasgow's expanding tram network, which was then extending north towards Possil. A larger aqueduct was built alongside to replace it in 1880. Just a few years later, a bomb exploded on the aqueduct but failed to burst the canal. Look how the current road was excavated out of the solid rock. It's no wonder a nearby house was called Rockvilla.

Section 5

69 THE WHISKY BOND

The large, red brick building on the north side of the canal is The Whisky Bond. Now home to Glasgow Sculpture Studios and a collective of artists and creative organisations, the building dates from the 1950s and is also known locally as The Mushroom Factory as it was used as a warehouse to grow funghi. If you have time, you could cross the footbridge to visit the Glasgow Sculpture Studios gallery.
www.glasgowsculpturestudios.org

70 NEW STOP-LOCK BRIDGE

As you round the corner, you will find the remains of a wartime stop-lock. A new sliding bridge will cross the canal here, leading to a boardwalk extending across the former timber basin on the corner and back round to the Whisky Bond and what will shortly be the new National Theatre of Scotland headquarters.

71 THE GLUE FACTORY

Housed in the former Scottish Adhesives Company warehouse, the Glue Factory is a vibrant new venue for exhibitions and events, showing everything from visual art and design to contemporary performance and film.
www.thegluefactory.org

72 SPIERS WHARF

The handsome buildings at Spiers Wharf, which were converted into flats in the 1990s, were once the industrial heart of this area. The northernmost building was part of the Wheatsheaf Mills. Next door stood The Port Dundas Sugar Refinery, which was established around 1865, and the remaining buildings formed part of the City of Glasgow Grain Mills and Stores, which were built for John Murray & Co from 1851. The smaller, detached building at the end was built in the Georgian style around 1812 as offices for the Forth & Clyde Canal Company.

73 SPEAKER MARTIN'S DROP LOCK

This modern lock was opened in 2001 to access the new basin. The lock gates here are hydraulically operated unlike the traditional hand-worked gates elsewhere on the canal.

74 COWCADDENS LINK AND PHOENIX FLOWERS

Take time to follow the path leading from the canal here down onto Garscube Road. The 50 stunning, brightly coloured Phoenix Flowers that rise eight metres high and lead under the motorway are part of a major project to improve the connections between the canal and the city centre. The giant flowers represent the former Phoenix Park, which gave way here to the M8 Motorway.

Cowcaddens Subway Station is just beyond the motorway here and bus stops can be found on Garscube Road. The city centre is just a few minutes walk from here.

75 THE MODERN BASIN

After the canal closed in the 1960s, a section of the original route at Port Dundas was lost with the construction of the M8 Motorway.
This stretch was once full of wharfs with evocative names, which gave some idea as to the destination of the goods departing or arriving on them: Rotterdam, Kirkcaldy and Leith. As part of the Millennium Link works, a new basin was created here to reconnect Spiers Wharf with the otherwise isolated section of canal at Pinkston. We're high above the city centre now with some excellent views to enjoy. At the end of the new basin, another drop lock raises boats back up to the level of the main canal. Follow the path up and cross over to the other side of the busy road at the traffic lights. Continue to follow the canal along North Canal Street.

76 PORT DUNDAS

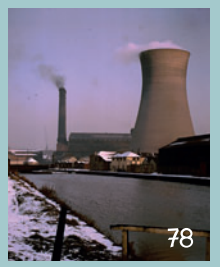
"Port Dundas was so called in honour of Thomas, Lord Dundas. It is the basin of the celebrated Forth and Clyde Canal, and is situated, strange to say, at the top of a hill overlooking the city. The appearance of ships' masts in such a position, over-topping the houses, presented to us a peculiar surprise. The canal, which is a direct water-way from the Clyde to the Forth, a distance of some thirty-seven miles, over the whole of its progress through bustling towns and quiet villages, commands fine views of the country, pretty water scenes, and the magnificent background of the Forth. Port Dundas itself, however, is the scene of great commercial activity, and the prominent feature of the locality is the Distillery."

The Whisky Distilleries of the United Kingdom, Alfred Barnard

It's hard to imagine now how busy and important Port Dundas was to Glasgow's trade in the heyday of the canal. Indeed, the many industries here included Port Dundas Distillery, which was one of the largest in the world in the 1880s and which still existed as recently as 2010.

77 RAILWAY SWING BRIDGE AND BASCULE BRIDGE

A large metal railway swing bridge, which once allowed locomotives to cross the canal and serve the industries on the north bank, now sits fixed open. The hand-worked cranking mechanism can be seen at the side of the bridge, which also still retains its rails. A further original wooden bascule bridge lies just beyond, giving access to where a very old steel lighter or barge, which was rescued from the canal basin, now sits in parkland.



78 SITE OF PINKSTON POWER STATION

The area is remembered by many as the site of the former Pinkston Power Station, which stood at the far end of the basins. Built in 1901 to serve the city's electric tram network, this huge building featured two enormous chimneys and a vast cooling tower, the tallest in Europe and visible for miles around. It was painted in camouflage colours during the Second World War so that it wasn't such a useful navigation aid for the Luftwaffe. The water in the basins was once warm thanks to the overflow from the power station.

79 PINKSTON PADDLESPORTS CENTRE

The towers of the former power station are being replaced by an equally impressive landmark, the £2.5m Pinkston Paddlesports Centre. The new centre, which features a fast flowing artificial whitewater course at its heart, is Scotland's first national training centre for elite canoeists and kayakers and a watersports hub for the local communities of North Glasgow. The brightly coloured tower and lower slung storage units are refurbished shipping containers.
facebook.com/paddlesportsglasgow

Section 6

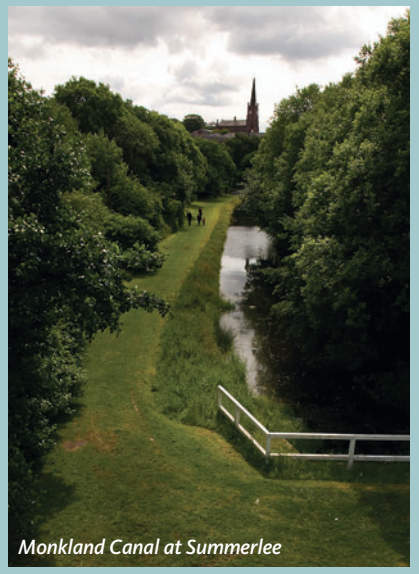
THE FORGOTTEN CANALS

Our final section looks at the other canals which once flowed within the City boundary but now sadly are mostly built over and not suitable for walking.

Just a little outwith the city boundary, there are stretches of the Monkland Canal which you can visit, particularly around Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life, Blair Bridge in Coatbridge, Calderbank and Drumpellier Country Park.

This part of the two hundred year old canal is undergoing a vibrant renaissance with new artworks, footbridges and interpretation bringing it back to life as a popular and welcoming waterside space.

http://tinyurl.com/summerleemuseum



Monkland Canal at Summerlee

Scotland's Most Successful Canal: The Monkland

The Monkland Canal was built to carry coal and other raw materials from Lanarkshire to the factories of Glasgow. Construction of the 19.5 mile long Monkland Canal began in the east in 1770 and the original terminus at Townhead opened in 1794.

As construction of the Forth & Clyde Canal continued towards Bowling however, engineers realised that there wasn't enough water flowing into the canal to sustain it. The ingenious solution was to extend the Monkland Canal to meet the Great Canal at Port Dundas so that it could act as a 'feeder'.

The connection between the two canals, the Cut of Junction, was made and soon deepened to allow boats to travel between the two waterways.

With the increased efficiency of the railway, however, came the decline of the Monkland Canal and it was finally abandoned in the 1940s. The waterway fell out of popularity and Glasgow City Council received a 1,000 strong petition calling for it to be filled in as the stagnant water and deep drops were a danger to children.

Without support, it wasn't long before sections of the canal were infilled and built over. Indeed, the M8 Motorway between Glasgow and Edinburgh was constructed along much of the waterway's length in Glasgow to the extent that it was originally dubbed the 'Monklands Motorway'.

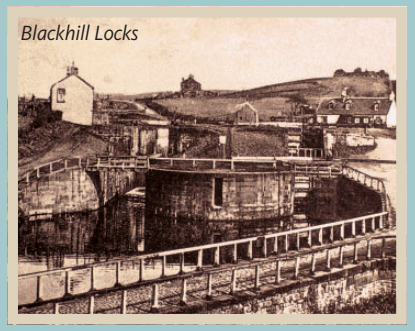
Although the Monkland Canal is no longer navigable, the water still travels along its length, mostly in pipes underground. The piped water supplied Ravenscraig Steel Works until it closed and today still feeds water into the Forth & Clyde Canal at Pinkston Basin.

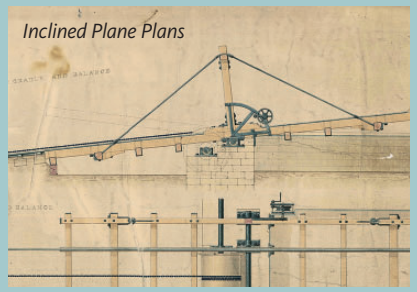
The Cut of Junction

THE FORGOTTEN CANALS

Feats of Engineering

The Monkland Canal featured two unusual structures.


Blackhill Locks


Inclined Plane Plans

A series of double locks was built at Blackhill to allow a number of boats to traverse the canal at once. The area also featured an inclined plane invented in the 1850s to move boats more quickly between the two different levels of waterway. This was basically a funicular railway for canal boats - vessels were transferred onto carriages running on tracks, which were then raised up or down the hill, using a pulley system.

The Cuilhill Gullet was a man-made island created in the canal channel so that tonnes of coal could be swiftly transferred between boats and the railway.

A Ghost Canal

Only a few fragments of the Monkland Canal remain visible within the Glasgow City boundary.

In addition to a spot at the far eastern edge of Glasgow, you can see a small section of towpath under Castle Street Bridge in Townhead, which is now a pedestrian underpass. Look for the worn lines at each end created by ropes hauling barges around the tight bend of the waterway.

Some fragments of the wharf walls and metal hooks from the Cuilhill Gullet are hidden away in a copse of trees in the middle of a field near Easterhouse!

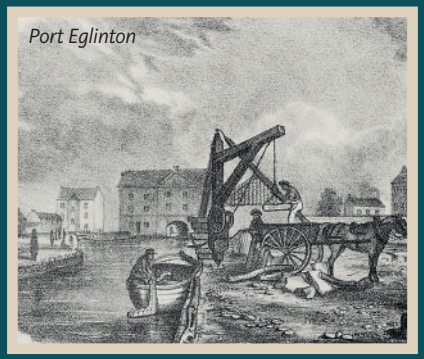
The Covenanter's Plaque, originally located in a wall next to the canal basin at Townhead, has moved several times over its history. Created to commemorate the martyrdom of three covenanters on the site in 1684, a stone was *'funded by the proprietors of the Monkland Navigation'*. Set into the wall of a cinema in the 1920s, it was moved beneath a motorway flyover in the 1960s and later to the nearby Martyrs Church in St Mungo Avenue, Townhead. There are now plans to demolish this church, so it may well be on the move again in the near future!

To experience the Monkland Canal above ground at its best, visit Coatbridge where a large section of towpath and canal have been restored. www.scottishcanals.co.uk/our-canals/monkland-canal

Castle Street Bridge

Glasgow's Third Canal

A third canal flowed into the city in the 19th century - the Glasgow, Paisley and Johnstone Canal. As the name suggests, this canal connected Glasgow and Johnstone although it was originally intended to extend further westwards, carrying coal from Ayrshire and other goods from the port at Ardrossan into the heart of Glasgow.


Port Eglinton

It opened in 1811, but closed just 70 years later when most of its length was filled in and used as the route for a new railway line. Sadly, there is nothing left to see above ground at the Glasgow Eglinton Street basin and terminus, although fragments of the port were found during excavations for the M74 Bypass and these can be seen at www.tinyurl.com/porteglinton

Some short watered sections still exist in Paisley and the memory of the canal lives on in the posthumously named 'Paisley Canal' railway line and station, as well as the name of Eglinton Street itself – named after Hugh Montgomerie, the 12th Earl of Eglinton, who financed much of the work.

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UNLOCKING THE STORY

EXPLORE THE TOWPATH
This free guide to help you explore five sections of the towpaths of Glasgow's canals was created as part of *Unlocking the Story*, a project to uncover, explore and celebrate the social and industrial history of canals around the city. These played such a defining role for the communities of North Glasgow from their industrial heyday through to the current renaissance being led through the Glasgow Canal Regeneration Project.

GIVE US YOUR CANAL STORIES!
We also need your help – do you have any canal-related stories? Did you grow up nearby? Did your family work on or near the canals? Have you any old photos or artefacts? We want to hear from you! Please get in touch. Email us at info@scottishwaterwaystrust.org.uk, ring 01324 677809 or send us your stories directly using the free App.

FIND OUT MORE...
This free booklet is just the start - You can download and access more information on each section and points of interest, along with more photos, audio clips and stories, plus news about local canal-related events, by using the free mobile phone and tablet app *Unlocking the Story* - find out more and download it at www.scottishwaterwaystrust.org.uk/uts

ALONG THE TOWPATH...
You will also find a series of QR codes along the route – scan these with the app to see more details, pictures and stories. Look out for a series of new waymarkers and information panels along the way.

Please share the towpath with other users and follow Scottish Canals Towpath Code of Conduct.
www.scottishcanals.co.uk

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