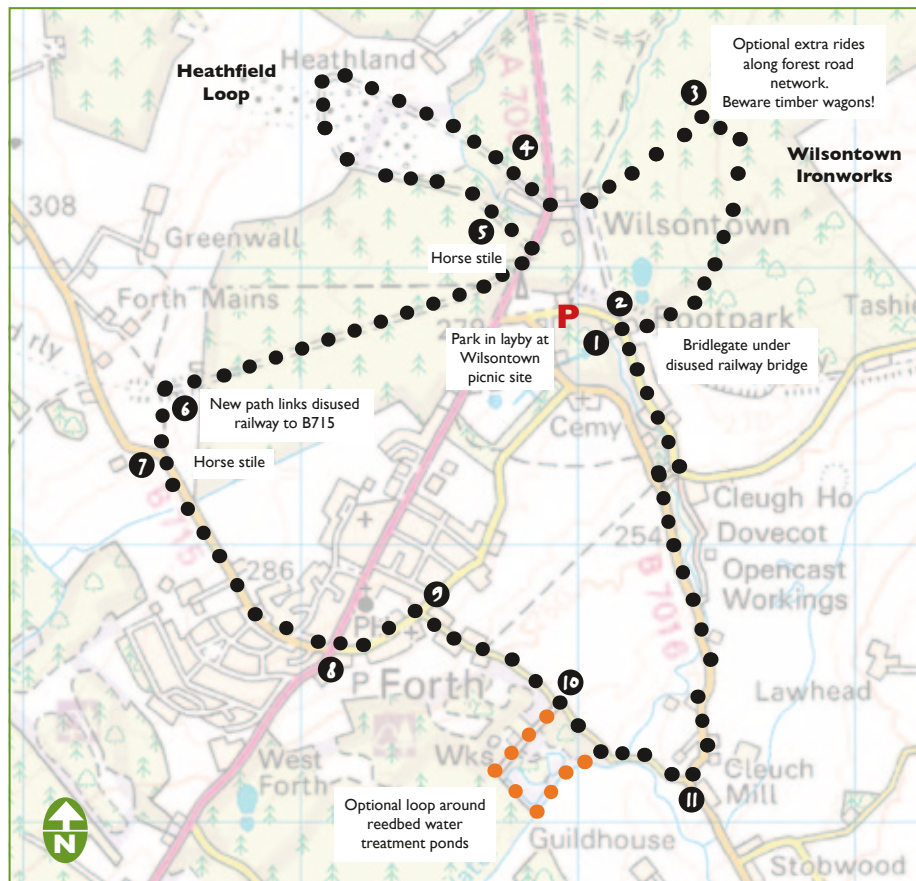


Route 6 - Forth and Wilsontown

A network of paths has been developed incorporating disused railway lines, forest tracks and other paths



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Description: A network of paths has been developed incorporating disused railway lines, forest tracks and other paths, which can be combined with local roads to create a circular route around Forth.

Location: Forth, approximately 6 miles north-east of Lanark

Distance: Variable 30 minutes - 3 hours

Maps: OS Landranger no. 72 Upper Clyde Valley
OS Explorer no. 343 Motherwell and Coatbridge

Parking: Off-road parking in small Forestry Commission car park/picnic site at The Glen, Wilsontown (OSGR NS950548) for up to two trailers or one lorry. Please make

sure you do not obstruct access for other vehicles, and clear up any dung.

Facilities: Shops in Forth.

Season: Most suitable year-round.

Going: Variety of level disused railway tracks, with some low gradient forest roads and purpose-built paths offering scope for variety of pace including some good canters.

Attractions: Industrial archaeology in the form of Wilsontown Ironworks. Good long canters on some of the disused railways.

Route Description

The routes described below follow formally waymarked paths which are suitable for use by horses most of the year. There are any number of other paths through the forest around Wilsontown which you may be tempted to explore, but the condition of these cannot be guaranteed, and you are advised to keep to the path to avoid former mine workings. Remember that you only have a right of access on these informal paths provided you are not causing any damage.

Most of the time the paths around Forth are quiet but some are popular with local people, particularly dog-walkers who may be frightened by horses at speed. Please respect other people who may be using the paths by reducing your pace to a walk when you meet or pass people on foot or cycle, and unless you can see clearly ahead.

Signs and access controls have been erected to try and stop motorbikes which have no legal right of access on the Forth access network but occasionally you may still meet scrambling bikes.

Wilsontown Ironworks

- 1. From the car park at The Glen, turn right up the minor public road towards Tashieburn and Auchengray. After 200m turn left through the wooden bridlegate under what was previously a bridge along the disused railway. Follow the main track ahead at 11 o'clock (north). Ignore the informal path on your right which follows the fenceline.
- 2. After approximately 100m turn right at the wooden waymark post up a level clearly defined firm grass track between an area of recently felled timber. At the next waymark post after approximately 100m, turn left along the disused railway. The bed of the disused railway is in places corrugated where the old sleepers have been removed - good for teaching horses balance and even strides at canter, but please respect other people enjoying this path.
- 3. At the T-junction at the end of the disused railway, turn left towards the old mine buildings. To continue on a circular route around Forth, ignore the bridge and turn left at the buildings, and then right before the trees, through the gate, past the houses on your left, to the main road. Turning right over the bridge will lead you along a track to the forest road network. Watch out for timber wagons and quarry traffic.

Heathfield

- 4. Cross directly over the main road onto the hard track to the right of the gardens and sheds at Pleasance Row. Immediately beyond the storeyard for Forth Roofing, pass around the right hand end of the barrier across the track. Follow the track/disused railway on through the trees, enjoying a good canter where visibility is clear ahead, continuing on the main track as it skirts left in front of the bing (spoil heap), and looping back along the track through the trees around to the main road.

- For a shorter ride, cross directly over the A706, walk over the horse-stile on the opposite side and head east on the disused railway for approximately 300m. The path leads down off the railway immediately before the missing bridge. Turn right through the bridlegate under the bridge, and right again to bring you back to The Glen.

- 5. To continue on a longer ride, at the A706 turn immediately right around the side of the barrier, onto the disused railway which runs around the north-east side of Forth. Follow the disused railway for approximately 1.2km until you see a fence across the track.

- 6. Shortly before the fence, turn left on the clearly defined path which leads off the disused railway along the side of the forest to join the public road at Climpy. If you are worried about traffic, retrace your steps back along the disused railway.

- 7. Turn left along the B715 into Forth, passing Climpy Industrial Estate and the police station on your left.

Horse stiles and horse-friendly gates have been installed around Forth and Wilsontown to allow riders to enjoy the route network.

Forth

- 8. At the junction with the A706 in the village of Forth, cross straight over. Follow this road past the bowling club.

- 9. Shortly after the Gospel Hall on your right, and immediately after the swingpark on your left, take the first public road to the right, and follow this road downhill.

- 10. About half-way down the hill, just before the mature trees, you can add in an extra loop by turning right around the right-hand end of a padlocked gate across a clearly defined stoned track. Carry along this track, past the waterworks on your right. Turn left just before you reach the semi-mature forest ahead (a kissing gate restricts access ahead through this forest because the ground is very wet and unsuitable for other than pedestrian use). Follow the path around the right hand-side of the reedbed (if you take the path to the left of the reedbed you will have to cross a grid at the far end to rejoin the main path, which some horses may not like). When you reach the fence enclosing the settling pond, look out for the information finger post which explains the filtration system being used to remove the iron from the water. Take care crossing the following bridge - a sign suggests you dismount - and follow the path to join the road just above the ford.

- 11. At the T-junction with the public road, turn left, over the bridge, and climb up the hill passing the opencast site on your right.

- 12. At the end of the segregated footpath, turn right between the white bollards to cross over the bridge onto the Tashieburn road. Turn left on the public road to return to your starting point at The Glen.