

FALKIRK BASE INFORMATION

Falkirk Wheel, Lime Road, Tamfourhill, Falkirk,
FK1 4RS
Tel: 0131 453 6218 Fax: 0131 777 8039
Email: fhb@capercailliecruisers.co.uk

Base Contact: Pat Bowie

HOTELS AND GUEST HOUSES

Best Western Park Lodge Hotel, Camelon Road, Falkirk, FK1 5RY
Double / single rooms - £65. Rates include breakfast. Tel. 01324 628331
www.bw-parkhotel.co.uk

Ashbank House, 105 Main Street, Redding, Falkirk, FK2 9UQ
Double rooms - £56, single rooms - £ 40. Rates include breakfast. Tel. 01324 716649
www.bandbfalkirk.com

Oaklands, 32 Polmont Road, Laurieston, near Falkirk, FK2 9QT
Double rooms - £65, single rooms – £45. Rates include breakfast. Tel. 01324 610671
www.oaklandsbedandbreakfast.co.uk

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

National Rail Enquiries: www.nationalrail.co.uk Tel: 08457 484950
www.thetrainline.com Tel: 0871 244 1545
www.scotrail.co.uk

Nearest Airport: Edinburgh - www.edinburghairport.com Tel. 0131 333 1000
Nearest Railway Station: Falkirk High station / Falkirk Grahamston

Taxi/Minicabs:

- Express Taxis Tel: 01324 622100 / www.expresstaxis.net
- Bruce's Taxis Tel: 01324 636000 / www.brucetaxis.co.uk
- Stenhouse Taxis Tel: 01324 551161

Approximate prices: (Prices courtesy of Express Taxis – subject to change)

- Falkirk train station to Falkirk: £8
- Edinburgh Airport to Falkirk: £38
- Glasgow Airport to Falkirk: £45
- Prestwick Airport to Falkirk: £80
- Manchester International Airport to Acton Bridge: £30

CAR HIRE

Enterprise Rent-a-Car has depots throughout the UK (including main airports). We have an exclusive agreement with Enterprise who will provide reduced rates for all Black Prince customers. Drop-offs, collections and one-ways are all available, allowing you to pick up a car at your arrival point and request a car to be waiting at the end of your holiday for onward travel. To enquire about rates and make a booking, please contact Chris Blair on: Christopher.J.Blair@ehi.com or call 07855 466919. Please allow two working days for a response.

GROCERIES

Tesco, Asda, and Morrisons are all within a ten minute drive from the Falkirk Wheel. Alternatively, shopping can be ordered on-line through the tesco website and delivered directly to the Falkirk base. You will need to access the website, login on as info@capercailliecruisers.co.uk, using the password: shopping. It will need to be paid for on your own card – just remember not to save the card details to the account!

HOW TO FIND US

By train: Catch a train to Falkirk High station or Falkirk Grahamston station.

HOW TO FIND US (by car)

From Edinburgh: Take the A8 for Glasgow and the West. At Newbridge roundabout take the M9 West for Stirling. Take the slip road off for Falkirk (Junction 5). Signs on the M9 indicate you should continue straight ahead for the Falkirk Wheel, but if you do not leave the motorway at junction 5 you will end up at the wrong car park. Once off at junction 5, follow the signs for the Falkirk Wheel/Mariner Centre, which will take you past Falkirk Football stadium and an ASDA distribution centre. This will eventually bring you to the Rosebank Beefeater restaurant at the Forth and Clyde canal. At the roundabout take a left and cross the canal (signposted for the Falkirk Wheel Service and disabled entrance). Immediately across the canal at the mini roundabout turn right. You will now be driving with the canal on your right-hand side and can follow the yellow AA Falkirk Wheel signs from here. At the second mini roundabout (with the Union Inn in front of you), go left up the hill and then take the first right. At the next mini roundabout, turn right to enter the Falkirk Wheel site. Park on the right, come down the hill, walk through the reception, turn right and our office is facing you.

SO YOU'RE READY TO SET OFF

(The reason for sending you this sheet is to get you started on your holiday with the minimum of delay)

About a week before your holiday starts you should 'phone British Waterways to book your departure day travel movement if you plan to go west towards Glasgow and the Clyde along the Forth and Clyde Canal. If you plan to go east through the Falkirk Wheel, along the Union Canal and towards Edinburgh **you do not need to book**. If you are going west you need to book a time to have Bonnybridge road lift bridge opened (British Waterways Tel: 0845 676 6000). Leave your telephone/mobile number if the line is busy, as the BW staff person is probably already on the 'phone. Remember, after you have sorted yourself and your luggage out on the boat, it will take us about 30 minutes to go through the handover procedures and then 35 minutes to travel west along the Forth and Clyde to Bonnybridge road lift bridge where BW staff will be waiting to meet you, take you through the bridge and up through the four locks that follow shortly after. It is important to keep to the time you have booked, or you may be delayed.

So for example your timetable might be: Arrive at Falkirk Wheel visitor centre car park 2.30pm. Load personal gear onto boat. Boat show round 2.55pm. Book Bonnybridge lift bridge passage for 4.00pm. Leave our base 3.25pm at latest.

If you are **GOING WEST** on the Forth and Clyde Canal, BW staff will see you through Bonnybridge road lift bridge and locks 17 – 20. You are then on the summit reach and there are no more locks between here and Glasgow, but there are two more bridges. If you want to celebrate the start of your holiday with a restaurant meal, we would recommend you moor on the towpath side immediately you come out of lock 20. Glenskirlie House – which won a Restaurant of the Year award a few years back - is a 10-minute walk away on the towpath side. Follow the road to the T-junction and turn right there and about 100 yards along the restaurant is on the left. Book well in advance – 01324 840201 - to eat in the restaurant. Bar meals are also available at lunchtime. If the weather is warm, don't miss the garden at the rear. You can stay at lock 20 overnight if you wish. At lock 20 let the BW staff know where you intend to stop for the night, what time you plan to leave the following morning and how far you intend to go that day. This will save you a 'phone call in the morning - but make sure you stick to your departure time next day – to get through those two road bridges.

By the way, you can travel from Falkirk to Glasgow in about 9 hours. (Glasgow to Bowling will take you a day). If you plan to go into Glasgow, which is the place to stop the night, even if you are going down to Bowling the following day, you need to take the left fork when the canal splits. This is Stockingfield Junction. You can moor at one of two places. The first is at BW headquarters at Applecross Street. Your BW key on the key ring will allow you to open the gate surrounding the BW premises and get back in when you return. It is a 15-minute walk across the canal down into the city centre. There is a watchman on duty throughout the night at Applecross Street. The other alternative is Spiers Wharf. To stop here you need to have phone BW in advance, as you come into Glasgow, on 0845 676 6000 to get the bascule bridge at Applecross Street opened for you and you need to be here by 5.00pm at the latest. Plenty mooring space at Spiers Wharf.

If you are **GOING EAST** up through the Falkirk Wheel and along the Union Canal towards Edinburgh, as soon as your showround has been completed we will place you in any queue there might be for the Wheel. We will open the pedestrian bridge for you and once you have passed through this bridge, turn immediately into the lower lock, which should be set for you. Have your mooring ropes (bow and stern) coiled in advance and pass the entire coils once round the poles that run the entire depth of the lock and then once round the cleat on the front of the boat and also hold the stern in. This will allow you to hold your position whilst the lock fills. When the lock has filled and the gates have been opened, the BW staff will tell you when to proceed across and into the wheel gondola.

Even though the green traffic light is showing, wait for their instruction. If there is a wind blowing, usually from the west, you need to make allowance for it when crossing the wheel basin. Enter the gondola and both someone at the bow and stern should go onto the walkway and tie off the boat. Everyone should get back onto the boat whilst the wheel turns. The thing of interest to watch for here is over the stern as the baffles rise from the water, the water is drained from between them, and the securing bolts are withdrawn. Then the wheel begins to turn. When you have completed your cycle, your crew in the bow can watch the same thing happening in reverse. BW staff will tell you when to leave the gondola. If it is windy at the top, keep a reasonable amount of throttle open so you are not pushed into the leeward bank. Pass through the tunnel under the Antonine Wall – if you keep your eyes on one side of the boat and make sure you keep a roughly constant space from the towpath, you will keep straight. If you look to the front of the boat, an optical illusion will suggest you are not going straight. Once you leave the tunnel, turn to the left and into the first of two locks in series. Same procedure as in the lower lock with only BW operating them. If the lock gates are not open, moor at the bollards on your left until the lock has been emptied and the gates opened. Once you have cleared these locks you have no more obstacles between you and Edinburgh, which is 10 and a half hours cruising away. However, you will pass through the Falkirk Tunnel, which usually has a water spout coming through the roof at the west end on the towpath side. It is easily avoided. Best place to stop for your first night is Linlithgow (just through the bridge at Manse Road basin, where the Linlithgow Union Canal Society have their boats), which is three hours from the locks. If you would like to have a bottle/s of wine delivered to the boat when you arrive at the basin, 'phone Linlithgow Wines (Tel: 01506 848821) after clearing the locks, place your order and tell them you will be there in three hours. It is only five minutes walk to the High Street in Linlithgow and a good selection of restaurants and take aways. Again, if you would like to start your holiday with a restaurant meal you might want to try Livingston's in the High Street – 2AA rosette award. But ring (Tel no. 01506 846565) and book several weeks in advance for Saturday nights. If you want to stop earlier, the best thing is to go through the Falkirk Wheel and the two locks above it and then moor up. You can then walk back to your car and have access to Falkirk.

If you are cooking on board and don't want to travel very far once you have cleared the top locks, moor up in front of the door into the Seagull Trust boathouse just before the Falkirk Tunnel. This is a good spot if you have a dog, as there are acres of parkland right beside you. Not a good place if you plan a long lie, as the Seagull Trust people may want to shift you about nine in the morning so they can get their boat out.

Subsequent movements through the Falkirk Wheel – If you are coming from the west along the Forth and Clyde Canal, you should 'phone to book the Falkirk Wheel when you pass under Bonnybridge road bridge. Similarly, if you are coming from the east along the Union Canal, you should 'phone the Falkirk Wheel when you have cleared the Falkirk Tunnel and before the Seagull Trust boathouse.

Movement on the Forth and Clyde Canal if coming through the wheel off the Union Canal – advise British Waterways (Tel: 0845 676 6000) the DAY BEFORE you want to start moving west on the Forth and Clyde. Tell them the name of the boat, what time you will be at Bonnybridge road bridge (or where you will be setting off from the following morning and at what time) and how far you wish to go that day. There is little point going east on the Forth and Clyde Canal from our base, other than down to lock 16 where there is a turning place and the Union Inn (good spot for a meal in their conservatory restaurant (To book tel: 01324 623578). From here it is just a series of locks down to the sea.

Hours for Locks and Bridges – Forth and Clyde Canal

8.30am – 5.15pm (Mid June to end August 8.30am – 7.15pm)

Falkirk Wheel hours and locks above and below

Apr 1 – May 31 Mon – Thu 9.00am – 6.00pm; (7.00pm Fri/Sat/Sun)

June 1 - Sept. 2 9.00am – 7.00pm

Sept 3 – Oct 31 Mon – Thu 9.00am – 6.00pm; (7.00pm Fri/Sat/Sun)

FORWARD PLANNING

- MOBILE 'PHONE -** Bring a mobile phone and a car cigar lighter re-charger connection with you if you have them, to enable you to contact the Falkirk Wheel staff to arrange passage through the wheel and to contact other British Waterways staff if and when required. If you do not have a 'phone, we can rent you one with re-charger at a small charge.
- Locks and bridges on the Forth and Clyde Canal are also currently operated by BW staff and a 'phone will allow you to contact them and arrange passage at your convenience. The reason for this is that some of the lock gates are still very stiff after having lain virtually unused for over 30 years. BW staff welcome your assistance with lock operation.
- WHICH DIRECTION -** Decide which direction you wish to travel first when you set out in your narrowboat on Saturday afternoon from our base at the Falkirk Wheel - east through the Falkirk Wheel and onto the lock free Union Canal towards Edinburgh, or west along the Forth and Clyde Canal towards Glasgow.
- EAST -** You do not need to book passage through the Falkirk Wheel. As soon as you are ready to leave, we will put you in any queue there might be for the Wheel. The wheel closes at 7.00pm in June/July and August and from March to May and September and October at 7.00pm on Fri/Sat/Sun and 6.00pm Mon – Thu.
- WEST -** If you wish to go west on the Forth and Clyde Canal first on your departure Saturday, about a week before your departure date you **MUST** 'phone British Waterways on 0845 676 6000 and tell them what time you intend to be at Bonnybridge lift bridge. Allow 30 minutes to load your luggage onto the boat and settle in. It will then take us about 30 - 40 minutes to complete the handover and 35 minutes for you to cruise from our base to Bonnybridge. So allow 1 hour 45 minutes between arrival and bridge booking time.
- BW staff may ask to vary your time slightly depending on other craft in transit.