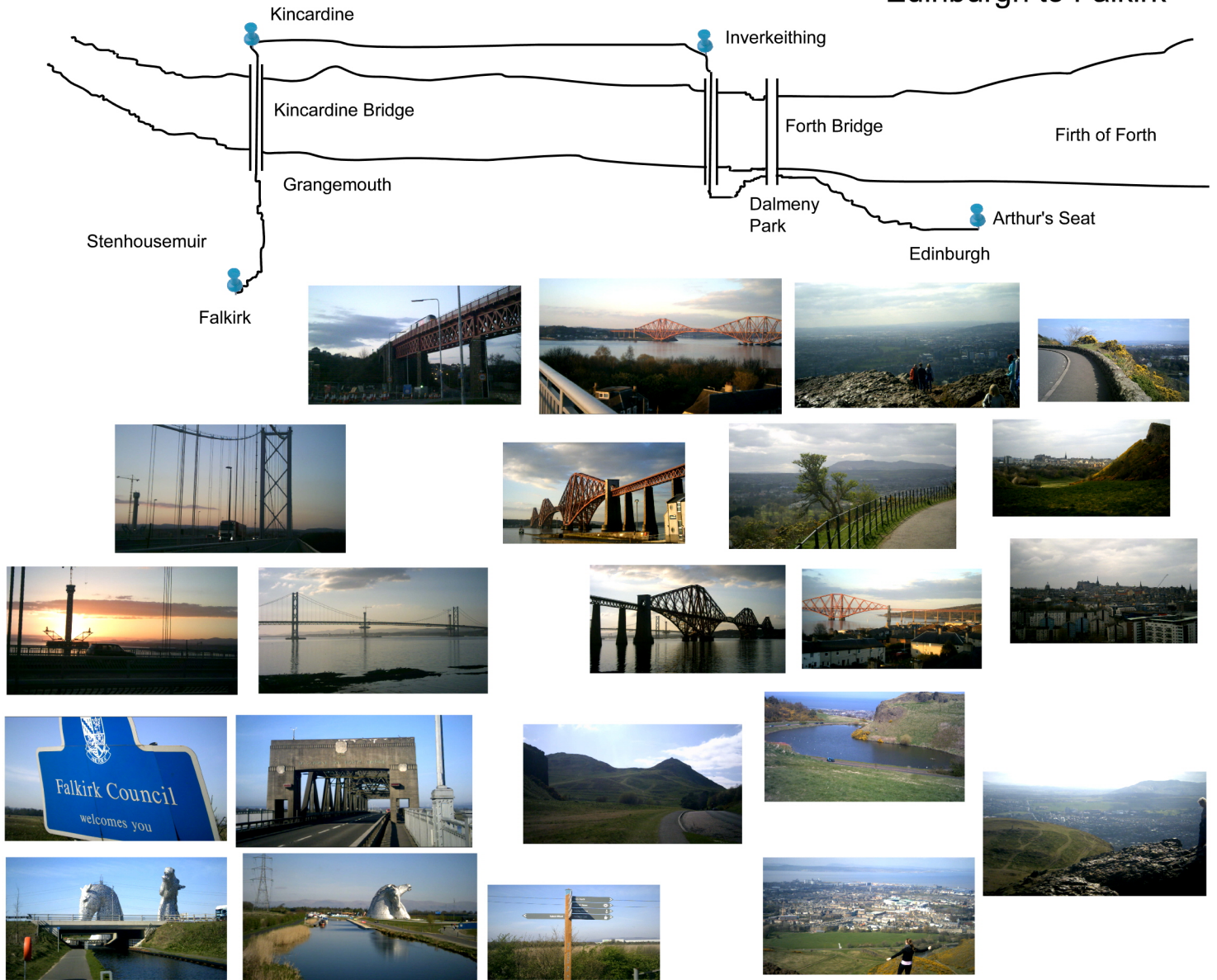


# Edinburgh to Falkirk



The best way to get to Falkirk from Edinburgh, I would say, would be along the Union canal, although I haven't tried it. I, on the other hand had to be different because I wanted to walk over the Forth Bridge. As soon as I reached Edinburgh, I made my way, not west, towards Falkirk, but east, towards Arthur's seat. Maybe I needed a bit of a challenge, so I decided to walk to the top of Arthur's seat, which, if you know Edinburgh at all, is a great big lump of volcanic rock situated right in the middle of Edinburgh city. I remember how shocked I was to see this mini mountain in the middle of the city the first time I visited Edinburgh, kind of like the shock I felt in seeing a great big gorge on the edge of Bristol. I thought I would walk up the steep side at the front of Arthur's seat to save time, only to find that this was not exactly Arthur's seat, the tallest peak being situated more or less in the centre, but this proved to be a waste of time, anyway, as you go up so far, only to have to come back down again. This then leads to a road that travels along the edge of the mountain until you come to a spot with a lake and you are surrounded by hills and some tall peaks. I went up one hill only to find that everyone was walking up this steep side at the centre of this cluster and so I followed to the tallest peak. The view was breathtaking as you could see all around Edinburgh, but getting onto the very top was even more of a challenge as it was surrounded by students. I nearly knocked one of them off with my rucksack in my determination to reach the summit, accidentally, of course!

It was now about 3 p.m. and I left Arthur's seat to head towards the Forth Bridge. I followed the A90 from Edinburgh City until I met a diversion which led me through Dalmeny Park. The park is quite beautiful, as it's path leads you along the Firth of Forth, until you come to a clearing, and there standing in all it's magnificence, is the Forth Bridge, towering above you as you walk under it towards the road bridge. It was about 8 p.m. when I reached the road bridge and I started to cross. Thankfully it was still light, so I could take some pictures as I crossed over. The road bridge, at this time was in the process of being replaced by another bridge, I could see the giant pylons in place for the new bridge. Whether they were going to just repair or completely replace the old bridge I wasn't sure. Thinking how long the railway bridge has stood for and the road bridge hasn't lasted nearly as long. After the bridge I reached Inverkeithing and then followed the A985, which isn't very good for walking on and stayed overnight at a village called Crombie.

The day after, I headed towards Kincardine and the swing bridge which takes you back over the Firth of Forth. After the bridge I started south towards Stenhousemuir and Falkirk. I could see Grangemouth on my left, but as I gradually approached Falkirk, I noticed two very large structures. As I came nearer they appeared to be two very large Horse's heads. At first I thought it was something to do with Horse Racing or Equestrian, but when I did finally reach them it became clear that they were alongside the canal and situated at a newly built exhibition centre dedicated for the canal. I found out that the horse's heads are called Kelpies and there is a strange legend regarding them. I would much rather think of them as commemorating the horse's that used to pull the canal barges.

By Philip Catherall.