

Fountain Gardens

Directions

Start at the main entrance of **Paisley Abbey**. Walk past the entrance of the **Town Hall**, cross **Gauze Street** and turn left passing the front entrance of the **Piazza Shopping Centre** on your right. At the war memorial turn right down **Gilmour Street**. Pass through County Square and underneath the **railway arch**, before crossing straight over at the traffic lights. Turn right along **Old Sneddon Street**. A few metres along, take the steps on the left down to the riverside. Go up the steps at the far end of the walkway and turn left onto **Niddry Street**. Cross over using the pedestrian crossing and then continue in the same direction along Niddry Street. Turn right onto **Love Street** and you will find **Fountain Gardens** a few metres along on the left. Walk straight across the park and out of the other side onto **Caledonia Street**. Turn left and proceed to the mini roundabout, then turn left along **St James Street**. At the far end cross St James Street and turn left. Walk under the first railway arch. Continue along **Moss Street** and cross diagonally at Paisley Cross. Enter Dunn Square by the steps between the Coats brothers' statues. Cross the square and then walk along cobbled **Forbes Place**. Continue along the river before turning left over the Abbey Bridge. To return to the start turn left into **Abbey Close**.

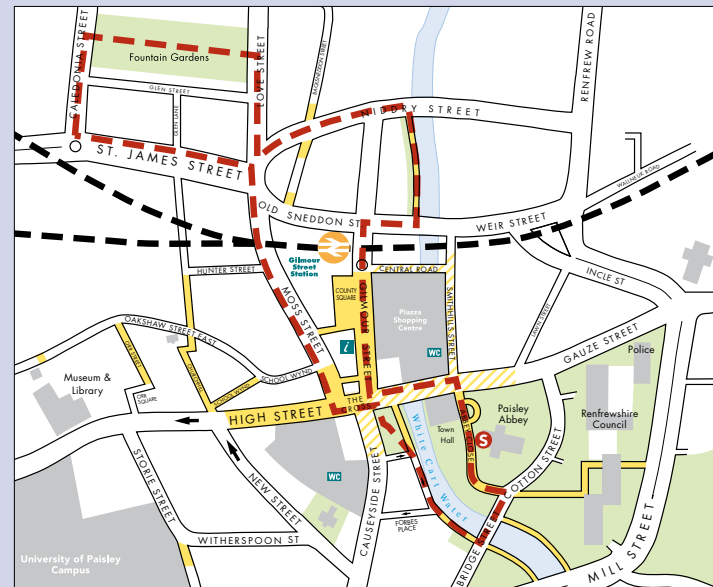


Fountain Gardens

walking to health



Distance: 2.5kms Approximate time: 30 mins





A little local knowledge

As you walk through **Abbey Close** try to imagine what it may have looked like 130 years ago. Until the early 1870's it was crowded with houses, workshops and factories jostling together.

In **County Square** the former Post Office was described as the finest public Post Office in the west of Scotland. Today County Square is a bustling place with people hurrying for buses, trains or taxis. However, spare a thought for the people who met their grisly end here at the hands of the public executioner.

Admire the ornate ironwork on the **Abercorn Bridge** over the **White Cart Water**. Here the river emerges from under the Piazza, at this very moment **Mallards** or even **Swans** could be paddling through the dark from the open water on the other side of the building.

In 1808 John Love, a rich Paisley merchant, bought six acres of land in the north end of Paisley. Here he opened the Hope Temple Gardens. There were formal gardens, a small

museum and an outdoor menagerie complete with monkeys and bears. The gardens were so popular that **Love Street** was renamed in John's honour.

In 1866 Thomas Coats bought the gardens. He had them transformed into the **Fountain Gardens** and presented them to Paisley as its first public park in 1886. The magnificent fountain is decorated with herons and dolphins as well as four life sized walruses. One of the oak trees in the park is reputed to have grown from an acorn from the Wallace Tree in Elderslie. It was in this tree that William Wallace is said to have hidden from his enemies. Looking up busy **St James Street** towards the Sheriff Court it is hard to believe that at the beginning of the twentieth century both a cattle market and a donkey market were held here. The cattle market took place in the vicinity of Glen Lane, whereas the donkey sales were situated outside the Sheriff Court.

