



From Romans to Reels

Directions

Walk 1 - - - - -

Start from the main entrance of the **Royal Alexandra Hospital** on Corsebar Road. Turn left along Corsebar Road. Pass the end of three dead end roads on the right. Turn right along the fourth road, **Cross Road**. Follow this road to the end. You will pass a small area of woodland on your right with a small burn (the Candren Burn) at the bottom of the slope. At the end of Cross Road turn right onto the main road. You will eventually pass a cricket ground on your right. Continue on to the traffic lights and then turn right onto Corsebar Road and return to the hospital.

Walk 2 - - - - -

Start from the main entrance of the **Royal Alexandra Hospital** turn right passing the hospital car park on your right. At the first road junction turn right into **Riccartsbar Avenue** and follow the avenue to the top. Continue round to the left to the junction with **Craw Road**. Turn left along Craw Road and continue to the junction with **Corsebar Way**. Turn left and walk along the road, continue onto the footpath returning along Corsebar Road to the hospital.



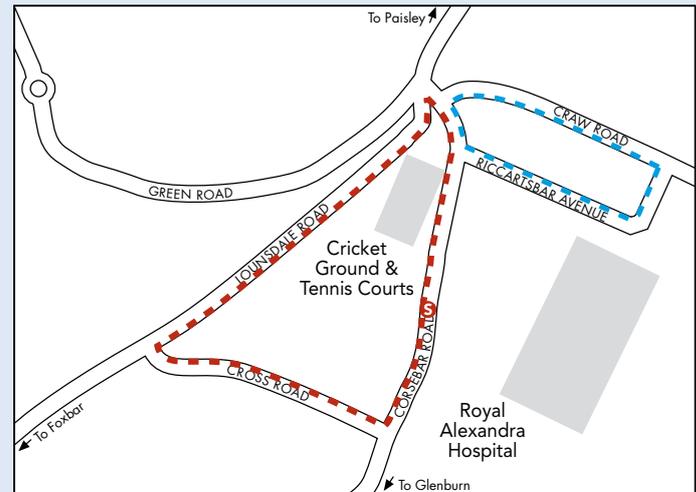
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walking to health



Walk: - - Distance: 1.8kms Approximate time: 25 mins

Walk: - - Distance: 1.2kms Approximate time: 15 mins



A little local knowledge

Nowadays there is little sign of the long history that has shaped this area. Riccartbar Avenue rises up the edge of the hill on which there may have been a fort in Roman times. This was possibly located just the other side of Craw Road behind Main Road. From the top the Roman lookouts would have had an excellent view out south towards Gleniffer Braes and north to the Clyde - a good place to spot marauding natives.

The fort is thought to be one of three in what has become Paisley, the others being at Oakshaw and Woodside and together they formed the station of Vanduara manned by the 20th Imperial Legion. Those with sharp ears and a wild imagination may still hear the tramp of ghostly Roman feet returning from a foray into the surrounding countryside. On the other hand those tramping feet might be the mill lassies on their way to the Ferguslie Mills.

In 1826 James Coats set up one mill on a small site between the Candren Burn and the Paisley Canal. By this time James had already made a small fortune by making silk crepe, a material used for gowns by fashionable women. His new venture was to make cotton thread. James retired in 1830 leaving his thread business to his sons James and Peter, J & P Coats was born. The two brothers quickly brought another brother Thomas on board. The three made an



excellent combination- James was a weaver, Peter an accountant and Thomas an engineer.

The Coats brothers provided benefits for their workers. A 'half time' school was built for children who worked in the mill. Some children went to the school in the morning and others in the afternoon. This way the company could control both the timetable and the syllabus taught! Nursery education was provided for children of female workers who had no other means of looking after them. They also paid the fees of all young male workers who wished to attend the local technical college.

The Coats thread empire stretched across the world and the family became fabulously wealthy. They gave some of their wealth back to Paisley by paying for some of its fine buildings such as the Museum and Art Gallery, the Observatory and Coats Memorial Church.