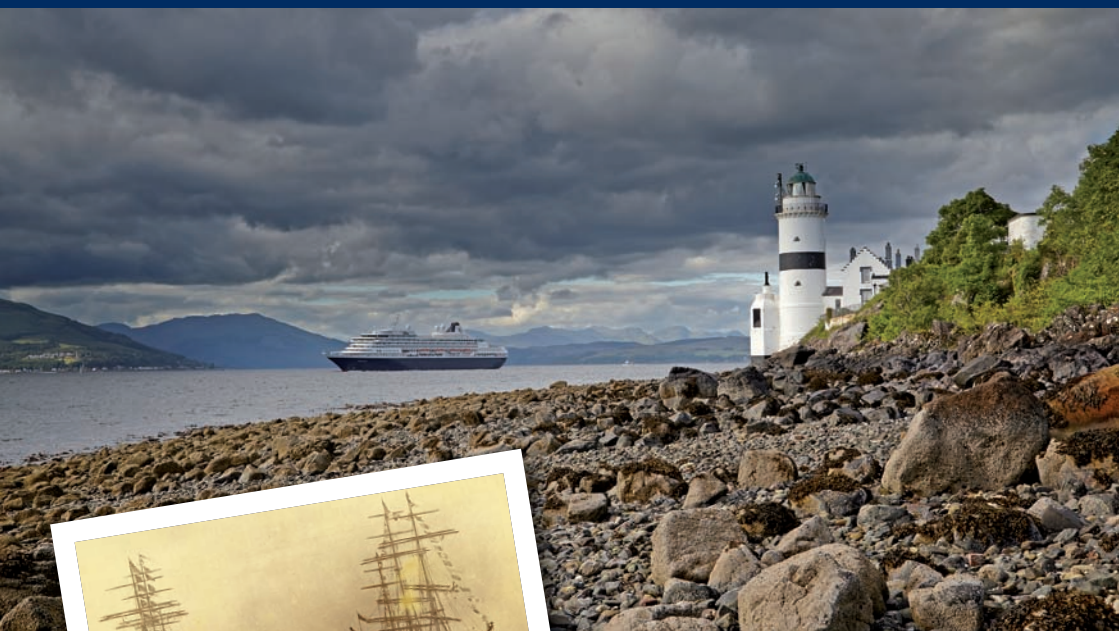
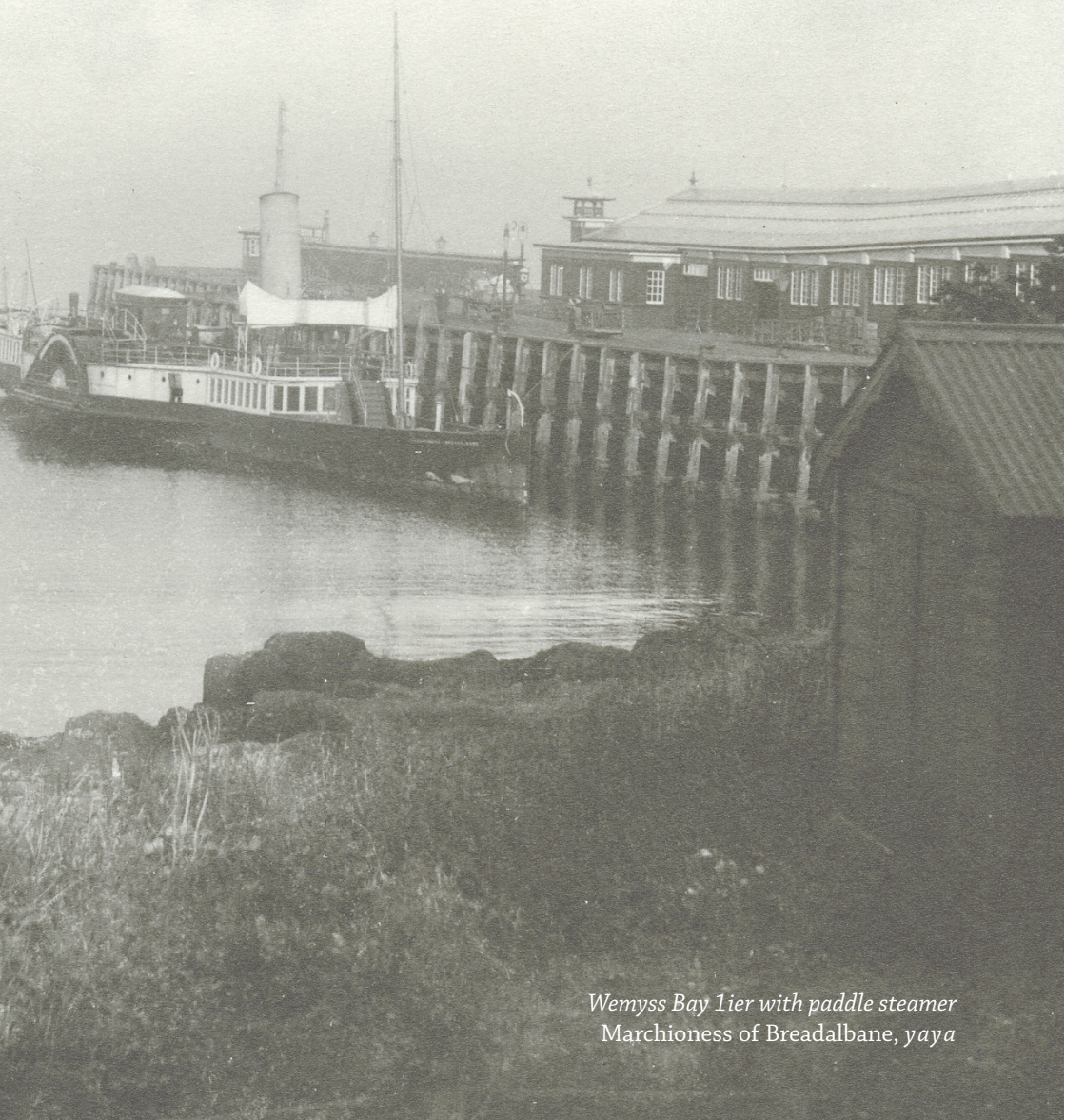


# Heritage Inverclyde Coastal Trail

Find out about fascinating places  
by bike, bus, train, car or on foot







*Wemyss Bay tier with paddle steamer  
Marchioness of Breadalbane, yaya*

# Heritage Inverclyde Coastal Trail

An invitation to explore!

## Welcome to the heritage of Inverclyde.

This booklet will tell you about many of the places you can discover and enjoy along the coast of Inverclyde from Finlaystone in the east to Wemyss Bay in the west.

The story of this beautiful and busy bit of Scotland begins before written history when people began living along the south bank of the *Cluaidh*, the Gaelic name for the River Clyde. *Inbhir Chluaidh* means the mouth of the Clyde, which begins its journey many miles away in the Lowther Hills. Since those early settlements, the coastline you can explore has changed in many ways and has witnessed great events and important happenings.

As you travel from place to place, you'll learn about our natural history and the tales of our people at work, home and play. At each of the places shown in this booklet, you'll find a helpful information point which will provide more stories that help to bring alive this memorable coastal stretch.

We hope you'll get a lot of pleasure from exploring and spending time along our Coastal Trail. There are several waterside walks and cycle routes linking most of the places in this leaflet.





Custom t ouse 9 uay, Greenock, cyB B



# Heritage Inverclyde Coastal Trail

Find out about  
fascinating places  
by bike, bus, train,  
car or on foot

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# 1 Finlaystone Country Estate

## **The story of Finlaystone over its 800 years offers many insights into Scotland's past.**

It has belonged to only eight families and an early owner, Sir Robert Danielstoun, was 'holden of the king and his successors for payment yearly on the first of Pentecost at the village of Renfrew of a silver penny'.

A later owner, Alexander Cunningham, Earl of Glencairn, 'the good' earl, is said to have invited John Knox to give communion to his family under a yew tree which still stands. Charles II made the 9th earl Lord High Chancellor of Scotland and the 14th earl was a distinguished patron of Robert Burns. Today, Finlaystone is home to the chief of Clan MacMillan whose family manages the 500-acre estate.

The present house was built around 1746 and incorporates an earlier 'castle'. It was greatly altered in 1900 and the renowned formal garden were re-landscaped. The woodlands are a great delight in spring months when they're illuminated by snowdrops and other flowers. You'll thoroughly enjoy your encounters with wildlife when exploring the estate; children, especially, love hearing the rangers' tales of deer, squirrels, stoats and the colony of herons.





**Parklea is close to the Inner Clyde Nature Reserve which protects the mudflats along the shore.** Particularly in the winter months, they attract great numbers of wildfowl and wading birds that feed on the plentiful worms, insects, molluscs and crustaceans. Redshanks, with their distinctive tyu-yu flight call, and the more plaintive curlew, arrive in large flocks. You may also see – or hear – tumbling peewits (lapwings) and noisy oystercatchers as well as elegant eider ducks, patrolling cormorants, scaups and goldeneyes. The sturdy little reed buntings and skulking snipe breed on the reserve.

Many people who buy produce or enjoy a cup of coffee at Parklea, just east of Port Glasgow, probably don't know its inspiring story. Parklea Farm was bought just before the second world war to save the coast from further industry and its new sports facilities are successors to the original playing fields. Parklea Association *Branching Out* was set up more recently to use horticulture as a vehicle for training, work experience and supported employment for people with support needs. Those who work at Parklea look after the Oriental, Five Continents and Woodland Gardens as well as producing soft fruit and vegetables.

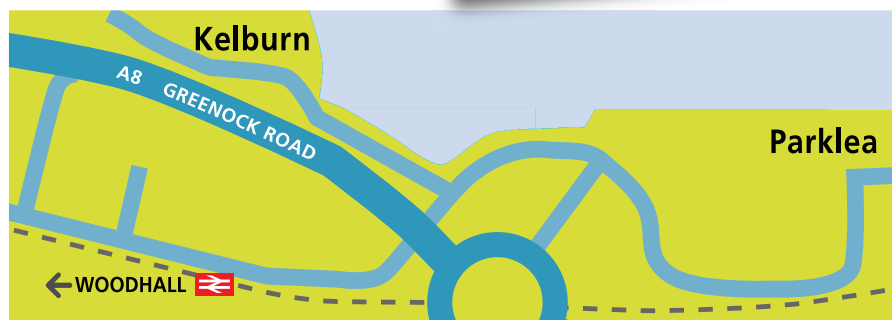


### 3 Kelburn Park

**Sticking up along the shoreline at Kelburn Park is an unusual reminder of the Inverclyde's shipbuilding heritage.**

The wooden posts driven into the mudflats are best seen at low tide and were used to mark out enormous timber ponds. During the 19th century in particular, Port Glasgow and Greenock's shipyards needed huge quantities of cut timber which was stored here on arrival from Scandinavia and North America. The empty ponds are poignant evidence of past industrial prosperity and maritime trading. The park itself hides its less glamorous origins as a former 'coup' or tip.

One of the pleasures of walking through Kelburn Park is the view across the River Clyde to the sea lochs and hills of Argyll. You are looking across the Highland Boundary Fault, the geological dividing line that separates the Highlands from the Lowlands. To the north west is the Cowal Peninsula (take the ferry from McInroy's Point), to the north is the Cove Peninsula (take the passenger ferry from Gourock) and, to the north east, is Helensburgh. The beds of the Holy Loch, Loch Long, the Gare Loch and the Clyde were all scoured out by glaciers during the ice ages.



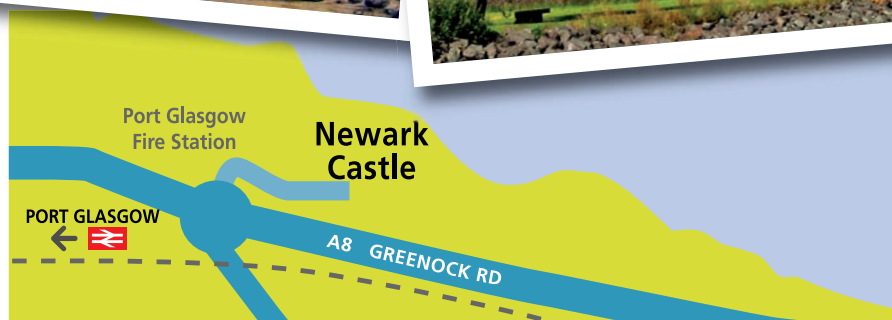


# Newark Castle 4

**To call a 15th-century building a 'new wark' – hence Newark Castle – seems odd today but in the late 1400s, that's how it was known.**

This was a stronghold of the Maxwell family, and the great tower house – with its gunholes shaped like inverted keyholes – is part of the original structure. James IV stayed here in 1495 before setting off for the Hebrides to quell opposition to his rule. Sir Patrick Maxwell knocked down some of the original castle and built a fine Jacobean residence with projecting turrets and crow-stepped gables. Newark is one of the best buildings from that period to survive.

Sir Patrick, however, was less elegant in his relations with his neighbours – he murdered two of them and with his family. He beat his wife and locked her up for months. Lady Margaret tried to have her 'unkind and unnatural husband' restrained but finally fled to Dumbarton after 44 years of marriage. In 1668, the first harbour of Newport Glasgow was constructed beside the castle and began an age of prosperity. The castle is open in spring and summer and visitors can explore 'upstairs and downstairs' and look for 'my lady's chamber' where Sir Patrick imprisoned his spouse.



## 5 Coronation Park

**Coronation Park is an early example of 'post-industrial' Inverclyde.**

**If you'd come to Port Glasgow a hundred years ago, you'd have struggled to see the river past all the docks and shipyards.** However, as shipbuilding declined, yards were demolished and harbours filled in. One outcome was Coronation Park, opened in 1937 to mark the coronation of King George VI. Ever since, it's been a popular place to relax and enjoy the views over the river. The park is a great place for families to picnic while the kids test out the play equipment. It's also a favourite place to while away time fishing for mackerel.

Port Glasgow owes its existence to the shallow waters of the Clyde which, before large-scale dredging was introduced, prevented large ships from going upstream to Glasgow itself. And so, from here to Gourock, vessels of all shapes, sizes and purposes used to dock, load and unload alongside shipyards and boatbuilders. Dry docks were another feature of the industrial scene and the QE2 – built upriver at Clydebank in 1969 – was a familiar sight at nearby Inchgreen during its final trials. The historic steamship, the PS Comet, was built at Port Glasgow.





**A Helensburgh hotel and public baths owner built PS Comet, the first steam-powered passenger ship in Europe.** In 1811, Henry Bell commissioned John and Charles Wood of Port Glasgow to construct the paddle-steamer. It had a tiny cabin and its funnel could support a sail when there was a following wind. Bell's notice in the Greenock Advertiser in August 1812 said:

***The Steamboat Comet Between Glasgow, Greenock and Helensburgh for Passengers Only***

*The subscriber, having at much expense, fitted up a handsome vessel to ply upon the River Clyde from Glasgow, to sail by the power of air, wind, and steam, intends that the vessel shall leave the Broomielaw on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays about mid-day, or such hour thereafter as may answer from the state of the tide, and to leave Greenock on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in the morning to suit the tide.*

Bell charged 'four shillings [20p] for the best cabin, and three shillings [15p] for the second'. He later lengthened the Comet and ran a four-day service to Oban and Fort William using the Crinan Canal. Sadly, the vessel was shipwrecked in 1819 near Oban but no lives were lost.

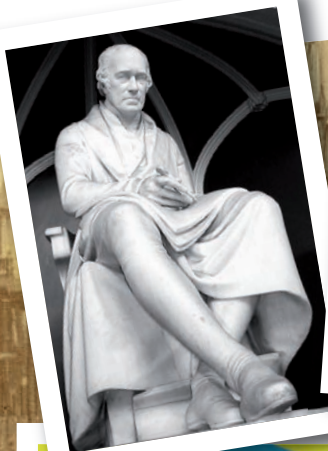


## 7 James Watt Dock

**The James Watt Dock is named after the pioneering engineer who was born in Greenock in 1736, 150 years before this enormous dock was completed.** It was intended to keep

even the largest cargo vessels afloat at all states of the tide and cost £850,000 – perhaps £50 million today. However, its sponsors believed that the rapidly-increasing trade coming up the Clyde would fully justify such expenditure. And for a time they were right. Greenock expanded at an unprecedented rate and became one of the world's busiest ports and shipbuilding towns.

Raw sugar from the Caribbean was a major import after refining began in the town in 1765. A hundred years later, Abram Lyle, a shipowner, founded a business that prospered and expanded. It was later to become part of Tate & Lyle which went on to produce its world-famous syrup from a waste product of sugar refining! By the end of the 19th century, 400 ships a year were arriving in Scotland's sugar capital and much of the raw sugar was stored in the magnificent range of Sugar Sheds which line one side of the docks and are now A-listed as a historic building.



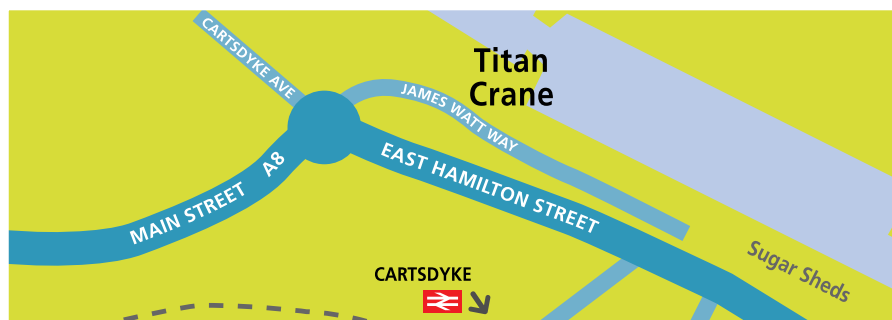


**The huge Titan Crane that stands guard over James Watt Dock is, like the dock itself, an A-listed structure, one of the treasured features of Greenock's proud shipbuilding heritage.**

The cantilever crane was built in 1917, towards the end of the first world war, by Sir William Arrol and Co of Glasgow. Their many engineering triumphs included the rail and (first) road bridges over the River Forth, Tower Bridge in London – and nearly 40 other Titans. Only four survive in Scotland.

This Titan was designed to lift loads of up to 150 tons and was driven by electric motors which were more effective and responsive than steam engines. The enormous jib could be rotated on top of the tower, controlled from a motor room above the hanging counterweight on the shorter arm. It was used by the makers of ships' engines to lift the great power plants into vessels they were fitting out. It is hard to imagine today that the banks of the Clyde here were once a forest of cranes of different shapes

and sizes. Many were involved with shipbuilding and repairs, others with handling cargo arriving or leaving the port of Greenock.

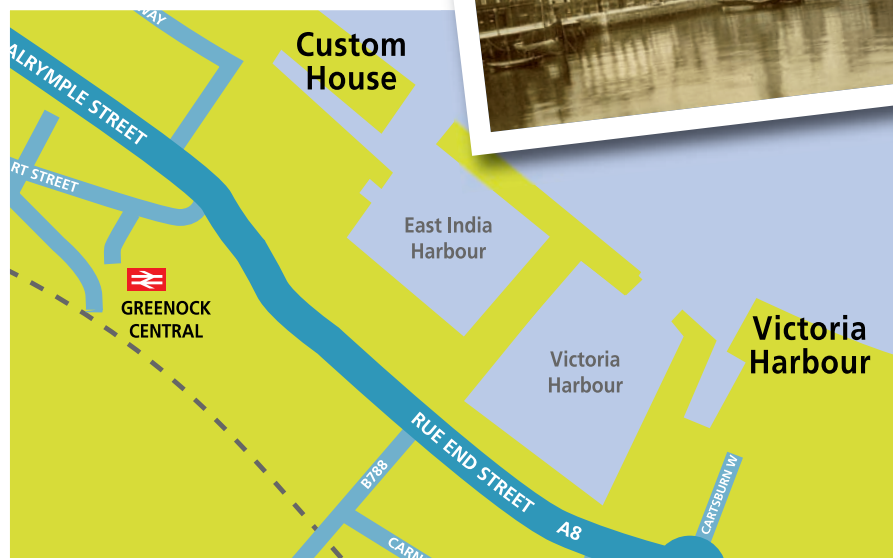


## 9 Victoria Harbour

**Once it was completed in 1850, the Victoria Harbour area became a focus for shipbuilding or engineering and, later, the harbour itself was home to tugboats.** It's now the base for a busy marine services company which has steadily expanded its varied operations to include charter cruise vessels. One of their favourite cruises sails 'doon the watter' from Glasgow, re-creating traditional family outings to the Clyde resorts.

What was once an industrial shoreline is now very much a 'people's coast' where local folk and visitors can enjoy new walkways along the waterside. In the spring, black guillemots, called tysties, nest in drainage holes in the quayside and in nesting boxes provided for them.

This part of Greenock has been transformed from the days when it was a hub of the shipbuilding industry. It had developed, along with port facilities, from the town's beginnings as a fishing village with a sheltered anchorage. Among great names from the great days of building great vessels were Scott's at Cartsburn Shipyard and Kincaid's, which provided engines for liners and cargo ships. Until the later 1900s, the streets around here, at the end of each shift, were thronged with workers.





**Greenock's Custom House is one of the finest buildings of its kind.** It was designed by William Burn, completed in 1818 and the subject of a fine painting by Robert Salmon in the McLean Museum. Since then, where sailing ships once moored, the quay has been extended and The Beacon Arts Centre opened in 2013. The scale and quality of the Custom House are clear indications of the volume of goods passing through Greenock – and paying harbour and excise dues – and the civic pride which the town had developed through its shipbuilding, sugar, other industries and international trade.

But everything was not perfect. The great number of textile and paper mills, refineries, shipyards, docks and other workplaces needed people. Folk flocked to Greenock, many from the Highlands and from Ireland where famine and poverty forced them to migrate in search of jobs. Great streets of tenements were hurriedly built, sanitation was rudimentary, illness was rife and many people turned to drink as a relief from the toil of work and the struggle to buy necessities. Meanwhile, the factory owners and shipmasters commissioned the grand houses, churches and civic buildings that are also a feature of Greenock.



## 11 Waterfront

**When you visit the Waterfront Leisure Centre, you can take it for granted that the water in the pool will be clean.** Two hundred years ago, most people living in the densely-populated streets around the town centre had no fresh drinking water or sewerage. Diseases like cholera and typhoid fever flourished, tuberculosis was common and life expectancy was short; many children died in infancy. It was the same in most other industrial towns. In 1827, Sir Michael Shaw Stewart's Greenock Cut began supplying water from Loch Thom, above the town. It provided drinking water for the population and also drove the wheels of water mills on the way.

The other great change is in working people's lives – leisure time is now part of the day and many people use it to keep healthy through exercise and sports. Football is very important in Greenock, as everywhere in central Scotland. The Morton Football Club was set up in 1874 and is one of the oldest in the country. The name comes from Morton Terrace which was near the first playing field. Since then, the team has moved to Cappielow Park and added Greenock to its name.

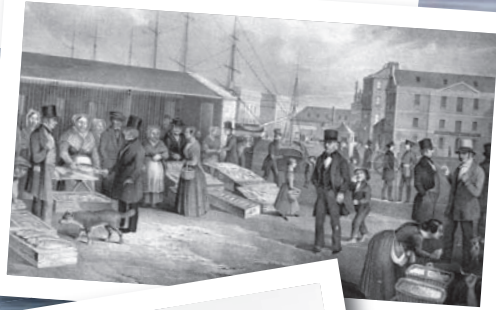


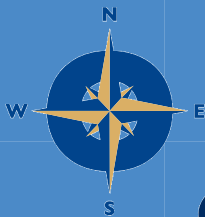


**Greenock, like topsy, just 'grewed'. Its origins are lost in the morning mists that lie over the river and even its name is a matter of debate.**

It might come from the Gaelic for 'sunny bay'; it certainly doesn't mean 'green oak', a popular myth. The original fishing village spread inland from the bay, along the banks of the West Burn. In 1589, 30 years after the Reformation, a charter from King James VI allowed one of Scotland's first Presbyterian churches to be built here. This was welcomed by parishioners who, up till then, had to walk many miles south to Inverkip to worship.

In the early 1600s, the town received rights to hold weekly markets and two annual fairs. From then on, its prosperity increased as trading, shipbuilding and manufacturing developed over the next 300 years. The town expanded eastwards but its heart remains around the course of the burn which now flows underground but gave its name to the Westburn Refinery. It was the last of many sugar plants in Greenock and closed in 1997. The raw cane it processed was stored in the Sugar Sheds which still stands alongside James Watt Dock.





↓ to Largs



*River Clyde*

*Cardross*

10

9

8

7

*A8*

6

5

4

3

2

1

*A8*

***Port Glasgow***

*to Glasgow →*

*A761*

*B788*

***Kilmacolm***

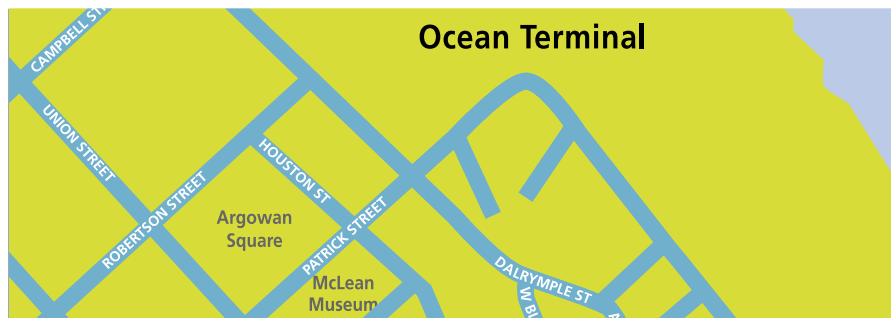
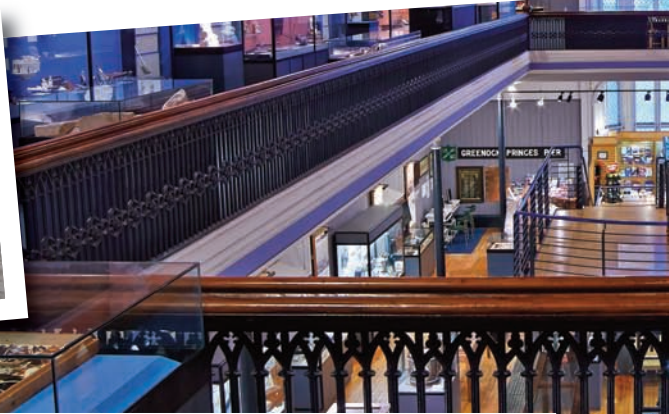
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***Quarrier's Village***

## 13 Ocean Terminal

**One of Inverclyde's most dramatic sights is a visiting cruise liner moored at Greenock's Ocean Terminal.** Each year, the port welcomes many of these towering and shimmering giants of the sea and their thousands of passengers who come to explore Greenock and beyond. The terminal is also a hive of activity with its constant turnover of cargo containers arriving with goods and produce from overseas or despatching exports from Scotland. In this way, the town is continuing its tradition of trading with the world even if the ships have grown in size and the workforce has shrunk.

In the past, Greenock exported a long list of cargoes from the iron and steel products of central Scotland's heavy industries to cured fish, whisky, sugar, paper and other manufactured goods. It also exported people. For 150 years, the town had the reputation of being Scotland's emigration capital. It waved farewell to thousands of Scots who went to the colonies to seek their fortune. At least one, Captain William Kidd, found infamy instead, as a pirate. Most emigrants never saw their homeland again – but many of their descendents come to visit. And lots of them arrive on cruise liners.





# McLean Museum 14

**The McLean Museum began as a collection of curiosities assembled by the Greenock Philosophical Society whose objective was to create 'a collection to illustrate the industries, the natural history and the antiquities of the town and its neighbourhood'.** Many local people contributed items and by the late 1860s, the collection outgrew its premises; more space and a lecture hall were needed. In 1875, James McLean laid the foundation stone for the museum that he paid for and was named after him. He was a timber merchant who caused outrage when he converted his mill to steam power – but it increased his commercial success.

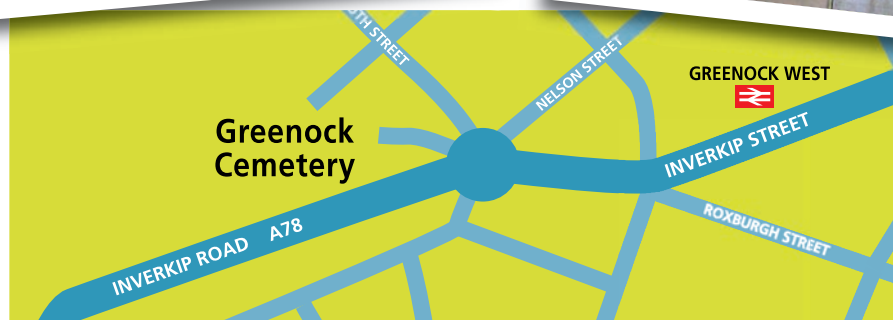
Among many donors of natural, cultural and industrial history items, the Egypt Exploration Society provided funds which helped establish a notable assembly of material relating to Egypt. In later years, the museum has built up a collection of drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures which illustrate many aspects of the town's illustrious past and, particularly, its maritime history. Children love visiting the McLean because it's full of models and ships, coins minted during the reigns of Mary Queen of Scots and James VI, and items related to early technology and to James Watt.



## 15 Greenock Cemetery

**The prosperity of past citizens can be seen from the memorials in Greenock Cemetery.** It was created in the 1840s on land acquired from the Shaw Stewarts of Ardgowan House near Inverkip – the family that had always played a part in the development of Greenock. An initial suggestion that it be called the Necropolis (city of the dead) met with objections as its meaning appeared to contradict the hope of resurrection. While some of the headstones are modest, many of the memorials are extravagant in size and design, which suggests that the competitive spirit continued to the end among the leaders of industry, trade, the professions and civic society.

You can enjoy contemplative walks along the tree-lined avenues and paths of the cemetery and can trace much of the history of the town through the carved inscriptions. Many well-known names are there to be discovered from Highland Mary, one of Robert Burns' great loves, to James Watt whose pioneering work on steam engines changed the world for ever. There are also memorials to victims of cholera, typhoid fever, those lost in the first world war and in the Greenock Blitz. Nearly 300 died in May 1941.



# Greenock Esplanade 16

**The peaceful pleasure of Greenock Esplanade owes its origins to the one-time bustling harbours and shipyards to the east.** Trade brought prosperity to the town and many captains of its industry and commerce chose to build mansions along the coast, up-wind from the smoke and grime. Their gardens ran down to the shore of the Clyde. Later, the material dug out of Albert Harbour in the 1860s was used to create the waterside walk. It's over a mile in length: a gentle stroll to and from the end after breakfast brings you back to the town centre in time for lunch. Take a seat and picture the Tail o' the Bank when the anchorage at the end of the great sandbar was once busy with ships.

The projecting light on the yellow pillar, and the one on the pole in nearby Madeira Street, are 'leading lights' – part of a network that helps ships to navigate the sometimes treacherous waters of the Clyde. These two, when seen in alignment from a vessel, mark a safe anchorage called The Hole which provided good 'holding' for anchors. The pillar may have been moved here when Albert Harbour was excavated.



Greenock Esplanade



## 17 Battery Park

**The playing fields of Battery Park conceal a number of secrets.** The name comes from the coastal gun emplacement – or battery – at Fort Matilda which was built to defend Greenock against possible attack by Napoleon's navy. Waste from the nearby Newton Street railway tunnel was used to create the level ground and the Admiralty decided it was ideal for the Clyde Torpedo Factory. This was opened in 1910 and staffed by workers from the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich. The site made torpedoes again during the second world war.

Further along the coast, many women were among the technicians who serviced the famous wartime Sunderland flying boats, and their American cousins, the Catalinas. The Short Sunderlands were built across the river in Dumbarton in the Blackburn Aircraft Factory which delivered 260 of these lumbering ladies, the last in November 1945. There is no trace now of torpedoes or aircraft and Battery Park is a simply a pleasant place to watch ships and boats sail by and the tide coming in and out. If you're patient, you might see a seal or two watching you from the water. You'll certainly hear raucous herring gulls and noisy oystercatchers.



Gourock Bay

Battery Park

CARDWELL ROAD

OCTAVIA TERRACE

NEWARK STREET



FORT MATILDA

**Like many place names in these parts, Gourock derives from a Gaelic word.** *Guireág* means pimple and alludes to the many low hills around the town. In 1889, the Caledonian Railway cut what was reputedly Scotland's longest railway tunnel through one of them to serve the pier and its steamer subsidiary, the Caledonian Steam Packet Company. It's now part of CalMac. The Queen Mary II was a popular paddle steamer for sails 'doon the watter', the Duchess of Hamilton was one of the most elegant and the Glen Sannox was another favourite. The first ferry from the town, however, sailed to Dunoon as early as 1820 and Gourock also boasted an early tram service, linking the town with Greenock and Port Glasgow.

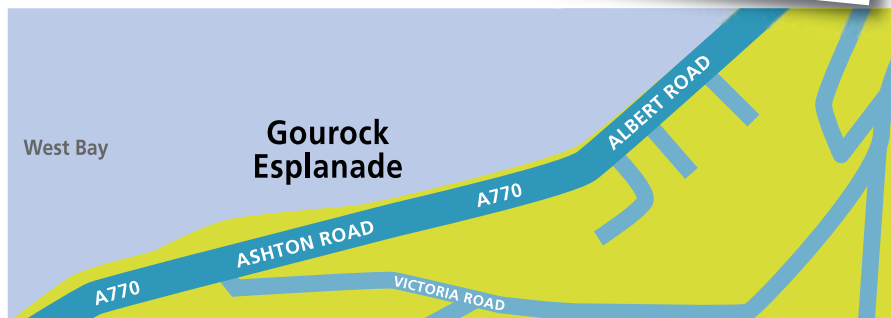
The Gourock Rope Works (which moved to Port Glasgow) was a major industry for many years. It was founded in 1711 and supplied ropes and, later, sails to the shipbuilders and chandlers in the area. Gourock was noted at one time for its cured herrings and copper mining. It continues the maritime tradition with yacht-building and repairing under the watchful eye of Granny Kempock, an ancient pagan stone with mythical powers which stands above the town.



## 19 Gourock Esplanade

**For well over a century, Gourock Esplanade has attracted visitors to stroll along 'the prom' and enjoy the breathtaking views.** What was once a fishing village, and then a rope-making town, found a new role as a day-out and holiday destination – and yachting centre. People came 'doon the watter' from the Broomielaw quay in Glasgow or by train along the banks of the Clyde. Many came to swim in the outdoor pool which was tidal, with a sandy floor, when it was built in 1909. It has recently been completely refurbished and its clean and heated seawater is enjoyable in all weathers.

The Gourock Yacht Club was much favoured by King Edward the VII who was pleased for it to be renamed 'royal'. Its clubhouse opened in 1902 and has entertained many famous names since then. Much earlier, in 1494, another king – James IV – left Gourock by boat for Dunstaffnage Castle where the Lord of the Isles and other clan chiefs submitted to his rule. A later 'monarch' of the isles, David MacBrayne, operated many of his ferries from the Clyde and Gourock is now the headquarters of the successor company, Caledonian MacBrayne.

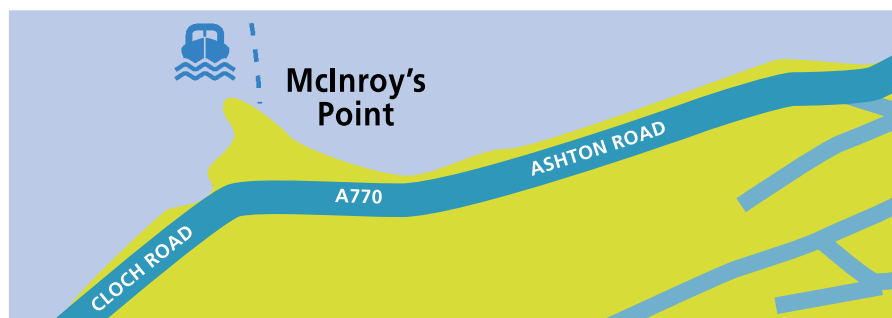




**McInroy's Point could be called the gateway to the Highlands – as a visual spectacle and as a practical proposition.** From here, you can see the hills of the Cowal Peninsula to the west, the Rosneath Peninsula to the north and Loch Long in between.

Thousands of years ago, you might have watched a few stone age people arriving here by sea in search of places to settle. Two hundred years ago, you could have watched the first of many emigrants' ships full of Scots intent on enjoying better lives in North America and beyond. Today, you'll see the great cruise liners bringing in their descendents.

If you take the ferry to Hunter's Quay, near Dunoon, you'll reach the mouth of the Holy Loch where the US Navy had a nuclear submarine base during the 'cold war'. There's also a ferry to Kilcreggan from Gourock. Because the Firth of Clyde provided a relatively secure anchorage, the stretch of the river from here to the Tail o' the Bank (the western end of a sandbank) was a gathering point for wartime convoys. It was not unusual to see a hundred or more naval and cargo vessels assembling before sailing.



## 21 Cloch Lighthouse

**The Cloch Lighthouse is unusual because it stands right beside a main road.** The site – Cloch Point – was chosen because, from there, the beam could be seen from many directions. The present light warns sailors about the treacherous Gantocks reef. This skerry (the word comes from Norse for rock) is just visible above the water but at night, or in stormy weather, it caused many a ship to founder. The hull of Swedish iron-ore carrier, the MV Akka, which sank in 1956 after tearing herself open on the Gantocks, is now a popular wreck for divers. More recently, the pleasure steamer Waverley was badly damaged when she grounded on the rocks in 1977 but she was soon repaired and paddles on to this day.

The famous lighthouse designer, Robert Stevenson, had a hand in completing the Cloch when he helped to install the light. He went on to build the Bell Rock Lighthouse and served as engineer to the Northern Lighthouse Board which still looks after Scotland's lights. Until it was automated, the Cloch's keepers worked in shifts, tending the light and keeping watch. They lived in the next-door cottages which are now a private house.



Cloch  
Lighthouse

CLOCH ROAD

A770

A770



## Lunderston Bay 22

**Believe it or not, Lunderston Bay is the nearest, award-winning, sandy beach to Glasgow.** That makes it a popular spot all year round for bracing winter walks, kite-flying in spring, picnics in summer, beach games in autumn and birdwatching at any time. There's also a gentle coastal walk to Kip Marina and Inverkip village. You might be lucky enough to see the languid seals, playful dolphins, acrobatic porpoises or harmless basking sharks that make the Firth of Clyde their home. Or you can explore the shoreline and find the small creatures that are food for the flocks of wading birds which patrol the sand as the tide recedes.

There's a long tradition of folk from Greenock, Port Glasgow and beyond spending summer holidays at Lunderston Bay. In the mid 1900s, families made the fair fortnight stretch for weeks by staying in the informal 'tent city' or by hiring a beach hut. The kids would go fishing for mackerel which always tasted best when cooked fresh from the sea on an open fire. If the catch was good, they would sell the fish round the tents and rush off to buy ice cream with their profits.





## 23 Inverkip

**The village of Inverkip was created a 'burgh of barony' before the Act of Union in 1707.** This gave the laird – the landowner – the right to hold weekly markets. At that time the parish included Gourrock, Wemyss Bay, Skelmorlie and part of Greenock. A 17th-century laird, Alexander Lindsay of Dunrod, was infamous for slaying a brother-in-law of Patrick Maxwell (the murderous owner of Newark Castle) and for consorting with so-called witches.

Very different are the Shaw Stewarts who have lived on the Ardgowan Estate for 600 years. Robert III of Scotland gave the land to John Stewart, his natural son. In the 1820s, when the family owned much of Greenock, they financed the Greenock Cut which brought fresh water to the homes and mills of the growing town. Ardgowan House dates from 1801 and was designed by an assistant to Robert Adam; the landscaped parkland was laid out to a design by James Ramsay.

On Inverkip Bay is Scotland's first purpose-built marina, close to some of the country's most popular sailing waters. It has berths for 160 craft and provides a range of ancillary services.



**For many people, their memories of Wemyss Bay are of its railway station and the elegant curved walkway which leads down to the pier.** The village was created in the 19th century as a 'marine village' and watering-place by Robert Wallace, the landowner and Greenock's first MP. By the middle of the 19th century, resorts on the Firth of Clyde were attracting large numbers of holidaymakers – and commuters. The Greenock and Wemyss Bay Railway opened in 1865 and the Wemyss Bay Steamboat Company operated paddle-steamers to take businessmen from Lamlash on Arran and Tighnabruaich to connect with trains to Glasgow.

Among the village's more famous residents in the past was Sir George Burns who joined with Samuel Cunard to found the British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, today known simply as the Cunard Line. He died a few years before the present station, designed by James Miller, was opened in 1903 by the Caledonian Railway. It's now recognised as an architectural gem for its superb use of glass and steel. The station still welcomes and dispatches hourly trains from and to Glasgow and car ferries from and to Rothesay on the Isle of Bute.



# Useful information

Getting to and around Heritage  
Inverclyde Coastal Trail:

## ROAD

Travelling to Inverclyde by car couldn't be easier - the main towns of Port Glasgow, Greenock and Gourock are only 20 to 25 miles west of Glasgow and the M8 motorway runs straight to our doorstep.

## RAIL

Frequent rail services run from Glasgow Central Station to the 14 railway stations in Inverclyde via the Wemyss Bay and Gourock lines.

📞 08457 48 49 50  
🌐 [www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk)

## BUS

An express bus service operates from central Glasgow (linking with national routes) and also from Braehead Shopping Centre. Getting around Inverclyde is straightforward, with regular bus services operating within the urban areas and also connecting with more outlying villages.

📞 08000 51 56 51  
🌐 [www.mcgillsbuses.co.uk](http://www.mcgillsbuses.co.uk)

## FERRY


Car and passenger ferry services connect from Helensburgh, Bute and the Cowal peninsula, and on to the Mull of Kintyre.

📞 0800 066 5000  
🌐 [www.calmac.co.uk](http://www.calmac.co.uk)  
📞 01369 704452  
🌐 [www.western-ferries.co.uk](http://www.western-ferries.co.uk)





**For more information about  
Heritage Inverclyde Coastal Trail  
visit**

 [www.inverclyde.gov.uk](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk)  
[www.heritageinverclyde.org](http://www.heritageinverclyde.org)

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*Photograph by Norman T. Hunter, showing a view of the Municipal Buildings, Port Glasgow with the harbour in the foreground and the sailing vessel Svanen moored on the right.*

By Bas - Yam







Inverclyde  
council