



# Walkabout Inverclyde



# Welcome to Inverclyde

Inverclyde is one of Scotland's smallest regions. It is also an area of enormous diversity and unrivalled beauty. From the broad coastal reaches of the River Clyde and breathtaking views of the Argyll hills and lochs, to historic towns and villages and picturesque countryside, there's so much to discover and so much to take in.

The principal towns of Greenock, Port Glasgow and Gourock form an uninterrupted coastal conurbation rising up spectacularly from the water's edge to the magnificent moorland and hills behind. From there

the magnificent views extend in every direction and as far as the eye can see. Shipbuilding, manufacturing and trading brought enormous prosperity to Inverclyde in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many prominent historical figures such as James Watt, whose famous inventions paved the way for the industrial revolution, were born here.

Many of today's historical attractions – the museums and galleries, stately homes and castles – celebrate Inverclyde's influential maritime history and industrial past.

The picturesque villages of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay have a distinct charm of their own. Their sailing waters and facilities provide an extensive range of water-based sports and activities.

Inland, nestling in the Gryffe Valley, is Quarriers Village, a conservation village, founded by William Quarrier as a Victorian orphan community. Nearby lies the historic village of Kilmacolm whose ecclesiastical roots date back to the time of St Columba.

Inverclyde's spectacular countryside – its moorlands, hills and lochs – lies mainly within Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, a haven for the rarest species of Scottish wildlife and centre for numerous outdoor pursuits, scenic walks and leisure activities.

This guide is aimed at helping you make the most of your visit to Inverclyde by offering a series of structured walks covering every fascinating aspect of the area. From the elegant architecture and spectacular coastal stretches of the main towns and unique natural beauty of the countryside, to the picturesque tranquility of the villages and hamlets.



# Port Glasgow to Finlaystone



Port Glasgow, as its name suggests, was the point on the River Clyde where vessels, laden with goods bound for the city of Glasgow, originally off-loaded their cargo. The shallowness of the river prevented them from going any further. When the Clyde was dredged and its channel deepened in the 18th century, Port Glasgow's importance as a port declined. New industries like shipbuilding and ropemaking took over, sustaining a level of prosperity for the area. Henry Bell's Comet, the first commercial passenger carrying steamship, was launched in Port Glasgow in 1812. A replica of the original was built for the town to mark its 150th anniversary.

From David Hamilton's grand Town Buildings (now the library for the Town Centre), cross the main road to Coronation Park, which winds eastwards towards the thriving Ferguson's shipyard. Immediately beyond is one of town's delightful surprises. Nestling behind the cranes and shipyard gates, in a peaceful parkland area, is the ancient 15th century Newark Castle, now in the careful hands of Historic Scotland.

Continuing east, the waterside walkway takes you through Kelburn Riverside Park and on to Parklea Recreation Ground. Owned by the National Trust for Scotland, this coastal area is a designated site of special scientific interest. Its mud flats attract rare species of migrating birds.

Beyond Parklea, the curious remnants of the old timber ponds – storage points for imported wood required to construct the early Clyde-built ships – protrude poignantly along the waters' edge.

Finlaystone Estate, the home of the Chief of the Clan MacMillan, marks the eastern boundary of Inverclyde and is well worth a separate visit. For information on its walking trails for visitors, and its various attractions and activities including a tea room providing a range of healthy snacks, contact the Ranger Service on 01475 540505.



# Customhouse Quay to Greenock Town Centre

Customhouse Quay was the departure point for thousands of Scottish emigrants during the 19th century. Nowadays it is one of the main ports of call for the world's last ocean going paddle steamer, PS Waverley, which undertakes regular trips from Glasgow along the Firth of Clyde.

The walk westwards along the riverside walkway takes you past the Waterfront Campus of James Watt College and the distinctive ship-like sculpture Prospect and Trust to the popular new Waterfront Leisure Complex with its wide range of facilities for swimming, ice skating and keep-fit.

The route moves inland past the Waterfront Cinema and the seat marking the original position of the Old West Kirk, around Tesco's car park, and across Dalrymple Street. Take the short route inland along Nicholson Street followed by a left hand turn onto West Blackhall Street, which takes you past shops and restaurants to the Oak Mall shopping centre. Once you've spent time and money there, exit to Clyde Square, which is dominated by the magnificent Victorian Municipal Buildings. This civic palace, with its grand colonnade and extravagant carvings, is a bold reminder of Inverclyde's prosperous past. The industry principally responsible for that prosperity is celebrated in the powerful sculpture Men of the Clyde, which stands at the heart of Clyde Square in front of the Central Library. To the south of the ornate Lyle Fountain in Cathcart Square is the refurbished 18th century Wellpark Mid Kirk, its design unmistakably inspired by London's St Martins-in-the-Field.

A walk up Bank Street enables you to enjoy the tranquil open spaces of Well Park and its elevated views of the river. Returning to Cathcart Square, continue down William Street past the historic Dutch Gable House back to Dalrymple Street. Before crossing the dual carriageway at the pedestrian crossing and returning to Custom House Quay, glance back at the statue of Greenock's most famous son, James Watt. The red sandstone building on which it is mounted was the original James Watt College, and occupies a position near to the birthplace of the famous engineer.



## The Esplanade to Gourock & Tower Hill



The Esplanade is one of Inverclyde's most popular promenade areas. It is easy to find a parking space before embarking on a stroll along this broad, majestic mile-long waterfront walk. The views across the river are magnificent. Start from Princes Pier and head westwards, taking time to admire the stately villas that border the Esplanade. Note too, the wall-mounted drinking fountain dedicated to the Scottish novelist John Galt.

At the end of the Esplanade, continue on to Battery Park, with its splendid views across Cardwell Bay to neighbouring Gourock. It was here that Catalina sea planes regularly landed during the Second World War. Take the waterside route around the bay, past the Dunoon ferry terminal and on towards Gourock Pier, the railway station and Kempock Street. In nearby Kempock Place, Gourock Library has its own Visitor Information Point. For those who feel energetic, you can extend your walk by heading up Tower Hill. The route is clearly signposted on the main road at the foot of John Street. At the top of John Street, enter the park area directly ahead and continue the ascent up a winding staircase and path to the tower at the summit – an 18th century folly – and enjoy one of the area's most exhilarating viewpoints. As well as taking in the panoramic vista of the Clyde Estuary, look back inland to Lyle Hill and the distinctive anchor of the Free French Memorial.



## Gourock to Cardwell Garden Centre & Lunderston Bay

The three mile coastal walk westwards from Gourock to Lunderston Bay shows the Clyde Estuary at its best. Start at Kempock Place, and perhaps prepare yourself for the walk in one of Gourock's many excellent cafes and tea rooms. It's also worth paying a visit to the legendary Granny Kempock's stone between Kempock Street and Castle Gardens. A walk around this prehistoric monolith, said to resemble a huddled, cloaked figure, is thought to bring good luck. According to legend, sailors and newly weds were among those who regularly placed great faith in this romantic tradition.

Back on the waterfront, resume the journey west, past Gourock's unique outdoor heated swimming pool and war memorial, and along the promenade towards the home of the Royal Gourock Yacht Club.

The views change as the river broadens and sweeps towards Cloch Point and the 200 year old Cloch Lighthouse. The road winds through open countryside before reaching Cardwell Nursery and Garden Centre, and the opportunity to refresh yourself in its busy restaurant.

On the other side of the road is one of the areas most popular beach areas, Lunderston Bay, an excellent spot for children, having a play park and picnic site. The coastal walk extends for just over half a mile. Sustrans Cycle path number 75 gives some off road cycling. Many wading birds can be seen at low water searching for food. You might on occasion spy common and grey seals swimming offshore. The coastal path ends at Ardgowan Point. However, a track leads back to the main road and the option to continue inland towards Kip Marina and the village of Inverkip.



# Sights of Inverclyde



Header Pool, at the start of the Greenock Cut,  
Greenock Cut Visitor Centre



Tall Ship, Greenock



Kip Marina, Inverkip



Custom House Quay, Greenock



Lunderston Bay, Gourock



Darroch Park, Gourock



McLean Museum, Greenock



Pony Trekking, Inverkip



Waterfront Leisure Complex, Greenock

# Greenock's Historical Conservation Area

Start at Clyde Square and take a westward route through the Oak Mall on to West Blackhall Street and left into Argyle Street. Beyond the distinctive red sandstone Masonic Lodge the upward route narrows, and its eventual emergence into George Square reveals an area rich in historical and architectural interest. The vicinity of the square has three magnificent church buildings – St George's North, George Square



Baptist and George Square Scottish Congregational – and the walk westwards on to Union Street immediately takes you past the solid grey edifice of St John's Episcopal Church.

On the opposite side of the road, entered from Kelly Street, is the superb McLean Museum and Art

Gallery which features, alongside its wonderful fine arts collection, excellent local history displays relating to the area's great maritime and industrial past. The art collection alone includes works by the Glasgow Boys and the Scottish Colourists, as well as international artists like Boudin and Courbet. The adjacent Watt Library, established in memory of James Watt by members of his family, is easily identified by its idiosyncratic Tudor style architecture. It houses a valuable collection of historical documents on Inverclyde's past, and is a rich source of information for those researching local, industrial and family histories.

A short walk further along Union Street takes you to the gracious open spaces of Ardgowan Square, surrounded by elegantly conserved mansion houses. Take a stroll around the square, then consider a stop for refreshments in the stylish and historic Tontine Hotel, before continuing past the imposing edifice of Ardgowan Parish Church and then right into Campbell Street. Beyond Greenock Arts Guild you reach the junction with Brougham Street. Turn right and continue along West Blackhall Street through the Oak Mall and back to Clyde Square.

# Lyle Hill & the Free French Memorial



Start at the east end of Greenock Esplanade, make the short walk inland along Campbell Street to Brougham Street. Take a right turn, and after about half a mile, turn left into Madeira Street following the sign for Lyle Hill. Take a deep breath, as you are now about to ascend to one of Inverclyde's most breathtaking viewpoints.

Continue past Greenock Academy, and at the top of Madeira Street turn right. The road passes the perimeter of Greenock Golf Club on your left before reaching the viewing area on Lyle Hill. Abraham Lyle was Provost of Greenock in the 1880s and developed this public viewpoint as a means of creating work for the unemployed people of the town. To the north, the views of the Holy Loch, Loch Long and the Gareloch extend to the majestic mountains of Argyll. The island of Arran can be seen on a clear day 45 miles to the south. To make the most of the view, take a further short walk through the adjacent golf course following the signpost to Craig's Top. From here, the view extends east beyond Port Glasgow as far as the Erskine Bridge.

The most notable structure on Lyle Hill is the anchor-shaped Cross of Lorraine, erected in 1946 in honour of the Free French sailors who were stationed in Greenock during the occupation of Europe. From the summit of Lyle Hill, either retrace your route back to the Esplanade, or continue over the hill and, after a quarter of a mile, take a right turn downhill to Battery Park and then eastwards to the Esplanade.



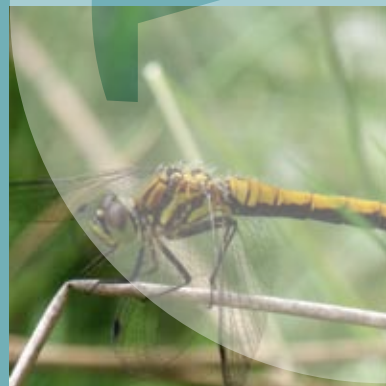
# The Greenock Cut

From the A78, follow the signs to Greenock Cut Visitor Centre, part of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. Car parking, toilets, tearoom and shop are open to visitors (tel 01475 521458 to check opening times). Within the centre there is an interpretive display of the historical "Greenock Cut" which is now listed as an ancient monument. The Visitor Centre is a good base to start walks for the Greenock Cut, Kelly Cut and nature trail. Alternatively, get the train to Drumfrocher or the local bus to Overton and

start your walk at the north end of the Greenock Cut, just up the hill from Overton Primary School. The Greenock Cut is a 6.5 km. aqueduct. It carried water from the "Great Reservoir" (Loch Thom) to the town of Greenock. The aqueduct was built between 1825-1827, by Robert Thom, a civil engineer, who designed a similar scheme at Rothesay, on the Isle of Bute. Forming part of the Clyde Plateau with volcanic rocks up to 1 km deep, these igneous rocks are less permeable than sedimentary rocks. The geology and the heavy rainfall of the area supplied the people of Greenock with drinking water and industries (woollen & paper mills) with water power.



Starting and finishing the walk at Cornalees or Overton will give a 10.5 km circular walk, best done in an anti-clockwise direction. This way the views of the River Clyde, Cowal peninsula and Greenock are better afforded. The Kelly aqueduct was built in 1845, to supplement the water supply for the Greenock Cut. The Kelly Cut is 6.5 km in length, giving a return walk of 13 km. A 9.6 km linear walk from Cornalees to Wemyss Bay can also be done with views of the Isles of Bute and Arran in the distance. The Nature Trail is a one hour, 2.5 km circular walk with views overlooking the Clyde towards Dunoon and the Argyll mountains. Points of interest along the way include the start of the Greenock Cut and walking alongside the Kip Water following the deciduous trees down the Shielhill glen. The glen is a S.S.S.I. (site of special scientific interest) because of the self regenerating native broadleaf trees. Silver Birch, Oak, Ash and Rowan. The four seasons offer great varieties of flora/fauna. Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park offer a wide range of walks, talks and activities, information is available from the visitor centre or online at [www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk](http://www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk)



# Kilmacolm and Quarrier's Village



Commence this walk in the village of Kilmacolm at the entrance to Duchal Woods on Lochwinnoch Road. Follow the track through the woods until you reach the old Greenock Road (B788). Turn left and continue across the River Gryffe at Milton Bridge as far as the old railway bridge, over which the Greenock to Paisley cycle route passes. Make your way onto the National Cycle Route 75 and head away from the village. There are several interesting sculptures along this cycle path and also seats and benches dotted along the route. Continue along the cycle route until you reach the spur path signposted for Quarrier's Village and turn down this path for the world-famous village founded by the 19th century philanthropist William Quarrier as a caring community for homeless children from Victorian Glasgow.

Quarrier's Village remains a beautiful conservation village with its own community, businesses and attractions. Take a walk around its elegantly landscaped grounds, visit the craft centre and coffee shop.

Return to the cycle track and head back towards Kilmacolm. Either continue along this route to The Pullman Tavern (the old Kilmacolm Railway Station) or rejoin the Old Greenock Road, this time heading uphill to the junction with the A761 and the picturesque Knapps Loch on the outskirts of Kilmacolm. After a stroll around the loch, continue into the village past the elegant mansion houses that are a feature of this conservation village. On reaching the Village Cross, pay a visit to the prominently sited Kilmacolm Old Kirk, the burial site of the later Earls of Glencairn. Part of the original 13th century church remains as the Murray Chapel.

Complete your visit with a look around Kilmacolm's gift shops, restaurants and tea rooms.



# Useful Contacts

Caledonian McBrayne **01475 650100**

Clyde Marine Ltd **01475 721281**

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park (Greenock Cut Visitor Centre) **01475 521458**

Finlaystone Country Park **01475 540505**

Greenock Arts Guild Theatre **01475 723038**

Greenock Health Centre **01475 724477**

Greenock Ocean Terminal **01475726171**

Inverclyde Council Central Library **01475 712323**

Inverclyde Leisure **01475 797979**

Inverclyde Royal Hospital **01475 633777**

Kip Marina **01475 521485**

McLean Museum and Art Gallery **01475 715624**

Police **01475 492500**

Western Ferries **01369 704452**



# Local Information

Further information on Inverclyde's attractions and facilities, are available at:

- [www.inverclyde.gov.uk/tourism-and-visitor-attractions/leisure-attractions](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/tourism-and-visitor-attractions/leisure-attractions)
- [www.discoverinverclyde.com](http://www.discoverinverclyde.com)
- [www.inverclydetouristgroup.co.uk](http://www.inverclydetouristgroup.co.uk)

Or visit:

The Visit Scotland Visitor Information Point  
Gourock Library,  
1 Kempock Place,  
Gourock, PA19 1QU

Open: Mon & Thur 2.00pm - 8.00pm,  
Tue & Fri 10.00am - 5.00pm,  
Wed & Sat 10.00am - 1.00pm



Greenock Cut and Views of Kilmacolm photos courtesy of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.

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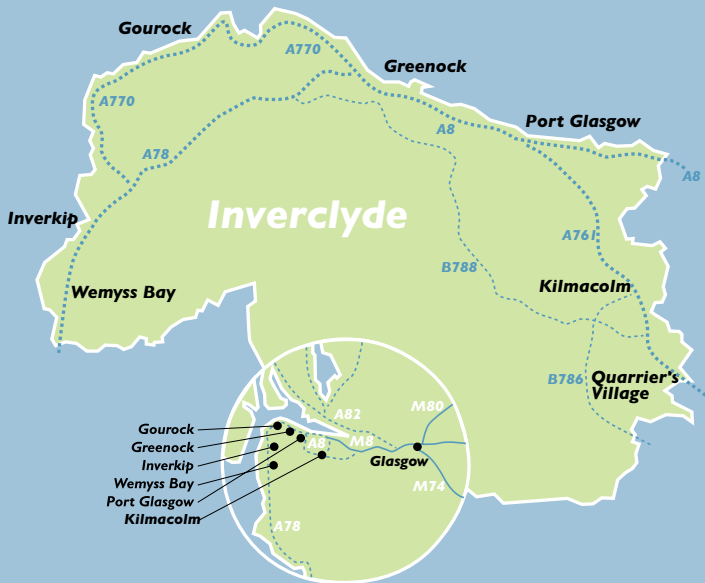


If you are planning a day trip or a short break in the west of Scotland, Inverclyde is well worth considering. It is easy to reach, has a wealth of things to do and places to see in a setting with unrivalled views and scenery.

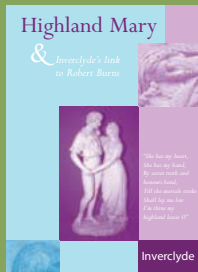
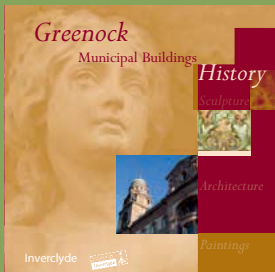
Whatever you want to do, **Inverclyde** has it all!



# Inverclyde map



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