

Some interesting Arran 'Facts'

- 1 The name **Arran** may mean 'place of peaked hills' from the Brythonic word *Aran* meaning *height* or *peaked hill*.
- 2 At 874m [2867 ft] **Goat Fell** is the highest peak on Arran.
- 3 **Thomas Telford**, the great Scots civil engineer, left part of his legacy on Arran when he planned and built the *string* road which runs through the centre of the island.
- 4 Arran's unique landscape of lowland and highland, is a result of the **Highland Boundary Geological Fault** running midway through its compact land mass.
- 5 The Holy Isle was once the Christian settlement of the monk **St Molais**, a follower of St Columba. Columba spread Christianity across Scotland in the 6th century with the help of those he taught like St Molais.
- 6 A person belonging to Arran is an **Arranach**.
- 7 Kilmory Village Hall is a centre for viewing and learning about the **Hen Harrier** community that have flourished on Arran over the last 50 years. The birds are particularly noted for their dramatic 'skydancing' courtship displays.
- 8 Founded in 1995, **Isle of Arran Distillers**, are producers of the **newest** Single Malt Scotch. They proudly produce a pure matured liquor. No peat or caramel is added to their '*true spirit of nature*' !
- 9 It is not just geology that has made Arran, **Scotland in Minature**, since it has played its part in the main chapters of Scots history.
- 10 **Robert the Bruce** is said to have left Arran to return to the mainland on Turnberry and continue his fight to regain his position as king and independence for Scotland.
- 11 The lighthouse on Holy Isle was built by the **Stevensons**, renowned Scots civil engineers. The most famous of the family however, **Robert Louis Stevenson**, favoured a life of letters.
- 12 **Machrie Moor's** exceptional collection of standing stones and stone circles, akin to Cathedral status, suggests that it has been a ritual site of some importance for more than 4000 years.
- 13 Arran had its own ice sheet during the ice age, the main evidence for which is the presence of **raised beaches** visible around the island. These were formed as the land rose when it was released from the weight of of thousands of feet of ice when it melted.
- 14 **James Hutton**, father of geological time, verified his theories through visual observations of the land and rocks of Scotland. Arran played its part in supporting his work on igneous geology. Today the island's complex formation draws annually hundreds of geology students.
- 15 Most Arran place names are **Gaelic**, a legacy of settlers from Dalriada who came from Ireland. They were called by the Romans **Scotti** and eventually Scotland was named after them.
- 16 The northern hills of Arran are granite rock. Their profile has earned the name '**Sleeping Warrior**'.
- 17 **Brodick** means broad bay from the Norse *breidr vik*.
- 18 Arran was sacked by the **vikings** in 797 and did not become part of the Kingdom of Scotland until 1266 at the signing of the Treaty of Perth when all of the Western Isles returned to Scotland.
- 19 John Barbour, **the father of Scots poetry**, referred to Arran in his chronicle *The Brus*, which relates the story of Robert the Bruce restoring independence to Scotland.
- 20 The name **Kilmory** means church of St Mary - the *mory* suffix meaning Mary can be found elsewhere in Scotland e.g. Tobermory - St Mary's well and in fiction Balamory - town of St Mary!
- 21 When **Saddell Abbey** was founded on Kintyre it was endowed with lands at Shiskine, and remained in the Abbey's hands until it fell into disuse despite a change leadership on Arran.

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- 22 **Arran Fine Foods** is a very successful enterprise, which started making mustard and has expanded to make jellies, jams and other relishes. Part of Paterson's, they are the *wet* manufacturer for the famous oatcake maker.
- 23 Arran's main industry is **tourism** and many artisan businesses established on the island allow visitors to take a piece of Arran with them. Souvenirs range from cheese to chocolate to smoked fish to ice-cream, beer to whisky, porcelain and pottery to the island's colourful wee stone men.
- 24 **Catacol** is home to a neat row of Houses known as the Twelve Apostles. The houses were built to re-house people cleared by the 11th Duke of Hamilton to make way for deer.
- 25 Holy Island is now home to a **Tibetan Buddhist** community who are happy to share this place of contemplation with visitors.
- 26 The **Arran Banner** founded in 1974 earned itself a place in the Guinness Book of Records as the newspaper "*most read within its circulation area*" in 1991 when the paper's circulation was 3300 and the island population was a mere 822!
- 27 The island's fortune has been strongly linked to the fortunes of the Hamilton family, to whom the island was gifted in the late 15th century and who became the Earls of Arran.
- 28 **Brodick Castle**, a country seat of the Hamilton's, has been in the care of the National Trust for Scotland since 1958, when the estate passed to the treasury in lieu of death taxes.
- 29 **Arran Aromatics** has earned Arran an internationally fragrant reputation. Their inspiration - the Isle of Arran itself - pure, natural and refreshing.
- 30 You have to look closely when driving through **Corrie** since there is always a seal in the classic seal pose of elevated tail basking on a rock. Seems a bit fishy?
- 31 **Balmichael** visitor centre has fun for everyone on any budget. Golfing, shooting, quad biking, crafting, shopping, eating and drinking or perhaps a short helicopter ride for unique view of the island.
- 32 Lamlash Bay is invaded every May by a variety of sailboats taking part in the **Island's Peaks Race**. The Race runs from Oban to Troon stopping at Mull, Troon and Arran so that fell runners in the boat crews can run up Ben More, the Paps of Jura and Goat Fell.
- 33 In the 19th century, Arran experienced tourism growth, facilitated by paddle steamers coming from Glasgow to the new pier constructed in Brodick by the Hamilton estate. The PS Waverley, **the last sea going paddle steamer in the world**, still visits Arran today.
- 34 During **WWII**, the Royal Navy used the High School at Lamlash, for hospitalisation and billets for its sailors.
- 35 **Kildonan** takes its name from its Patron St Donan, one of Scotland's early Celtic saints. The town's beach is still popular with holidaymakers. A fragment of 13th Kildonan Castle can still be seen. It was built as a watchtower for the Clyde and so guarded the Marine Highway.
- 36 Arran saw its own episode of **Clearances** in 1829-40 when the absentee Dukes of Hamilton allowed their factor a free hand to improve the estate's economics. In all 700 people were to leave Arran during this time, many settling in Canada.
- 37 Arran Brewery has **won several awards** from the Society of Independent Brewers and at CAMRA festivals.
- 38 **Lochranza Castle** is a 16th century fortification, which partnered with Skipness Castle on the mainland to guard the Kilbrannan Sound for the Lord of the Isles.
- 39 Island life allows wildlife to flourish and Arran is rich in **Scotland's iconic fauna** - red squirrels, deer, seals, otters, dolphins, owls, eagles, pheasants and even the odd basking shark in summer!
- 40 Arran has a strong traditional music heritage and benefits from the **FeisFest** festival in June where teaching and performing provide musical entertainment for islanders and visitors.