50 fascinating 'facts' about Clyde Valley

1. The Clyde Valley has a reputation as the Garden Valley. Traditionally the first harvest of Scottish tomatoes came from the area.
2. The Clyde runs for around 105 miles with its source in the hills near Elvanfoot where the rivers Tweed and Nith also have their source.
3. New Lanark is a UNESCO World Heritage village. The settlement was developed in 1784, by David Dale, a pioneering entrepreneur. Cotton mills were the foundation for the industrial village.
4. Chatelherault is all that remains of Hamilton Palace, which was designed by William Adam, architect to the king in his day and father of Robert Adam designer of neo-classical masterpieces like the north side of Charlotte Square, Edinburgh.
5. Tinto Hill crowned by a huge Bronze Age fort dominates the landscape west of Biggar. Tinto is 2320 feet high.
6. Lanark is one of Scotland's oldest burghs, granted a charter by David I in 1140.
7. The Southern Uplands fault that runs from Girvan to St Abbs Head divides Clydesdale so that southern area is hilly and the northern portion is mainly rolling wide-open landscapes excepting Tinto.
8. Coulter has its own library and reading room, which is open on weekdays and was gifted to the community by the McCosh family, local landowners.
9. The sculptor Robert Forrest of Carluke, created the William Wallace statue that is now situated in a niche on Lanark Town Hall. He was the creator of the John Knox Statue in the Glasgow Necropolis and Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville in St Andrew Square, Edinburgh.
10. Biggar public toilets have won 5 star awards for several years now in the Loo of the Year awards!
11. Blackhill, the site of a hill fort, affords a panorama of the area for those who clamber along the NTS trail which leads to the summit.
12. Hamilton Park racecourse hosts around 20 races each year. It has benefited substantially from a £2.5 million refurbishment and now offers city centre hotel standard of hospitality from a unique venue.
13. The Scots poet, Hugh McDiarmid, lived just outside Biggar in Brownsbank Cottage for the last twenty-six years of his life. Brownsbank Cottage has been preserved by Biggar Museum Trust and is used as a base for a writer-in-residence for most of the year.
14. James Gillray, whose home was in Coulter, three miles from the Royal Burgh, created over 1500 satirical artworks of political figures such as King George III and Napoleon. James Gillray is regarded as having been the first artist to create British political cartoons.
15. The Scott Monument was designed by George Meikle Kemp who was originally from Hillriggs, Biggar.
16. Family run Ramsay's of Carluke offer award winning butcher products and are the only butcher in Scotland to produce Ayrshire bacon in the traditional way. Rick Stein the TV chef, includes Ramsays in his Guide to the Food Heroes of Britain.
17. The Hogmanay bonfire on the High Street in Biggar, Lanarkshire, like many celebrations, supposedly dates back to mid-winter fire-worship in pagan times. The burning of the bonfire has been going on for hundreds of years, even continuing during World War II, although during the war it consisted only of a candle in a tin at the bonfire site so as not to attract enemy bombers.
18. The historic burgh of Lanark was the location of the first meeting of the Scots Parliament in 978.
19. William Wallace lived in Lanark and it is here he is said to have first drawn his sword in defence of Scotland after the Sheriff of Lanark was 'responsible' for the death of his wife.
20. The family of William Ewart Gladstone, who was once British Prime Minister, came from here and the family name can be seen on Gladstone Court museum which portrays small town life as the old remember it and as the young imagine it.

21. William Smellie, born 1697 in Lanark, Scotland, died March 5, 1763 in Lanark, was a pre-eminent obstetrician and has been called the father of British midwifery.
22. Douglas, a historic town in The Clyde Valley, was once the home of the powerful Douglas family.
23. It was in Douglas that a regiment was mustered to maintain the ideals of Rev. Richard Cameron, who is considered a protestant martyr of the 17th Century. That regiment became the Cameronians, one of Scotland's best-known regiments who were disbanded in 1968.
24. The ancient burgh of Hamilton was originally known as Cadzow, an Anglicisation of the Celtic name "Cadihou" meaning "beautiful castle". Since 1445 the town has been called Hamilton after the prominent local landowning family of the same name.
25. Hamilton Mausoleum was built in the 18th Century and boasts the longest echo (15 seconds) of any building in Europe. It was built as a chapel and crypt for the Duke of Hamilton.
26. Low Parks (Muir Street) Museum is a seventeenth Century Coaching Inn that is now home to museums telling Hamilton's story.
27. Hamilton Old Parish Church is the only church that William Adam ever designed. Built in 1734, it is the oldest building in this fascinating town that is still used for its original purpose.
28. The name Motherwell may have come from either the ancient "Lady Well" in the area or from the Gaelic "the level place above water".
29. Motherwell earned an international reputation for the manufacture of steel, an industry now sadly lost to the area.
30. Baron’s Haugh RSPB reserve is noted for wildlife, and the meadows and woodlands provide an ideal location for viewing the wealth of birdlife that inhabits them.
31. Carfin Pilgrimage Centre portrays pilgrimages and the history and motivation behind them. The Centre examines pilgrimages in relation to various faiths including: Christianity; Judaism; Hinduism; Buddhism; and Islam.
32. The magnificent Falls of Clyde are argued to have been inspiration for poets, painters, and even New Lanark itself. The nature reserve named after the falls has a visitor centre providing information about the woods and the wildlife, in particular about badgers.
33. Discover Carmichael Centre opened in 1994 and features the former Edinburgh Wax Model Collection depicting Scotland’s millennium from Queen Margaret and Macbeth through to the present day.
34. Strathaven Castle was built in the 17th Century and was home to the Earl of Douglas. Later, the Castle also became a home for the Dukes of Hamilton. Today Strathaven Castle is open to visitors all year round.
35. Drumclog Monument marks the site west of Strathaven where the Battle of Drumclog was fought in 1679. The Covenanters, who were fighting for religious freedom, were victorious in the battle, defeating Lord Graham of Claverhouse who commanded the Kings army.
36. The mighty medieval castle of Bothwell was built on a bluff above a bend in the River Clyde. Building was started by Walter of Moray some time in the latter half of the 1200s. Invasion and repeated siege meant that the original design of the castle was never completed and what you see today is largely the work of the Earls of Douglas in the years around 1400.
37. David Livingstone was born in Blantyre, at the time it was a mill village, on the banks of the River Clyde some eight miles south east of Glasgow. His mother and father were among the 2000 people employed in the Blantyre Cotton Mills and the family, including David's four brothers and sisters, lived in a single room in a tenement they shared with 23 other families in what was known as Shuttle Row. This now forms part of the David Livingstone Centre, a museum commemorating Livingstone's life and work in his native Blantyre.
38. Artisan cheese-maker Humphrey Errington has been farming for 25 years, working on 300 acres / 121 hectares on the western edge of the Pentlands near Carnwath. By way of diversification, he looked seriously at cheese making in the early 1980s, with his now famous Lanark Blue being launched in 1985.
39. Craignethan Castle was built in 1532 on a bluff falling steeply on two sides to the River Nethan and on a third to the Craignethan Burn. The only approach is from the higher ground to the west, and on this side the Castle was protected by defences designed to withstand the strongest artillery of the day.

40. Simple Simon Pies of Coulter have been voted in the top ten pie-makers of Britain. Stockists of their pies include Harrods, Harvey Nichols, Margiotta of Edinburgh and Peckhams.
41. The Biggar Little Festival is ten days of events showcasing the arts in and around Biggar.
42. The 1997 worldwide Carmichael population was estimated at over 42,000 with half resident in the United States, a quarter in the United Kingdom and 10% in Canada. A further 10% lives in Australasia. Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, France, Holland, South Africa and Italy each have a significant Carmichael population.
43. The Clydesdale horse was first bred in this area in the 18th Century from local packhorse mares and Flemish stallions.
44. Douglas has the tomb of Sir James Douglas, known for his loyalty to Robert the Bruce. 'Good Sir James' died in Spain at the hands of the Moors while carrying the king's heart to the Holy Land, in fulfilment of Bruce's dying wish to go on crusade. The Douglas coat of arms gained a red heart after this time.
45. Gladstone Court Museum contains a collection and records of the Albion Motor Co., which by 1915 was the largest vehicle manufacturer in the British Empire. Its founder Thomas Blackwood Murray came from Biggar.
46. Little Sparta is a garden at Dunsyre in the Pentlands near Edinburgh, created by artist and poet Ian Hamilton Finlay. The five-acre Arcadian garden includes concrete poetry in sculptural form, polemic, philosophical aphorisms, together with conventional sculptures and temple-like buildings as well as mature plantings. Altogether it includes over 275 artworks by the artist.
47. East Kilbride was the birthplace of the renowned 18th Century surgeons John & William Hunter whose skill and knowledge contributed significantly to surgery being a recognised medical discipline. The Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery at the University of Glasgow is due to their endowment.
48. Coal mining was significant to the Hamilton, Motherwell and Wishaw areas bringing huge wealth to the Dukes of Hamilton. Mining proved the downfall of Hamiton Palace when it had to be demolished in the 1920s due to subsidence.
49. David Dale sold out his interests in New Lanark to his son in law Robert Owen. It was Owen who realised the industrial success of the village. A keen business sense combined with an ethical view towards employees, Owen believed that productivity and profit lay in a clean, healthy, educated and contented workforce.
50. The Biggar Puppet Theatre was the dream of Ian and Jill Purves. They converted the stable block of their newly acquired Victorian villa in Biggar almost 40 years ago and have gained an international reputation for their puppet show productions.