

Interesting 'Facts' Around Dumbarton

1. The name **Dumbarton** comes from "Dun Breatann" meaning the fortress of the Britons.
2. St Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland, is believed to have been born beside **Old Kilpatrick** on the shores of the River Clyde around the year 410AD.
3. The geological feature of the Highland Boundary Fault runs diagonally across Scotland from **Helensburgh** in the west to Stonehaven in the east. The Fault separates the Highlands of Scotland from the Lowlands.
4. Opened in 1790, the 22 mile Forth and Clyde Canal, connects east and west Scotland and meets the River Clyde at the village of **Bowling**.
5. Claiming its date of founding as 1772, Littlemill distillery at **Bowling** is a contender as the oldest distillery in Scotland.
6. Formula One racing champion Jackie Stewart was born at **Milton** in 1939.
7. John Logie Baird, the inventor of television in 1924 was born in **Helensburgh**. In the early part of his career he invented a type of pneumatic shoes which, unlike Nike, never caught on.
8. The daughter of one of the mansion houses in **Rhu** was the infamous Madeleine Smith who was tried in Glasgow for murdering her fiance Pierre Emile L'Angelier, in 1857, by poisoning him. The case was found "not proven", Scotland's third verdict, so Madeleine escaped imprisonment.
9. The last surviving tea clipper, The Cutty Sark, on display in Greenwich, was launched from Scott and Linton's shipyard at Dumbarton in 1869.
10. When it was built in 1910, the **Alexandria** Motor Works was the largest car factory in the world. Today it houses the Motoring Heritage Centre.
11. The Denny Ship Model Test Tank in **Dumbarton** has a water tank as long as a football pitch. Built in 1882, the Denny Tank was the first commercial ship model testing tank built in the world and it remains in use today.
12. William Wallace was held at Dumbarton Castle before being taken to London for execution in 1305.
13. **Dumbarton** was first mentioned around 450AD as the stronghold of the kings of Strathclyde. The ancient kingdom stretched from the northern tip of Loch Lomond to Morecambe Bay in the north of England.
14. In a 2005 poll of Radio Times readers, Loch Lomond was named as the 6th greatest natural wonder in Britain.
15. The rock on which Dumbarton Castle sits is an extinct volcanic vent.
16. The town of **Dumbarton** was made a Royal Burgh by King Alexander II in 1222.

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17. In 1603 the use of the name MacGregor was outlawed by King James VI. The MacGregor clan had massacred many of the Colquhouns at the Battle of Glenfruin, the "Glen of Sorrow" not far north of Dumbarton.
18. Geese have been used at Dumbuck distillery as security guards since 1959. The alarm set up by this 'Scotch Watch' acts as a deterrent to would be intruders.
19. The town of **Alexandria** is named after the local member of parliament, Alexander Smollet, a relative of the town's developer around 1760. He was killed at the battle of Alkmaer in Holland in 1799.
20. Vikings laid siege to the formidable rock fortress of **Dumbarton** in 869AD. The starving Briton occupants held out for four months until the Fortress' well dried up. 200 ships took the occupants as slaves.
21. The village of **Balloch** on Loch Lomond's southern shore takes its name for the Gaelic word Bealach meaning pass or gap which reflects its position between the loch and the River Clyde.
22. The castle on Dumbarton Rock is strategically positioned to monitor traffic on the River Clyde and to guard the mouth of the River Leven, the gateway to Loch Lomond.
23. Built across the width of Scotland in AD142, the Roman Antonine Wall meets the River Clyde at **Old Kilpatrick**.
24. The 720 square miles of The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park was opened in 2002 and lies just to the north of Dumbarton and was Scotland's first National Park.
25. Why did Dumbarton rock? Because it saw the River Leven!
26. The Kilpatrick Hills were once the haunt of illegal whisky distillers and smugglers in early 19th C.
27. **Dumbarton** castle saw its last action in May 1941 when a German aircraft dropped four bombs on Dumbarton Rock during a raid on the Clyde.
28. **Dumbarton** was Scotland's largest producer of glass in 19th century.
29. Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, died at **Cardross** in 1328.
30. The town of **Dumbarton** differentiates itself from the county of Dunbartonshire by one letter which probably arises from an early mis-spelling, the pre-fix dun being old gaelic for hill fort.
31. Loch Lomond is Scotland's largest loch by surface area. (7,123ha /190,000a)
32. Mary Queen of Scots stayed in **Dumbarton** Castle for five months in 1547 before sailing to France to marry the Dauphin. When Mary was defeated at the Battle of Langside in 1568 she fled from Dumbarton Castle to her cousin Queen Elizabeth of England to face imprisonment and finally beheading.
33. The town of **Renton** was named in 1782 by founder, Jean Telfer Smollet (sister of the novelist Tobias Smollett) after her Daughter-in-law, Cecelia Renton.

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34. The Smollett Monument commemorating novelist Tobias Smollett stands in Renton's Main St near his birth place at Dalquhurn House.
35. **Renton** and **Alexandria** began as busy textile-dyeing and printing villages in the late 18th century. Calico and Turkey Red cloths were exported to India, the Far East and the South Pacific.
36. Henry Bell, the inventor of the steamboat in 1812 hailed from **Helensburgh**.
37. The West Highland Railway on its way from Glasgow to Oban and Mallaig is one of the most outstanding railway journeys in the world.
38. Sir James Colquhoun designed **Helensburgh** in 1780 and named it after his wife Helen. Originally the place was a small clachan and was called Milligs.
39. Percy Pilcher first took a kind of aeroplane off the ground near **Dumbarton** in the year 1895. Four years later, in 1899, he got ambitious. He fitted a petrol engine to one of his machines and invented the powered aeroplane. It is claimed to have got off the ground, several years before Wilbur and Orville Wright.
40. Hill House in **Helensburgh** was designed by renowned Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh and is open to the public in summer.
41. It was once possible to take a tram car ride all the way from central Glasgow to Dumbarton.
42. In the Tintin series of cartoon books, Captain Haddock and Snowy's favourite drink is Scotch whisky of the brand Loch Lomond.
43. The song The Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond was first published around 1876. The song tells of two Scottish prisoners in Carlisle after the 1745 Jacobite uprising. One was to be set free, and the other to be executed for his part in the uprising against the Hanoverian king. The two prisoners' release and execution were timed for the same hour. The freed man would travel home to Scotland the conventional way, tramping wearily for many miles by The High Road. The condemned man, travelling with the speed of a spirit by The Low Road, would be transported instantly at the moment of death, arriving home first.
44. Duncryne Hill at **Gartocharn** is known locally as 'the Dumpling'.
45. Sir Walter Scott stayed for a time at Ross Priory on the shores of Loch Lomond and is said to have composed the Lady of Lake there.
46. WH Auden, the English poet afforded recent notoriety being quoted in the eulogy in the film 'Four Weddings and a Funeral' spent a two year period as a schoolmaster at the Larchfield Academy in **Helensburgh**.
47. It was at Dumbarton that Scotland's earliest poetry, 'The Gododdin', by the Welsh bard Aneirin, was first written down. It tells the tale of a disastrous raid by the warband of the Britons of Edinburgh on the Angles, revelling in their deeds and mourning the loss of so many fine warriors.
48. An island in Loch Lomond plays host to an unusual animal. Inchconnachan is home to a colony of wallabies, who sometimes manage to make it to the mainland if the loch freezes in the right place.