



40 fascinating 'facts' about Dumfries & Galloway

1. Dumfries is thought to have come from Fort of the Frisians where the prefix 'Deum' comes from the Scots Gaelic 'Dun' for fortified stronghold and the Frisians were one of three tribes inhabiting Britain in earlier times.
2. The inhabitants of Dumfries are known as 'doonhamers'.
3. Galloway means land of the stranger since the early inhabitants of the area were a mix of Irish & Norse.
4. 'There's gold in them there hills!' could easily refer to the Southern upland area around Wanlockhead and Leadhills. The area is comprised of mineral rich deep-sea shale but lead ore has been a more common find!
5. David Coulthard born in Twynholm is arguably the greatest living sportsman to emerge from the southwest.
6. Brother Walfrid, founder of Glasgow Celtic Football Club, is buried in Dumfries.
7. Nicky Spence born in 1983, in Dumfriesshire, is Scotland's latest contribution to the international music scene. Nicky's classical tenor voice has endeared him to a growing number of public. An operatic performer, he has included in his first CD recordings s of traditional Scottish songs.
8. Dumfries was the hometown of Robert Burns from 1759 until his death in 1796. The poet is now buried in St. Michael's Churchyard in the Burns Mausoleum.
9. The Southern Uplands have been heavily sculpted and rounded by the effects of glaciation to leave a series of gently rolling hills with occasional rocky outcrops. There are no summits above 3000ft (914m) 7 but over 80 rise above 2000ft (610m) 7 offering some fine hill walking.
10. J M Barrie author of Peter Pan was a pupil at Dumfries Academy.
11. Robert the Bruce murdered his key rival for the crown of Scotland, John Comyn, in Dumfries. In a twist of legitimacy, Isabella, Countess of Buchan 7 who had married into the Comyn family, crowned Bruce *King of Scotland 7 as was her right as the daughter of the Earl of Fife.
12. Kirkcudbright's Tolbooth was the model for the prison in Sir Walter Scott's novel 'Guy Mannering' (1815) 7.
13. In 1999 Scotland's first multi-institutional university campus was established in Dumfries. Located within the 85-acre Crichton estate, it is host to the University of Glasgow, the University of Paisley, Bell College and Dumfries & Galloway College. Funding issues have led to withdrawal of the University of Glasgow-University's participation.
14. In the 5th Century 7, Christianity came to Scotland via St Ninian when he set up a community known as Candida Casa in Whithorn to spread the Good News.
15. Hugh Clapperton (May 18, 1788 - April 13, 1827), Scottish traveller and explorer of West and Central Africa, was born in Annan.
16. Portpatrick was for almost 200 years in the period 1661-1849 the main harbour for the crossing to Northern Ireland but was superseded by steamships using Stranraer.
17. From the late 1650s, Moffat developed as a spa town associated with the Moffat Well and, from 1748, the Hartfell Spa, attracting visitors including Robert Burns (1759-96).
18. Kirkcudbright became the base in the 20th century for several notable artists, including Sir James Guthrie, E.A. Hornel, Jessie King, W.Y. McGregor, S.J. Peplow and E.A. Taylor. The town is still well known as an artist's haven.
19. The Scots poet Hugh MacDiarmid (C.M. Grieve) was born in Langholm and is celebrated with a memorial of an open book 7 and a cairn on the north flank of Whita Hill.
20. The long coastline of the Solway Firth welcomes over 40,000 wildfowl and 83,000 waders each winter making Dumfries & Galloway an ornithologist's paradise. Places such as WWT Caerlaverock and Mersehead Nature Reserve make it easy to get close to flocks of thousands of barnacle geese 7 which travel every year from Norway to winter on the wetlands of the Solway.

21. Lord Dowding (1882 - 1970), Air Chief Marshall during the Battle of Britain, was a native of Moffat.
22. Robert Burns is said to have composed the song 'Scots Wha Hae' while riding from St Mary's Isle to Gatehouse of Fleet on 1st August 1793 and is thought to have written it down when he arrived at the Murray Arms Hotel in the town.
23. Sanquhar is famous as the site where in 1680 schoolteacher Richard Cameron and an armed band of followers established their rebellion against Charles II with the Declaration of Sanquhar. Though killed soon after, the remnant of his men formed the regiment of the Cameronians.
24. John Laurie the British actor renowned for his role as Fraser in Dad's Army is a Doonhamer.
25. Dalbeattie was the birthplace of Lieutenant William Murdoch (1873 - 1912), First Officer of the Titanic.
26. Dalry is fully, St John's Town of Dalry. It is situated on an old pilgrimage route and named after the Knights of St John.
27. Wigtown is 'Scotland's National Book Town' with numerous bookstores and book-related businesses. There is a spring book festival in May with the main festival in September. ~~[28th Sep - 7th Oct 2007]~~.
28. Gavin Maxwell, the author, was born in Elrig near Monreith in Dumfries and Galloway in 1914. In 1960 he published *Ring of Bright Water*, the story of his life in the West Highlands of Scotland with two pet otters and for which he is best known.
29. Another famous Maxwell, James Clerk Maxwell a pioneering Mathematician and Physicist is buried in the churchyard at the village of Parton. Maxwell contributed significantly to the study of electro-magnetism and prepared the way for quantum physics. He ranks alongside Newton and Einstein as one of the world's greatest physicists. Also a photographic pioneer, he succeeded in taking the world's first colour photograph, of a tartan ribbon
30. Dumfries and Galloway is a superb outdoor environment. For those who would like to get started, a number of walking festivals run from May to October. Lower Annandale, Newton Stewart, Upper Nithsdale, Langholm and Moffat all boast organised festivals.
31. The Twelve Apostles stone circle in Nithsdale near Dumfries is the largest by diameter in Scotland.
32. In 1831 regular steamers served Stranraer eventually becoming a major ferry port with links to Larne and Belfast in Northern Ireland.
33. John Paul Jones, considered the Father of the US Navy, was born in Arbigland. It is possible to visit the house where he grew up. An intrepid sailor, he is often quoted 'I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast, for I intend to go in harm's way'.
34. The cult film *The Wicker Man* had many scenes shot in the Dumfries & Galloway area. The film centres on an investigation into a missing girl from a community called Summerisle. Logan Botanic Gardens and Castle Kennedy gardens together formed the gardens for Summerisle Castle.
35. Galloway Forest Park is the largest forest park in Britain covering over 300 square miles of spectacular forest, moorland and lochs rise towards the rugged grandeur of the granite mountains. The forest provides good opportunities to view wildlife with red squirrel and red kites firm favourites with visitors.
36. Thomas Telford the acclaimed Scots civil engineer was born at Glendinning (northwest of Langholm, Dumfries and Galloway). Telford is notable as a builder of many bridges, docks and canals. These include the Bridge over the Atlantic Ocean (the Menai Straits) linking Anglesey and Wales, Dean Bridge in Edinburgh and the Caledonian Canal. 2007 ~~seesaws~~ - the 250 anniversary of his birth.
37. The Southern Upland Way is Britain's first official coast-to-coast long distance footpath. It runs 212 miles (340 kms) from Portpatrick on the southwest coast of Scotland to Cockburnspath on the eastern seaboard. It one of four national long distance routes.
38. The Dukes of Buccleuch inherited Drumlanrig Castle in 1810, with the Queensbury title. The Buccleuchs brought to the home a magnificent collection of furniture and art, with works by Holbein, Rembrandt and da Vinci.
39. Kirkpatrick Macmillan was born in Keir (Dumfries and Galloway), 1813, the son of a blacksmith. Macmillan developed the first rear-wheel driven safety bicycle in 1842. He gained inspiration for his invention from the hobbyhorse.

40. The rivers Annan, Nith and Esk are well known for sport angling.