



50 Fascinating Facts about the Forth Foreshore area

1. Each year, a native of the **South Queensferry** is elected to the position of Burry Man on the second Friday in August, and is covered from head to toe in burrs (Spiky seed cases of the burdock plant)
2. The "Burry Man" ceremony has existed in **South Queensferry** for centuries and is thought to be a pagan ritual invoking good fortune.
3. The Hawes Inn in **South Queensferry** serves as a location in Stevenson's Kidnapped.
4. In the shadow of the Rail Bridge near **Dalmeny, Barnbogle Castle** stands on the shore of the Forth. It came into the Rosebery family's possession in the 1660s when Sir Archibald Primrose bought it for his son who was created 1st Earl of Rosebery in 1703.
5. **Dalmeny House** was built by the fourth Earl of Rosebery in 1815. Barnbogle, the original house just a quarter of a mile away.
6. There is a **public footpath** right along the southern foreshore of the Forth across Dalmeny estate that brings you out at Cramond.
7. **Fife**, often called the 'Kingdom of Fife' is thought to have formed one of the seven Pictish kingdoms well over a thousand years ago when it bore the name of 'Fib'.
8. UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown was born and raised in Kirkcaldy and is the MP for **Dunfermline East**.
9. **Dunfermline** is home to the Makars Trust, which has since 1997 been creating and gathering folk songs predominantly from projects in Fife communities. They have successfully teamed song-writing talent with over 50 schools, 30 day centres and old peoples homes.
10. Sir James Dewar (1842 -1923) not only invented cordite but also the Thermos Flask. He was born in what is now the Unicorn Inn in **Kincardine on Forth**.
11. **Culross**, the beautifully restored 16th/17th century village was 'saved' for that restoration by a lack of money to clear away what had become insanitary housing. A rich trading port for salt and coal and in the 16th and 17th centuries it was commercially more important than Glasgow.
12. Sir Samuel Greig (1735 -1788) was born in **Inverkeithing**. He joined the navy and rose through the ranks to become a full admiral in 1782. He was responsible for transforming the Russian Navy during the reign of Catherine the Great and indeed is called, 'The father of the Russian Navy'.
13. Had Alexander III, King of Scotland, not been in such a hurry to rejoin his new wife on a stormy night in March, 1286, his horse might not have stumbled in the dark at **Kinghorn** and he might not have died. His death ultimately led to the Wars of Independence and the Battle of Bannockburn. In other words, it was a horse's stumble that gave us, 'Flower of Scotland'!
14. The monks of **Dunfermline** were the first to exploit the ample coal reserves of Fife. A papal envoy, Aeneas Silvius Piccolimini, visited Scotland in the 15th century and was astonished to see people – as he thought – burning stones!
15. St Margaret, Queen of Scotland and patron saint lived in Dunfermline and gave her title to **South and North Queensferry** when she established a ferry there both for herself and the many pilgrims wishing to travel to St Andrews.
16. If you visit **Dunfermline Abbey**, you can pay your respects to Robert the Bruce who lies buried there (except for his heart which is said to have been buried in Melrose Abbey).
17. The Abbot House in **Dunfermline**, survived the town's great fire of 1624 and is today a museum centre for Fife heritage.
18. **Barbara Dickson**, famous singer and actress, was born and educated in Dunfermline. Barbara sang on the original Evita soundtrack.
19. **Dunfermline** has produced other internationally-successful rock bands, notably Nazareth, The Skids and Big Country.
20. **Iain Banks**, the writer, was born in Dunfermline in 1954 and still lives in Fife. He writes very quickly (about three months for a book) and this leaves him free to enjoy life for the rest of the year.
21. **Andrew Carnegie** (1835 – 1919), Dunfermline's most famous son who became one of the richest men in the world once said, 'The man who dies rich, dies disgraced.'
22. **The Carron Company**, a famous foundry based at Carronshore near Falkirk, produced a wide range of goods including cast iron parts for James Watt's steam engine and made telephone kiosks and police boxes – like Dr Who's Tardis – well into the 1960's but the company went into receivership in 1982. A company operating under the Carron name now makes steel sinks, among other things.

23. **The Carron Company** was granted a lucrative contract to supply armaments to the British armed forces and also to the Russian Empire and the newly formed United States of America.
24. **Grangemouth** used to be in Stirlingshire. Founded by Sir Lawrence Dundas in 1777, it was built as part of the eastern end of the Forth and Clyde Canal. Its original name was Sealock. Later the name changed to Grange Burn Mouth which flows into the Forth at this point.
25. In February 1939 Scottish Aviation announced their plans to provide central Scotland with what would be the largest airport in the country. Over 500 acres of land were secured and in July 1939 **Grangemouth** Aerodrome was officially opened. KLM flew a regular service to the Netherlands. During the war Grangemouth was a centre for the training of fighter pilots from Britain and all parts of the Commonwealth as well as Poland and Czechoslovakia. After the war ideas on civil aviation changed and the great plan was gradually abandoned.
26. **Bo'ness**, or Borrowstounness, is derived from the old village name of "Borrowstoun" (the area at the southern edge of the town) and "ness" – a point projecting into the sea. The new town grew up around a thriving harbour – hence Borrowstounness.
27. **Bo'ness** town centre is being upgraded as part of a Townscape Heritage Initiative. This will complement plans to build hundreds of new homes, shops and restaurants around the town's historic harbour. The plans have seen house prices rise – and RBS recently named Bo'ness as the best place for first time buyers to buy in Scotland (and second in the whole of the UK).
28. The oldest building in the town centre is thought to be Dymock's Buildings (c. 1650) recently restored by the National Trust for Scotland and now used as housing for elderly people. The building – with traditional orange lime-rendered walls – was officially re-opened by Prince Charles in 2004. There are occasional tours as part of Doors Open Day celebrations.
29. Princess Diana visited the **Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway**, which attracts around 50,000-60,000 visitors a year. The restored railway featured buildings from across Scotland, and a great range of international rolling stock. The railway provides trips from the station, near Bo'ness Harbour, to Birkhill – where visitors can explore a clay mine. The line and station are frequently used for TV and film productions, from Hollywood films to making BBC's Balamory!
30. **Kinneil House** features some of the best examples of Renaissance Wall paintings in Scotland. The paintings were discovered during demolition work in the 1930s, saving the imposing house from destruction. Since then there has been partial rebuilding work. The house is open to the public occasionally. A local group, The Friends of Kinneil works with Historic Scotland to provide access, normally free of charge. Open days are usually very busy.
31. Items on show in **Kinneil Museum** include Roman artefacts and examples of Bo'ness Pottery. The town was a leading pottery producer and examples are now prized collectors' items.
32. The museum also features a picture of the "Bridgeness Slab" – a decorated Roman tablet found in the Bridgeness area of **Bo'ness**. Channel 4's Time Team recently voted it one of the top Roman finds in Britain. The original slab is now on show in the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh's Chambers Street. However, the local community has plans to have a new replica made and put on display in Bo'ness.
33. The House was home to the powerful Dukes of Hamilton – who have been close to British monarchs throughout history. The current Duke is the Queen's Representative in Scotland.
34. The other large mansion in **Bo'ness** is Carriden House – at the eastern edge of the town. It offers bed and breakfast facilities.
35. **Bo'ness** offers good opportunities for walkers. Check the VisitScotland walking website for details. <http://walking.visitscotland.com/walks/centralscotland/>
36. The Hippodrome, the first purpose-built cinema in Scotland, perhaps in the UK, is to be refurbished and re-opened as both cinema and heritage centre in **Bo'ness**. Designed by local architect Matthew Steele, a contemporary of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the Hippodrome is both a beautiful & historic building. Designed in 1911, it will once more be a focal point in Bo'ness Town Centre.
37. The price of beer in **Bo'ness** was raised by two pence in 1744 to pay for the cost of upkeep of the harbour.
38. The **Bo'ness Children's Fair Festival** – thought to be the largest event of its type in Scotland – is held on the last Friday every June. The Fair features the crowning of a Fair "Queen" – and a large procession through the town. Children who feature in the fair have arches or house frontages erected in front of their homes.
39. '24' actor **Keifer Sutherland** has Falkirk connections. His grandfather, Tommy Douglas, was born in Camelon, near Falkirk, before moving to Canada, aged seven.
40. In **Bo'ness**, generations of miners are honoured by a new mining memorial in the town centre. Bo'ness was one of the first places in Scotland to have coal mined. Its last pit closed in the 1980s.
41. The local library in **Bo'ness** is a visitor attraction in its own right. It's an amalgamation of new build, with an old inn and a warehouse building added into the new layout. It features a fine display of local history photographs.

42. Between 1911 and 1923, 30 steamships mainly weighing less than 3,500 tons were built in shipyards at **Alloa**. During the Second World War 157 'tank landing crafts' were built at Alloa.
43. During the First World War an aircraft factory near **Alloa Harbour** built 'Sopwith Camels' and during the Second World War, Harland Engineering Company made parts for planes and submarines.
44. The 'Maid of the Forth' passenger cruiser plies between Hawes Pier in South Queensferry and **Inchcolm Island**, which lies in the Forth, off Burntisland.
45. Since 2007 it also sails occasionally from **Alloa** and **Bo'ness** – one of the very few vessels to do so and almost certainly the only passenger service to call in these re-emerging ports.
46. Built in the 15th century by one of Scotland's most powerful families, the Crichtons, the roles of **Blackness** Castle were those of garrison fortress and state prison. The present castle was designed as the bow of a large ship heading into the Firth of Forth to scare off any would be attackers! It was location for scenes from Franco Zeffereilli's version of Hamlet, starring Mel Gibson.
47. '**Blackness milk**', imbibed on the Linlithgow marches, is a blend of milk and whisky.
48. The **House of the Binns**, near Blackness, stands as a living monument to one of Scotland's oldest families, the Dalrymples, who have lived here since 1612.
49. The legendary regiment of **Royal Scots Greys**, was formed in West Lothian by General Tam Dalrymple in 1681. The general had replaced his troops' conspicuous red coats for grey uniforms and is thus credited as the first Royal army commander to recognise the importance of camouflage.
50. **Hopetoun House** near South Queensferry is one of the most splendid examples of Georgian architecture in Britain being the work of Scottish architects Sir William Bruce and William Adam. Both Bruce and Adam were architects to the Royal house of their day.