40 fascinating 'facts' about Kyle & Skye

1. The origin of the name Skye is uncertain but is thought could have a Gaelic origin meaning *winged isle* referring to the shape of the island.
2. Skye is the largest of the Inner Hebrides.
3. The singer KT Tunstall purchased a house on Skye last year to enjoy creative space on the island away from it all.
4. The population of Skye, at the 2001 census was 9,232. In contrast to many other Scottish islands this represents a 4% increase from the census of 1991.
5. Isleornsay (Scottish Gaelic: Eilean Iarmain) is a village lying off the main Armadale to Sleat road on the Isle of Skye. It overlooks, but is not upon, the island of Oronsay. The island itself shelters one of the best natural harbours in southern Skye and is much used by yachtsmen caught out in the Sound of Sleat.
6. Skye music festival will take place on 25th & 26th May 2007. Last year's event was voted 'Fan Friendly Festival' in the UK Festival Awards.
7. The 400-mile coastline is littered with bays, sea arches, stacks, caves, massive cliffs, waterfalls, fossils, and tidal islands – a lifetime's worth of exploration and discovery.
8. The Vikings settled on Skye and lived there, albeit not completely at peace for over 550 years.
9. When Skye returned to Scots rule bloody feuds continued between the Macleods of north Skye and the Macdonalds of south Skye.
10. The Skye Boat Song recounts the tale of Prince Charles Edward Stewart's flight from the government after his rebellion was crushed in 1746 at Culloden. He was helped to escape by Flora MacDonald who disguised him as her maidservant Betty Burke.
11. A monument to Flora MacDonald can be found in the cemetery at Kilmuir. It is inscribed with Dr Johnson's epitaph for her: 'A name that will be mentioned in history, and if courage and fidelity be virtues, mentioned with honour.'
12. Visible evidence of deserted settlements can be found and visited on Skye at Suisnish, Boreraig, Lorgill and Tusdale. The empty towns came from forced eviction from the land of tenants in an episode in Scots history known as the Highland Clearances.
13. Dunvegan Castle is probably the oldest inhabited castle in the north of Scotland. The Chiefs of the Clan MacLeod have occupied it continuously for more than 750 years. The present - and 30th - clan chief is Hugh Magnus MacLeod.
14. Sgurr Alistair in the Cuillin Hills is the highest point on Skye at 992m (3255 feet).
15. The noted Gaelic-language College Sabhal Mor Ostaig is located by Kilbeg on the Sleat peninsula. Skye is at the centre of Gaelic culture, with a majority of islanders using Gaelic in everyday conversation.
16. Skye has been joined to the mainland by bridge since 1995.

17. The famous dog Greyfriars Bobby known for his loyalty to his dead master until his own death was a Skye terrier.
18. Sorley MacLean [1911-1996] was born at Oskaig on Raasay, MacLean was educated at the school on that island, followed by Portree High School. MacLean re-established Gaelic as a serious literary language, much in the same way his friend Hugh MacDiarmid had done for the Scots language, and became one of the greatest Gaelic poets.
19. James Abbot MacNeill Whistler was a MacNeill on his mother's side, descended from a chief of the clan and a Jacobite, who had emigrated from Skye to North Carolina in 1746.
20. Donald (Donnie) Munro was born in Uig (Skye). Munro was brought up in Portree where he attended the High School, before studying at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen. He joined the Gaelic folk-rock band Runrig in 1974 as their new lead singer.
21. Skye is a haven for fairy life and the Fairy Glen must be experienced first hand. Turn off the main road just by the Uig Hotel, heading up the hill signed to Sheader and Balnaknock.
22. Spar Cave is an astonishing, cathedral-like structure, some 150ft long, with a marble-like flowstone staircase and huge columns formed from the centuries of water dripping through the limestone. Accessible only at low tide extreme must be taken in timing your visit. Take a good torch!
23. Talisker is the only distillery on Skye and is situated in Carbost.
24. The Skye museum of Island Life, Uig gives an insight into Skye in previous times. In addition to reconstructed buildings there are fascinating archives of memories to look at.
25. Oronsay situated just off the end of Ullinish Point can be crossed to at low tide when a natural causeway is exposed. The name Oronsay comes form the Norse for tidal island.
26. Skye's distinctive skyline is the mountain range the Cuillins (or Cuillin Hills) which provide challenging walking and rock climbing. The main body of the Cuillins is known as the 'Black Cuillins', consisting of Gabbro with the lower 'Red Cuillins' of pink granite lying just to the east.
27. If walking in the Cuillins seems too much there is the option to drink it courtesy of Isle of Skye Brewery who have beers bearing the Cuillin name and others with island associations.
28. An iconic image for Scotland, Eilean Donan is a stereo-typically picturesque, and somewhat over-exposed, 13th century castle. It lies on a small island of the same name, at the junction of Loch Alsh, Loch Duich and Loch Long in the Skye and Lochalsh district of Highland.
29. The author Gavin Maxwell is associated with the area living on Soay, Sandaig and Eilean Ban at different stages of his life. His book *Ring of Bright Water* was made into a film.
30. Amongst pipers the tune *Dornie Ferry* is a well-known strathspey.
31. Kyle of Lochalsh provides the administrative headquarters for the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre (BUTEC), a torpedo testing range run on behalf of the Royal Navy.
32. Strome castle is a 15th Century fortified tower-house, built on a strategic promontory on Loch Carron in such a position to effectively control the water-borne traffic. It was built originally by the Earls of Ross, but given to the Camerons of Lochiel by James IV.

33. The popular television series *Hamish Macbeth* was filmed in and around Plockton.
34. Scenes from Skye have featured in the films *Highlander, Breaking the Waves, The Wicker Man* and *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* to name just four.
35. The Five Sisters of Kintail are held in trust by the NTS and make a challenging walk for those who wish to make the journey. 4 of the 5 sisters are Munro's i.e. are over 3,000 ft high.
36. The estate is also home to the Falls of Glomach, which drop some 370 feet making them one of the highest in Britain. The 5-mile walk to view the falls, is a strenuous one.
37. The Pass of Mam Ratagan is renowned for spectacular hairpin bends! It is in fact a military road, which was built to safeguard the passage to Skye.
38. Two of the best-preserved brochs on the mainland are situates near Glenelg. Dun Troddan and Dun Telve are under the care of Historic Scotland.
39. The Clan Donald visitor centre near Armadale presents an excellent exhibition of the family structure of the clan and the ceremonial of clan society.
40. Kilt rock on Skye is the fantastic coastline formed of basalt columns whose different colours and lines suggest tartan.