

KINTYRE -

IF IT'S tranquillity you're after away from the bright lights and hustle and bustle the Kintyre Peninsula offers all the peace and quiet you need. This lovely 40-mile long stretch of land, no more than ten miles wide at any one place, is an agricultural and fishing heartland and the only sounds you'll hear will be from cattle, sheep or tractors.

Along with its farms and picturesque fishing villages are quiet roads leading to lochs, glens, sandy beaches, hills and forests and plenty of archaeological and historical interest to satisfy any holidaymaker.

Your trip to Kintyre begins at Tarbert to which the peninsula is joined by a narrow isthmus. This is a busy fishing village which is also dependent on tourism.

Tarbert has one of the loveliest natural harbours in Scotland and so is a 'yachtie' haven. It is also Scotland's oldest burgh although its history is pre-Viking.

At Tayinloan, not far from Tarbert, you can take a short ferry trip to the fascinating little island of Gigha, bought by the islanders some years ago from the owner.

The islanders now have lots of flourishing enterprises and provide you with a warm welcome.

They host various events throughout the year including a music festival which is very popular. The superb gardens at Achamore House are well worth a visit and there is overnight accommodation if you want to return to the mainland the next day.

Several pretty nearby mainland villages offer plenty of choice in the form of restaurants, woodland walks, fantastic beaches and abundant wildlife. Muassdale and Glenbarr are two and Glenbarr Abbey, an 18th century gothic mansion, is open to the public, as are its gardens.

Not far from the main community of Campbeltown is the world-famous Machrihanish golf course, reputed to have one of the finest, if not the finest, first hole in the entire world. Many celebrities have played here and if you take a turn you might spot a Hollywood star or two. Well, Hugh Grant and Greg Norman are two, for starters! They loved it.

Unique craft shops in the village of Carradale make it well worth stopping here, as well as its glorious beach, outdoor activities and chal-

lenging nine-hole golf course.

Last year a new walk, the Kintyre Way which stretches from Tarbert to Southend near Campbeltown was launched. The 142-km (89 miles) walk criss-crosses the peninsula and a trek along it is a great way to take in the landscape and all it offers. If you're into hiking or even gently rambling along this walk could be for you.

There are plenty of places to obtain accommodation and supplies and the walk can be completed in a week.

The Mull of Kintyre was made famous by former Beatle Sir Paul McCartney with his record of that name. Sir Paul still has a home on the peninsula and a statue to his late wife Linda can be seen in Campbeltown.

The Mull itself has far-reaching views across the sea to the north coast of Ireland and on good clear days

from the cliff tops it's said you can even see cars travelling along its roads. Also at the Mull is a lighthouse completed in 1788. Rebuilt in the 1820 it was automated 11 years ago.

Campbeltown itself on the loch of that name is a small but pretty town with hotels and guesthouses to suit all pock-

ets and palates. Several craft shops have been established in the centre. If it's activity you want you can have a swim or gym session at the town's fantastic new leisure centre Aqualorium.

Campbeltown is another royal burgh, founded in 1607, and grew because of its surroundings. In Victorian times it was an important fishing port and the landing of herring here contributed to its wealth at that time. Local red sandstone was used to construct its handsome buildings and it had a coal industry for several centuries.

The Machrihanish Light Railway, known as the 'wee train', carried passengers to local hotels and the famous golf course at Machrihanish until it closed in 1931.

Whisky was what really put the town on the map. At one time it had 24 whisky distilleries and wealthy distillery owners built fine houses in the town which can be seen today. Now there are only two distilleries, Springbank and Glen Gyle.

Apart from Machrihanish there are two other golf courses within a few miles of Campbeltown. One of the town's best-known attractions is the



The busy main street in Campbeltown

Argyll's agricultural and fishing heartland



The picturesque fishing village of Tarbert

cave painting of the Crucifixion by Archibald MacKinnon on Davaar Island, reached by a causeway at low tide.

The town's secondary school now maintains it. Campbeltown does have a bloody history with a massacre at Dunaverty Castle in 1647 when the remnant of the MacDonald army was slaughtered by Covenanters under General George Leslie after it had surrendered. However, little now remains of the castle.

Bloodthirstiness apart, for a quiet, leisurely holiday in a scenic, tranquil setting the Kintyre Peninsula will surely live up to your expectations.

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