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# *Welcome to the Heart of Argyll*

## *A guide to our local area*

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*Photo: [www.marcpickeringphotography.co.uk](http://www.marcpickeringphotography.co.uk)*

*I took the image from a hill above Cairnbaan on a cold spring morning, it is one of my favourite views in the Heart of Argyll.*

*The view across Moine Mhor to the Add estuary and Isle of Mull beyond really captures a lot of the features found in Argyll landscapes...*

*Even Duntrune Castle can be found in this image, an iconic building nestled amongst the hills!*

*Marc 2019*

With our outstanding national nature reserves, abundant wildlife, prehistoric landscape and stunning coastal landscapes, we have it all.

Stretching from the picturesque fishing village of Tarbert, Loch Fyne, in the South to Loch Craignish in the North, over to Kilberry, Knapdale, Tayvallich, Crinan and Ardfern in the West, across to Inveraray and Loch Awe in the East; with Kilmartin Glen in its midst, the Heart of Argyll boasts some of the most beautiful scenery in Europe.

We are passionate about the sheer variety of nature, wildlife, history, landscapes and adventures to be had in this amazing part of Argyll. We hope that this booklet will inspire you to explore further and stay a while longer.

*The Heart of Argyll*

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# Top 4 Things to See and Do!

## 1. Bury yourself in History

Historic Kilmartin Glen has the most important concentration of Neolithic and Bronze Age remains in mainland Scotland. At least 800 ancient monuments, of which 150 are prehistoric, lie within six miles of Kilmartin village.



*Photo: Urn; Kilmartin Museum*

Kilmartin Museum is the perfect start to your exploration of 6,000 years of human history.

Learn how people have gradually shaped the extraordinary environment you see today with hundreds of prehistoric sites including burial cairns, rock carvings, standing stones, forts and stone circles in the museum through the interactive exhibits before exploring the ancient landscape for yourself. Every Wednesday afternoon during the summer period there is a free guided walk through Kilmartin Glen starting from the museum café.

If social history is of interest you can get a fascinating insight into the 'Upstairs and Downstairs' of life in Argyll through visiting the beautiful Inveraray Castle, walking through the Royal Burgh of Inveraray, visiting Inveraray Jail and finally taking a trip to the Highland Farm Township museum a few minutes further up the A83 at Auchindrain. This settlement provides an insight into rural life in the Heart of Argyll.



*Photo: Auchindrain Highland Township Museum*

Tarbert Life overlooking the fishing fleet on Harbour Street in Tarbert, showcases the local history of the village from the days of King Robert the Bruce to the building of the harbour, the fishing trade, farming and Tarbert mart. From herring girls to the shops and industries of yesterday, Tarbert Life will help you understand the story of this picturesque village.

## 2. While away the time with Wildlife

If you like wildlife and are interested in the natural world, the obvious place to start is Heart of Argyll Beaver and Wildlife Visitor Centre at Barrandaimh. The highly knowledgeable staff at the centre can also fill you in on local things to see and do after you have explored the way-marked trails and exceptional viewpoint, sat quietly in the wildlife hides, discovered the beaver signs, viewed the webcam footage or taken part in a themed event exploring different aspects of the natural world throughout the Summer months.

Knapdale is famous, of course, for the Scottish Beaver Trial that ran from 2009-14. The beavers are here to stay, and more are currently being introduced into the area.



*Photo: Beaver; Philip Price, Loch Visions*

The Beaver centre is located in a 400-year old farm building in Knapdale Forest, just a few hundred metres from the nearest beaver lodge. Later additions include a cruck-frame barn and what must be Scotland's most striking composting toilet, built in the style of a Norwegian mountain hut.

The centre runs a series of guided walks throughout the year to explore the habitat of these amazing engineers and the many animals and plants that benefit from their activities. Or maybe some wild foraging, be it sorrel, birch sap or chanterelles!

So, if you want to meet our local moths, listen to our bats, explore our seashores and ponds, or discover the weird and wonderful world of fungi, we will have an activity to suit. We also have lots of children's activities at the centre from things to make and do, special events and discovery sheets to help them create their own adventures. At our centre you will find expert information on where to get the best chance of sighting anything from an otter to an adder.

We can also tell you all you need to know about Knapdale's other unique attractions. A short stroll from the Beaver centre takes you to a stunning viewpoint overlooking the Add Estuary, Moine Mhor, Kilmartin Glen and even across the islands in the Sounds of Jura and Luìng towards Mull.



*Photo: Add Estuary from the viewpoint above Bellanoch;  
Victoria Winters, Heart of Argyll*

### 3. Immerse yourself in Water

If boats and water are your thing, try out the newly developed Steamer Terminal in Ardrishaig, at the eastern sea lock or Crinan at the West.

The towpath along the Crinan Canal offers you a fabulous opportunity to explore this wonder of late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century engineering which links Loch Fyne to Loch Crinan. It was created as an alternative to the lengthy and unpredictable sea passage around the Mull of Kintyre. Along the 9 miles of Scotland's most beautiful shortcut, you can discover the stunning surroundings of the Add Estuary and local coastlines or just sit and while away the hours watching boats navigating the locks.

There are more watery adventures to be had with amazing boat trips, there is a choice of trips to suit your needs. They leave from Crinan Harbour ([www.venture-west.co.uk](http://www.venture-west.co.uk)), Crinan ([www.crinanclassiccharters.co.uk](http://www.crinanclassiccharters.co.uk)), Ardfern Yacht Centre ([www.craignishcruises.co.uk](http://www.craignishcruises.co.uk)) or further north on Seil Island ([www.sea-lifeadventures.com](http://www.sea-lifeadventures.com)). Venture West, Craignish Cruises and Sea-life Adventures all run regular trips to the famous Corryvreckan whirlpool. This magnificent tidal whirlpool is the third largest in the world.



*Photo: Puffin on Lunga; Victoria Winters*

The boat owners also run special day trips to areas in the Inner Hebrides such as The Garvellachs or Staffa to see puffins or the unique archaeology and geology of the area. The Skipper of Crinan Classic Charters is also an artist and offers bespoke charter trips island hopping including painting. Check their websites or social media for more information.

All our boat trips immerse you in incredible wild coastal scenery and provide fabulous opportunities for spotting wildlife; the highly experienced skippers navigate the local islands and inlets searching for eagles (golden and sea), whales, porpoises, dolphins, seals, basking sharks and amazing seabirds.

Our sea life is astounding and recognised as such with the Sound of Jura being a Marine Protected Area and the Argyll Coast and Islands here designated as the first mainland UK Mission Blue Hope Spot.



*Photo: Minke whale; Venture West*

Whether pottering on the shore or taking a boat trip with one of several operators in the area there's every chance of seeing minke whales, white tailed sea eagles, bottle-nosed dolphins or even a vast basking shark. You may even find one of the egg cases of the giant flapper skate, the species protected by this very special area.

If you want to literally immerse yourself in water there are plenty of opportunities for wild swimming in the crystal-clear tidal waters of Loch Fyne, Loch Crinan, Loch Craignish, Loch Sween, Loch Caolisport or the Sound of Jura from a variety of easy-access pebbly coves and beaches. There is also a *heated* community swimming pool in Lochgilthead.

#### 4. Get back to Nature

Knapdale is Scotland's Nature Treasure Chest. Within our stunning mosaic of forest, coast, loch, moorland and seashore are all of Scotland's iconic animals: Golden eagles, red squirrels, otters, pine martens, red deer, harbour seals, hen harriers, ospreys and basking sharks.



*Photo: White-tailed sea eagle; Philip Price, Lochvisions*

Our Atlantic Rainforests teem with life from tree top to forest floor. One glen may hold 100's of species of lichens, bryophytes and fungi. Lungwort, yellow specklebelly, Wilson's filmy fern, hazel gloves, dog tooth lichen; the names are as strange and wonderful as the lives of these organisms. Rare

butterflies such as marsh fritillaries have a stronghold here along with purple hairstreaks and hawk moths.

There are fascinating nature reserves and forest walks throughout The Heart of Argyll, each offering unique experiences plus some beautiful easy walking and picnic spot options. Details can be found in the next sections.

You can take to the waters in a sea kayak with experienced guides at Wild Argyll or join our local photographers Wild Light Explorers or Loch Visions on their specialist trips on land and sea to experience The Heart of Argyll up close!



*Photo: Crarae Lower gardens;  
Victoria Winters, Friends of Crarae*

If you like your outdoors a little more ‘managed’ the Designed Landscape of the National Trust for Scotland Crarae Gardens, on Loch Fyne is a plant hunters paradise. Emulating a Himalayan gorge with stunning rhododendrons, azaleas and magnolias amongst immense trees from all continents, this garden is a special place.



# Heart of Argyll Map



## Go wild and Explore

Take a B road trip, meander along routes off the beaten track that lead you to Castles, Chapels, ancient gravestones, abandoned villages, stunning coastal views, sparkling white beaches and rock pools. There are walking routes throughout the area, 7 out of the 11 Mid-Argyll Forest access routes are in the Heart of Argyll, there are also cycle trails, including National Cycle route 78, some of our local buses carry bikes so you won't necessarily have to cycle both ways! Call West Coast Motors on 01586 555881 to check out the options.

### *The B8024 Kilberry Loop.*

Heading south towards the Kintyre peninsula just before the excellent Argyll Backpackers Hostel at Inverneil the B8024 offers you the opportunity to take in a 30-mile single-tracked loop through magnificent scenery, past white beaches at Ormsary near the head of Loch Caolisport and just beyond Kilberry on Loch Stornoway.

The café at the wonderful Port Ban Holiday Park is a welcome stop and the award winning red-roofed Kilberry Inn is definitely a destination for a special evening meal. Kilberry is also the home of the Kilberry Sculpted Stones, a collection of early Christian grave markers and medieval carved grave slabs and the excellent wood-working artist studio and workshop at Bole The Gallery.



*Photo: Beach at Portban; Portban Holiday Park*

The B8024 loop returns along West Loch Tarbert to the A83 just North of the wonderful fishing village of Tarbert, which deserves a page in itself; and within sight of the entrance to Stonefield Castle Hotel. This Scottish Baronial Castle Hotel is open to non-residents, for excellent food, coffee, afternoon teas or cocktails. The Castle is situated in magnificent gardens and grounds

which are well worth exploring, including the tiny Barmore island accessed via causeway with magnificent views up and down Loch Fyne.

*The B841/B8025 National Nature Reserves, Crinan Canal, Beavers and the Mystical Glen.*

Just north of the town of Lochgilphead at Cairnbaan the B841 Road is the beginning of a myriad of exploring options.

The Cairnbaan Hotel is an old coaching inn, it is a great starting point especially if you're in need of a pitstop. There are side trips to be had from Cairnbaan with footpath access to the Neolithic carved rock outcrops above Cairnbaan. The way-marked trails trail to Britain's most extensive carved 'cup and ring' symbols on rock outcrops at

Achnabreac and also to Dunardry Forest Walks are both within sight of The Cairnbaan Hotel.



*Photo: Prehistoric rock carvings, Achnabreac; Victoria Winters, Heart of Argyll*

The B841 to Crinan runs alongside the Crinan Canal with plenty of opportunities to stop and watch the boats navigating the canal locks. Just before Bellanoch the road branches to the south on the B8025 south which takes you up past the Heart of Argyll Beaver and Wildlife Centre and to the Knapdale walking trails around Loch Coille-Bharr and Barnluasgan.

You can also explore the abandoned townships of Arichonan and Kilmory Oib from here. Just around the corner you will also find the start of the Ardnoe cycle trail which takes you along forestry tracks above the coastline to Carsaig Bay and Tayvallich.



*Photo: Arichonan deserted township, Kilmartin Museum*

You have a choice of exploring either side of Loch Sween. The east-side is accessed via an unnamed road through Achnamara which takes you to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century ruins of Castle Sween and the ancient Kilmory Chapel.



*Photo: Castle Sween; Victoria Winters, Heart of Argyll*

The west side follows the B8025 to the fishing village and harbour of Tayvallich. An unnamed road takes you to Taynish National Nature Reserve, or you can continue on the B8025 down to Keillmore, to explore Keills Chapel and a Thomas Telford designed pier at the end of the road, with magnificent views across the Sound of Jura. Carsaig Bay at the other end of the Ardnoe Cycle trail is also worth a visit.

At Taynish you will find ancient Atlantic oak woodland clinging to steep-sided ridges that run into the sea, tidal races where otters and seabirds forage for food, coastal grasslands, home to rare marsh fritillary butterflies, a multitude of summer migrant songbirds. Taynish teems with wildlife. Taynish has trails to suit everyone, from a few hundred yards to several miles and you can choose from gentle strolls, woodland walks and testing climbs.

Whilst you are exploring look out for the work of local artists that appear every Summer and be sure to visit the Poet's seat and catch up with the thoughts of other visitors. In partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage, Artmap artists showcase their work through an Art Trail at Taynish NNR which is open for the summer season.



*Photo: Taynish Art Trail  
(Artist-Melanie Chmielewska); Image-Arthur Ker*

The Tayvallich Inn and Tayvallich General Stores and Café both offer exceptional local produce and imaginative cooking to suit all tastes from breakfasts or morning coffee, light lunches to a full restaurant

menu. There is a seasonal passenger ferry to Jura that operates from Tayvallich Harbour.

If you stay on the B841, following the Crinan Canal to its terminus you end up in the old fishing port of Crinan and Crinan Harbour. Crinan Harbour is the starting point for a fabulous walk through the woods to the Sailors Grave at Ardnoe Point or up to the ruins of Dounie Castle with far-reaching views up and down the Sound of Jura along part of the Ardnoe Cycle trail. Venture West Boat Tours operate from Crinan Harbour.



*Photo: Crinan Basin, Crinan Canal; Peter Sandground*

Crinan itself marks the end (or start) of the Crinan Canal. The canal sea lock and basin sit below the wonderful Crinan Hotel, with its seafood bistro, bar, award-winning seafood restaurant and the charming coffee shop right next to the canal basin and lock. Crinan Classic Charters operates from the Crinan Hotel.

Crinan is the starting point for the Woodland Trust managed circular walk, the woodland trail is well worth the haul to the top through the oakwoods. The views are gorgeous and span the Atlantic isles of the Inner Hebrides. The wood is home to many species of birds and our iconic red squirrels. The trail

also takes you past an abandoned settlement called New York, which was part of the accommodation for the workers building the canal and returns along the canal towpath.

The canal towpath is an easy choice for walking, cycling or running along the entire length of the Canal. You can choose how far to explore.

Turning to the North off the B841 heading onto the B8025 North (signpost Oban) over the swing bridge at the canal takes you across the Add Estuary; Islandadd Bridge is a favourite spot for bird-watching and otter spotting.

You can travel across the magnificent Moine Mhor 'The Great Moss' is a raised bog that is slowly being restored to its former glory through the patient efforts of Scottish Natural Heritage. One of the rarest habitats in Europe, the Moss is a fantastic place to catch a sunset through the mass of cotton grass that abounds every summer, or hunt for golden-ringed dragonflies, the UK's largest species. Hen harriers roost here in winter and short-eared owls nest on the Moss in the spring, whilst ospreys will plunge into the Add Estuary for a tasty sea trout.

You can take the Tileworks Trail from the reserve car park to enjoy a unique view of the bog from the trail's boardwalk. It is a great place to spot dragonflies and lizards on a sunny afternoon. Don't miss the left turn at the next tiny cross-roads for the unnamed road to Crinan Ferry, the track to this tiny community culminates in a huge expanse of estuarine and tidal beaches.

If you stay on the B8025 this 'back road' takes you through one of the world's most significant archaeological landscapes, Kilmartin Glen, before re-joining the A816 just south of Kilmartin. According to Historic Environment Scotland, no other place in Scotland has such a concentration of prehistoric



*Photo: Nether Largie, Kilmartin Glen; Kilmartin Museum*

carved stone surfaces, and Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments with over 800 scheduled monuments within a 6-mile radius.

The Lady Glassary Wood carpark just before the main road gives you easy walking access to Nether Largie standing stones, Nether Largie South cairn and Temple Wood stone rings.

Once you re-join the main road you are in sight of Kilmartin, where the excellent museum and café provides another opportunity to stop and explore our ancient history. Kilmartin church and graveyard also house some magnificent examples of medieval sculpted stones.



*Photo: Temple Wood; Kilmartin Museum*

Only a couple of minutes further up the main road is Carnassarie Castle. This largely unaltered 16<sup>th</sup> Century tower house and hall was built by John Carswell, the Bishop of the Isles.

### *B840 Awesome Loch Awe*

If you continue North up the A816 you can take the B840 to Ford and explore the length of Loch Awe. Be prepared for the long-haul with this single-track road which follows almost the full length of Loch Awe before joining the A819 enabling you to return via Inveraray or turn up towards Dalmally for a heart-stopping glimpse of what surely must be one of Instagram's most featured castles in Scotland



*Photo: Ben Cruachan at the head of Loch Awe; Blarghour Farm Cottages*

(certainly in the Heart of Argyll), the 15th Century Kilchurn Castle, once a Campbell stronghold, which contains the oldest surviving barracks on the mainland.

### *B8002 Boats and a track to the end of the road*

If you continue on the A816 past the turning to Ford you can explore the ruggedly beautiful Craignish Peninsula by taking the B8002 to Ardfern, The Galley of Lorne Inn and Crafty Kitchen café provide options for a pit stop here. Craignish Cruises operates out of the Ardfern Yacht Centre.



*Photo: Loch Beag and Craignish Castle;  
Victoria Winters, Heart of Argyll*

The road ends at the derelict Airds Pier which would have been a welcome sight for cattle which were once swum across to from Islay and Jura on their way to inland markets in central Scotland. There are glorious views across to the Gulf of the Corryvreckan whirlpool.



*Photo: Standing waves, Correyvreckan whirlpool;  
[www.whirlpool-scotland.co.uk](http://www.whirlpool-scotland.co.uk)*

You can find more information on all these ideas and precise locations, nearby amenities and contact details together with news on local events by visiting [www.heartofargyll.com](http://www.heartofargyll.com)

Please remember if you are out and about in the Heart of Argyll, keep any dogs under close control and be aware of the livestock and wildlife around you. Take responsibility for your own actions, respect the interests of other people and care for our environment. Please check before you roam:

[www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)



## Our History

Kilmartin Glen right in the centre of the heart of Argyll is home to internationally significant prehistoric and early historic sites and monuments, making it mainland Scotland's most important archaeological landscape.

There is a wealth of prehistoric monuments, including the densest concentration of rock art of anywhere in Britain, a unique Neolithic and Bronze Age linear cemetery, the remains of one of Scotland's largest timber circles and Dunadd Hill Fort, which was home to the earliest Kingdom of the Scots.



*Photo: Dunadd Fort; Kilmartin Museum*

Many of the ancient artefacts found in the Glen are also of international importance and include rare jet necklaces and one of Britain's earliest 'Beaker' pots.

6,000 years ago, or thereabouts, someone placed a flint tool in a pit in Kilmartin Glen – to give thanks for a successful hunting trip perhaps? Since then this place has become special to many generations. Neolithic and Bronze Age peoples built tombs to house their dead here. Some carved the rocks with thousands of enigmatic designs. Others erected stone circles and standing stones, the purpose of which inspires speculation today.

Later peoples, named Scotti, created a kingdom that spanned whole regions of what is now Scotland and Ireland. The Scotti chose to site the capital of this medieval sea kingdom at Dunadd, in the heart of the Glen. They held power for more than five centuries.

In all, over 800 monuments and site have been found here. These testify to the skill, ingenuity and firmly held beliefs of the thousands of generations who called Kilmartin Glen home.

This is what makes Kilmartin Glen one of the most significant archaeological sites in the world. For 20 years, Kilmartin Museum has been collecting, conserving, and revealing the stories of this special place and the artefacts found here.

This is our national story, one where the place and the people who shaped it in prehistory led to the emergence of Scotland as a nation. The area also has exceptionally rare natural heritage.

### The Dalriada Heritage Trail

The Dalriada Heritage Trail links Carnasserie Castle through Kilmartin Glen and the Moine Mhor National Nature Reserve to Dunadd Fort and on through ancient Atlantic oak woodlands to the Crinan Canal and Achabreac cup and ring marked rocks. The Trail can be enjoyed in its entirety or in small sections from car parks at Carnasserie Castle, Kilmartin, Moine Mhor National Nature Reserve, Dunadd Fort, Achabreac and Dunardry on the Crinan Canal (1 mile west of Cairnbaan).



*Photo: Common Blue butterfly;  
Victoria Winters, Heart of Argyll*

## Galleries, Shops and Places to Eat.

### Royal Burgh of Inveraray

Beautiful Inveraray is a traditional county town of Argyll and the ancestral home of the Dukes of Argyll. The new town was founded in 1745 on the site of an old fishing village where Loch Fyne meets Loch Shira and is, of course, on the doorstep of iconic Inveraray Castle.



*Photo: Inveraray Castle, gardens & Dun Na Cuaiche; Victoria Winters*

Attractions such as the Castle, gardens and grounds and Inveraray Jail are very popular with our visitors. The Dun Na Cuaiche Woodland Walk is a circular 1.5 mile trail through Inveraray Castle estate to the wonderful viewpoint at the summit.

The George Hotel, is a must-visit; the family and dog friendly pub is full of character with roaring logs fires and a beer garden, and is at the heart of Inveraray. Loch Fyne Hotel Spa offer visitors a spot of luxury and The Inveraray Inn has a casual conservatory restaurant overlooking Loch Fyne and a traditional pub-style bar.

The Royal Burgh, also boasts a wonderful array of independent shops, galleries, cafés and restaurants to suit all budgets. One of Inveraray's top places to eat is Samphire, a small seafood restaurant, and Brambles Café &

Bistro is perfect for light bite, coffee and cake. If you are looking for retail therapy MacIntyres and The Woollen Mill have everything you need from exclusive country clothing to bargain cashmere and woollen offers. Two new enterprises for 2019 are The Chocolate Box, offering a dazzling array of chocolate treats and The Hive selling select gourmet products, handmade art and beautiful jewellery.

## Lochgilphead

Like Inveraray, Lochgilphead is a planned town at the head of Loch Gilp, a branch of the longest sea loch in Scotland, Loch Fyne. The town was laid out in the late 18th Century alongside the road from Inveraray to Campbeltown, which became the A83. The town's importance grew after the opening of the Crinan Canal in 1801 and again after completion of a road to Oban in 1830.

You can access the canal towpaths at Oakfield Bridge, just a couple of minutes' walk from the centre of the town.

The picturesque setting and charming town centre has attracted many film-makers with scenes being filmed on Lochgilphead's streets for movies including "633 Squadron" "From Russia With Love" and "Love You To Death" among others.



*Photo: Oakfield, Crinan Canal; Victoria Winters*

The architecture includes 18 listed buildings and old maps from the 1800s reveals locations of a woollen mill, distillery and gas works among other sites. Prominent Lochgilphead exports include the Argyll Turbo GT sports car which was constructed by Bob Henderson on Manse Brae, where it is still to be found today.

Lochgilphead is the administrative centre of mid-Argyll and, as well as a local hospital with A&E dept, the town offers the largest supermarket, two petrol stations and many opportunities for stocking up on local products.

Lochgilthead has a lovely selection of independent shops (book shop, butcher, fishmonger and delicatessen), a selection of cafes and places for a light bite, several art and craft galleries plus gift shops and a specialist sweet shop. Crinan Cycles not only sells bikes and accessories for all ages, they also hire bikes and have a service/technical workshop and spares. Fyne Tackle caters for outdoor and country pursuits and they also provide local fishing permits.

Facilities in the town include the swimming pool, sports centre, bowling green, golf club and extensive and world-famous mountain biking trails at nearby Achnabreac.

## Tarbert

Tarbert Loch Fyne is an historic fishing village overlooked by the Royal Castle of Tarbert. The harbour, built by Thomas Telford, is the focus of the village, accommodating shops, hotels, restaurants and houses. A walkway around the harbour connects the village with the busy marina.

Tarbert is situated at the north of Kintyre and gives access to the ferries to Islay, Gigha, Arran, Portavadie and further afield, during the summer, from Campbeltown to Northern Ireland and Ayrshire.

Tarbert is renowned for its festivals. Starting in May, the village hosts the Scottish Series, Britain's second largest yachting regatta. Following on, are the Seafood Festival, Traditional Boats Festival, biennial Viking Festival with Tarbert Fair in July. Autumn sees the Music Festival, Book Festival and the Christmas Fayre.

The village has a full range of accommodation, hotels, bed and breakfasts, static caravans, camper van hook ups and glamping pods. Restaurants, cafes



*Photo: Tarbert Harbour; Janet West, Pure West Media*

and takeaways serve food for all tastes while those who are self-catering can buy the freshest fish and shell fish, meat and vegetables from traditional fishmonger, butcher and green grocers. Visitor services are also provided by the bank, post office and health centre. There are galleries and gift shops, a well-stocked small supermarket, an organic skincare and fragranting Workshop and Spa; we even have the candlestick maker.

For those who want to be a bit more active Tarbert has a challenging nine-hole golf course and a bowling green, both of which are open to visitors. The village hall and the harbour amenity area host ceilidhs and visiting bands. Sea trips and fishing are also available locally.

There are several short walks around the village. A stroll along the pier is the easy option or a walk out past the harbour office following the signs to the White Shore. This leads you through a part of the original Celtic rainforest.

The other direction leads you to the Royal Castle of Tarbert, associated with King Robert the Bruce. The Castle Heritage Park has interpretation boards and seats and further signs which direct you to the community woodland and community orchard.



*Photo: Tarbert Castle; Tarbert Castle Trust*

Tarbert Castle is the start of the Kintyre Way, the first stretch of which crosses the peninsula to Skipness. From the forestry road there are views across to Cowal and, further on, to Jura and Arran. During the summer you can visit the Seafood Cabin and Skipness Castle and return to Tarbert by the afternoon bus. Tarbert Life will display visitor information, bus timetables, accommodation and useful telephone numbers.

## Art in the Heart of Argyll

Artmap Argyll is an artists' collective which hosts an annual Open Studios event over the last weekend in August, and this year some studios will be open the following weekend and the week between. This is known as the red dot studio trail and visitors are guided to artists' studios by a network of numbered red dots and direction arrows, travelling through some of Scotland's most stunning scenery on the way.

The event is an opportunity to visit artists' studios without any pressure to buy work – although if you do fall in love with a piece, then you have the joy of meeting the artist and seeing how the work is made. In many studios there are opportunities to try out the techniques or crafts the artist employs and to browse their sketchbooks to see how they develop their ideas. As well as artist studios the event has seven venues which will host mixed exhibitions of Artmap and other artist's work.



*Photo: On the Art Trail; Artist Moira Ferguson;  
Photo: Arthur Ker*

A brochure featuring the artists and venues' work with detailed directions to their studios and a map of all the studios is printed and distributed in mid-June. These are free and can be picked up at any of the artist's studios and venues and at most hotels and B&Bs in the area.

Artmap Open Studio dates can also be found on their website.

# Thanks to Heart of Argyll Members

*For more photos and details plus phone numbers or links to make a booking please see [www.heartofargyll.com](http://www.heartofargyll.com) or follow the direct links below:*

## Accommodation to suit all requirements and budgets

Argyll Backpackers – self-catering budget accommodation

[www.argyllbackpackers.com](http://www.argyllbackpackers.com)

Dunchraigaig House B&B [www.dunchraigaig.co.uk](http://www.dunchraigaig.co.uk)

The Crown House B&B [www.crownhousebandb.co.uk](http://www.crownhousebandb.co.uk)

The Old Manse B&B [www.oldmansekilmartin.co.uk](http://www.oldmansekilmartin.co.uk)

Kings Reach Vegan B&B and self-catering cottages

[www.kingsreachbedandbreakfast.co.uk](http://www.kingsreachbedandbreakfast.co.uk)

Ashfield Farm Cottage, self-catering cottage [www.lochsween.co.uk](http://www.lochsween.co.uk)

Barr Cottage, self-catering cottage [www.barr-minard.com](http://www.barr-minard.com)

Blarghour Farm Cottages, self-catering cottages [www.self-catering-argyll.co.uk](http://www.self-catering-argyll.co.uk)

Ri Cruin, self-catering cottages [www.ri-cruin.co.uk](http://www.ri-cruin.co.uk)

Little Keils, self-catering house

Cairnbaan Hotel and Restaurant [www.cairnbaan.com](http://www.cairnbaan.com)

The Galley of Lorne Inn, hotel and restaurant [www.galleyoflorne.co.uk](http://www.galleyoflorne.co.uk)

Crinan Hotel, Restaurant, Bistro & Coffee Shop [www.crinanhotel.com](http://www.crinanhotel.com)

Port Ban Holiday Park and Café [www.portban.com](http://www.portban.com)

Stonefield Castle Hotel and Restaurant

[www.bespokehotels.com/stonefieldcastle](http://www.bespokehotels.com/stonefieldcastle)

## Attractions & Food

ArtMap – Exhibitions, galleries, art trails [www.artmapargyll.co.uk](http://www.artmapargyll.co.uk)

Auchindrain Highland Township Museum and café [www.auchindrain.org.uk](http://www.auchindrain.org.uk)

Inveraray Jail, museum and shop [www.inverarayjail.co.uk](http://www.inverarayjail.co.uk)

Heart of Argyll Beaver and Wildlife Visitor Centre

[www.argyllbeavercentre.co.uk](http://www.argyllbeavercentre.co.uk)

Kilmartin Museum, Shop and Café [www.kilmartin.org](http://www.kilmartin.org)

Crinan Canal, Steamer Terminal Café and Exhibitions

[www.scottishcanals.co.uk/locations/crinan-canal](http://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/locations/crinan-canal)

Crarae Gardens, Visitor Centre and Café [www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/crarae-garden](http://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/crarae-garden)



Forest and Land Scotland - Forest Walks and cycle trails

[www.forestryandland.gov.scot/visit/knapdale](http://www.forestryandland.gov.scot/visit/knapdale)

National Nature Reserves [www.nnr.scot](http://www.nnr.scot)

Blarbuie Woodlands [www.blarbuiewoodland.org](http://www.blarbuiewoodland.org)

The Tayvallich Inn and serviced accommodation [www.tayvallichinn.com](http://www.tayvallichinn.com)

Tarbert Life; local visitor information and Tarbert history

## Adventure

Explore Wild Argyll – walking, kayaking, guided tours.

[www.explorewildargyll.co.uk](http://www.explorewildargyll.co.uk)

Columba's Trail – bespoke tour guide. [www.columbastrail.wordpress.com](http://www.columbastrail.wordpress.com)

Crinan Classic Charters, boat trips, charters, bespoke painting trips.

[www.crinanclassiccharters.co.uk](http://www.crinanclassiccharters.co.uk)

Craignish Cruises, wildlife and whirlpool boat trips and bespoke charter tours.

[www.craignishcruises.co.uk](http://www.craignishcruises.co.uk)

Sea-life Adventures, wildlife and whirlpool boat trips. [www.sea-](http://www.sea-lifeadventures.com)

[lifeadventures.com](http://www.sea-lifeadventures.com)

Venture West, wildlife and whirlpool boat trips and bespoke charter tours.

[www.venture-west.co.uk](http://www.venture-west.co.uk)

Wildlight Explorers – photography. [www.wildlightexplorers.com](http://www.wildlightexplorers.com)

Loch Visions – wildlife photography. [www.lochvisions.co.uk](http://www.lochvisions.co.uk)

## Shopping

Bluestone Gift Shop, Lochgilphead

The Square Peg, Lochgilphead, gifts, toys and games, cards and gift wrap, takeaway café [www.thesquarepegonline.co.uk](http://www.thesquarepegonline.co.uk)

Argyll Book Centre, Lochgilphead – this wonderful local bookshop also contains the Heart of Argyll Visitor Information point and physical brochures/business cards from our members.

If you own a tourism-related business in the Heart of Argyll and would like to join our group, please e-mail [info@heartofargyll.com](mailto:info@heartofargyll.com)



Photo: [www.marcpickeringphotography.co.uk](http://www.marcpickeringphotography.co.uk)

*Duntrune Castle*

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