

KILCREGGAN

Translating from the Gaelic as 'Litterlock Church', Kilcreggan's name relates to an early chapel, long since lost.

Upper River Clyde & Glasgow

Port Glasgow

Greenock

Gourock

Clachan Point

Cove

Kilcreggan Pier

PS Waverley

Clyde

South

Kilcreggan is situated at the southern tip of the peninsula of Rosneath, a name which also has religious connotations, being an anglicised version of the Gaelic, Ros Neimhidh, meaning 'Blessed promontory'. The object of veneration was St Modan's Church, a focus of pilgrimage dating from the 6th Century. Some ancient carved cross stones and the remains of the medieval church can be seen at Clachan of Rosneath a few miles east of here.

Resorts "doon the water" for the rich

Kilcreggan and its neighbour Cove date from 1849 when, in an effort to cash in on the Victorian boom in Clyde Coast property, the 8th Duke of Argyll feued the area for housing. A pier was built for the steamers and plots were quickly taken up by Glasgow's business people who built the many fine villas which still grace the area today. For more on Clyde Coast villas, see the Clyde Sea Lochs Trail panel a few miles along the coast at Cove.

- Pioneered on the Clyde in 1812 by the far sighted Helensburgh hotelier, Henry Bell, it was the advent of the paddle steamer that facilitated the development of Clyde coastal resorts like Kilcreggan. For more about Henry Bell, see the Clyde Sea Lochs Trail panel at Helensburgh's Seafront on the other side of the Gareloch.
- The villas are still here, but now the wealthy merchants have mostly been replaced by retirees, Glasgow commuters, Ministry of Defence civil servants and naval personnel. Yet Kilcreggan's pier remains in good repair, there is still a daily ferry over to Gourock and in summer, when the magnificently restored paddle steamer Waverley makes her weekly call, the nostalgia is palpable.
- A tangible link with those bygone days, the white shelter at the end of the pier incorporates what is possibly the only remaining steamer signaling tower left on the Clyde. In the heyday of the Clyde coast resorts, competition between the paddle steamers to be first at the pier was so intense that a signaling system had to be developed to prevent collisions. The changeable black and white disks on the tower's two seaward faces indicated which of two vessels approaching from opposite sides had priority. At night, red and white 'traffic lights' did the same job.

Greenock

Across the Firth, lies the deep water port of Greenock. In the 1840s, Greenock was a hive of industry. Its docks bristling with the masts and yards of dozens of tall ships, it was Scotland's and indeed one of the UK's foremost ports. Raw sugar and cotton from the Americas were its chief imports and sugar refining, sail and rope making were its principal industries.

- Ultimately it was this transatlantic trade which was the source of the wealth which built Kilcreggan's fine houses. The nouveaux riches ship owners and merchants who built the most prestigious of the mansions would often have their architects incorporate prominent towers in their designs from which the arrival and departure of ships could more easily be monitored.



The Comet
Henry Bell's pioneering paddle steamer of 1812



Alexander 'Greek' Thomson Villa with observation tower



Kilcreggan Pier, Signal Tower



SCALE: 1:25,000
2 Miles / 3.2 Km



For more information
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MAP KEY

Clyde Sea Lochs Trail

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