

ROCKVALE REBOUND T.N.
Summer Outing 2015
A Report by Ricky Holloway.

This is a report on the Summer Outing to Troon and Largs which took place on Saturday, August 15th.

We set out early on the Saturday morning, Margaret Fitzsimons having the honour of being the bus steward, for the driver, James, so that he would be able to go to the appropriate addresses. There were seventeen people in number going on the trip and everybody was picked up at their own home, Sarah Worthey being the last to board the bus and then we were on our way. The bus was adequate in size and very comfortable and everyone settled down to enjoy the views during the excursion.

The journey took us past Paisley to Kinning Park then via Crookfur and Newton Mearns and on past the Fenwick Moor which was looking wonderful with the heather just coming into bloom, giving a light mauve glow to the area. We skirted Kilmarnock and then travelled through Burns country and on by the coastal road to our first destination, Troon, famous for its world class golf course which is used, in rotation for the British Open Golf tournament. Once in Troon we made our way to the hotel for lunch. The hotel was the South Beach Hotel which was very comfortable and well furnished with good, attentive staff. Our lunch consisted of a choice of either soup or fruit juice, steak pie or fish and chips or cold meat salad followed by coffee and a scone. The food was beautiful and the service excellent. After lunch and a brief break we boarded the bus and headed off again on the coastal road northwards and descended on Largs which is known as the Viking town since they had been one time invaders of Scotland.

In Largs we had a couple of hours for folk to do their own thing such as visiting shops, basking in the sunshine and watching the almost constant arrival and departure of ferries to Millport, and, of course, a visit to Largs would be incomplete without paying a visit to the Famous Nardini's to sample their wonderful ice cream.

Largs is a town on the Firth of Clyde in North Ayrshire, about 33 miles (53 km) from Glasgow. A popular seaside resort with a pier, the town markets itself on its historic links with the Vikings and an annual festival is held each year in early September. In 1263 it was the site of the Battle of Largs between the Norwegian and the Scottish armies. The National Mòd has also been held here in the past.

History Largs evolved from the estates of North Cunninghame over which the Montgomeries of Skelmorlie became temporal lords in the seventeenth century. Sir Robert Montgomerie built Skelmorlie Aisle in the ancient kirk of Largs in 1636 as a family mausoleum. Today the monument is all that remains of the old kirk.

The Brisbane family vault in Largs. From its beginnings as a small village around its kirk, Largs evolved into a busy and popular seaside resort in the nineteenth century. Large hotels appeared and the pier was constructed in 1834. It was not

until 1895, however, that the railway made the connection to Largs, sealing the town's popularity.

It also became a fashionable place to live, and several impressive mansions were built, the most significant of which included 'Netherhall', the residence of William Thomson, Lord Kelvin, the physicist and engineer.

Largs has historical connections much further back, however. It was the site of the Battle of Largs in 1263, in which parts of a Scottish army attacked a small force of Norwegians attempting to salvage ships from a fleet carrying the armies of King Magnus Olafsson of Mann and the Isles and his liege lord King Haakon IV of Norway, beached during a storm. The Norwegians and islemen had been raiding the Scottish coast for some time, and the Scots under Alexander III had been following the fleet, attempting to catch its raiding parties. The outcome of this confrontation is uncertain, as both sides claim victory in their respective chronicles and sagas and the only independent source of the war fails to mention the battle at all. The battle was followed soon after by the death of the 59-year-old King Haakon in Bishop's Palace on Orkney. Following the king's demise, his more lenient son Magnus VI of Norway agreed the Treaty of Perth in 1266, under which the Hebrides were sold to Scotland, as was the Isle of Man after the demise of Magnus Olafsson.

The "Pencil" monument commemorating the Battle of Largs, which stands just over 1 mile (1.6 km) south of the town centre. During World War II, the Hollywood Hotel was designated HMS Warren, which was Headquarters, Combined Training. A conference was held there between 28 June 1943 and 2 July 1943, code name RATTLE, under Lord Louis Mountbatten, it was known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold because of the number of high-ranking officers taking part. The decision that the invasion of Europe would take place in Normandy was made at this conference. King Haakon VII of Norway, then in exile in Britain due to the German occupation of his kingdom, visited Largs in 1944 and was made the town's first honorary citizen.

Largs residents Colin and Chris Weir won £161,000,000 on a Euromillions on 15 July 2011, the largest lottery win in the UK to date.

Culture Largs has hosted the National Mòd in 1956, 1965 and 2002.

In 2014, it was rated one of the most attractive postcode areas to live anywhere in Scotland. Largs hosts the popular "Largs Live" on the last weekend in June where the towns

hosts live music around their pubs, restaurants and other venues over Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Largs Main Street. Despite its diminished status as a holiday resort, much of Largs is still geared towards tourism. There is the award winning Vikingar Centre at Barrfields, an interactive look into the history of Viking life; Kelburn Country Centre, Barrfields Pavilion Theatre, Largs Swimming Pool, Douglas Park and Inverclyde National Sports Training Centre. But it is best known for 'Nardinis', the famous ice cream parlour, cafe and restaurant, that dominates the Esplanade and which reopened in late 2008 following clearance from

Historic Scotland and major renovation works. St. Columba's Parish Church is situated opposite Nardinis and contains a Heritage Centre. The church itself was built in 1892 and is notable for its stained glass windows and Willis organ.

At around five thirty we boarded the bus again and set off along the very scenic coastal route of the Firth of Clyde, passing through several ferry port towns on our way to Greenock, one time home to the giant sugar refinery of Tate and Lyle. Onwards we sped towards Port Glasgow where we had a splendid view across the Clyde estuary to Dumbarton Rock, with its fortress at the top and the Governor's house in the foreground and, to the right, the massive Dumbuck quarry with the Lomond hills making a beautiful background. From Port Glasgow we headed along the M8 to and over the busy Erskine Bridge and on to Dumbarton for our first drop off point at approximately six thirty. Everyone had had a grand day although poor Heidi, Bobby's Guide Dog was a bit poorly earlier in the afternoon, having consumed half a box of Bovril Cubes before leaving home!!

I can safely say that it was a grand day, with the weather being excellent and would like to thank Bobby and Pat and Margaret for the work they put in to make it such a success and would encourage more members to come along, since we are already looking forward to next year's trip.