The Three Towns

Known locally as "The Three Towns" Ardrssan, Saltcoats and Stevenston are set around a sheltered bay, making them popular coastal resorts. Traditionally, the area has been recognised as a destination for holidaymakers with large numbers travelling "down the water" for their summer holidays.

Discover the extensive network of tracks and trails, which offer valuable opportunities for outdoor access around the towns. The majority of the paths are on well-formed paths or tracks. The routes offer in the main traffic-free transport links between communities, residential areas and local facilities as well as attractive recreational opportunities.

National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 7 runs approximately north to south through North Ayrshire passing through Ayr, Kilwinning and down to Dalry and Kilcreggan. NCN 73 runs approximately east from Kilmarnock to Barrhead, and the two routes provide opportunities to link further afield for example to Glasgow and Ayr on NCN 7 and from Smoove to Largs on the Isle of Arran on NCN 73.

Eglinton Country Park can also be accessed from the NCN as can the Irvine and Kilwinning New Town Trail which provides a 12-mile circular route through the two towns.

Saltcoats

Saltcoats is nestled in between Stevenston and Ardrossan. The town derives its name from the ancient practice of tolling, a tax to be paid by boats when entering the town.

The town grew and developed around its small harbour, which was used to facilitate the exportation of coal from the Stevenston coalfield to Ireland.

Saltcoats has always been a great favourite as a holiday destination, being only a short journey away from Glasgow by train, or by boat.

points of interest

- Visit the North Ayrshire Museum
- Enjoy some shopping in the town centre
- Follow the historical town trail taking in the local history
- Watch the sea birds whilst walking along the promenade and harbour
- Try out Saltcoats Skatepark for box slalom and skateboarding

Saltcoats is a popular shopping location, offering sports and leisure facilities including indoor bowling, fitness centres and attractive coastal locations that attract thousands of tourists each year.

Stevenson

Stevenson is situated adjacent to Saltcoats and 2 miles (3 km) east of Ardrossan. Archaeological studies suggest that the town was in existence by the 13th Century and that the area was probably settled in previous times.

The town is strongly associated with the industrialists of Ayrshire, which has its own peninsula west of the mouth of the River Carse. Stevenson is also well known for its connections to Ayrshire's most famous poet, Robert Burns. The town is home to a number of popular attractions such as the Ayrshire golf course and Auchmuty.

points of interest

- Enjoy a round at Ayrshire and Auchmuty golf courses
- Watch for wildlife at Stevenson Beach Local Nature Reserve
- Visit Harvey's Leisure Centre, renowned for its sulphurous ice rink
- Discover Stevenson's History on the Town Trail including the ruins of Kilbirnie Castle

Stevenson beach was designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in 1998.

A heritage trail is available from North Ayrshire Council and the Scottish Outdoor Access Co-ordinators. For more information, please visit the website:

www.outdooraccesscot.co.uk

Scottish Outdoor Access Code

Know the Code before you go... Enjoy Scotland’s outdoors responsibly.

- Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water providing they accept responsibility. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
- Whether you’re in the outdoors or managing the outdoors, the key things are to:
  - Take responsibility for your actions;
  - Respect the interests of other people;
  - Care for the environment.

For further details contact the Ways to Walk co-ordinator on (01773) 669777

Stevenson was the capital of Robert III of Scotland.

Ardrossan

Situated to the north of Irvine Bay, an inlet of the Firth of Clyde, Ardrossan lies 32 miles (51 km) south-west of Glasgow.

The town of Ardrossan, founded in the town in 1855, was due to its deep-water harbour being suitable for steamboats and providing a connection with Ayr, Balfarg, the Isle of Man and the Western Isles. It was also one of the last towns to be established as a burgh in Scotland in 1845.

Today there are three railway stations in Ardrossan, and Ardrossan Harbour also provides the link between the mainland and the island of Arran.

points of interest

- Take a point to enjoy the panoramic views of the ruins of Ardrossan Castle
- Look out for Horse Isle, a Royal Society for the Protection of Birds nature reserve, just off shore
- Bring a picnic to the promenade or the beach during the birdwatching week of Arran
- Discover Ardrossan History by following the Town Trail

Recent development in Ardrossan has resulted in the creation of a new Marina for the expanding leisure yachting and boating market in the West of Scotland.

Health Benefits

More active More often

Walking and cycling are ideal forms of exercise as well as improving health. Benefits can also include increased social contact and reduced pollution. Walking is free, requires no special equipment and is accessible to all regardless of age, income, location and ability and cycling only requires access to a bicycle.

Becoming active:

- Helps reduce stress and provides a greater sense of well being
- Lowers your blood pressure
- Assists you to manage your weight
- Reduces the risk of developing many illnesses such as heart disease
- Enables you to sleep better
- Provides you with more energy for work and play

Do you think that your health could benefit from taking part in some more exercise, than why not try one of the Health Walks in your area? Leaflets are available from the council offices.

Contact Information

www.outdooraccesscot.co.uk

www.northayrshire.gov.uk/outdooraccess

www.aaps.org.uk

Or contact Eglinton Country Park Visitor Centre on (01294) 055776

National Cycle Network

To find out more about the NCN contact the NCN on (0131) 6248660 or www.sustrans.org.uk

Rail Services

More information can be found at www.northayrshire.gov.uk/traveller info on (0845) 1980000 or www.thetrainline.com

Bus Services

More information can be found at www.northayrshire.gov.uk/traveller info on (0870) 2000 200 or www.travelines.org.uk

Tourist Information

Contact Visit Scotland via www.visitscotland.com or on 0845 22 55 121

Other Walking and Cycle Routes in and Around North Ayrshire

For more information on contacts use the website or contact the tourist Information Centre on (01294) 055776

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