

Spotlight: Largs

Days out at the seaside

THERE'S nothing quite like a trip to the seaside and one of the west coast's most popular destinations is Largs, on the Firth of Clyde.

A long-established holiday resort with a delightful Victorian promenade, Largs offers a step back in time and a fond reminder of great days out when paddling in the sea, playing on the beach, fish and chips, and an ice cream cone were enough to keep all members of the family happy.

Today, you can recreate that nostalgia and stop off at one of its several restaurants and a well-known Art Deco ice cream parlour. And if you like fish and seafood you can buy it fresh to take home for tea.

Largs also has a host of excellent leisure activities, including two golf courses, putting, bowls, play parks and a swimming pool.

The town is popular for sailing and Largs Yacht Haven – the largest marina in Scotland – boasts excellent facilities.

Just a mile offshore is the lovely Isle of Cumbrae, accessed via the regular ferry service. About four miles long and



two miles wide, it's home to the town of Millport where you'll find Britain's smallest cathedral, a golf course designed by James Braid and fantastic views to Ailsa Craig, Bute and the Cowal Peninsula.

A great spot for outdoor enthusiasts, the island's circular loop is perfect for family cycling trips – take your own bikes or hire them in Millport.

Still on the water the famous Waverley Paddle Steamer makes regular trips from Largs during the summer months or you can try your hand at yachting,

dinghy sailing, windsurfing, powerboating and paddlesports at the Sportsotland National Centre for Watersports.

Back in Largs itself you can stroll along the shoreline and visit its most famous monument, The Pencil. It was built in 1912 to commemorate the Battle of Largs in 1263, when the Scots defeated King Haco of Norway's troops on the shore.

The Vikings, attempting to land from a fleet of longboats, were

repulsed by the army of Alexander III and this heritage is celebrated at Vikingar!, a multi-media Viking-themed attraction and at the annual Largs Viking Festival which features battle re-enactments and culminates in the burning of a Viking galley and fireworks display.

This year's festival runs from September 2 to 10.

You can also learn more about Largs and the area by visiting Largs Museum, run by volunteers from the Largs and District Historical Society.

Also worth a visit is the 13th-century Kelburn Castle & Country Park. Kelburn Glen, with its waterfalls and deep gorges, is regarded as one of Scotland's most beautiful woodlands and leads to spectacular views over the islands of the Firth of Clyde.

Glasgow is less than an hour from Largs by road and there are regular trains to Glasgow Central Station.

