

Largs / Cumbrae

Getting there with sailors

For those who have not been to Largs before (or haven't been for a while), here are some notes. Opinions are my own – feel free to ignore them!

Largs is near the mouth of the Firth of Clyde. The island of Great Cumbrae (often just called Millport, or Bicycle Island) is in the Firth of Clyde, opposite Largs. The ferry slip is in the middle of town – easiest access from the south of Largs is via the seafront. There is a good bus service to Glasgow (operated by McGills), and an hourly train – the journey time by train is about an hour.

For those flying in to Glasgow Airport, an option is the Airport Bus into town (approx. £5), then train to Largs. The easiest bus stop is the east end of Bothwell St – and Central Station is then just off to the right. Prestwick Airport is not so convenient for public transport access to/from Largs.

For those driving up the west coast, it is highly recommended to stay on the M74, then picking up the M8 and the A737. Note that the M74 now runs south of Glasgow and joins the M8 south of the Kingston Bridge – it is no longer necessary to go round the north of the city. The M8/A737 junction can be confusing, as it is very close to the airport exit. Coming over the flyover by the airport you should be in the left hand lane. The airport exit is immediately after the flyover, with the A737 half a mile later (signposted Irvine). If you miss the A737, just carry on through Gourrock and come down the coast road into Largs. Clyde 1 (102.5) has good traffic reports at 'rush hour', as does Smooth (105.2).

The cross-country route from the M74 should be avoided unless you really want to take the scenic route! Expect to achieve no more than 40, and an average speed of about 20 if you take this option. The coastal route via Cairnryan is pretty – but the bit from Gretna across to Stranraer is often busy with drivers anxious to get to the ferry. It has a higher than average accident rate, so treat it with caution. If you choose this route, keep an eye out for the average speed cameras!

Drivers with large vehicles or trailers can pick up sailors at the airport by using the 'drop off' lane (free) at the airport. Pausing for more than 5 minutes is likely to get unwanted attention from the traffic police. The official 'pick up' point is in the car park, and has a height restriction. It is possible to 'hover' around the long term car-park and then drive into the drop-off zone once sailors have collected their bags. This may not be feasible if lots of you are on the same flight!

By road it is approximately half an hour from Glasgow to Largs. There are plenty of cheap hotels in Glasgow for those driving up on Friday - those with car-parks that can handle trailers include the Travelodge (Paisley Road), Ibis Budget (Springfield Quay, was the Etap). These are on opposite sides of Paisley Road and are 15 minutes stroll from the city centre. I haven't investigated the Ibis breakfast recently – there is a Burger King and a Harvester that is open in the morning, and a couple of café's along Paisley Road. Springfield Quay offers a Chinese buffet restaurant, an indian, Chiqita, Frankie & Benny's, Harvester, Ask (Italian) and an Odeon.

There is the usual range of hotels in the city centre: the St Enoch hotel is basic, cheap and clean, with twin rooms from £20. Don't expect parking though! The multi-stories are mostly 2m headroom. There are a couple at 2.2m