

The Isle of Bute

The Isle of Bute lies in Scotland's Firth of Clyde, tucked into the sea lochs of southern Argyll.



Fifteen miles long by approximately four miles wide Bute is less than two hours from the city of Glasgow.



Rothsay Castle from two viewpoints



Bute has been occupied by man for over 5,500 years. Exploration of the island reveals standing stones, cists and a vitrified fort in the south at Dunagoil Bay. Early Christian sites dedicated to St Ninian & St Blane are indications of the missionary faith of the first inhabitants of Bute.

Before the Gaels arrived and absorbed Bute into the Cenél Comgall of Dalriada, the island was home to a people who spoke the P-Celtic brythonic language (*akin to modern day Welsh*).

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View from Rothesay Castle

After the viking period the island was not granted to the Lord of the Isles as were most of the islands off Scotland's west coast. Instead Bute became the personal property of the Scottish monarchy.

Bute is the ancestral home of the Stuart Kings of Scotland. The 800-year old ruin of Rothesay castle was built by a hereditary High Steward of Scotland from which the surname Stewart, and later Stuart was derived. The circular design of the castle is unique in Scotland and withstood many onslaughts including an invasion by the Vikings. It was captured by the English during the wars of independence but in 1311 was retaken by Robert the Bruce. Partially destroyed by Oliver Cromwell's troops in 1659 and finally burned and sacked by the Duke of Argyll in 1685 the castle has been partially restored over the last 120 years.

Under the 2nd Earl of Bute the Stuart family moved seven miles to the south of Rothesay and built Mount Stuart House on an estate of 300 acres. This original Mount Stuart house was partially destroyed in a disastrous fire in 1877, however the 3rd Marquess of Bute was inspired by his artistic, religious and astrological interests to build one of the most magnificent Victorian Gothic mansions in the world.

In 2005, Lyle McConachy, Doreen Robinson and Jan Morris, all visited the Isle of Bute and came away with sufficient evidence to convince them that the island is the ancestral home of the Thomas McConachy family.