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Major surprise news from Kintyre Express

Posted on September 5, 2011 by newsroom



Actually, the only surprise now is being surprised by anything **Kintyre Express** – or its parent Campbeltown company, West Coast Motors, initiate – because initiating is at the heart of what they do.

In around seven months this year (2011) we've seen Kintyre Express run both of its small passenger ferries – fast 12 seater cabinised RIBS – from Campbeltown in Kintyre, along the causeway coast of Northern Ireland and straight into Portrush Harbour with passengers keen to see the 2011 superbike race, the North West 200.

They ran this day trip as an experiment last year, with a success that meant both boats were needed on the run this time around.

Within days of this event, West Coast Motors started its almost doubled five-returns-a-day coach service between Campbeltown and Glasgow.

Then Kintyre Express began a completely new passenger ferry service between Campbeltown and Ballycastle, on the Antrim coast of Northern Ireland, opposite the timelessly beautiful Ratlinn Island, with its historic links to Robert the Bruce.

And weeks ago West Coast Motors launched five new stupendously carnivalesque supercoaches, on a joint venture with Sir Brian Souter's Scottish Citylink, serving the new expanded frequency on the Campbeltown-Glasgow run.

NOW – in the surprise that should have surprised none of us, Kintyre Express has just announced that it is to run the passenger ferry to Ballycastle all year round, rather than stopping it at the end of the visitor season.

This decision comes in response to public demand, with repeated requests for the service to continue.

It is to run on Fridays and Mondays over the off-season, with:

- Friday departures from Campbeltown at 14.00pm, and Ballycastle at 16.00
- Monday departures from Campbeltown at 07.30, and Ballycastle at 09.30.

This schedule will support long weekends in working lives at both destinations, each with a particular and different beauty in Autumn and Winter. The company will also operate additional services if the demand is there.

Cyclists have proved a strong market for the route, with members of cycle clubs, individuals and groups of friends relishing the ease of access to the scenic roads of these two areas pulled together by the elastic of Kintyre Express.

Long autumn and winter weekends wheeling on either side of the water will really open up the options available to this most eco-friendly leisure and sporting pursuit.

And the other thing that characterises the two destinations is that they each have world class golf courses on their doorsteps, like Royal Portrush, Machrihanish Golf Club with its Old Tom Morris designed course and Machrihanish Dunes, a course for men if ever there was one.

One market sector using the ferry will be especially enabled by this decision to go to a twelve month operation. It has emerged that there are families with members on either side of the North Channel, in Kintyre and in the north east of Ireland.

Many have been travelling the route in delight at the ease of renewing and maintaining physical contact.

The cyclists and the families using the route have come as something of a surprise for Kintyre Express – so at least their own jaws have been dropping in synchronisation with what they've delivered to the rest of us.

The year round service development testifies to the market Kintyre Express has built in its first months of operation. This is very good news for Campbeltown and for Kintyre.

The route is stunning, the journey short – an hour and a half, the two destinations rich in scenery and history and linked by their shared membership of the 6th and 7th century Gaelic Kingdom of Dalriada – which covered much of what is now Argyll and Bute and Lochaber on the west coast of Scotland and County Antrim in Ireland.

It's the sort of operation that says, 'Let's go explore.' We did – and it was unforgettable.

For folk in Campbeltown and Kintyre, who've grown up seeing Davaar Island as a familiar identifying feature of your home landscape, guarding the entrance to Campbeltown Loch – until you've gone on this trip, you've not seen Davaar at all – and you have the Irish north coast and the Giant's Causeway still to come.

For those on the Antrim coast, used to seeing the sweep of the south end of the Mull of Kintyre, clearly, just across the water, you've no idea of the drama of this place and no idea of how lovely your home place looks like from here.

For further information or booking, visit the **Kintyre Express website** or phone 01586 555 895.

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