

Press Release - Fifth Annual South Ayrshire Rotary Beach Clean - Sat 26 March 2011

Members of Ayr, Alloway, Prestwick, Troon and Girvan Rotary Clubs were joined on Saturday morning by Scouts from Girvan, St Columba's Ayr, Prestwick and Troon Groups, 1st Ayr Boys Brigade, Doonfoot Primary pupils, Troon youth club, and many members of the public for their fifth Annual Beach Clean.

Encouraged by the lovely morning, around 240 people took part in the clean-up and in just four hours, 721 bags of rubbish were removed from Girvan, Dipple Shore, North Croy, Dunure, Bracken Bay, Craig Tara, Greenan, Doonfoot, Seafield, Newton, Prestwick and Barassie beaches.

Sadly, the environmental message to fishermen has not yet got home, and we removed at least six 30lt drums of used engine oil which had been dumped overboard at sea. Given that there is a waste oil tank facility at Troon harbour, this is inexcusable. The usual quantity of nets, gloves, fishing boxes, ropes and creels was also removed, as was a lot of washed up farm debris, plastic feeding containers, pipes, and fertiliser bags. But by far the main source of rubbish continues to be the mountain of plastic bottles washed up from Scotland, England, Isle of Man and Ireland.

Two young German students were assisting Ayr Rotary members, and they were appalled by the amount of rubbish washed up on Scottish beaches - far, far, more than they would ever see on Baltic beaches surrounded by clean litter-responsible countries like Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Germany.

Last year we suggested that the answer for this country might be to impose a charge on every plastic drinks bottle. From our German volunteers, we discovered that this is exactly what happens in their country - where every drinks bottle or metal can is taken back to the store for the return of a 20-70 cent deposit charge. Remember our glass lemonade bottles and the fortune to be made by enterprising wee boys!

The five Rotary Clubs would like to thank all volunteers who took part in litter-picking; the farmers, caravan park, and NTS staff who transported the rubbish to collection points; the Coastguard for their standby presence in case of accidents; and especially South Ayrshire Council, who provided bags, litter-picker tongs, gloves, and a most helpful staff who ensured the smooth and efficient collection and disposal of all the rubbish collected. A great all-round team effort.

Jimmy Begg (Ayr), Alistair Morrison (Alloway), Mike Kelly (Prestwick), Fred Pearson (Troon) and Ron Gibson (Girvan) Rotary Club Coordinators.