

# THE ISLE OF MAN COASTAL PATH



### **About the Author**

Aileen Evans, now retired after a career in teaching and book production, has enjoyed a lifelong love of the outdoors. She has climbed, walked, skied and camped in many parts of Europe and North America yet considers the Isle of Man a favourite which continually draws her to return.

She prefers to linger on a walk, allowing time to appreciate views, to enjoy flowers and wildlife, and delve into things of historical interest.

Aileen has always enjoyed adventure sports and sampled most, including pot-holing, wild-water canoeing and alpine mountaineering. She still particularly enjoys rock climbing and exploring remote areas on her mountain bike.

Some of Aileen's memorable tours include cross-country ski-backpacking in France, walking across the remote interior of Iceland and a trek to Iceland's North Cape, and completing the Tour of Mont Blanc and the Alpine Pass Route.

At home in Lancashire, with her husband, Brian, and collie, Jess, she enjoys her garden, particularly the visiting birds.

## **THE ISLE OF MAN COASTAL PATH**

**RAAD NY FOILLAN –  
THE WAY OF THE GULL**

**Includes also  
the Millennium Way and  
Bayr ny Skeddán – the Herring Way**

**by Aileen Evans**

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For photographs, the maps and drawings I must thank my husband, Brian, who patiently packed up at a moment's notice to follow me round the island.

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Front cover: Maughold Head from Dhyrnan Bay (Ramsey to Laxey)

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*Coming over the moor above Black Head, with Bay Stacka below*



## PREFACE

Raad ny Foillan (The Way of the Gull) is a 98 mile footpath around the coastline of the Isle of Man. This long-distance footpath was set up in 1986 to mark the island's Heritage Year. In its journey round the Isle of Man Raad ny Foillan offers a variety of scenery, from the rugged cliffs and mountain moorland in the south, to the glens, beaches and dunes of the north. It wends its way through several nature reserves and along a disused railway. It passes scenes of historical interest, colourful fishing villages and peaceful havens. It takes to the road in several places, yet these country lanes have their own charm and little traffic. The single stretch of main road is of short duration. The footpath is never far from the sea or the cry of the gull. It is suitable for the gentle walker to do in short day-walk sections, for the dedicated backpacker, and for the fit fell-runner to set up his own personal record for the delightful circuit of this beautiful island.

The idea of a coastal footpath was first promoted by a former Governor of the Island, Sir Ambrose Flux Dunas, himself a keen Rambler. There was no legislation similar to the Parks and Countryside Act in the UK, but he paved the way for the 1961 Rights of Way Act. By 1973 maps were prepared and the task of waymarking and improving sections of the coastal path began. Dave Woods, the Rights of Way Officer, took on the task and in the Heritage Year, 1986, Raad ny Foillan was opened.

In this guide I have tried to introduce you to the Isle of Man as I have found it. As a child I visited Douglas, and returned with memories of seaside bustle, horse-drawn trams and a lurching ship. My next visit was as a rock climber, which fixed memories of a rugged coastline with crags and secret coves. A third visit was as a backpacker to walk the coastal path. It far exceeded my expectations. After the first day, gone were all my preconceived ideas of roaring motorbikes sporting dayglow stickers. I came away with pictures of primroses in Glen Maye, the sunset turning the surf to gold and the wet noses of the seals as they questioned my presence so close to their domain. I hope that as you follow the Manx footpaths you will collect as many happy memories as I did.

The introduction to the guide covers the practicalities necessary to organise your 'expedition', as well as interesting things to be seen on the way and their background.

The description of Raad ny Foillan sets out the circuit in stages, the longest being 15½ miles, the shortest 7 miles. The fast walker may wish to complete two stages per day, while those progressing at a more leisurely pace may decide to



amble along and take in the diverting attractions along the way. I chose to begin at Douglas simply because I arrived by boat and was keen to literally step from the quay onto the footpath. As the way borders Ronaldsway Airport the starting point is a matter of choice and presents no problem.

The footpath is waymarked and so, together with the information given in this guide, should enable the walker to progress easily and, if adverse conditions arise, safely.

The guide also covers the island's first long-distance footpath, the Millennium Way (see page 128), which was opened in 1979 to celebrate the millennium year of Tynwald. This follows an ancient route from Ramsey to Castletown. Bayr ny Skeddan (the Herring Way, see page 141), established in 1986, is an old trade route from Peel to Castletown.

Although the Isle of Man sits snugly in the Irish Sea surrounded by the British Isles, it is different from the rest of the United Kingdom. UK money is accepted, but your change may become mixed with the Manx currency, which is legal tender only on the island. The island government also issue their own stamps. If you post anything on the island, it must have a Manx stamp. The Isle of Man is part of the mainland telephone network and has good cellphone coverage.

The pace of life is easy; people seem to have time to talk. I obtained some helpful advice from a gang of commissioners (council workers) who were laying a hedge. A fisherman mending his nets was only too pleased to inform me of the state of the Irish Sea and its fish over the last 10 years. (Things are vastly improved, by the way.)

Although the early Manxmen were of Celtic origin, Man was part of the Norwegian Kingdom of the Hebrides until 1266. It is now a self-governing Crown Dependency, the Lieutenant-Governor being the Queen's representative on the island.

The legislature, The Tynwald, has two branches. The first is the Legislative Council that comprises the President of Tynwald, the Bishop, the Attorney and eight members. The other branch is the House of Keys, which has 24 elected members. The Isle of Man has a special relationship with the EU but does not contribute to, nor receive, funds from its budget.

Douglas is the capital of the island, a position held by Castletown until 1869. It is the home of Manx Radio, which was the first commercial radio station in the British Isles.

Campervans are allowed on the island all year round but caravans require a permit (page 12) and can stay only up to three weeks on an approved campsite, thus it remains free from the coastal developments that have so despoiled much of Britain's coastline. The Manx treat their coastline as a prized asset and are making

every effort to maintain its present beauty. Long-distance walkers will inevitably compare Raad ny Foillan favourably with the South West Peninsula Path of Devon and Cornwall, where huge static caravan sites often dominate the scenery.

Important to the walker is that inns and hotels are open seven days a week. Most serve food and you can sample the real Manx ale. An ancient law prohibits the use of any substitutes for malt, sugar or hops, so you do get the real local brew. The Manx ice-cream is the genuine article too. I cannot vouch for the ale, but I can definitely give the thumbs up to the ice-cream.

*Aileen Evans, Preston*

### Map Key

+++++*	Old railway track		Official campsites
	The Route		Hill summits
- - - -	Other paths		Car park
=====	Motor roads		Direction of north
.....	Rough Lanes		Direction of route as described
	Cliffs		Walls or fences (Only shown where necessary)
	Rocky beach		
	Sand or pebble beach		
	Village or town		
	Railway		

**Note:** (w/m) used throughout the text denotes a waymark



## INTRODUCTION



### HOW TO GET THERE

The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company has regular sailings from Heysham, Liverpool and Birkenhead to Douglas, and from Belfast and Dublin to Douglas (summer service and the Christmas holiday period only). Car parking is available at the dock.

For details of timetables and fares consult the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company (tel: 01624 661661 (from the Isle of Man) and +44 (0)8722 992992 (from elsewhere); [www.steam-packet.com](http://www.steam-packet.com)).

- All boats are drive on/off car ferries
- Bicycles are transported free

- Dogs are allowed, and a dedicated area of the lounge is set aside
- Trailer caravans are not permitted on the island without a permit. Self-propelled motor caravans are welcome, as are tenting campers.

By air there is a daily service to Ronaldsway from the following airports: Belfast, Birmingham, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, London City, London Gatwick, London Luton, Manchester and Newcastle. Note: there is no service into London Heathrow.

The coastal footpath is within a mile of the island's airport (tel: +44 (0)1624 821600; [www.iom-airport.com](http://www.iom-airport.com)).

### THE BEST TIME TO WALK

Everyone hopes for good weather, and you can increase your chances to some extent by looking at the past meteorological reports (see also 'Climate', below). May and June stand out as the months with a good sunshine average and little rainfall. The holiday season begins in June and is virtually over by mid-September, yet in the middle of the season I met very few people on the footpath, except around the Sound Cafe where tourists were taking the air within sight of the car park. Most walkers that I met were Manx and were pleased to see a 'foreigner' enjoying their coastline.

Spring brings flowers to the glens and migrant birds to the beaches. Late summer glows with the dwarf gorse in flower, heather in bloom and sunsets on the west coast that make an extra amble around in the twilight worthwhile.

If there is a time of year to avoid it is late May, early June and early September: the weeks of the motorcycle and car rallies. At these times the ferries, accommodation and campsites are fully booked. The closure of roads for these and other events does not inconvenience the Raad ny Foillan walker, but the Millennium Way and the Herring Way may be affected.

A provisional list of events for the year is published by the Isle of Man Department of Tourism and Leisure (tel: +44 (0)1624 686766; [www.visitisleofman.com](http://www.visitisleofman.com); IOM Met Office Weather Check: 0900 624 3200).

### ACCOMMODATION

Current lists of hotels, bed and breakfast, hostel accommodation and campsites are available from the Department of Tourism and Leisure ([www.iomguide.com](http://www.iomguide.com)). They have prepared a list of accommodation near Raad ny Foillan specially for the walker (see Appendix D).

There are commercial walking companies that will arrange your accommodation and transfer luggage for a self-guided walking tour. Visit [www.macsadventure.com](http://www.macsadventure.com); [www.celtictrailswalkingholidays.co.uk](http://www.celtictrailswalkingholidays.co.uk) or [www.isleofmanwalkingholidays.co.uk](http://www.isleofmanwalkingholidays.co.uk).

Campervans and motorhomes are welcome all year round but caravans require a valid permit from the Department of Infrastructure. To obtain one submit an e-mail to [caravan@gov.im](mailto:caravan@gov.im) including dates of arrival and departure, purpose of visit and where the caravan will be sited. Permits are issued only for events, staying up to three weeks on an approved campsite.

### PARKING

If you have a vehicle obtain a free parking disc from the Welcome Centre at the Sea Terminal, on the Steam Packet ferry or from Post Offices throughout the island.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Tel: +44 (0)1624 662525; [www.visitisleofman.com](http://www.visitisleofman.com); [www.iombusand](http://www.iombusand)



[rail.info](http://rail.info). Journey planner and timetables tel: 01624 662525.

The Isle of Man is well served with public transport. Bus routes, an electric railway and a steam railway cover the island.

The Isle of Man Passenger Transport publishes a booklet of official timetables that is available from the Information Bureau at the Douglas Sea Terminal, at any bus terminal, and at local Tourist or Commissioners' Information Offices. It is useful to obtain this timetable before planning your trip as, for example, the circular routes from Ramsey via Jurby, Bride, Smeale, Andreas and Jurby may influence your choice of accommodation.

Tickets described as 'inter-available' can be purchased for bus, train and tram travel. These can be bought from retail transport shops in Douglas, Peel, Port Erin and Ramsey, or you can pay on the bus in the usual manner. Explorer tickets may be purchased on

the island or in advance for unlimited travel by bus or train for one, three, five or seven consecutive days.

The steam train runs from Douglas (Bank Hill Station is at the southern end of the harbour) to Port Erin. The whole line is within easy reach of Raad ny Foillan. Stations along the line are: Port Soderick, Santon (by request), Ballasalla, Ronaldsway (by request), Castletown, Port St Mary, Port Erin. Trains run from March until November.

The electric railway runs from Douglas (Derby Castle Terminus is at the northern end of the promenade) to Ramsey. There are numerous request halts along the way, the main ones being Groudle, Baldrine, South Cape, Laxey, Dhoon, Ballaglass, Ballajora and Ramsey. The electric railway runs from March to November.

From Laxey Station the Snaefell Mountain Railway makes the journey to the summit from March until November.





Horse-drawn tram on Douglas promenade

Bus services are more frequent in summer, May–September, when numerous routes criss-cross the island. All the towns and large villages are on a bus route, and special services run in the summer to Cregneash and The Sound from Port Erin.

There is another form of public transport which you may find irresistible if you have blisters on the last lap – the horse-drawn trams clip-clopping their way along Douglas promenade!

### CLIMATE

The climate of the Isle of Man can be summed up as being milder than that of its UK neighbours. The influence of the surrounding relatively warm sea is the major factor. In winter the temperatures seldom fall below freezing.

The 42 degrees isotherm, after passing through the Isle of Wight, swings northward to capture the Isle of Man. In summer the sea exerts a cooling influence and the island enjoys the pleasant gap between the 58 degrees and 60 degrees isotherms. The annual amount of rainfall on the coastline is 30–40ins per year, most of this falling in the winter months. As can be expected, it is heavier on the mountains. The wind often lifts the clouds over the coastline, leaving it dry, while inland the hills are swathed in cloud. The prevailing wind is south-west. This is a consideration in planning your route. If you tackle the walk clockwise the length of the west coast will put any breeze at your back, then as you turn the Point of Ayre to come south the cliffs and mountains will provide shelter.

Another facet of the weather is the sea mist. The air over the sea can be saturated with water vapour. A drop of only one degree in temperature can result in the condensation of suspended vapour causing mist in the surrounding air. Thus mist can roll in from the sea with little warning. Douglas can be covered in mist while the rest of the island is bathed in sunshine.

The Isle of Man has an excellent bonus to offer. The clean air of the island supports 500 varieties of lichens to testify to its purity.

### TIDES AND TIMES

Isle of Man Coastguard, tel: 01624 661664

The sea makes such a major contribution to Raad ny Foillan that it is to your advantage to learn a little about

its ways. Things that seem obvious and familiar to those fortunate enough to live near the sea may be amusing, but could soon become alarming to those who make the odd visit to the sea and are not familiar with its various moods.

The tide flows up the Irish Sea in a northerly direction, bending round the Point of Ayre to take an easterly direction along the Galloway coast. The ebb flows at 2½ knots from Galloway south back down the Irish Sea.

The tidal flow reaches Liverpool at roughly the same time as the Isle of Man, the tidal differences in time and height on Liverpool being shown in the table on the following page.

The times and heights of the tides for Standard Port – Liverpool can be found easily in the national daily newspapers or by studying one of the nautical almanacs.

The tidal stream changes direction every six hours. The ebb usually

Ballaugh Beach and Jurby Head





## RAAD NY FOILLAN: The Way of the Gull

98 miles

The Way of the Gull is officially 98 miles long, yet the route is very versatile. Sections can be done as single walks, each with their own unique character. Port St Mary to Port Erin is a superb walk, often with a fine sunset. Bradda Head, with an ascent of Milner's Tower, makes a gentle stroll. Rambling on Lhaittee ny Beinnie and Cronk ny Arrey Laa makes a fine mountain day. The Ayres Reserve offers peaceful picnic spots for nature lovers.

### *Douglas to Castletown*

**Distance:** 15¾ miles + 4½ Langness  
**Maximum height:** 300ft

At first glance a 3-mile walk round the Marine Drive may not be your idea of an unspoilt coastal path, but do not judge hastily. In a few minutes Douglas has dropped below and the Marine Drive is revealed as a road halfway up a 200ft cliff where man has failed to tame the elements. The tarmac, sprinkled by rocks from above and sprayed by the sea from below, holds a few motorists in search of 'a bit of fresh air' and Raad ny Foillan footpath. The impressive facade is merely a hollow memorial to man's grand intentions to run a tramway. If you arrive on the overnight boat, the dawn over the sea, the rosy surf and the morning cry of the gulls will launch you on your way in worthy style.

The wide seascapes from the Marine Drive are rivalled by the position of this airy road, as it threads its





## DOUGLAS

## TOURIST INFORMATION

Isle of Man Welcome Centre  
 Sea Terminal Building, Douglas, Isle of Man IM1 2RG  
 Tel: 01624 686766; [www.visitisleofman.com](http://www.visitisleofman.com)  
 Leaflets available in English, French and German

## ACCOMMODATION

See Tourist Information brochure; also list of B&B accommodation within easy reach of the coastal footpath

**Campsites:** Grandstand Campsite, Nobles Park, Douglas, tel: 01624 696330 (during office hours), open TT week only; Glen Dhoo Campsite, Hillberry, Onchan, tel: 01624 621254, no dogs allowed; Glenlough Farm Campsite, Union Mills, Douglas, tel: 01624 852057

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

## Service bus

Bus Station, Lord Street. Tel: 01624 663366  
 Douglas – Port Erin via Oatlands Lane End, Airport, Castletown and Port St. Mary; Douglas – Ramsay via Laxey; Douglas – Peel; Douglas – Ramsay via Peel and Kirk Michael; Town service via Nobles Park

## Steam railway

Bank Hill Station. Tel: 01624 663366. All stations to Port Erin

## Manx electric railway

Tel: 01624 861706. Douglas to Ramsey via the coast. Numerous request stops.

## SERVICES

Douglas – all amenities, hospital, sea terminal, sports complex  
 Coastguard – Tel: 01624 661664  
 Port Soderick – Anchor Family Centre, open all year for drinks & refreshments, meals. Summer only.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

Manx Museum, Kingswood Grove, Douglas IM1 3LY, tel: 01624 648000

way across the formidable cliff face until the cliffs lower and Port Soderick is reached.

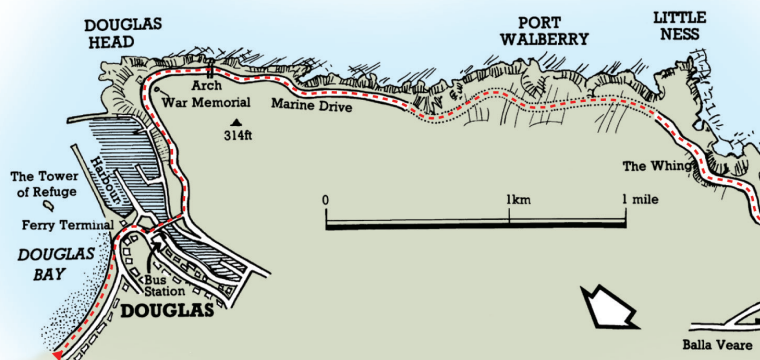
A shady glen leads inland from Port Soderick to a stretch of just over a mile on country lanes. Return to the coast is by the fields where the clifftop path is narrow, overgrown in places, but sound underfoot. The unspoilt coastline gives a feeling of remoteness. It is rocky with high cliffs and deepawns. Spectacular views lie in every direction. After Cass-ny-Hawin the cliffs lower to shelving rocks and the walking becomes easier as the path widens.

At Derby Haven flocks of birds, feeding on the shallow bay, seem undisturbed by their noisy neighbours as they come into land at Ronaldsway Airport. The walk round the Langness Peninsula also allows a visit to St Michael's Island. A final road walk into Castletown gives you time to admire the situation of its fine castle.

Throughout the stage the views are excellent, gradually changing in the distance yet springing a sudden surprise near at hand. The path is firm but the cliff is under constant erosion from the prevailing south-west wind and weather, and the edge should only be approached with utmost caution.

*Port Soderick*





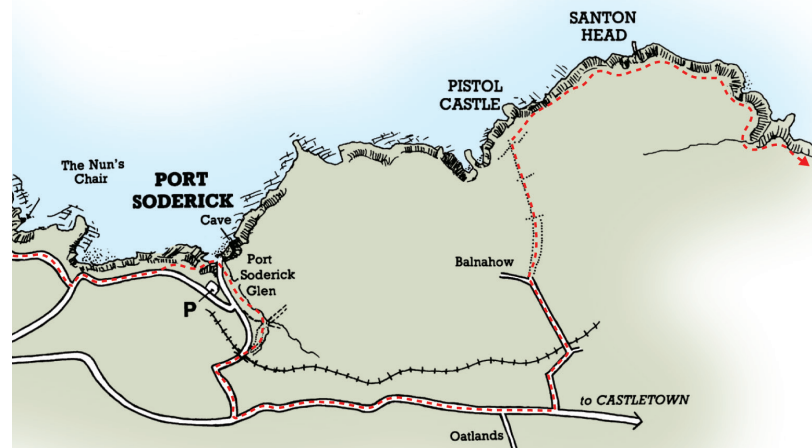
1. DOUGLAS to SANTON HEAD

### The Route

Start at the bridge across the harbour in Bridge Street, where you will find the first waymark of Raad ny Foillan. These signs, a white gull on a blue background, will guide you clockwise round the island and return you to this spot.

Cross the bridge and mount the flight of steps. Turn left along the road and proceed until the Manx Radio building is on the right. Take your first break here (seats) and look back because the views across Douglas Bay are magnificent.

*Douglas is the capital of the island, its rise to prominence being mainly due to its deep-water harbour where the River Dhoo and the River Glass enter the sea. The underlying rock is shale, so the harbour is not a victim to silting, and with increasing trade the town has grown. The little isle in the bay is St Mary's Rock, with its tower of*

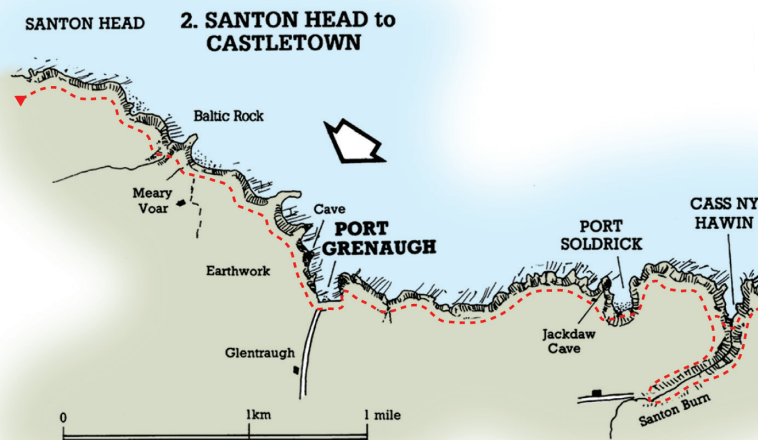


*refuge. Beyond the town the patchwork of fields merges into the distant moorland of Snaefell.*

Continue along the road. At the first bend is the war memorial, then on the headland the scene changes. Go through a rock cutting where a concrete path leads left. A few metres along this stands the memorial stone presented to the island for help at the loss of the fishing boat *Solway Harvester* in January 2001, and a bird's-eye view of Douglas lighthouse.

*The imposing turreted facade marks the entrance to the Marine Drive. Built in 1891 it presents an uneasy partnership of brick and stone. The bracken- and heather-covered moorland ends in 200ft cliffs, which fall sheer in a deluge of crags, zawns, slides and pinnacles into the sea. The road threads its way across the face of this cliff.*

The surfaced road has little traffic, so there is plenty of space for you to gaze seaward and enjoy views eastwards to Black Combe in the Lakeland hills. This is

**Reverse direction:**

At the beach pass the Anchor Centre and turn left. Do not pass through the stone arch – this path leads to a fisherman's walkway – but search for a well-concealed flight of steps.

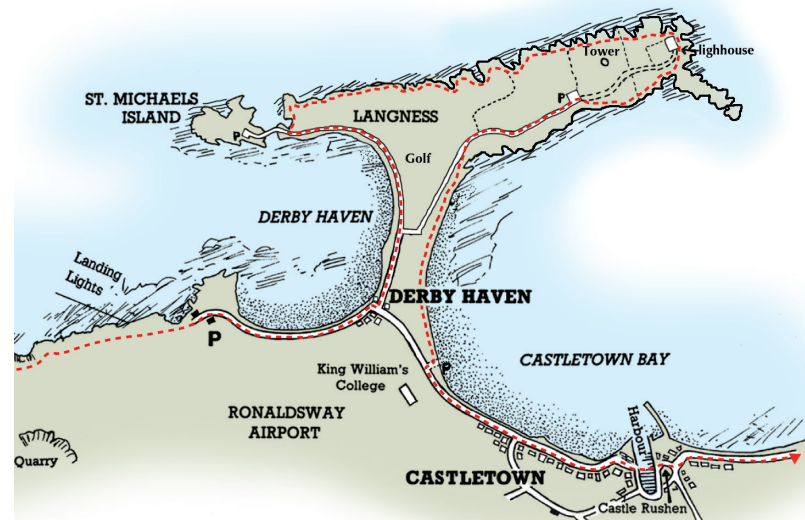
especially beautiful if you have landed from the overnight boat and dawn is creeping over the horizon.

Pass amazing rock scenery at The Whing, where earth movements have folded the rocks. Down the next deep zawn a detached rocky pinnacle can be seen at sea level. This is the Nun's Chair, where the naughty nuns from the Douglas Nunnery were put to do penance. The cliffs become lower. At the road junction turn left.

After ¼ mile look for a footpath which veers off to the left (w/m) and descends gently at first, then more steeply by zigzag steps, to the beach at Port Soderick. ◀

*A walkway round the base of the cliffs ahead leads to a little cave. You can enter this and pop out through a cleft back on the walkway.*

Pass the Anchor Family Centre using the beach and look for the waymark and signpost at the entrance to Port Soderick Glen.



There are paths on either side of the stream, which meet and cross over little footbridges. A patch of open meadow, a lovely picnic spot, is passed. Carry on through the offset gap in a fence, keeping uphill and right on a bridle path to reach a lane.

Turn left. The lane goes under a railway bridge. Keep left again to join a minor road (w/m). Turn left along the road, passing a small lake formed by a dam in the Crogga river.

Follow the road until opposite a terrace of cottages. The hill to the right behind the cottages is formed of Devonian granite – one of the few places where it appears on the surface. Just over the rise look for the waymark, which indicates a left turn into a narrower winding lane. Cross the railway bridge and climb the rise.

*The railway you have just crossed is the steam railway from Douglas to Port Erin. You may have already heard*



a nostalgic whistle echoing over the fields, but this railway is very much alive. Gleaming engines gasping noisily pull their single-compartment coaches. The passengers, comfy in plush seats, use any excuse to let the window down by its leather strap.

The lane now bends towards a farm, but take the track to the right (w/m), leading to the fields, and scan the horizon for the next waymark. The track ends at a stile. Keep straight ahead through the fields, and as you reach the next waymark you will be rewarded with a magnificent view of the coastline. On the left are the crags of Pistol Castle, a fine array of cliffs enjoyed by birds and rock climbers. To the right is Santon Head where the next rock strata, the Agneash Grits, come to light.

Turn right along the shy footpath.

*This narrow footpath between the cliff edge and the fence is almost hidden in the height of summer by gorse and bracken, yet it is sound underfoot. Open balconies of turf appear, and I found it idyllic to sit and enjoy the sight of the seabirds riding the air and skimming the cliff edge. Taking a break here made me feel this footpath really did belong to the gull. Sea thrift is abundant, as is the tiny scarlet pimpernel I found peeping from the foot of an old wall. Yellow and blue pimpernel also grow, but I have still to find them.*

Baltic Rock with  
Santon Head behind



Jackdaw Cave at Port Soldrick



Continue along the footpath, which winds over Santon Head, crossing the stream near Baltic Rock by a footbridge. The protruding, yet easily accessible Baltic Rock gives fine coastal views. Cross a footbridge at Purt Veg. After passing a large telephone cable sign follow the stone wall, and there is a waymark by a stile which leads down into Grenaugh Cove. Before you descend into the cove look around.

*Here was the Viking fortified farm of Cronk-ny-Merriu, protected on the seaward side by the cliff and on the landward side by a rampart with a fosse (ditch). The building was late 11th century, yet when the site was excavated in 1950 traces of Iron Age occupation were found. Port Grenaugh is Manx for 'sunny harbour'.*

The lane gives access to the road and telephone (1 mile).

Leave the bay by crossing a bridge. The path slants upwards to gain the cliff edge again on the opposite side of the cove. From here to Port Soldrick the path lies between the cliff edge and the field, but in places it can be overgrown.

The path continues until a squat cove, Port Soldrick, is reached. Here the path divides, allowing you to choose your route. You can either skirt the cove by a circle of the

*Granite blocks from  
Norway defend  
the airport runway  
from the sea*



*King William's  
College, Castletown*

cove rim along an indistinct path, much overgrown, or make a descent into the cove.

The descent is better. When level with the beach continue straight ahead by a path up the other side cut through a tunnel of vegetation. On reaching the cliff top a fine sea cave on the east side of the cove can be seen and the views are splendid back to Santon Head and forward to Langness and Castletown.

*Caves on the coastline bring to mind smugglers, and this is Jackdaw Cave, a genuine smugglers' hideout. Boats entered the cave and were secretly loaded through a hole in the roof. Around the year 1700 the island was being used as a 'trading' centre for brandy. Manx merchants would buy brandy and silks from France and rum from Jamaica. The goods were then brought to the Isle of Man duty free in the fast Manx clippers. This was quite legal. The same clippers then ran cargoes to quiet coves on the Welsh, Cheshire, Lancashire, Scottish and Irish coasts.*

*The Manx were skilful sailors, knowing every inch of the Irish Sea, and the British revenue cutters were continually outmanoeuvred. The smugglers have gone and so have the jackdaws. Housemartins are the present tenants.*

In a short while you will pass Cass-ny-Hawin Head and approach the deep inlet of Cass-ny-Hawin, where





Harbour light,  
Castletown

The earthwork which stands on the rock headland is the site of the ancient fort of Cass-ny-Hawin.

the Santon Burn enters the sea. Across the inlet the rocky knoll with sea caves at its foot and an earthwork on top is your objective.

A decision has to be made here. If the tide is out and the Santon Burn is not in flood it is possible to easily cross the stream. The best descent is by a steep path about 20m past the signpost. After crossing the stream near the gorge entrance go left along the beach below a rock headland to climb a zigzag path, steep at first, up a grassy scoop to a field. ◀ If you cannot take the shortcut then you must make a detour upstream along the official path. It takes to a field on the right for a short way, then a w/m points the way back left into the bushes and trees above the stream.

Eventually cross a stile to gain a bridge over Santon Burn. Turn left downstream, go through a gate (w/m) and continue through the bushes to reach a sunken track with a wall on the left. Climb to a signpost at its head and turn left to emerge eventually in the meadows near Cass-ny-Hawin earthworks and a junction with the shortcut. Keep on the seaward side of the meadow on a pleasant grassy path as the cliffs lower.

The quarry on your right announces a change of rock to the Carboniferous limestone. It is a working quarry, the rock being used for building stone. Continue along the field edge. The path now enters between the airport perimeter fence and blocks of grey Norwegian granite which form the sea defences for the newly extended runway. Neither distract from the view. ▶

Across the shallow bay of Derby Haven, St Michael's Island attracts the eye.

*The island is joined to Langness by a causeway, and the ruin of St Michael's Chapel stands a silhouette against the sea. If the tide is on the turn, Derby Haven becomes a birdwatchers' paradise as all the seabirds in the area are attracted to feast. To be seen are: duck, curlew, plover, dunlin, lapwing, redshank, widgeon, snipe and curlew sandpiper. In winter bar-tailed godwit and choughs congregate.*

*The narrow neck of land between Derby Haven and Castletown Bay is Ronaldswath or Ronald's Way. Boats were hauled across the isthmus to avoid the difficult tide race round Langness. King Ronald laid a paved way to make the task easier. Langness Light on Dreswick Point, one of the four Manx lighthouses, guards this section of the coast.*

At Derby Haven turn right at the telephone box for Castletown.

### Langness Circuit

Turn left and rejoin the shoreline on a narrow road. Pass two well preserved lime kilns, keep left at a junction to pass the golf clubhouse and along until you reach the causeway to St Michael's Island.

*The chapel was built on the site of an ancient Celtic keeill. The round fort being erected about 1540 by Henry 8th. It was a coastal defence for Derby Haven, in case Napoleon invaded the island. Six cannons still stand guard. The island [information panel] is well worth a visit.*

At the start of the causeway turn right. A signed path leads behind the remains of an old swimming pool and runs along the edge of a rocky gullet to the green. ▶

Go round the edge of the green passing the deep gullet Chreagh Moainee and a warning notice. The white

The huge 70 ton granite blocks were brought from Norway on barges. Being too heavy for a crane they were pushed into position by bulldozers. This stone was chosen because originating from a very cold climate it was bacteria free.

**Note:** The right of way path uses the edge of the golf course, which has been extended nearer the sea. Be alert for golf balls being hit across this gullet and other parts of the footpath until the sheep gate.

building of the clubhouse disappears behind, views expand and the top of Langness tower is seen ahead. A mown path appears on the right. The few extra feet of height gained gives us a wonderful view.

Keep on the edge of the green to a smooth gravel path, which is followed, passing a lily pond towards a seat. Stay on the edge of the golf course. Pass a 'Tee 17' stone on the R. The grassy path gives a clear view of the tower and lighthouse. Go through the sheep gate then keep ahead. Well worn paths lead up to the tower if you wish to visit it.

*The tall tower is impressive. Built around 1800 its original purpose remains uncertain. One theory is that it was a watchtower against the fleet of Napoleon. A more popular theory is that it was a beacon tower to guide the herring fleet home.*

Turn left on a wide path which splits, then rejoins. ◀ Pass below the tower and head for the lighthouse. At a fence, go through the gate to a seat overlooking Grave Gullet. The wide path leads round the lighthouse.

*Langness light is identified at sea by one white flash every 10 seconds. It is administered by the Northern Lights Board. The Dreswick Point foghorn blows 5 seconds every 45 seconds and is nicknamed the Bugaine by the locals.*

Pass the foghorn and notice the tide race round the point. It is said that 'anything coming to grief has a nasty habit of being picked up at Holyhead'. Exposed now is the underlying conglomerate rock – a rich, red pudding stone of beach worn pebbles set in a deep red matrix.

Meet a track and follow it to a ruin near Langness Point. The view west looks out to Port St Mary, The Chasms, Spanish Head and the Calf of Man. The Point itself is along a series of three islands. At low tide two can be gained by a scramble. The Point itself remains inaccessible.

Go through a gate and along a field edge to meet the road. Loops of grassy path can be exchanged for tarmac. At an old stone gateway on the right turn left onto a path

From the left hand loop amazing upright strata can be seen.



Langness tower

which is followed between the sea and the golf course. At a car park join the road and turn left towards Castletown.

*On the right the buildings of King William's College demand your attention. A fund begun by Bishop Barrow in the 17th century provided grants for deserving pupils, and in 1830 a general appeal by the Governor to add to these funds resulted in the building of this well-known public school; King William IV was approached for a donation, but as he had no money at the time he gave it his name instead! The new building was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1844 with the loss of many valuable documents. Public subscription was again generous and the fine building of local limestone is the one you see today.*

Follow the road round the bay and along the harbour into Castletown. Cross the swing bridge (for toilets go over road bridge on right) to the town centre. Tap on quay opposite harbour office.