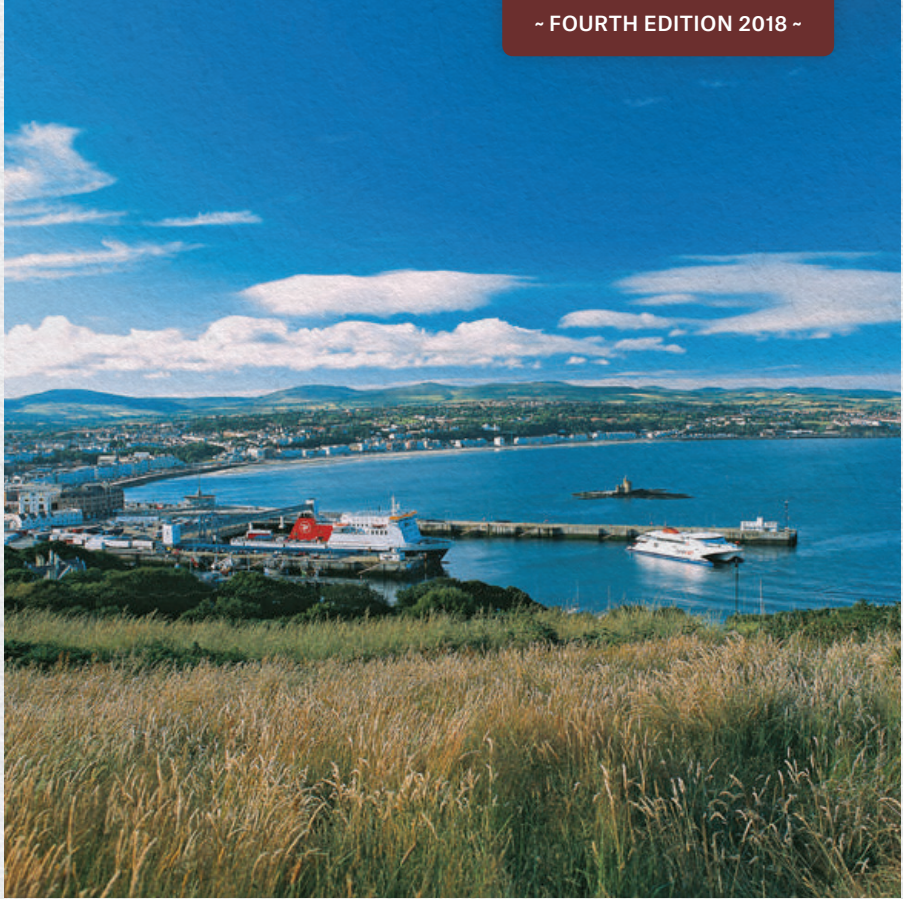




## HERITAGE AND NATURE WALK

~ FOURTH EDITION 2018 ~



THE DOUGLAS TRAIL  
HERITAGE & NATURE WALK

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Town Centre Management



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# THE DOUGLAS TRAIL

Welcome to the Douglas Trail, a route which will take you through both built and natural environments. You can easily split the trail up into shorter sections or start at any point en-route.

The Douglas Trail was inspired by the Douglas entry in the Britain in Bloom competition in 2006, the theme for which was biodiversity. It has developed beyond this initial concept into a trail which celebrates the variety in the town's landscapes, architecture, history and culture. We hope you enjoy walking the trail and would welcome your comments about any ways it could be improved for the future. Similarly, if you encounter any problems en route, particularly with following the trail, it would be helpful if you would let us know. Contact details are below.

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*We are grateful for the support of EJC Design, Douglas Borough Council, the Manx Wildlife Trust and Manx National Heritage in producing this trail.*

 **DOUGLAS**  
Town Centre Management



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## 1. THE GRANDSTAND

The start and finish of the world famous Mountain Course around which the annual Tourist Trophy motorcycle races take place. The TT motorcycle races first began in 1907, originally on a smaller course starting and finishing at St John's, and take place on closed public roads. The mountain section became part of the circuit in 1911. The TT Festival, held over a fortnight at the end of May/beginning of June, has become the world's most highly regarded motorcycle road racing competition attracting competitors from all over the globe, along with around 35,000 spectators visiting each year.

The Manx Grand Prix, established on the same circuit in 1922 for amateur riders, is held at the end of August/beginning of September with many MGP riders graduating to the TT. The Classic TT is now also held over these same weeks as part of the Isle of Man Festival of Motorcycling. The number of laps of the 60.75km/37.73 mile course varies from three to six depending upon the size of machine. With the fastest average lap speed of over 135 mph and lap times of under 17 minutes, the bikes reach top speeds of up to 206 mph. In 2010, TT zero, an electric motorsport event joined the races. This is only a one-lap circuit of the Mountain Course. In general the TT Zero lap speeds have been improving at an average rate of around 4 mph each year since the series began (119.279 mph as of 2015), and thus could achieve 130 mph by around 2020,



*TT Riders running to their machines for a mass start, about 1976. The riders now start already astride their bikes and singly at 10 second intervals rather than en mass. [photo kind permission of Geoff Cannell]*

and catch up with the gasoline bikes in subsequent years.

The Grandstand is the nerve centre of the TT and MGP races, housing the main commentary box, race control room, reception areas, and offices. The Grandstand seats around 1400, in front is the Pit lane, and across the road you can see the iconic scoreboard, which on race days has been updated by Scouts for over a century. Just behind the Grandstand is the Paddock area.

Other types of racing also start and finish at the Grandstand, such as car rallies, walking and cycling.

[www.iomtt.com](http://www.iomtt.com)



**From the Grandstand walk northwards (facing the scoreboard, turn right) along Glencrutchery Road. The first house on the right after the sports pitch is Oakleigh.**

## 2. OAKLEIGH - A HUGH BAILLIE SCOTT HOUSE

Oakleigh was designed by Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott (1865-1945), famous for his architecture, interior designs and involvement with the Arts and Crafts movement. Born in Ramsgate, his early training was in 1886-89 with Major C.E. Davis, City Architect of Bath. After his marriage in 1889 to Florence Kate Nash, he and his wife moved to the Isle of Man. Initially he worked with Frederick Saunderson, a Civil Engineer before setting up his own architectural practice in Athol Street, Douglas. Baillie Scott designed and built Red House in Victoria Road, Douglas where he lived until he left the Island in 1901.

Baillie Scott was a contemporary of architects Charles Voysey and Charles Rennie Mackintosh and contributed to the Art Nouveau movement, although he went on to forge his own distinctive style. He knew and worked with the Manx artist and designer Archibald Knox on some of his interior design features. He attended classes in geometry and drawing at the Isle of Man Arts School in Douglas and, like Archibald Knox, gained an Art Class Teacher's Certificate. The isolation of being away from mainland Britain led him to develop his own particular architectural style as can be seen in the houses he built here. Quite a number of his properties survive on the Island in varying states of originality. There are also surviving residential and business premises in England and Europe. He returned to live in England in 1901 and continued in practice until 1939 when he retired after the death of his wife.

Baillie Scott described his preferred clientele as '...people with artistic aspirations but modest incomes' and with this in mind he invented a new

type of small house by opening up the plan around a spacious living area, and extending the interior into the garden. His interest in all aspects of design led Baillie Scott to produce furniture, fabrics, wall coverings and pianos, which sat perfectly in his harmonious interiors. In 1945 Baillie Scott moved to a Brighton nursing home where he died on 10th February, aged 79.

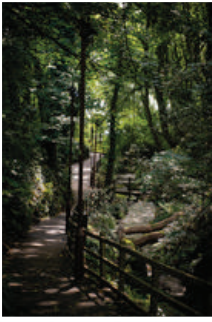
Some of the Baillie Scott designed properties still in existence on the Isle of Man:-

- *Braddan Cemetery Office, Braddan (1892)*
- *Bishops Demesne Farm, Kirk Michael (1893)*
- *Red House, Victoria Road, Douglas (1893)*
- *Ivydene, Little Switzerland, Douglas (1893/4)*
- *Oakleigh, Glencrutchery Road, Douglas (1893/4)*
- *Myrtle Bank & Holly Bank, Little Switzerland, Douglas (1895/6)*
- *Leafeld and Braeside, King Edward Road, Onchan (1896/7)*
- *Falcon Cliff Terraced Houses, Douglas (1897/8)*
- *Onchan Church Hall, Onchan (1898)*
- *Castletown Police Station, Castletown (1901)*

'The McAndrew House', built on Onchan Head was his first major design commission; it was converted to the Majestic Hotel in the 1920's but this building was demolished in 2000 to make way for a luxury apartment development.



**Continue past Oakleigh to the roundabout at Governor's Bridge. Turn right into Victoria Road and shortly on your left in between two gatehouses is the entrance to Summerhill Glen.**



*Summerhill Glen [photos by Andrew Barton]*

### 3. SUMMERHILL GLEN



**At the very top of the glen is a wetlands nature area. To take the spur to this, turn left at the bottom of the hill shortly after entering the glen. Otherwise keep right and proceed down the glen.**

The glen is an example of one of the many wooded Manx glens that follow river courses down to the sea with waterfalls and still pools. Originally called Burnt Mill Hill during the 19th Century the glen and its river were used in conjunction with the town's first drainage network and one of the town's original reservoirs was situated here. Little evidence now remains of this former use.

In 1933 the glen was acquired by the then Douglas Corporation on a 99-year lease from the Government Property Trustees at nominal rental, and opened to the public. It had been created as a tourist attraction in 1932-33 by 187 young men aged 18 to 22 on a 'Work for the Workless' scheme. The first Douglas Corporation Gardens Superintendent, Eric Coward, appointed in 1935, supervised its further development as a winter work scheme.

It is an ecological oasis for nature; in effect a green highway allowing wildlife access to the whole of North Douglas. The Glen is also a perfect habitat for animals such as birds and bats that nest and roost in the mature trees, and bugs and beetles that make a home in dead wood and leaf litter. Wild flowers carpet the ground, flowering from March to June. The top of the Glen is rich in wetland plants, particularly marsh marigold, while the lower slopes are covered with plants such as bluebells. The stream running through the glen is home to wildlife like the caddisfly. The largest trees in the Glen are beech trees. These are now becoming aged veterans and as they age and die, they will become host to an accumulation of life such as fungi and wood boring beetles.

Summerhill Glen is also home to people who are smaller in stature but no less real. As you walk through the glen, even if you don't catch sight of the faerie inhabitants, you'll see the doors to the tiny homes they have made in the bases of trees.

Note the fallen trees, the result of bad storms which has created holes in the canopy. These are usually left in the glen to promote biodiversity.

The glen is illuminated annually from August to the beginning of January by Douglas Borough Council.



**Follow the Glen all the way down to Summerhill Road, walk down the hill, cross the road and walk around the corner to the left to The Kaye Memorial Garden.**

## 4. THE KAYE MEMORIAL GARDEN

This peaceful garden was created in 1955 in memory of Alderman Joseph Kaye and Sarah Kaye, Mayor and Mayoress of Douglas 1904-05 by way of a bequest made by their son. A statue by local sculptor Bryan Kneale of the famous Manx author Sir Hall Caine (1853 – 1931) is situated here as well as a memorial stone erected by Douglas Borough Council and dedicated on 2nd August 2013, the 40th anniversary of the Summerland fire disaster, in memory of the 50 people who lost their lives in the tragedy of 1973.



**Continue northwards along Strathallan Crescent.**

## 5. STRATHALLAN CRESCENT

Development of this terrace commenced when the fourth Duke of Atholl purchased the land as an extension to his Castle Mona estate in the 1820s. The Atholl family had succeeded to the Lordship of Man in 1736 when, following the death of the childless tenth Earl of Derby, James, Second Duke of Atholl, inherited the title. It was during the 55-year reign of the flamboyant fourth Duke, John, which commenced in 1774,



*Strathallan Lodge [photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

that the town started to develop as a holiday resort. The attractive two-storey pre-Victorian terraces have generous front gardens and some retain the original timber detailing to their balconies. The villa at the centre of the terrace, the Min y Don, was once the home of Captain Rowe of the Laxey mines. It was built on the site of a snuff mill and although it bears a date plate of 1795 it was actually built in about 1830.

The Duke left the Island in 1825, but his daughter Lady Amelia Sophia and her husband James Drummond, Lord Strathallan, remained residing at the Castle Mona. With the agreement of her father, who was still technically Governor of the Island, Lady Amelia had the name of the crescent changed from East Mona to Strathallan, which was the final endeavour to perpetuate the Atholl influence. The Strathallans left the Island in 1830 and the Duke breathed his last three months later.





*The tramway station 1896 [photo the Francis Frith Collection, by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

## 6. THE HORSE TRAMS



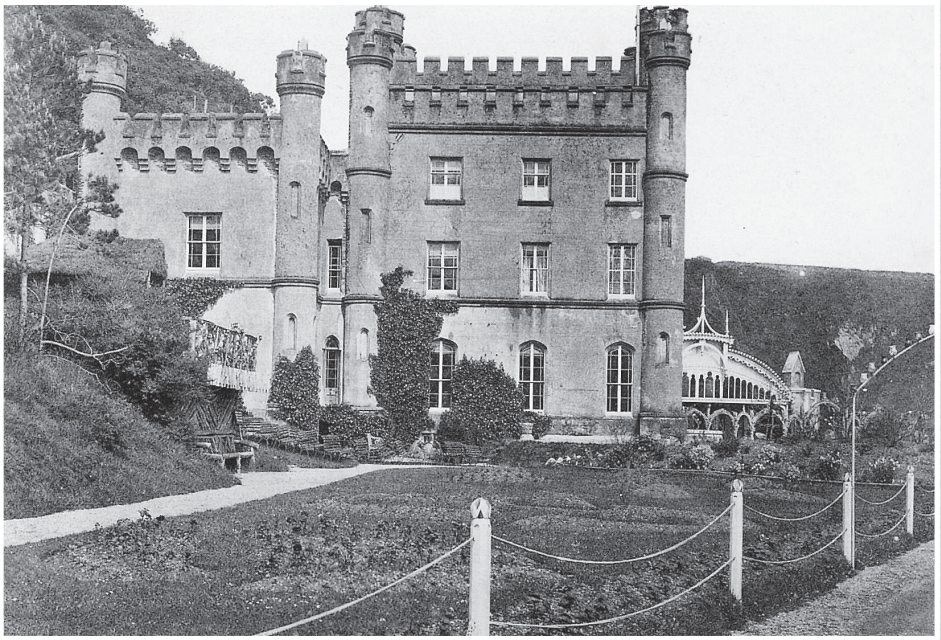
**If you do not feel like walking the length of the Promenade, a pleasant way to travel all or part of the way is by horse-drawn tram. (Between April and October only)**

The first passenger horse tram services began on 7th August 1876 as a result of a vision by civil engineer Thomas Lightfoot who felt that it would be of great service to the thousands of visitors arriving by steamer. By 1889 the line had been enlarged to serve the whole 1.5 miles of sea front. The running of the trams to the new Victoria Pier was the final touch to the new Loch Promenade, which had been officially opened in 1875 by Governor

Loch. Of the 51 tramcars used since 1876, 21 are still maintained for regular services and the original stable block on Queen's Promenade at the bottom of Summerhill Road, is still in use.

The Douglas Horse Tram service is unique in the northern hemisphere as the only other example is in Victor Harbour in South Australia. Take the tram from the terminus at the end of Strathallan Crescent or board at any stop along the Promenade.

[www.friendsofdbh.org/](http://www.friendsofdbh.org/)



*Derby Castle [photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

## 7. MANX ELECTRIC RAILWAY

The public transport system was extended towards the end of the 19th century with the construction of the Manx Electric Railway system in 1893 and, still using the original rolling stock, provides scenic journeys from this northern end of the Promenade along the coast through Laxey (where a connection can be made to the Snaefell Mountain Railway) to Ramsey. At 18 miles long it is one of Britain's longest vintage narrow gauge lines.

The Manx Electric Railway museum, located at Derby Castle yard, is free admission and open every Sunday throughout tram season between 12.00 and 16.30.

[www.manxelectricrailway.co.uk/](http://www.manxelectricrailway.co.uk/)

## 8. SITE OF SUMMERLAND/ DERBY CASTLE

Summerland was a leisure complex built in 1971 on the site of the former Derby Castle entertainment complex. Unfortunately, tragedy struck when a fire broke out just two years later resulting in the loss of 50 lives. The complex reopened in 1978, but it eventually closed down and was demolished in 2005 with the sport and leisure functions being transferred to a new facility, the National Sports Centre, and the entertainment facilities to the Villa Marina.



**Cross with care onto the seaward side of the Promenade where there is a pedestrian walkway and cycleway. Head south along the Promenade or take a walk on the beach.**

## 9. THE SHORE



*Flat Periwinkle on Wrack*



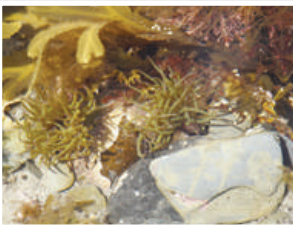
*Shore Crab*



*Top Shells*



*Edible Periwinkle and Anemone*



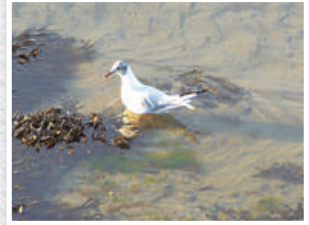
*Snakeslock Anemone*

There is a wealth of wildlife to be found all along the shore. Look for a variety of wading birds as they follow the tide in and out, probing in the sand for lugworms and shellfish. Curlews have long down-curved bills and the black and white oyster catcher has a distinctive call. Large herring gulls dominate the shore, dwarfing the smaller black-headed gulls. The biggest and boldest bird is the great black-backed gull.

At low tide, search amongst the seaweed such as oarweed, sea lettuce and bladder wrack for shore crabs, periwinkles and topshells. In the shallow pools you may see shrimp and even pipefish.

The red jelly-like blobs at the base of the groynes are beadlet anemones; their tentacles reach out for passing shrimp as the tide washes over them. You may even find a snakeslock anemone in the pools left only by the lowest tides.

The rocks on the shore provide a good resting place for limpets and barnacles. Hiding underneath will be slippery, spotted butterfish and maybe an eel. Out to sea beneath the waves will be shoals of herring and mackerel as well as the occasional dogfish. Sometimes seen are whales, dolphins and harbour porpoise.



*Black Headed Gull*



*Great Black Backed Gull*



*Herring Gull*



*Oyster Catcher*

## 10. THE FALCON CLIFF

As you reach the Best Western Palace Hotel and Casino, look up to your right.

The white castellated building standing above the Promenade is the Falcon Cliff, one of the town's most prominent landmarks. It was originally built as a residence for bank manager John Jackson in the 1840s by local architect John Robinson and later became a hotel and entertainment complex. Because of its elevated position, a cliff lift, or incline railway, was constructed in 1887; it fell into disuse and was re-erected at Port Soderick in 1897. A second



*The Falcon Cliff Hotel and Dance Pavilion c.1890  
[photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

lift of a counterweight design driven by an electric motor was constructed in 1927 and was operating until the 1980s. The remains of the cliff lift can still be seen. Latterly the Falcon Cliff was given a new lease of life being renovated and utilised as offices.

## 11. THE BEST WESTERN PALACE HOTEL AND CASINO



*The Palace Coliseum and Ballroom [photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

Britain's first public casino was licensed in Douglas in 1963 and opened in the Castle Mona Hotel. It later moved to the purpose-built Palace Hotel and Casino (now the Best Western Palace) and replaced the former Palace Coliseum variety theatre. It was opened by the then 007, Sean Connery. A second licence was given to the former

Palace Ballroom immediately to the rear of the hotel which was once one of the largest ballrooms in Europe. It was largely demolished in 1994 and only the Opera House remains, which houses a two screen cinema.

[www.bestwestern.co.uk/hotels/best-western-palace-hotel-casino-83942](http://www.bestwestern.co.uk/hotels/best-western-palace-hotel-casino-83942)



*The Castle Mona [photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

## 12. THE CASTLE MONA

The Castle Mona was the first building on the Promenade, built in 1805 as the residence of the Fourth Duke of Atholl, the Governor General of the Isle of Man. The architect was George Steuart and it was built from freestone from the Isle of Arran, which was shipped into the bay and jettisoned at high tide to be recovered when the tide went out. Its conversion into a hotel 30 years later anticipated the future of the area to accommodate visitors. It is currently unoccupied.

## 13. THE CRESCENT CINEMA

The Crescent 'Super' Cinema opened in 1930 at the height of the cinema boom, and with 2,000 seats, it was the largest

cinema theatre in Douglas. Its ornate interior was designed in Tudor castle style with imitation tapestry walls and a stage shaped like a portcullis. Plans to build an identical theatre on the left of the site never proceeded. The site formerly housed a Pierrot village, tearooms and a wooden 'picturedrome'. Later it was used as a gym and a nightclub. It has now been redeveloped as apartments with the original frontage retained as it is registered (equivalent to 'listed' in the UK) and extended to create a matching façade which may be fulfilling the desires of the original developer of the site!

## 14. CLARENCE TERRACE AND THE ESPLANADE

These fashionable terraces were designed in the later Regency style in the 1840s by local architect John Robinson and built on part of the Castle Mona lawns. They were occupied by permanent residents and the well-to-do staying for the summer, far enough away from the jumble of old narrow streets of the old town to allow a rear mews for carriages.



*Clarence Terrace*

*[photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

## 15. THE VILLA MARINA

The original Villa Marina Kursaal (subsequently replaced by the title 'Royal Hall' following the visit of King George V and Queen Mary in 1923) was built as a multi-use entertainment complex in 1913 on land purchased by the then Douglas Corporation on favourable terms for the purpose from the trustees of the estate of Henry Bloom Noble, the town's great benefactor. It was designed in a classical style by Robinson and Jones of Leeds and the adjoining colonnade and shopping

arcade were added in the 1930s, designed by F. Prentice Mawson of Lancaster.

An extensive reconstruction and refurbishment programme of the whole Villa Marina complex commenced in 2002 and the beautiful newly renovated main building and gardens reopened in 2004. The complex is home to the Royal Hall, an auditorium that references the grandeur of the Edwardian era, as well as a suite of conference and meeting rooms, a cinema and children's play area.



*Villa Marina Gardens [photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

In 2009 the refurbished Villa Marina Arcade was opened, providing a link between the Gaiety Theatre and the Villa Marina. The arcade features a renovated 1929 Wurlitzer organ.

[www.villagaiety.com](http://www.villagaiety.com)

## 16. DOUGLAS WAR MEMORIAL

The 50ft high war memorial was constructed using funds raised by public subscription and unveiled by the Earl of Derby on 25th May 1924.

## 17. THE GAIETY THEATRE

The Gaiety Theatre opened in 1900 and was designed by Frank Matcham, 'The Prince of Theatre Architects'. Formerly the site of the Marina Pavilion, it is one of the few late Victorian theatres to have survived intact with all its original decorations, fittings, furnishings and stage mechanisms.

In 1976, after the fabric of the theatre had begun to deteriorate, the Isle of Man Government set about a programme of refurbishment to make it safe and in 1990 The Friends of the Gaiety, a charitable

group, launched a massive restoration programme which has put the theatre back as near as possible to Matcham's original design and concept. Tours of the theatre are held on Saturdays at 10.00a.m. from April to September, telephone 694500 or ask at the box office.

[www.villagaiety.com](http://www.villagaiety.com)

## 18. THE SEFTON HOTEL

The Sefton Hotel on Harris Promenade was built on a site previously occupied by part of the Villa Marina Gardens. Designed by architect W. J. Renisson, the centre section was completed in 1892 and the wings completed three years later. Major extensions completed in 1999 have seen the creation of a large atrium area at the rear of the original Victorian façade.

[www.seftonhotel.co.im](http://www.seftonhotel.co.im)



**From in front of the Sefton Hotel, turn to look out into the bay. The castellated structure is the Tower of Refuge.**



*Harris Promenade [photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

## 19. TOWER OF REFUGE

St. Mary's Isle or Conister Rock has, over the centuries, been the scene of countless shipwrecks and lost lives. At high tide the rocks were hidden just below the waves waiting for unsuspecting or drifting boats, and at any state of the tide in storm they represented a daunting prospect. During the 19th century, having witnessed many ships driven onto the rocks and battered mercilessly by the sea, Sir William Hillary, the founder of the RNLI and resident of Douglas, proposed the building of an extension to Douglas harbour and a sanctuary on St Mary's Isle for crew and passengers who had been tossed into the sea. Following the wreck of the ship the St George on St Mary's Isle in November 1830, a public subscription was launched and John Welch was commissioned to design and build the structure. Sir William laid the first stone on St George's Day 1832. The owner of the rock, Mr. Quane, then passed over the title deeds to be held by whoever was the president of the Manx branch of the Lifeboat Institution. A visit to the island by the poet Sir William Wordsworth inspired him to write about the 'Tower of Refuge' and the sanctuary has been known by that name ever since.

The Tower of Refuge is not just for stranded sailors. Cormorants and shags will be sitting on the rocks, drying out their wings after a successful fishing trip.

Every year since 2012 Douglas Town Centre Management has organised a mass walk out to the tower during the lowest spring tide. The event raises funds for the RNLI.

## 20. LOCH PROMENADE AND THE SUNKEN GARDENS

Loch Promenade was constructed between 1872 and 1882, prior to which there was no continuous sea wall. (Part of the old sea wall can still be seen at the corner of the lane half way down Howard Street, off Loch Promenade). It included the Villiers Hotel, now replaced by Royal Bank House on the corner of Victoria Street. The design of the original buildings had to follow a standard pattern and were subject to approval by Mr Elliston the surveyor appointed by the Town Commissioners and which resulted in its classic unified Victorian appearance.

Extensions to the Loch Promenade in the early 1930s added a further 100ft of width to the original 80ft and six sunken gardens, 'The Marine Gardens', were incorporated, designed by John Denman of the British International Horticultural Association. These included seating, shelters, a 200ft boating pool and an illuminated fountain.



**Continue south along Loch Promenade. Down in the sunken gardens you will find a sculpture depicting the Wreck of the St. George.**

## 21. THE WRECK OF THE ST. GEORGE

The RNLI Memorial Sculpture by international artist Michael Sandle RA was commissioned by the Isle of Man Arts Council. The work depicts Sir William Hillary and crew striving to save survivors from the Saint George, wrecked in Douglas Bay in 1830, and honours the courage of lifeboat crews down through the ages.

The bronze cenotaph was unveiled on 29th June 2002 by his Excellency the Lieutenant



Governor of the Isle of Man, Air Marshal Sir Ian Macfadyen, as part of the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the Douglas Lifeboat.

Michael Sandle was raised on the Isle of Man and attended the Douglas School of Art. He went on to study at Slade and teach in the UK and Canada, finally becoming Professor of Sculpture at the Karlsruhe Institute in Germany. A renowned printmaker as well as sculptor Michael has won many prestigious prizes including the Nobutaka Shikanai prize, 1st Rodin Grand Prize and the Korn Fery Award. The sculpture was funded by the Isle of Man Arts Council and the Henry Moore Foundation.

## 22. DAVID 'DAWSEY' KEWLEY MEMORIAL

'Dawsey' is a modern Manx hero whose repeated acts of unselfish bravery as a life saver so inspired the Island's population that they provided a memorial in his honour. Dawsey worked as a boatman for the Steam Packet Company and was a volunteer in both the Rocket and Lifeboat Services. He would often dive into stormy seas to rescue people and was honoured by the Royal Humane Society. He died in 1904 of pneumonia at the relatively young age of 54 and enough money was raised by public subscription to fund the grey Aberdeen granite drinking fountain and water trough. It was unveiled on 8th June 1905 by Deemster Kneen, the Island's Deputy Governor.



**Continue south to the 'Bottleneck' Car Park.**

## 23. JUBILEE CLOCK

The clock located at the bottom of Victoria Street was presented to the town and the people of Douglas by G.W. Dumbell to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. Dumbell was a wealthy bank owner but when his bank collapsed three years later it caused financial ruin for over 8000 businesses and individuals on the Island.

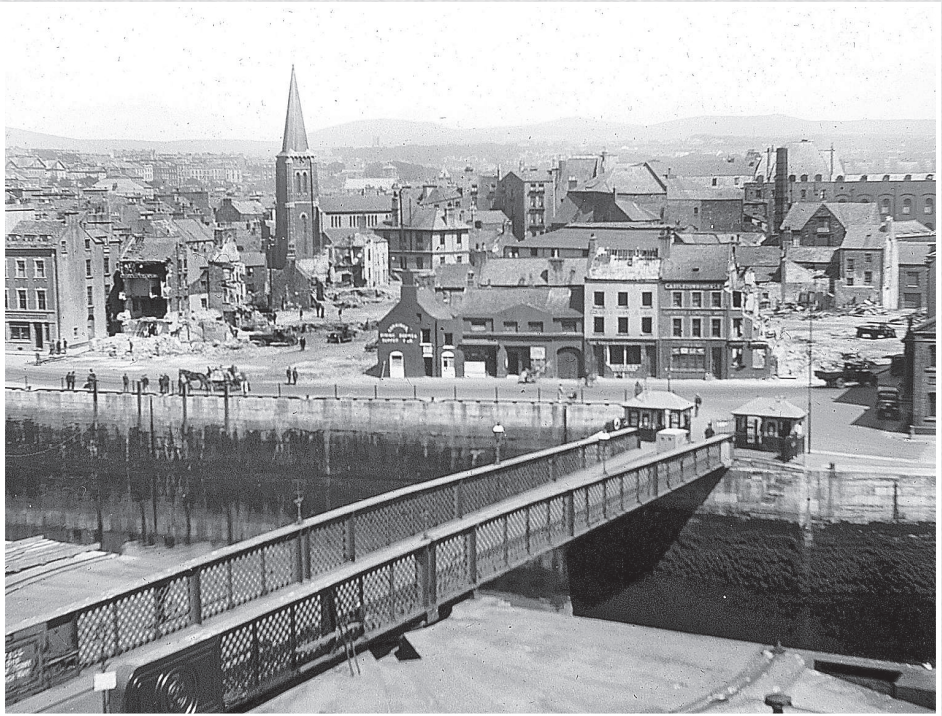
The clock was moved to its current location in 2013. Its earlier position is just a few metres away and is marked by studs in the road.

## 24. SEA TERMINAL

In 1957 consideration was given to building a new passenger ferry terminal at the end of Victoria Pier as it was felt that a more modern building with the ambience of an airport was required by the travelling public. Local architects Davidson Marsh & Co and T H Kennaugh came up with the novel design for the terminal building which takes the shape of the Three Legs of Mann topped with a central circular tower. McCormick and Davies Ltd. of Douglas were appointed as the main contractors. It was officially opened on Tuesday 6th July 1965 by the late Princess Margaret.



**From here cross onto Parade Street and turn left at the roundabout and walk straight on to the Millennium Lifting Bridge.**



*The old swing bridge during the demolition of some of the streets and buildings during the 1930s  
[photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

## 25. MILLENNIUM LIFTING BRIDGE

In the 1990s the Department of Transport proposed a new road bridge over the harbour to replace the previous footbridge and improve traffic flows. The structure, completed in 1999, has a lifting bridge with overhead counterweight to span the northern half of the entrance to the harbour, allowing 12m wide access for vessels. The £2million scheme also impounds water by means of a rising sill flap under the lifting bridge and a fixed weir under the remaining section, thus enabling the siting of floating pontoons to create a yacht haven in the inner harbour.



**On crossing the bridge, on the opposite side of the road and to the right of the steps you can see the...**

## 26. HYDRAULIC TOWER

By the end of the 19th century the south side of the harbour and Douglas Head had become much more developed as a tourist attraction and it was decided that a more direct route from the sea to the Head was required. A proposal for a tower and suspension bridge never progressed because of problems with the financing of it by the then Douglas Corporation,

although foundation stones were laid. The Harbour Commissioners' engineer, James Walker came up with a more feasible swing bridge, powered by hydraulic water pressure. The tower for this rare design still stands at the south end of the current bridge and houses the water tank, force pumps and giant accumulator.

The pressurised water was fed into slewing tanks connected to the bridge by 128ft long steel cables in tunnels under the road. The control room was at the top of the tower so that approaching sailing ships could be seen over the breakwater, allowing the operators to open the bridge in anticipation of their arrival so their speed was maintained to enter the harbour. The swing bridge was opened by the Mayor of Douglas on 16th May 1896. It was replaced by a footbridge in 1979 and then the Millennium Bridge in 1999. The tower is currently used by the Department of Infrastructure for storage but the machinery is still in situ.



**Having crossed the bridge turn left and make your way along the South Quay. In 500 yards, just before the lifeboat station, look to the right and on the stone wall is the memorial to the Herring Fleet Disaster 1787.**

## 27. MEMORIAL TO THE HERRING FLEET DISASTER 1787

On 21st September 1787, the 400 wooden boats of the Herring Fleet left Douglas harbour to fish off Clay Head. That night, a violent storm resulted in the loss of approximately 161 people and 50 to 60 herring fishing boats as they tried to return to Douglas Harbour.



**A few yards further on the left is the...**

## 28. DOUGLAS LIFEBOAT STATION

Prior to the 19th century vessels getting into difficulty were more or less left to help themselves. The founder of what is today known as the Royal National Lifeboat Institution was Douglas resident, Sir William Hillary. He had previously organised volunteers and small boats to carry out rescue operations. Sir William had an idea to establish a more formal maritime rescue service and 'The National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck' was formed in 1824 as a result of Sir William's efforts.

In January 1826 Sir William was elected as the first President of the first District Association of the National Institution. He was an active and courageous rescuer (despite the fact that he couldn't swim!) and "retired" from rescuing at age 63.

Douglas's first Lifeboat Station was built on the Promenade and it moved to the Battery Pier in approximately 1900. It was situated across the road from the present station and the lifeboat had to be pulled across the road to be launched on a slip, which has long since disappeared. A new lifeboat station was built in 1923.



**Continue along the Quay. At the car park turn right up the lane past the old coastguard station. Keep left and walk down the steps to Port Skillion.**



*Douglas Head Lighthouse [photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

## 29. PORT SKILLION

In the 19th century this shingle shore was a favourite bathing place strictly for men only at a time when mixed bathing was forbidden. Eventually in 1874, an open-air swimming pool was constructed by Douglas draper Robert Archer and was reputedly the first of its kind in Britain. By the mid 1890s it had become so popular

that ferries plied between Victoria Pier and Douglas Head. In 1921 the pool was bequeathed to Douglas Corporation by Mr Archer under his will and after storm damage in 1932-33 the creek was restored to its original state.



**Follow the steps up to the lighthouse.**



*Port Skillion [photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

### 30. DOUGLAS HEAD LIGHTHOUSE

The first Douglas Head lighthouse was built in 1832 and redesigned in 1859. Built of white stone, the tower is 63ft high and topped by a white light which flashes every 10 seconds and has a nominal range of 25 miles.

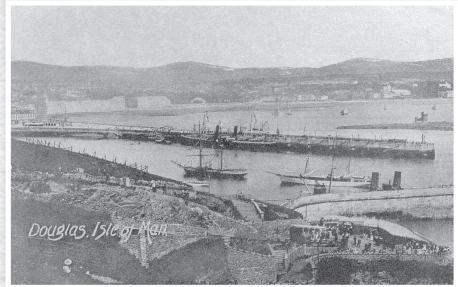


Follow the steps and path up to Douglas Head.



### 31. DOUGLAS HEAD

This headland, a one-time popular tourist resort, has played a very important role in the Island and the town of Douglas over the last two centuries. The headland was originally owned by the Nunnery Estate although in 1870 parts of it were dedicated in perpetuity to the people of Douglas for ramblage and recreation by Sir John Goldie-Taubman of the Nunnery. To this day, the use of the head for recreational purposes is still protected by the deed of covenant. At first people went to the headland for its scenery but soon there were other attractions and an inclined railway was installed to transport the visitors up from Port Skillion.



*A view from Douglas Head showing the incline railway and a busy scene on Douglas Head [photos by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

The cliff and coastal slope and the grassland in this area have a wealth of heath and coastal species Bracken, brambles, common sorrel, Manx fuchsia, cocksfoot, montbretia, ragwort, daisy, white clover, gorse and heather to name but a few!



*Bell Heather and Manx Gorse*



*Tufted Vetch*



*Bird's Foot Trefoil*



*Fuchsia*



*Wood Sage*

## 32. GREAT UNION CAMERA OBSCURA

The Great Union Camera Obscura was erected on the headland in 1887 by entrepreneur James Fielding. Unlike other cameras obscura, which were originally built for astronomical purposes, the Great Union was built purely as an attraction for the flourishing Manx tourist industry. Through a series of mirrors and lens units it provided visitors with spectacular views of Douglas, as well as opportunities to spy on other tourists on Douglas Head! It has recently been restored to its former glory. The Camera Obscura is open on Saturdays 1pm – 4pm and Sundays and Bank Holidays 11am – 4pm between Easter and September.



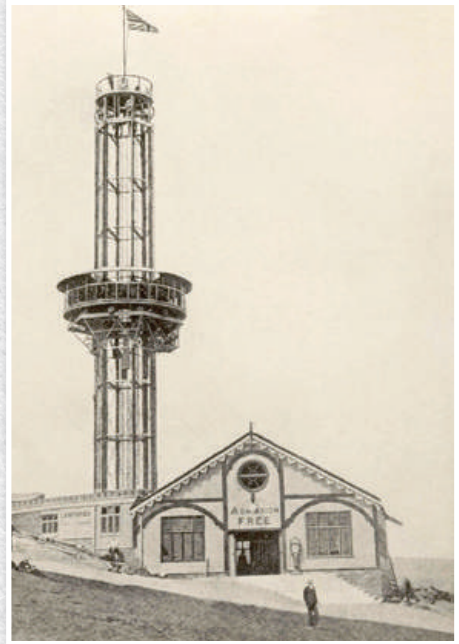
**From the Camera Obscura, take one of the footpaths up to Head Road and turn left to follow the road around the head. On your right just after the sharp bend is the open air amphitheatre.**

## 33. THE OPEN AIR AMPHITHEATRE

The Open Air Amphitheatre was home to a number of minstrel shows which were a huge success and continued on into the 1970s. The area above the amphitheatre was home to the Douglas Head Hotel.

## 34. THE DOUGLAS HEAD HOTEL

The Douglas Head Hotel was reportedly built by Major Goldie-Taubman of the Nunnery in 1869/70. The tower still survives as part of the Douglas Head Apartments constructed on the site after the demolition of the hotel in 1999.



*The Warwick Observation Tower which was a landmark on Douglas Head from 1899 to 1907. It had a revolving observatory platform capable of seating 200. [by kind permission the Frank Cowin Library]*



**A few hundred yards further down the road is the entrance to Marine Drive.**

## 35. THE MARINE DRIVE GATE

The Marine Drive Gate was opened in 1891 and the ornate gateway marked the entrance to Marine Drive which led along the cliffs to the resort of Port Soderick. A rail track was laid and in 1896 the Marine Drive Tramway opened and a hugely popular electric tram service for the public was operated to the beach facilities at Port Soderick. The road is currently closed to vehicular traffic for some of its length. However, it makes a very pleasant walk or cycle.



*The Gatehouse, Marine Drive [photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*



**To continue the trail, turn around and retrace your footsteps back around the sharp bend, returning to Head Road.**

**The first building on your left is...**

### **36. THE ROYAL NAVY RADAR TRAINING SCHOOL**

The Royal Navy Radar Training School was ideally positioned on Douglas Head during the Second World War. This building is now home to Manx Radio, 'The Nation's Station'.



**Walk down Douglas Head Road and lookout for the steps on the right that will lead you back onto South Quay bringing you out by the hydraulic tower you passed earlier. Cross over the road.**

### **37. THE BRUCE ANCHOR**

This anchor, designed for the oil industry was donated by the Bruce Anchor Company Ltd which is based at Cronkbourne on the outskirts of Douglas.



**Cross back over the Millennium Bridge and take a seat.**

### **38. 'BRIDGE SEAT' BY GAVIN CARTER**

Seat by local artist Gavin Carter. Part of the former Douglas Development Partnership (now Douglas Town Centre Management) and Isle of Man Arts Council public art project for the Quayside. The piece conveys a sense of balance and movement whilst connecting strongly with its surroundings and reflects the harbour as a working environment with its obvious reference to the adjacent bridge. The piece expresses empathy with other structures linked to a maritime industry and the use of heavy

gauge steel and corporate colour conveys this.

It is only at a second glance that the sense of balance and poise becomes the defining statement of the piece. It is hoped that people will be encouraged to explore the piece by the improbable angle of the steelwork arising directly from the cobbled surface to support the cantilevered timber seat. The seat has been hand carved from locally sourced timber and its waveform nature again refers to its maritime position. It is intended that the interplay of form, texture, balance and movement will arouse curiosity and encourage people to linger whilst exploring this and other artwork along the quay.



**Turn left down the Quay and make your way to the Douglas Hotel. The name of which appears on the side of the building.**

### 39. THE DOUGLAS HOTEL

Built in 1758 by a wealthy Ulster merchant called Black who used it as a base for importing wines and spirits from Bordeaux into England. By shipping via the Island he avoided paying the higher English duty rates but this resulted in his ships having to run the gauntlet of the Revenue cutters. This type of operation was known as 'running'. Connected via the basement to a network of cellars that ran under the town, it was probably a smuggler's delight. Unfortunately for Black in 1765 the island reverted to the Crown and the trade became less profitable so he sold up and left. In 1783 it was bought by the Duke of Atholl who allocated it to his seneschal, P.J. Heywood. After Heywood's death his widow remained there until 1791 after which the Duke briefly used it as his Douglas residence before moving to Port-e-Chee and then Castle Mona. For a while it was then used as the Customs House, which is ironic considering its origins! In



*Old St. Matthew's Church and the open air market prior to building of the indoor markets  
[photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*



1862 it was awarded a drinks licence and traded as the Old Customs House Inn before it became the Douglas Hotel. It is now offices.



**Next to the Douglas Hotel is the Manx Branch of the Royal British Legion and the Market Hall.**

## 40. THE MARKET BUILDINGS

Old Douglas had an open air market which spilled across onto the quayside outside the former St Matthew's Church.

A covered market was built during the 1830's, however the native Manx stallholders would rather stand out in the rain than pay a rental to be in a new building.

The Douglas Markets Act outlawed any market in Douglas other than that provided in the two new buildings. The Butcher's Market was opened in 1900 (despite the date of 1899 on the face of the building) and the Butter and Fish Market in 1901.

The Fish Market, now the home of the British Legion, was originally more open than at present so as to permit a flow of air through the market.



**Adjacent to this is...**

## 41. THE BRITISH HOTEL

Described by its architect, Armitage Rigby, as being designed in a 'Modern Antique style', this half timbered building was one of three public houses in the area of the town to be rebuilt in the mid 1890's after the clearance of many of the winding

streets containing shops, houses, stables, foundries, coffee houses and alehouses. The hotel opened in August 1897 replacing the original hotel of the same name and dating from 1809.



*The original British Hotel c. 1815  
[image © F. Coakley by kind permission]*



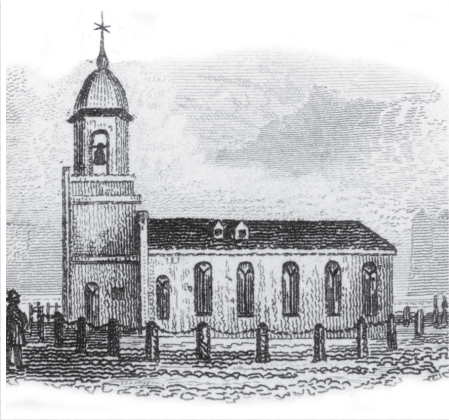
**At the end of this terrace is the new St Matthew's Church.**

## 42. ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH

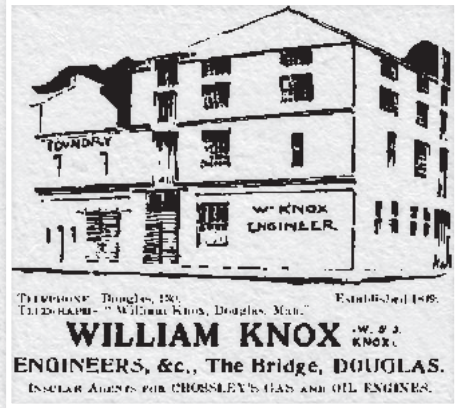
St Matthew's originally stood on a site which is now the rear part of the Old Cast Iron Market, now the Legion Club and was consecrated in 1708 prior to which, Braddan parish church served the spiritual needs of the people of Douglas.

As the old church became too small for the growing population of the town and as a result of town development after the clearance, a new church was built, the foundation stone being laid in 1895.

The new church was designed by the architect. J. L. Pearson, R.A., who was one of



Old St Matthew's c.1708  
 [image © F. Coakley by kind permission]



Isle of Man Examiner Advertisement c.1909 - original graphic design by Archibald Knox.  
 [image © F. Coakley by kind permission]

the most eminent ecclesiastical architects of the times.

The war memorial which is located round the corner on the small patch of land outside the church was designed by the famous Manx artist Archibald Knox.

Knox's father and brother had an engineering firm across the bridge on South Quay.

### 43. QUAYSIDE PUBLIC ART PROGRAMME

In 2006, the former Douglas Development Partnership (now Douglas Town Centre Management) and the Isle of Man Arts Council collaborated on a project to assist local artists to move into the sphere of public art. Nine local artists participated in the project and five commissions were awarded at the end of the programme.

#### 43A. THE FIFTH KINGDOM;

The Fifth Kingdom; The three granite benches situated opposite the end of Ridgeway Street were designed by local

artist Kristian Edwards and were cut from Manx granite, traditionally a very important stone to the Island (keep an eye out for fabulous corner stones everywhere!) The design, which is reminiscent of a Celtic Cross, represents the Isle of Man (the blue light at the centre) as the glowing heart of the Irish Sea surrounded by England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland which are represented by the four stones. Kristian wanted to give this important and beautiful stone a contemporary twist, hence the lighting which also ties these pieces with the revamped surroundings of Douglas Quay.

#### 43B. 'BUCKIE POTS';

The five metal seats adjacent to the granite benches were designed by local artist Katrina Jayne Bass. Buckie pots were historically used to protect the gunwales of vessels moored in the harbour before modern plastic fenders. The Buckie pots were willow 'withies' weaved around a willow structure. Katrina's design reflects the structure of the pots.

### 43C. PROTASEAT;

The 'Protaseat' was designed by Peel based artist Matt Owen. It is based on microscopic protozoa found in the sea and is one of a number of sculptural seats commissioned for the Quayside by the former Douglas Development Partnership with the support of the Isle of Man Arts Council and Douglas Borough Council. Once Matt had modelled the original concept design in clay, a computer programme was used to 'cut' the design into slices. The shape of each slice was scaled up and transferred to sheets of marine quality birch plywood which were then laminated together and hand finished. Each seat is designed to give a different view of the harbour.



**Continue along the Quay heading inland for approximately 150 yards, on your right you will see...**

### 44. THE BRIDGE INN

First mentioned in 1862, the Bridge Inn was modernised in 1935 with the roof being raised and larger windows inserted in the top storey but it is probably an ancient building and judging by a c.1880 photo, the steepness of the roof and proximity of the windows to the eaves and what appears to be the rain deflecting slates set into the chimney indicates that it was once thatched.



**At the end of North Quay, turn left into Bridge Road.**

### 45. DOUGLAS BRIDGE

There were possibly four previous bridges that crossed this part of the harbour but the current bridge was built in 1937 following the introduction of the motor car rendering the previous bridge inadequate. The railings that continue around North Quay and the boat park were installed in 2006 and designed by artist Ian Moran specifically for this site. The railings incorporate blue LED down-lighting.



**After crossing the bridge turn right and walk along the right hand side of the road passing Leigh Terrace. Just before the Nunnery Gates bear right and follow the Nunnery footpath alongside the Douglas River.**

### 46. THE NUNNERY

One of the most imposing structures on the Island is the Nunnery. It was once the site of a 12th-century convent dedicated to St. Bridget, who, it is said, was Prioress here. The convent was founded between 1187 and 1190 by Aufrica, sister of King Reginald of Mann and the Isles and wife of John de Courcy of Ulster. Only fragments remain in the restored St Bridget's Chapel on the estate. According to historical accounts, the old convent was a magnificent structure and the Prioress a person of considerable importance – a Baroness of Mann who had temporal as well as spiritual jurisdiction.

The Chronicle of Mann records that in 1313 the invading Robert Bruce, King of Scotland spent the night here on his way to besiege Castle Rushen in Castletown.

On the 1540 dissolution, it passed to the



*The Nunnery [photo by kind permission of Manx National Heritage]*

Earl of Derby and the building was razed. In 1700, it became the family home of the Heywood family, one of whom, Peter, was acquitted of being involved in the mutiny on HMS Bounty. Later, it was owned by the Fry Goldie Taubman family and the current mansion house, built in baronial style and surrounded by extensive gardens and parklands, dates back to 1797.

The merging of the two family names Taubman and Goldie surfaced in the official records of 1829 when Captain John Goldie-Taubman was elected a Member of the House of Keys. The Nunnery has long been considered the family seat of the Goldie-Taubman family and is closely associated with Speakership of the House of Keys. A monument in memory of Sir George Goldie-Taubman, who founded the British Colony of Nigeria, can be seen in the grounds of The Nunnery through a convenient viewing space in the wall that runs alongside the footpath. St Bridget's Well, said to have healing powers, is in the

grounds.

The property has been used as a film location for films such as 'Cinderella', 'Best' and 'Relative Values' the film version of the play by Noel Coward starring Julie Andrews, Jeanne Tripplehorn, Colin Firth, William Baldwin and Stephen Fry.

Previous owners of The Nunnery include millionaire businessman Graham Ferguson Lacey and prior to that, Robert Sangster, who based his horse racing business there. The estate was acquired by the Isle of Man International Business School in 1999 and then owned by the Isle of Man Government from 2008 to 2014 forming the Nunnery Campus of the University College Isle of Man (UCM). In 2014 the Government approved the sale of the site to the International Centre of Technology to establish an ICT school of excellence, partnering with UCM. The building has been carefully refurbished to ensure that it retains its original features.



As you continue along this footpath, to your right you will come across a water meadow.

## 47. WATER MEADOW

A water meadow is an area of pasture within a river valley which is deliberately flooded to encourage the growth of grass. The water deposits nutrients encouraging better grass growth and enables early production of animal fodder and an increased number of hay crops per year.

Water would have been directed from the river via a canal. As you continue along the path you will see some of the control structures such as weirs, hatches, sluices etc. Although water meadows and their structures were expensive for landowners and farmers to construct and labour intensive to operate and maintain, there is evidence that they could increase the rental value of a meadow by up to fourfold or more.



A little further on you will walk underneath a railway bridge on which the Isle of Man Steam Railway runs.

## 48. ISLE OF MAN STEAM RAILWAY

Isle of Man Steam Railway trains travel from Douglas to Port Erin. Railway facilities in the Island were first proposed in 1845 when the Isle of Man Railway Company Ltd was first registered. A three-foot gauge (914mm) line was opened from Douglas to Peel on July 1st 1873 and another line from Douglas to Port Erin opened on August 1st 1874.



*Meadowsweet flowering in marshy meadow*



*Soldier Beetle*



*Ferns growing in a wall*



*Isle of Man Steam Railway  
[photo © Maxima Systems Ltd by kind permission]*

A separate concern, the Manx Northern Railway Company, built the 16-mile line from St John's to Ramsey, which opened in September 1879. A final two mile section from St John's to Foxdale was built in August 1886. The Peel, Ramsey and Foxdale lines were closed completely in 1968-9 and have been lifted.

The one remaining line to Port Erin was taken over by the Isle of Man Government in 1978 and maintains a seasonal tourist service.

The route of the Douglas-Peel line can be followed on the Steam Heritage Trail, a footpath and cycleway which links to the Douglas Trail at the National Sports Centre.

## THE RIVERS;

### 49. THE DOO,

### 50. THE GLASS AND

### 51. THE DOUGLAS

The river that flows into the sea through Douglas Harbour is the Douglas River, formed by the joining of the Rivers Doo and Glass. The Doo drains the marshy areas of the central valley from the west of the Island, while the other, the Glass, flows southwards from the Baldwin valleys to join the Doo to form the River Douglas.

Popular opinion is that the name Douglas is Doo-Glass, deriving from a combination of the two rivers that, on some older maps, attempting translation of the Manx Gaelic, are recorded as 'Black Water' and 'White Water'. The word 'doo' does mean black in Manx Gaelic, however, 'glass' is more vague as it can be used to mean 'clear' or describes an indeterminate light colour (pale grey, blue or green) rather than white. An alternative theory for the origin of the name suggests that it could be one of a very few surviving Celtic place names pre-dating the arrival of the Vikings. If so, 'Douglas' is one of the oldest place-names in the Island and comes from the early Celtic term 'duboglassio'.

The river at Douglas was the boundary between two parishes, Kirk Braddan and Kirk Onchan. Douglas was originally within

the Parish of Onchan, and although only the area of the town south of the River Douglas was part of Braddan Parish, its church, a couple of miles inland along the river, looked after the spiritual needs of the whole of the town.

Direct access to the sea along the river would account for some of the importance of Braddan Old Church, standing as it does on what would have been an arm of the original harbour.

This footpath along the river was a route taken by the people of Douglas in order to attend services at Kirk Braddan.



**As you arrive at the boundary to the Industrial Estate you will reach Middle River.**

## 52. THE MIDDLE RIVER

The Middle River at Pulrose runs south and then north forming part of the boundary of Marown Parish where it joins the Douglas River near the Nunnery. 'Middle' is the name of the sheading through which the river flows. Sheadings are areas of land – land was apportioned at the time of the Viking settlement and many of today's boundaries date from that period. The Island is divided into six large sheadings and then 17 smaller parishes.



**Leave the woodland area by following the path to the right. Across the road ahead of you, you will see the Pulrose Power Station.**

## 53. MANX UTILITIES AUTHORITY PULROSE POWER STATION

The Manx Electricity Authority (MEA) originally constructed this combined cycle gas turbine power station in 2003, on the footprint of the old power station and rated at over 80 megawatts. The structure includes a 75m tall flue stack and a 30m high glass wall (turbine hall) that allow the generation process to become visible.

The design includes a bold lighting concept by Speirs & Major Associates.

Designed by architects Savage & Chadwick, the glazed tension structure forms a high performance skin. The design of the structure had to appear transparent and visually lightweight but able to withstand high wind loads, due to its location by the Irish Sea. Also, the design had to minimise the effects of solar gain, solar reflectance and deal with any condensation that may occur over such a large glazed area.

The whole plant has been designed to be cleaner environmentally and less visually intrusive. The plant uses air for cooling and not water from the river. A striking water feature has been built into the design and, instead of the two chimneys of the old plant, just the one, of modern design, is featured.

Natural gas brought in from a reservoir in the Irish Sea fuels two gas turbines. Exhaust heat goes through a boiler, which, in turn, runs a steam turbine. This 'combined cycle' is a design feature of the new plant.

The new station allows for cleaner emissions, with nitrogen oxides reduced by 90% from previous levels, particulates reduced by 80% and sulphur dioxides reduced to ZERO. It is quieter and, with the

previous water cooling system replaced by air cooling, the previous practice of taking water from the river has ended.



**Cross Pulrose Road and enter the small road to the right of the power station that takes you towards The Bowl, the NSC outdoor venue. Look to the river on your left.**

## 54. THE SALMON LEAP

This part of the river just before the water flows under the road is where adult salmon who are swimming up stream to spawn after spending a year in their feeding grounds at sea can leap up out of the water in their desperate quest to return to the quiet part of the river where they hatched.



**Continue on the small road alongside the river which runs through the National Sports Centre. Cross over the bridge and walk along the road in either direction past the athletics track. An exit will bring you out onto New Castletown Road. Turn right and head towards the Quarterbridge roundabout. You are now back onto the TT Course. Find a safe place to cross, and keeping Douglas Rugby Club on your left, head uphill along Quarterbridge Road, walking the TT Course in reverse direction. Just before you reach the end of Quarterbridge road look back in the direction of the TT course and you will see a noticeable orange and white TT sign depicting the spot of Ago's Leap.**



*Giacomo Agostini [photo by FoTTofinder Bikesport Archives]*

## 55. AGO'S LEAP

Named after Italian motorcycle racer Giacomo Agostini, winner of 10 Isle of Man TT races between 1966 and 1972 and considered to be one of the greatest Grand Prix riders of all time. After racing down Bray Hill, Ago would become airborne coming off a rise in the road just after the

bottom of the hill and so it was named 'Ago's Leap'. Riding an MV Agusta he has since taken part in the 'Lap of Honour' around the TT course usually on Senior Race Day, along with other motor-racing stars of the past and present.



**At Bray Hill, you will pass...**



## 56. 'THE GARDEN CITY' DEVELOPMENT

In the 1930's by far the most ambitious and largest land development in the Isle of Man took place on the slopes overlooking Porte-Chee meadow and was known as 'The Garden City'. Bray Hill, once a country lane on the outskirts of the town, then became very much part of Douglas.



**Continue up Bray Hill and on to Glencrutchery Road. On the way note;**

## 57. NOBLE'S PARK

The park was given to the then Douglas Corporation by the trustees of the estate of Henry Bloom Noble in April 1909.

The park provides facilities for many sports and ball games such as football, tennis, crown green bowling and netball. It also has a BMX track, a skate park, two high quality play areas, a splash zone, café and restaurant.



*Noble's Park Bandstand [photo by Andrew Barton]*



*Noble's Park Splash Zone [photo by Andrew Barton]*

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