

continued overleaf...

crew would draw water out of the Silverburn for the steam locomotive. follows the track as it weaves its way towards Castletown. In previous times, the connecting road at one end. On the right you will see the Silverburn river, which crossing, before passing through a housing estate and under a bridge with no main Douglas to Castletown Road via a level. Departing Ballasalla, the train crosses the Ballasalla rebuilt in 1985, is the next stop.

BALLASALLA

The line works its way through farmland, providing stunning views across to Langness and Ronaldsway Airport. The area was the site of a battle fought attempt by the Manx to reinstate the Norse Sudreyar dynasty.

On leaving Santon the train passes under the New Castletown Road – the main route for cars travelling into Douglas. The train traverses a short, deep cutting before emerging onto a high curved embankment over the leads up from Fairy Bridge. There is an automated crossing here but a little further along is Ballastray Crossing – the last manually operated crossing in the island. As our journey continues to Ballasalla the main road crosses the railway at Blackboards Bridge. It was so named because originally there were tall, vertical black painted wooden panels attached to the bridge parapet to ensure the trains did not scare horses on the road!

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SANTON

miniature Croga Valley Railway in its beautiful gardens. You can find out more on Facebook. Shortly after passing under Ballacostain Bridge and along an embankment, there is a sign on your right marking the 'summit' of the line. It is the highest point of the route, at 63.7 metres (209 feet). The line curves to the right, crossing a small glen, Glen Vurleigh, before plunging deep into a cutting, from which it emerges to travel onto a low embankment, across the Port Grenagh road on a high stone bridge and into the next stop.

Locos in service

No.8 Fenella	
Year built	1894
Withdrawn from service	1967
Returned to service	1998
Seen (place):	
Date:	




No. 13 Kissack	
Year built	1910
Withdrawn from service	1962
Returned to service	1971
Seen (place):	
Date:	

No.12 Hutchinson	
Year built	1908
Withdrawn from service	2001
Returned to service	2009
Seen (place):	
Date:	

No.15 Caledonia	
Year built	1885
Withdrawn from service	1968, 2009
Returned to service	1995, 2013
Seen (place):	
Date:	

Flags and whistles

The guard holds up his flags to indicate to the driver when the train is ready to depart. Sometimes he will show more than one flag conveying the following messages:

 Green - Caution - proceed slowly On board the train: no-one has requested the next request stop	 Yellow - Line clear - proceed On board the train: the guard is on board	 Red - Danger - stop On board the train: stop at the next request stop
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The train whistle serves as a warning that it is about to depart and also when approaching a station or level crossing plus at blind corners.

Port Soderick Station is just over three miles from Douglas. It would have originally accommodated the stationmaster and his family. However, it is now in private ownership. The journey continues through coniferous woodland then on past Croga House, which has the

PORT SODERICK

The station is also the starting point for the increasingly popular Dining Car specials that give travellers the chance to eat fine food while travelling in style. As you depart, look out for the signal box, built in 1892, that is on the left. Your train will also pass railway workshops and carriage sheds on the right. To start with, the line runs alongside the route of the former steel Nunery Bridge. Climbing 200 feet, you will soon be able to enjoy fine country views running along the cliffs at Kerstal for half a mile before curving sharply into the first stop of the route.

The building underwent an extensive renovation in 2017. office, parcels office, porters' room, stationmaster's office and storage. The building was constructed in 1891 and originally housed the booking hall, ticket room and bar. The building next to it now forms the main station building on its ground floor a ladies' waiting room and toilet, plus a refreshment was built in 1887 as administrative offices for the railway, and included The building adjacent to the road, which is now used as offices for Customs, you see today were constructed more than 100 years ago.

DOUGLAS

for the opening of a different steam railway line, which ran from the island's capital out to Peel on the west coast. It was initially a wooden structure, built on land reclaimed from the River Douglas. The impressive, red brick buildings that you see today were constructed more than 100 years ago.

Whether you are a regular passenger, or this is your first journey, it is always nice to know a little about where you are travelling. Here is some information about the trip from Douglas to Port Erin. We hope it helps you to enjoy the journey even more.

THE WINDOW GAZER'S GUIDE to the Isle of Man Steam Railway



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Map of line and places to visit



1. Douglas – the Island's capital, with shops, art galleries and the Gaiety Theatre and Villa Marina in the middle of Douglas promenade. The Manx Museum is also in Douglas. The station itself houses the booking office for special events, regular services and Dining Car specials plus The Tickethall café serving hot and cold refreshments and its famous fireman's breakfasts.

In recent years, the inner harbour has undergone many improvements and North Quay has become a popular destination for those eating out. At the far end of the promenade, the Manx Electric Railway can take passengers to the north of the Island. In the summer, horse trams can take you from near the Sea Terminal all the way to the MER terminus.



2. Port Soderick – Alight here to visit a small glen near the station that leads down to a shingle beach, popular for barbecues and for an excellent cave, which is possible to explore except at high tide.



3. Ballasalla – Rushen Abbey is a short distance from the station, along with the 14th century Monks Bridge. Silverdale Glen, with its boating lake and children's playground is a popular spot and can be reached via a footpath that runs alongside the Silverburn river.



4. Castletown – alight here to visit Castle Rushen, one of the world's best preserved medieval fortresses. The Island's ancient capital has retained its period charm and the Old House of Keys, the Old Grammar School and the Nautical Museum. Scarlett Visitor Centre and Wildlife Reserve nature trail is within walking distance.



5. Port St Mary – alight here to visit the harbour, golf course, shops, cafes and sheltered Chapel Beach. The section of coastal path between Port St Mary and Port Erin is arguably the most spectacular section and a good place to see nesting choughs or basking sharks in the sea below, depending on the time of year.



6. Port Erin – the end of the line, some nearly 16 miles south of Douglas. Port Erin has a stunning golden beach and also access to regular boat trips to the Calf of Man.

There are many coastal footpaths to explore, as well as regular bus connections to Cregneash village folk museum and the Calf Sound.



7. Steam Railway Museum – Adjacent to Port Erin Station, the museum homes the royal train, out of service locomotives and displays of handbills, posters and tickets from the early days of the railway. The museum is also home to the Isle of Man's only railway simulator.

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On the left (east) side, you will see an impressive building with a clock tower in the distance. It is King William's College, an independent school first established in 1668.

— Stad Roonsvale — RONALDSWAY HALT

horse racing course, before moving to the home of another type of racing.

— Balley Chashtal — CASTLETOWN

Castletown Station serves the Island's former capital. Castletown is well-known both for its history and for being the home of the famous Southern 100 motorbike races. The station is a fine twin-gabled building constructed out of limestone quarried at Gansey in Rushen. Some of the 2000 film 'Thomas and the Magic Railroad' was filmed on location at the station. The Isle of Man Steam Railway was the inspiration for the Reverend W. Awdry's world-famous Thomas the Tank Engine stories.

Castletown is a popular stop for many of our travellers. If you alight at Castletown station, you can leave in two directions. Either head past the ticket office towards the harbour and town centre and its many attractions. Alternatively, while making sure you look both ways before crossing the tracks, if you go through the gate on the other side, it takes you into Pouslorn Park.

If you stay on board, keep an eye out for the engine driver handing over a staff to the station master before the journey continues. Castletown is also the point where trains travelling in opposite direction pass each other. Upon leaving Castletown the train heads over Mill Road crossing then runs near to the Southern 100 course. Next, it passes through a deep cutting to emerge into a rural landscape dotted with farms and villages. To your right is the peaks of Cronk ny Arrey Laa (Hill of the Rising Day), reputed to have been a place of sacrifice 2000 years ago. The railway crosses a narrow stream known as Dumb River – called that simply because it makes no sound! It was dug by the monks of Rushen Abbey to drain farmland.

— Balley Beg — BALLABEG

Ballabeg is the next halt, a request stop, some distance from the village from which it takes its name. Ballabeg Women's Institute looks after the flowers that adorn the halt. The line crosses farmland for another mile until it reaches the next destination.

COLBY

Colby Station is only three-quarters of a mile from the next station, **Colby Level Halt**, which is a request stop that proves very popular with walkers. Its platform is only 15 feet long, however. Normally the driver will stop the train with the rear half of the carriages by the platform, so make sure you're sat at the right end!

— Purt Le Moirrey — PORT ST. MARY

Port St. Mary Station is the next stop. It is a large red brick building built on a grand scale that reflects what a major resort the village was in Victorian times. It remains a popular stop-off for passengers who want to walk around the harbour and enjoy the impressive views out to sea.

— Purt Chiarn — PORT ERIN

Port Erin Station, built in 1903, retains its Edwardian splendour. The line opened in 1874 and it proved so popular that at one time there was another platform and siding. The station has a café and also contains a Railway Museum and gift shop in what was the goods shed. Step outside the station and you will be greeted with stunning views across the bay towards Bradda Head, which is dominated by Milner's Tower built in 1771 to commemorate village benefactor Thomas Milner.



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