



Royal
Geographical
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with IBG

Independence and identity

A self-guided walk around Castletown on the Isle of Man



Explore the former capital of the Isle of Man

Discover a long history and proud independence

Find out about the many advantages of the island's separate status

See how the Manx people express and celebrate their unique identity

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discovered through walks





This booklet is to be used alongside the audio commentary for this walk

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Cover image: The Three Legs of Man © Martin Haslett

Independence and identity

Explore Castletown and discover how the Isle of Man is different from the United Kingdom

Most people are aware that the Isle of Man is somehow a little bit different. On this walk you will discover just how great the difference actually is.

Despite invaders and colonisers over the centuries, and its current status as a British Crown Dependency, the Isle of Man has clung resolutely to its independence and distinctiveness.



The island is neither part of the United Kingdom nor the European Union. Find out how the island reinforces its unique identity through everything from passports to postage stamps, from taxes to teaching, and from language to licence plates.



Discover how the national and local government is structured and where responsibilities lie.

This walk explores Castletown on the south coast, the Ancient Capital of Mann.

It's a picturesque small town with a wealth of heritage attractions and a pretty harbour.

Image credits: Castle Rushen across the harbour / Looking up Castle Street to Market Square
© Martin Haslett

Route overview



Location	Castletown, Isle of Man
Start point	Swingbridge over harbour
Finish point	Lighthouse at end of harbour wall
Walk distance	2 miles
Level	Gentle – An easy walk on the level around the town centre and harbour
Terrain	Pavements, narrow lanes and quayside
Suitable for	Families – Children will enjoy the castle and old grammar school Wheelchairs and pushchairs – An entirely step free route Dogs – Should be kept on a lead around the town centre

Practical information

Getting there

Car – Castletown is in the south of the island, about 10 miles from the capital, Douglas. There is plenty of parking in the town centre including by the Old Grammar School (accessed from Market Square), off Farrants Way, and off Hope Street by inner harbour.

Train – Castletown is on the Isle of Man Steam Railway which runs between Douglas and Port Erin. The service does not run every day so check website for details (www.gov.im/publictransport/Rail/Steam). It is about ½ mile from the station to the start point.

Bus – Castletown is served by buses running between Douglas and Port Erin / Port St Mary. There is a regular service of 3 buses an hour in the daytime. See website for timetables (www.gov.im/publictransport/Bus)

Directions from railway station to start

Exit the station and walk between the two pubs. Turn right onto Victoria Road. At the mini-roundabout bear left, continuing along Victoria Road. Where the road crosses Thirtle Bridge over the harbour continue straight along Bridge Street with the harbour on your right. The swingbridge is on the right at the seaward end of the harbour.

Directions from bus stop to start

Alight from buses in Market Square. Walk down Castle Street with the castle on your left. At the corner turn right opposite the castle gateway. The swingbridge is on the left.

Refreshments

- A few cafes and sandwich shops in the area around the Market Square (Stops 5-12)
- A few pubs in the town centre – The George Hotel (Stop 8) is especially recommended
- Bowling Green Café (Stop 16)

Toilets

- Inside Town Hall during opening hours (Stop 7)
- In car park behind Town Hall (Stop 7)
- Bowling Green (Stop 16)
- Railway station when open (Stop 19)
- End of Thirtle Bridge (Stop 21)

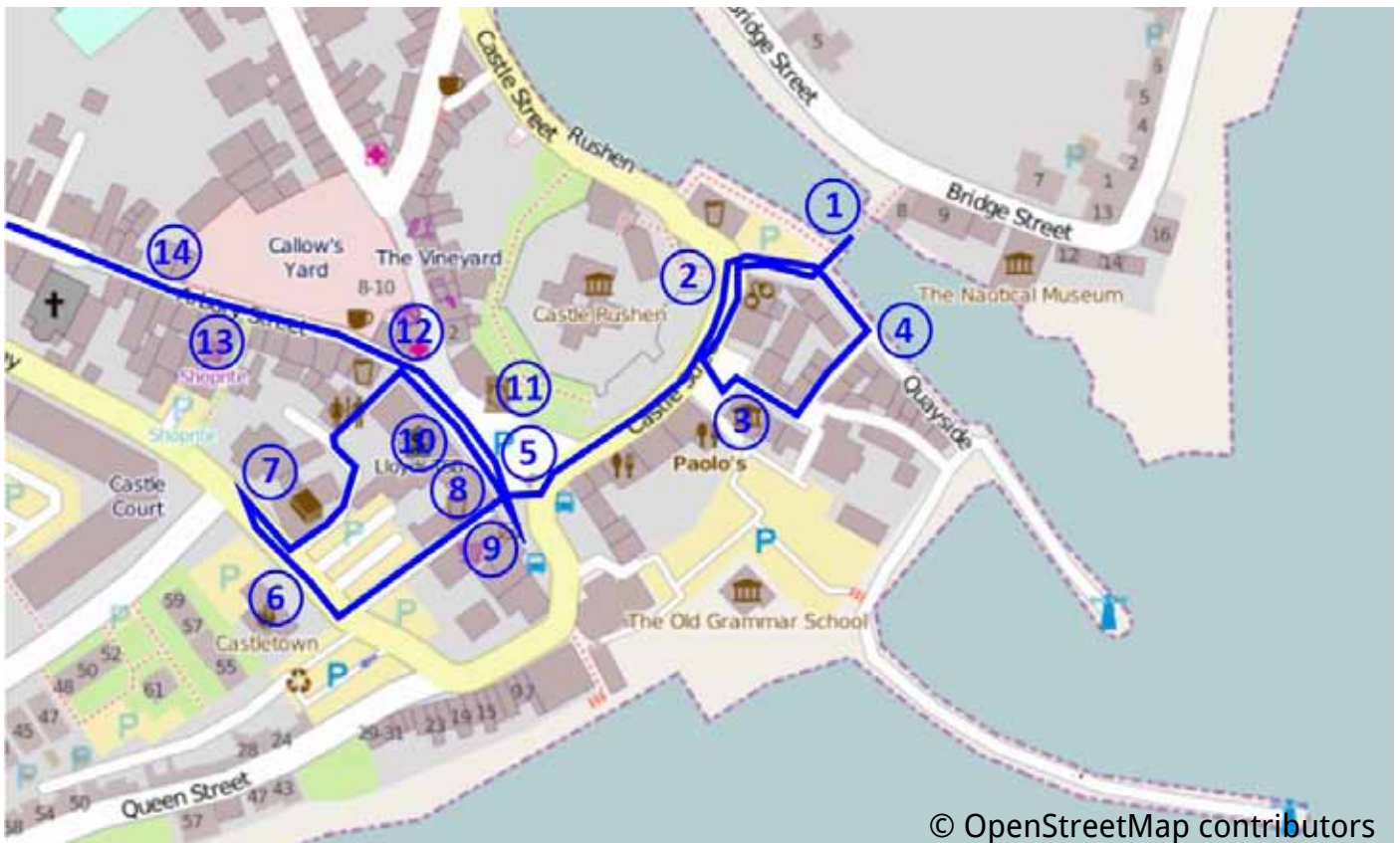
Places to visit

There are four Manx National Heritage sites in the town and one just a few miles away, all of which are well worth a visit: Castle Rushen, Old Grammar School (free), Old House of Keys, Nautical Museum and Rushen Abbey. See website for details (www.manxnationalheritage.im/explore-the-island/places-to-visit/historic-attractions)

Tourist information

Leaflets and information available at Castletown Civic Centre, Castle Rushen and the Old Grammar School

Detail of first part of route



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Stopping points

- 1.** Swingbridge over Castletown Harbour
- 2.** Castle Rushen, Castle Street
- 3.** Old House of Keys, Parliament Square
- 4.** Quayside at bottom of Quay Lane
- 5.** Smelt Monument, Market Square
- 6.** Fire Station, Farrants Way
- 7.** Town Hall, Farrants Way
- 8.** George Hotel, Market Square
- 9.** The Cooperative, Market Square
- 10.** Isle of Man Bank, Market Square
- 11.** Market Square
- 12.** Lloyds Pharmacy, Market Square
- 13.** Shoprite, Arbory Street
- 14.** Curry Club, 20 Arbory Street

Detail of middle part of route



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Stopping points

- 15.** Junction of Arbory Street, Arbory Road and The Crofts
- 16.** Bowling green, The Crofts
- 17.** Paradise Court, Mill Street
- 18.** Canada Life building, Alexandra Road
- 19.** Castletown railway station
- 20.** Victoria Road School, Victoria Road
- 21.** Church of St Mary's on the Harbour, corner of Castle Street and Hope Street

Detail of last part of route



Stopping points

- 22.** Police station, corner of Castle Street and Quayside
- 23.** Old Grammar School
- 24.** Harbour Commissioners building, The Quay
- F** Lighthouse at end of harbour wall

Directions

Listen to each track then read the directions in the boxes below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to Castletown

Swingbridge over harbour

Directions 1

Walk away from the bridge towards the castle. Stop facing the gatehouse of the castle and listen to Track 2.

2. Invaders and colonisers

Castle Rushen, Castle Street

Directions 2

From the castle gatehouse walk up Castle Street with the castle on your right. After about 25 metres is a small square on the left (Parliament Square). Stand in front of the building that has a columned porch and flagpole and listen to Track 3.

3. Ancient democracy

Old House of Keys, Parliament Square

Directions 3

Facing the front of the Old House of Keys go along the left side of the building (Parliament Lane). Take the first left down a narrow lane (Quay Lane). Stop at the bottom on the quay-side looking across to the buildings on the other side and listen to Track 4.

4. Seafaring people

Quayside at bottom of Quay Lane

Directions 4

Return to the castle gatehouse and turn left up Castle Street again. Follow the road up to Market Square. Take care as this road can be busy with traffic. Stand looking at the column in the square and listen to Track 5.

5. A popular Governor

Smelt Monument, Market Square

Directions 5

Go down the passage directly behind the Smelt Monument which goes between the George Hotel and the Co-op. At the end turn right onto Farrants Way. Stop immediately opposite the fire station and listen to Track 6.

6. National responsibilities

Fire Station, Farrants Way

Directions 6

Continue a few steps further along Farrants Way. Stop outside the Town Hall on the right side and listen to Track 7. There are some benches outside if you wish to sit down.

7. Ancient parishes

Town Hall, Farrants Way

Directions 7

Go up the right side of the Town Hall beside the library. Pass though the car park at the rear which takes you back into Market Square. Turn right and walk past the banks. Stand outside the George Hotel and listen to Track 8.

8. Fancy a pint?

George Hotel, Market Square

Directions 8

Continue a few steps further. Stand outside The Co-operative next door to the George Hotel and listen to Track 9.

9. Postcards and postcodes

The Cooperative, Market Square

Directions 9

Turn around and go back past the George Hotel. Stand outside the Isle of Man Bank on the other side and listen to Track 10.

10. An offshore economy

Isle of Man Bank, Market Square

Directions 10

Remain in Market Square and listen to Track 11.

11. Robot invasion

Market Square

Directions 11

Continue a few steps further to the end of Market Square. Stop facing Lloyds Pharmacy on the corner between Arbory Street and Malew Street and listen to Track 12.

12. Keeping healthy

Lloyds Pharmacy, Market Square

Directions 12

Go along Arbory Street to the left of Lloyds Pharmacy. Stop outside Shoprite about 60 metres on the left and listen to Track 13.

13. Manx to the Max

Shoprite, Arbory Street

Directions 13

Continue a few steps along Arbory Street. Stop outside a restaurant called Curry Club, a couple of doorways further on the right, and listen to Track 14.

14. Passports and permits

Curry Club, 20 Arbory Street

Directions 14

Continue along Arbory Street for about 150 metres. Shortly after the Methodist Church on the left, the pedestrianised section ends. At the first junction, Arbory Street becomes Arbory Road and The Crofts goes off to the right. Stop here and listen to Track 15.

15. It's all in a name

Junction of Arbory St, Arbory Rd and The Crofts

Directions 15

Walk along The Crofts for about 150 metres. Stop by the gates of the bowling green on the right and listen to Track 16.

16. Sporting prowess

Bowling green, The Crofts

Directions 16

Continue along The Crofts to the junction with Malew Street and turn left. After about 100 metres look for a narrow unmarked passage on the right between house number 106 and 110 (there is no Number 108) and opposite an arched entrance. Follow the passageway (Paradise Lane) between stone walls. At the end turn to the right to face a residential block called Paradise Court. Stop here and listen to Track 17.

17. Planning and protection

Paradise Court, Mill Street

Directions 17

With your back to Paradise Court, pass the end of the passageway and go straight along Milner Terrace. At the end turn right onto the main road (Alexandra Road). After just over 100 metres (just before the bridge) the Canada Life building is on the left. Stop here and listen to Track 18.

18. A boost to the economy

Canada Life building, Alexandra Road

Directions 18

Continue along Alexandra Road over the bridge. Bear left at the mini-roundabout into Victoria Road. Just before the petrol station turn left into the cul-de-sac of Station Road. Go between two pubs to the railway station. If the gate is open, go up to the station building and onto the platform. Stop here and listen to Track 19.

19. A very remarkable railway

Castletown railway station

Directions 19

Retrace your steps past the pubs and turn right onto Victoria Road. At the mini-roundabout, bear left, continuing along Victoria Road. Just before the bus stop is the wall of the playground of Victoria Road School. Stop here and listen to Track 20.

20. School time!

Victoria Road School, Victoria Road

Directions 20

Continue along Victoria Road. After just under 150 metres, take the footbridge on the right across the river. Walk round the left edge of the car park beside the boat parking area then down the lane (Back Hope Street) with the harbour on your left. When you meet the road at the end of Thirtle Bridge turn right. After a few steps there is a junction on the right with Hope Street. Stop here outside the church of St Mary's on the Harbour and listen to Track 21.

21. Calling the faithful

Church of St Mary's on the Harbour, corner of Castle Street and Hope Street

Directions 21

Follow Castle Street round towards the castle keeping the harbour on your left. Pass the Castle Arms hotel. Stop on the corner opposite the castle gateway looking at the police station and listen to Track 22.

22. A low rate of crime

Police station, corner of Castle Street and Quayside

Directions 22

From the police station go up Castle Street once more and turn left into Parliament Square. Take the lane down the right side of the Old House of Keys. Go across the car park to the small white building with a chimney which stands alone. Stop here and listen to Track 23.

23. New types of visitor

Old Grammar School

Directions 23

The Old Grammar School is free to visit so do pop inside if it is open. Facing the entrance to the Old Grammar School, look left across the car park to a small passage leading between two (white) painted houses. Go through the passage to the small square and then turn right down Parliament Lane. At the bottom is a white building on the left which is the Harbour Commissioners building. Stop here and listen to Track 24.

24. Territorial waters

Harbour Commissioners building, The Quay

Directions 24

Walk along the quay past the Old Lifeboat House to the end of the harbour wall. Stop at the lighthouse and listen to Track 25

25. A story of independence and difference

Lighthouse at end of harbour wall

Directions 25

This is the end of the walk. You are just a short distance from where the walk started and from the Market Square. There are many places to visit in Castletown so do take time to explore more.



Low tide in Castletown harbour
© Martin Haslett



The Old House of Keys from the castle walls
© Martin Haslett

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Discovering Britain walk:

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