



Royal
Geographical
Society
with IBG

Natural beauty and human endeavour

A self-guided walk around Glen Cornaa on the Isle of Man



Explore a picturesque valley and hidden cove

Find out how the physical landscape was shaped over millennia

See how humans made use of natural resources

Discover some surprises and ruins hidden in the woodland

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the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks





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

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Natural beauty and human endeavour

Explore the picturesque valley of Glen Cornaa on the Isle of Man

This walk is a tale of two halves that tells the story of how natural forces and human activity have shaped the landscape.

The first part of the route follows lanes and tracks down through the woods and pastures of Glen Cornaa. At the bottom is the beautiful cove and pebbly beach at Port Cornaa.



Discover the evidence that reveals how dramatic natural forces have shaped the physical landscape over millions of years and resulted in the beautiful scenery that we can enjoy today.



Enjoy views of mountains and glacial valleys, see a spectacular river cliff and a deep gorge, discover waterfalls, flood meadows and a pebbled beach.

The return journey back up the picturesque glen uncovers evidence of how humans have used this natural landscape and its resources from prehistoric times to the present day.

From fishing and farming to milling and mining; from trees and tourism to hatching and heritage. There are also some surprises in store hidden in the woods.

Image credits: Port Cornaa / Ballaglass Glen © Martin Haslett



Ballaglass Glen car park

Practical information

Location	Glen Cornaa, Isle of Man
Start & finish	Ballaglass Glen car park, Ballaglass Glen Road, Cornaa, IM7 1EH
Walk distance	3 ½ miles
Level	Moderate – A fairly easy walk with a couple of descents and ascents
Terrain	Narrow lanes, gravel tracks, woodland footpaths, pebbly beach
Conditions	Can be muddy underfoot in Ballaglass Glen and other sections
Suitable for	Families – A picturesque and fairly short walk with a beach at the half way point Dogs – Will enjoy the woodland walk and beach
Refreshments	There are no refreshments available on or near the route but the cove at Port Cornaa is an ideal spot for a picnic. There is also a picnic table in Ballaglass Glen car park and benches throughout the glen.
Toilets	There are no public toilets on or near the route
Places to visit	We recommend travelling by Manx Electric Railway . Check the timetable when planning the walk. Cashtal yn Ard , a well-preserved Neolithic chambered tomb, is on a hillside above Cornaa (see walk extension for directions) The Great Laxey Wheel about five miles away is the largest working waterwheel in the world The Manx Museum in Douglas tells the island's 10,000 year history
Tourist information	Douglas – The Welcome Centre, Sea Terminal. Open Monday to Saturday all year and Sundays in summer months. Laxey – Laxey Heritage Trust, Old Fire House, Mines Road. Open daily from Easter to September. Ramsey – Library, West Street, Ramsey. Open all year from Monday to Saturday.

Getting there

Car

Cornaa is off the **A2** between Laxey and Ramsey. On the A2 look for a small settlement called The Hibernian. Take the A15 signposted to Maghould village, Ballaglass Glen, Cornaa and Ballajora.

After $\frac{3}{4}$ mile turn right onto a narrow lane, signposted Cornaa and Ballaglass Glen. Cross the railway tracks and the **free car park** is on the right.

Train

Cornaa is a station on the **Manx Electric Railway** which runs between Douglas and Ramsey. Services run half-hourly in the summer months and hourly in the winter. Check website before travelling for details <http://manxelectricrailway.co.uk/current-timetable/>

Cornaa is a **request stop**. To alight, inform the conductor on boarding; to board, give a clear hand signal to the driver.

Go down the lane on the opposite side of the tracks to the shelter. The car park is approximately 150 metres on the right.

Bus

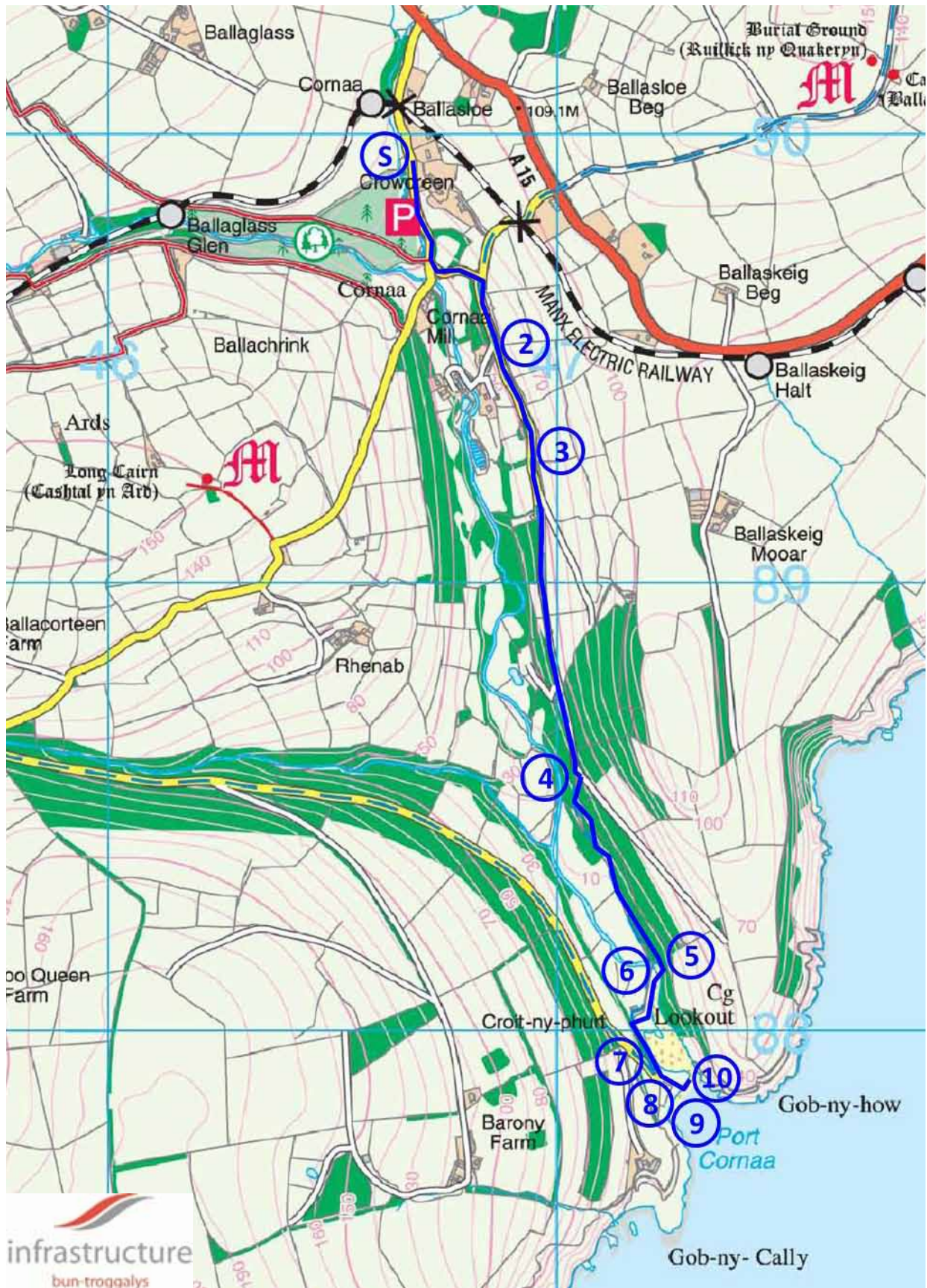
Buses **3** and **3A** (Douglas-Ramsey) and **3B** (Old Laxey-Ramsey) run along the A2. Services are half hourly during the day. Check website before travelling for details <http://www.gov.im/publictransport/Bus/timetables.xml>

Nearest stops are Corransy (1 mile) and The Hibernian (1 mile).

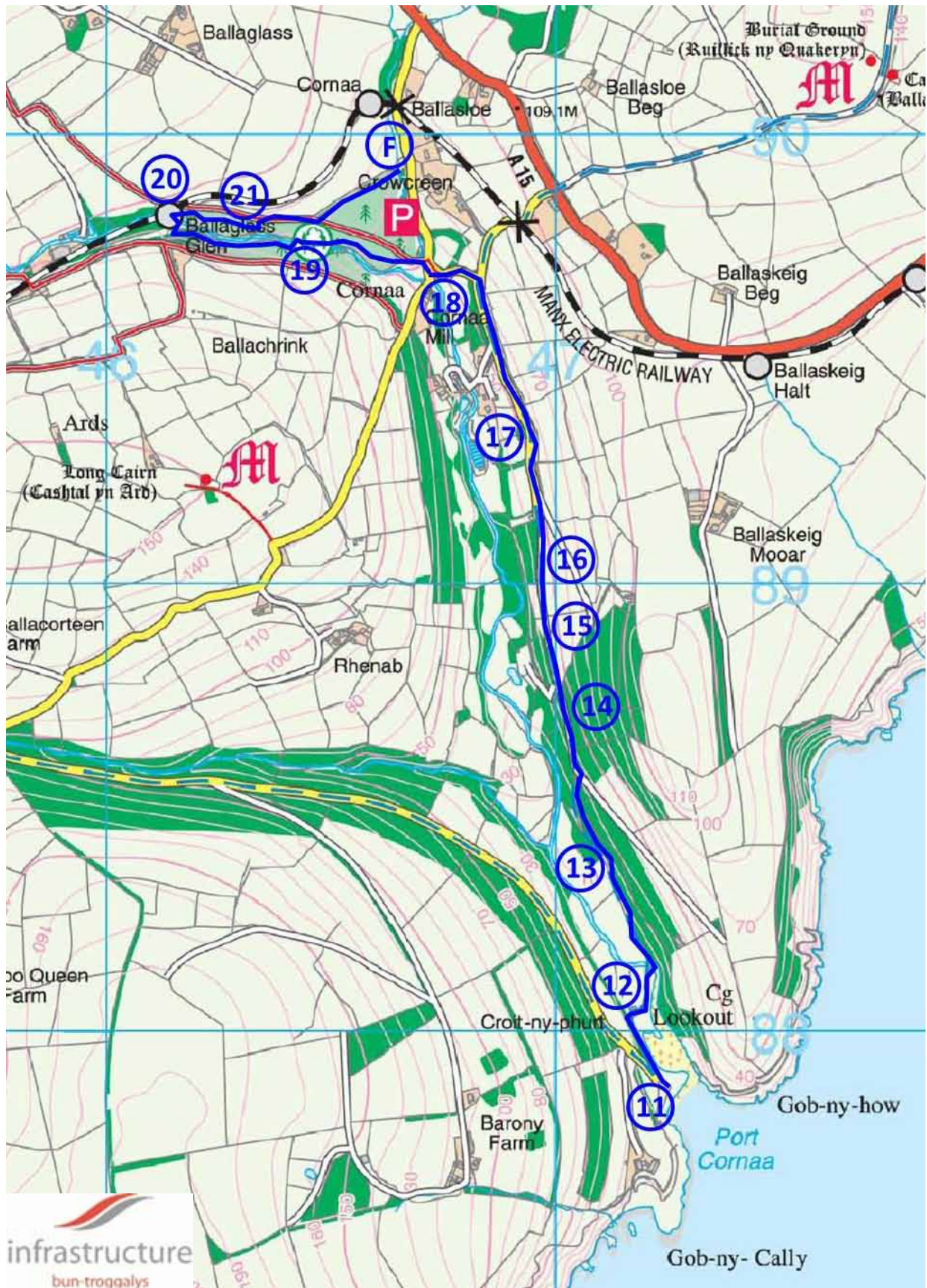
From The Hibernian – Turn from the main road onto the A15 signposted Ballaglass Glen, Cornaa and Ballajora. Take care as there are no pavements. After $\frac{3}{4}$ mile turn right onto a narrow lane signposted Cornaa and Ballaglass Glen. After about 150 metres cross the railway tracks. Continue down the lane for a further 150 metres to the car park on the right.

From Corransy – Walk along the main road in the direction of Laxey. Go over the stream and round a corner. About half way up the hill look for a footpath on the left. Follow the path round a house and alongside the railway tracks. Cross the railway tracks where indicated and continue with the tracks on your left. At Ballaglass Glen station take the steps down into the woodland. At the bottom, turn left over the bridge then follow the path down the glen with the river on your right. When you reach a ruined white painted building turn left for about 20 metres. At the top, take the second path on the right with a field to the left and the woodland to the right. Follow this path through the upper side of the glen until you reach the car park.

Detail of first half of route



Detail of second half of route



Directions

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

1. Welcome to Glen Cornaa

Ballaglass Glen car park

Directions 1

From the car park walk about 250 metres down the lane. Pass a house on the right (Cornaa House) and just before a house on the left (Cornaa Mill) turn left onto a track sign-posted 'Public Footpath Port Cornaa'. The track bends round to the left by the garage and climbs steeply.

At the junction with another track, turn right. Follow the lane as it goes gently downhill then levels off. Pass the gates to Meadowcroft on the right. About 25 metres further look for a break in the trees on the right which gives you a good view across and up the valley towards the mountains. Stop here and listen to Track 2.

2. Ancient oceans and colliding continents

View of valley just past gate to Meadowcroft

Directions 2

Continue along the track for about 100 metres until you reach the top of an ungated track that forks down steeply to the right to a farmhouse. Stop here and listen to Track 3.

3. Icy transformation

Top of track down to farm

Directions 3

Continue straight along the track. Pass through the sets of gates marked Barony Estate and continue straight on the level. After a gated track down to the right marked 'Private' the main track starts to descend steadily. Where the next track forks off to the left there is a very steep cliff on the right. Continue straight down the main track until you reach a gate labelled Barony Estate. Take the smaller path to the right of the gate which doubles back and leads down to the riverside. Walk a short way along the flat area with the river on your left and the cliff on your right. Stop by the river pool and listen to Track 4.

4. A raging torrent

Beside river below river cliff and near waterfall

Directions 4

From the riverside, retrace your steps back up to the main track. Turn right through the gate marked Barony Estate. Follow the track downhill past some ruined buildings (which you find out more about later) and alongside some fields. Stop when you reach a foot-bridge over the river and listen to Track 5.

5. Three courses

Footbridge over river

Directions 5

Remain on the bridge and listen to Track 6.

6. Erosion and deposition

Footbridge over river

Directions 6

Cross the bridge and follow the path. Cross the small bridge in front of the cottage (Croit ny Phurt) and turn left along the track. After about 25 metres a small stream channel comes close to the track. Stop here and listen to Track 7.

7. Glacial debris

Stream channel in front of Croit ny Phurt cottage

Directions 7

Continue along the track. Just after the boat house on the right the track rises. At the top of the rise, the grass ends and the beach pebbles begin. Stop here and listen to Track 8.

8. The power of the waves

Top of beach

Directions 8

Go down to the lower part of the beach and listen to Track 9.

9. Every pebble tells a story

Bottom of beach

Directions 9

Remain on the beach. Look at the vegetation on the headlands on either side of the cove and listen to Track 10.

10. A touch of salt

On beach looking at headlands

Directions 10

Go to the top of the beach. Look back up the valley towards the hills and listen to Track 11.

11. The first settlers

Top of beach looking up valley

Directions 11

Retrace your steps along the track to the little cottage (Croit ny Phurt) and over the small bridge in front. Go along the path to the corner where the fence of the cottage garden ends and fence of the field begins. Stop here and listen to Track 12.

12. River meadows

Field behind Croit ny Phurt cottage

Directions 12

Continue retracing your steps along the footpath and over the larger footbridge. Stop when you reach the large ruined concrete structure on the left and listen to Track 13. **Please note that this building is on private land and you must only view it from the path.**

13. Thwarted ambitions

Ruined building

Directions 13

Continue up the track, through the gate and steeply upwards with the river cliff on your left. Where the track levels off and just before it goes through a gateway, stop beside the earthen bank to the right of the path and listen to Track 14.

14. Ancient boundaries

Track beside earth embankment

Directions 14

Go through the gateway and continue along the level track. After some distance, the trees open up on the left. Stop where you have a good view across the valley to the plantation of trees on the other side and listen to Track 15.

15. Timber

View across to plantations on opposite valley side

Directions 15

Continue along the track for about 20 metres until you reach a section of high stone wall on the right which is clearly visible and not covered by vegetation. Stop here and listen to Track 15.

16. Rock of ages

Track beside dry stone wall

Directions 16

Continue straight along the track through three gateways by the garage labelled 'Dayll Mooar'. Look for a new building on the left of the track which is used as a stables; it has a concrete driveway. Look down the steep field and try to spot some water ponds at the bottom of the valley among the trees. Listen to Track 17.

17. Millions of eggs

View down to fish hatchery

Directions 17

Continue along the level track, past the entrance to Meadowcroft and then follow it steadily upwards. Where the gravel track becomes surfaced, turn left down the rough track that we came up earlier. Follow the track down past the garage and round the corner. Stop on the track by the back wall of the house (Cornaa Mill). Look over the low wall to see the waterwheel below and listen to Track 18.

18. Water power

Back of Cornaa Mill

Directions 18

Continue down to the bottom of the track. Go straight across the lane, through the gateway and across the bridge. After the bridge where the main path bears round to the right signposted 'Public Footpath Cordle Veg', take the three steps up to the left. Follow the path alongside the fence as it weaves gradually upwards through the woodland with the river on your left. After about 200 metres there is a footbridge over the gorge. Stop here and listen to Track 19.

19. Landscape conservation

Footbridge halfway up Ballaglass Glen

Directions 19

Cross the bridge and continue to follow the path up the glen now with the river on your right. At the top of the glen, take the steps up to the left. Stop at the top when you reach the railway tracks at Ballaglass Glen station and listen to Track 20.

20. A special railway

Ballaglass Glen station

Directions 20

Go back down the steps into the glen. At the bottom, turn left over the bridge then follow the path back down the glen this time with the river on your right. Stop when you reach a ruined white painted building and listen to Track 21.

21. Mineral mining

Old mine buildings, Ballaglass Glen

Directions 21

With your back to the entrance door of the ruined building, go up the path straight ahead for about 20 metres. At the top, turn right with a field to the left and the woodland to the right. Follow this path through the upper side of the glen. Stop when you reach the car park and listen to Track 22.

22. The Way of the Gull

Ballaglass Glen car park

Walk extension to Cashtal yn Ard

Cashtal yn Ard ('The Castle of the Heights'), perched on a hill above Glen Cornaa is well worth a visit. It is about a mile from the Ballaglass Glen car park.

Directions

Please note that this route is mainly on a road. It is narrow and without pavements; although it is not usually busy, do take care and listen for traffic.

From Ballaglass Glen car park, walk downhill. Pass Cornaa Mill on the left and follow the lane over the bridge and then uphill past some cottages.

Continue along the lane still going uphill. As the land flattens, there is a cottage with a low roof on the left. At this point, where the lane bends to the left, look for a footpath sign to the right. Follow this footpath uphill for about 200 metres until you reach Cashtal yn Ard.

The monument dates back to around 2000 BC. It was originally a megalithic chambered cairn which was built as a landmark and could have been used as a communal burial place for Neolithic chieftans and their families.

It has a fairly simple design consisting of five main chambers and a large entrance area.

The structure would have originally been covered by a large earthwork and have measured 120 feet in length by 45 feet wide.



Cashtal yn Ard
© Andy Stephenson, Geograph (CCL)



Cashtal yn Ard
© Martin Haslett

As such it the largest neolithic 'long barrow' on the Isle of Man and one of the largest in the British Isles.

Although the stone cairn has been stripped away over the past centuries the largest, well-set stones have survived creating a dramatic burial site.

It is a very peaceful, tranquil and unspoilt location with panoramic views (on a clear day) across the coastal parish of Maughold and across the Irish Sea to Cumbria.

Credits

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