



The Isle of Man has a unique and varied culture which is as evident today as it was 1,000's of years ago. Uncover the amazing history and heritage of the Island by following the 'Story of Mann' trail, whilst taking in some of the Island's unique arts, folklore and cuisine along the way.

THE STORY OF MANN

Manx National Heritage reveals 10,000 years of Isle of Man history through the award-winning Story of Mann - a themed trail of presentations and attractions which takes you all over the Island.

Start off by visiting the award-winning Manx Museum in Douglas for an overview and introduction to the trail before choosing your preferred destinations. Attractions on the trail include:

Castle Rushen, Castletown.

One of Europe's best-preserved medieval castles, dating from the 12th Century. Detailed displays authentically recreate castle life as it was for the Kings and Lords of Mann.

Cregneash Folk Village, near Port St Mary.

Life as it was for 19th century crofters is authentically reproduced in this living museum of thatched whitewashed cottages and working farm.

Great Laxey Wheel and Mines Trail, Laxey.

The 'Lady Isabella' water wheel is the largest water wheel still operating in the world today. Built in 1854 to pump water from the mines, it is an important part of the Island's once-thriving mining heritage. The old mines railway has now been restored.

House of Mannanan, Peel.

An interactive, state of the art heritage centre showing how the early Manx Celts and Viking settlers shaped the Island's history.

Rushen Abbey, Ballasalla.

The remains of a small but important Cistercian abbey founded in 1134. Close by is Monks Bridge - one of the last surviving packhorse bridges of its type in the British Isles.

Peel Castle, Peel.

A former centre of Manx Christianity, the castle became the ruling seat of the Norse Kingdom of Mann and the Isles in the 11th century. Peel is called the Cathedral City due to the castle's Cathedral.

ANCIENT SITES

The Island is home to a number of important ancient sites that are looked after by Manx National Heritage. These include:

Balladoole, Castletown: Viking ship burial with some prehistoric remains.

Braaid, Marown: Remains of a Celtic and Norse settlement.

Cashtal yn Ard, Maughold: A well preserved Neolithic chambered tomb.

King Orry's Grave, Laxey: An important Megalithic chambered tomb.

Meayll Hill, Cregneash: The Meayll stone circle is a unique megalithic burial site.

South Barrule: The summit hillfort is reckoned to date from late Bronze Age

Visit www.gov.im/mnh for more information.

VILLA MARINA AND GAIETY THEATRE COMPLEX

After a £15 million refit, the new Villa Marina Entertainment Complex provides a worthy complement to the Gaiety Theatre on Douglas promenade. The Villa and Gaiety provide a year round programme of entertainment, theatre, film, art and music. A new cinema and modern conference facilities sit alongside the Edwardian Royal Hall and Victorian theatre. The Villa and Gaiety are linked by a promenade colonnade and peaceful gardens.

Box Office, Tel: 01624 694555. www.villagaiety.com

THE ARTS

The national gallery is housed at the Manx Museum in Douglas. The Courtyard Gallery showcases contemporary Manx artists' work at Tynwald Mills Craft Centre, St John's, while the Erin Arts Centre in Port Erin has the Sir James Mellon art gallery which opened in 1994. Founded in 1971 by John Bethel MBE, the Erin Arts Centre is a prestigious venue for music and theatre and hosts the Mannanan International Festival and other concerts. Another music venue on the west coast is the Peel Centenary Hall which plays host to all kinds of performers.

www.gov.im/artscouncil

CAMERA OBSCURA

This Victorian curiosity situated on Douglas Head reopened during 2005 after a £250,000 refurbishment. Once again, visitors can experience the sometimes disorienting view of the harbour, bay, lighthouse and horizon from inside the camera. The Camera Obscura is unique to the Isle of Man and is named the Great Union because it was built with 12 lenses each highlighting a segment of a 360 degree view. Other Camera Obscura have only one lens.

Tourism Information Centre, Tel: 01624 686766

TYNWALD HILL

The most enduring relic of Scandinavian culture in the Isle of Man is the Island's parliament, Tynwald, at over 1,000 years old. The world's oldest continuous parliament normally sits in Douglas, but still meets once a year at midsummer on Tynwald Hill at St. Johns. For many Manx people Tynwald Hill symbolises the Island's independence. The open air Tynwald Day ceremony takes place annually on July 5th. Bus services 5, 5a & 6 from Douglas.

www.gov.im/mnh

FAIRY BRIDGE

Motorists travelling over Ballalona Bridge, better known as Fairy Bridge, in Santon on the main Castletown Road greet the fairies for luck, in keeping with Manx folklore. There are plenty of tales of individuals who ignore this tradition of hailing the Little People and face the consequences.

The Santon fairy bridge is believed to date from the days of the abbey in the 12th century when people raised their hands on entering the abbey lands. Bus services 1, 1c & 2 from Douglas.