

# Manx Notes 371 (2019)

T.E. BROWN

“HINTS HOW TO USE THE MANX RAILWAY”

(1874)

## THE PEEL LINE

### UNION MILLS STATION

(1) Walk back by Braddan Church.

(2) Turn back towards Douglas; but just above the station, take a lane to the right. Through either of two gates on the left, about half a mile on this lane, you can find a path across over to Ballastowell and the vicarage. The view of the valley and mountains N.E. is very lovely. From the vicarage, descend to the church by the ordinary road; and so back to Douglas. Time: From two to three hours (from Douglas Station). Or, keep along the lane from the Union Mills until it runs into the road between Foxdale and Douglas. Here turn to the left, and walk by the Cooil and Kewaique into Douglas. Time: From three to four hours.

A pleasant variation of this would be to turn to the left again at the Cooil Preaching-house, and go down past the vicarage to the church. Time: Not over three hours.

(3) Turn up from the station (right) to the Strang. Keep straight on, and over the hill down into the valley of the Glass river, just below Ballaoates. Cross Sir George's Bridge; pass "Bobby Lewin's Mill": take first turn on right: and so by Ballacreech and Woodbourne (Tromode being down in the valley on your right) into Douglas. Time: Two hours.

A variation would be to keep up along the valley of the Glas (west side) by Ballaoates, past the Paper Mill about half a mile. Cross the stream, and by a footpath get to Balliagarey; thence, still by footpath, to Ballamenagh, where you get a road. Keep on towards Douglas (S.), and you dip into the little glen under Lark Hill. Thence to Douglas, as above. Time: Three hours.

These are all very easy walks.

### CROSBY STATION

(1) Walk back along the Douglas road to Lewin's Smithy. Here turn down to the right: the road will take you to Glen Darragh. Turn off to the left, and make up the hill by a nice-looking place which I dare say the people still call "Captain Hayes's." At the top you will strike the Douglas and Foxdale road. Take it into Douglas as in A (2).

(2) Walk back. A little Peel side of Lewin's Smithy, turn up to the left. The road leads N.E. to Ballakelly. Turn to the right, and you will have a road on to the Strang

by Virginia and Mount Rule. Thence by Quarterbridge to Douglas. Time: Three hours.

(3) Walk on towards Peel, past the Halfway House. See the old Treen church, (conceitedly and absurdly called “St Trinian’s”) on the right. Get right under Greeba, which abuts upon the road at Greeba Castle. Just short of the Castle, go through a gate on the right. Pass through a fir plantation, in which there is a pleasure house; and so up and over a stone wall, on to the mountain. This is all charming picnic ground. Return to Crosby Station, and by rail to Douglas. Time: *Ad lib.*

(4) Walk on as in (3); climb Greeba: go over it, and bear north. You will hit the head of Rhenass Glen. Descend: get return coach in time for the evening train at St John’s; thence by rail to Douglas. A most delightful excursion: but only suitable for tolerably good pedestrians. There are some miles of mountain walking; but it is, on the whole, very dry. Time: Takes the better part of a day.

(5) Go up Greeba, as in B (4). Keep on the ridge for the next mountain—The Craig. Go down between the two, to the right, and you will be in Baldwin Glen. Here inquire road to Douglas. Or, go down the face of the Craig mountain, past Ardwhallyn farm. Get them to direct you to St Luke’s Chapel, which is on the hill between E. and W. Baldwin glens. There you will cross a few fields and get into the road which runs down E. Baldwin glen, by the Paper Mill to Ballaoates; and so to Douglas, as in A (3). Or, keep on over the Craig mountain, and down into Injebreck (the head of W. Baldwin glen). Thence, by St. Luke’s Chapel, into E. Baldwin glen; and so to Douglas, as above. Time: From three to five hours.

(6) Cross the line, to the left. You will easily find a steep road going W. Ask for Little Greeba. Leave the road and get on to this hill. You will soon be on the Bishop’s Barony, and have fine open moorland to Foxdale. There is no regular road. Steer a little N. of W., making in fact for South Barrule, the high mountain which looks so close. You will soon be at Foxdale. Cross at the foot of the dam, and walk on the north shore. A road will take you to Foxdale School. So on to the Castletown and Peel road. Then turn down, and you have a very pleasant walk to St John’s Station, all down hill. By rail to Douglas. Time: From three to four hours.

#### ST JOHN’S STATION

(1) Turn up to the right, and go to Rhenass (Glen Helen). Back same way. Time: Depends: on trains; but no difficulty whatever. Be sure to see Tynwald Hill, close to station.

(2) Climb Slieu Whuallian, the mountain west of St John’s. Take the road to the left of the station. Then, first turn to the right. You are now on the Kirk Patrick road. Go up anywhere. It is steep. You can turn the mountain a little by slanting up on its S. side, past Slieu Whuallian farm, it is an expedition for youngish folk. Keep along the top, westward. You will see Kirk Patrick Church before you. Nearly opposite to it you will find a pretty little glen going down. The bed of the stream is

curious. It is worked into holes, which are called “Trowl-pots.” Go down to Kirk Patrick Vicarage. When you get on to the main road, just below the vicarage, turn E. to St John’s. Back to Douglas by rail. Time: Take the day.

A variation would be, after getting off Slieu Whuallian on to the main road, to go on W. to Glen Meay; and walk from thence into Peel. There take train for Douglas. Time: The day.

N.B.—The Manx people are very jealous about trespassing. Be civil; don’t patronize; be straightforward, but gentle; and you will carry your point.

(3) Take road to the left. Walk straight up to Foxdale. On the mountain road beyond Foxdale, about the top of the ascent, you will find a rough road going up to some slate quarries on the right. Follow this. Or, rather take to the mountain (South Barrule), and work away N.W. I should go to the Cairn. Capital bleaberries near the top, on the east side. Go down on the other side into Glen Rushen, and follow the stream down to Glen Meay; thence either to Peel or St John’s station, and back by rail to Douglas. Must be a goodish walker. Time: the day for this. It is a noble stretch.

(4) Turn up to the right to the Tynwald-hill. Ask your way to Rock Mount. Short of Rock Mount you will see a steep road going up on the right. This is a bit of “Bishop Wilson’s Road.” Get up to the level. The road runs into another. Turn to the right, and at the next farm ask for Laurel Bank. Here descend into Glen Mooar. You will be about half-way on the road between St John’s and Rhenass (Glen Helen). Walk back by road to St John’s. There are two very fine views: one that of the Valley of St John’s, all down to Peel; Peel Castle and the sea to the right as you look back; the other, a lychroscope sort of peep above Laurel Bank down into Glen Mooar. Time of walk: about two hours. A good variation would be to pass Rock Mount and go on to Ballakillworrey. A curve on the right will lead into the road to Laurel Bank.

(5) I myself am very fond of an extension of walk (4). Don’t go down at Laurel Bank, but keep on “Bishop Wilson’s road,” straight to Cronk-y-Voddey. Still straight on, and you will gradually descend into Glen Ballagawne, and pass the Spout Vane (waterfall). The road is one of those blessed old rankments, half road, half common. It is exquisitely solitary. You come out upon the road between Peel and Kirk Michael. Then turn west along this road, crossing Glen Cam, which is a stately creature. The loneliness of the western sea is something unparalleled. Getting towards Peel, a little west of Knockohany, at a deep depression of the road, get over the hedge and follow the dip to the sea. This is the White Strand. Thence keep the cliffs by Tidie Vogog and Craig Mallin into Peel. This is a fair five hours walk. But you will be in good time for the evening train to Douglas. Don’t try it unless you like solitude. The walk might be shortened by turning to the left at Cronk-y-Voddey, and to the sea-road, either by Lhergydoo, or Glen Broigh.

(6) A walk for real pedestrians. (N.B.—Pending extension of rail to Ramsey.) As before to Rhenass. Up to waterfall, and over it; follow the stream to a farm called Little London. Get the watershed (about E.) Descend into Sulby Glen. Follow this glen to its month at Sulby. Then turn west, along high road by Ballaugh via Kirk Michael into Peel. Or, rather, having seen the best part of Sulby Glen, which is the elbow at Bishop Murray’s Bridge, turn up N.W., and over the hills, and on down Ballaugh Glen. It would be a little longer, not easier, to go down, Sulby Glen as far as the Starch Mills. There turn up to the left by a road (S.W. and W.). You get on to the mountain land, and pass a Druidical circle, which, by the bye, I have never seen mentioned in any guide book, though it was a very perfect one, and you must witness Ballaugh Glen. Descend it to Ballaugh village, and then take the highroad by Kirk Michael to Peel. N.B.—This really is walking.

Last year I met a young German and a young Englishman who had just done this, and I blessed them from my heart.

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T.E Brown,. “Hints How to Use the Manx Railway.” *Isle of Man Times* 8 August 1874: 3f.

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T.E. Brown was a walker as even a casual reading of his letters shows. He was also a walker’s walker, distance and weather being no concern. That said, he does grade the walks here, some a matter of hours, though he does include others that take the better part of the day. The final walk is one to his heart, “[a] walk for real pedestrians” and “[t]his really is walking.”

STEPHEN MILLER, 2019

