



Isle of Man Little Railways holiday – 15th-21st May 2011

On 15th May, 46 intrepid explorers set off for the Isle of Man. During our journey it started raining and after a three-and-a-half hour crossing by ferry from Heysham we arrived at the Hydro Hotel about 6pm. We enjoyed a lovely meal and then settled into our rooms.

The next day it was drizzling and we set off for Peel on the East side of the island. It was a pretty town with a few shops and a castle. I went into the ruined castle and listened to an audio handset about it all, although somehow I managed to miss the dungeons. We then went to see the Moore Kipper museum and had an interesting talk on how kippers are smoked.

On Tuesday it was sun shining and our free day so we decided to go to Port Erin by steam train that took one hour. Some of the others went on the same train but they went on to do a ramble. Port Erin is nice, quiet small town on a hill with a full swing of the bay. The railway museum it worth a visit with two steam engines inside. After a walk round the bay we stopped for fish and chips.

Wednesday was sunny although a breezy day. We paid a visit to the Laxey wheel which was used to pump water out of the Laxey mine that employed 600 miners. I climbed to the top of the wheel which was 75feet. From the wheel we went on the electric train up Snaefell mountain, the highest point on the Isle of Man which is 2,036feet above sea level. The wind was very fierce and blew you round the building at the top. The views were spectacular. On the way back we visited a big junk place on an airfield. We only spent half an hour there but it would have taken all day to see it all.

Thursday was another sunny day as we headed off to Castletown on the East side of the island. Again the town was small with a picturesque harbour and Castle Rushden the oldest complete medieval castle in the Country. There were several rooms inside including the kitchen and I climbed to the top up a spiral staircase. We then went to Port Erin for a couple of hours. We then went to Cregneash village to see a village set out as a museum and depicting what the way of life used to be which was very interesting. We boarded the steam train back to Douglas.

On Friday we headed to the North of the Island to see Ramsey although it was not very big. The shops were interesting and it had a swing bridge over the quay. The afternoon was free so we spent it in Douglas visiting the large Manx Museum which was full of fascinating material. In the folk lore section was a scissor grinding machine with a cartwheel on the front. My father owned a similar machine so I have written to the museum for a photograph.

On Tuesday and Thursday evening we attended two brass band concerts at the Villa Marina they were the Douglas brass band and the Crosby Silver Brass band. They were both very good. The food and the company at the hotel were excellent.

We travelled back on Saturday leaving the hotel at 8am and arrived in Mansfield at 3.45pm.
I wish to thank Margaret on behalf of all of us for an excellent holiday.
Glynis Benford