Despite being just 33 miles long and 13 miles wide, the Isle of Man contains an enormous variety of scenery. Its 100 miles of unspoilt coastline includes dramatic cliffs, rocky headlands, sandy beaches and picturesque harbours. Inland, the flat areas of the north give way further south to tranquil glens, remote moorland, steep-sided valleys and rolling hills dominated by the 2,036ft summit of Snaefell, the island's only mountain. Based for the week in a comfortable four star hotel in Douglas, this tour will explore all areas of the island on led rides of 40 to 55 miles per day, repeating what was a highly successful tour run in 2016.

**Itinerary**

**Sat 15 July**  
Depart from Liverpool at 1115 on the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company ‘Manannan’ fast ferry, arriving in Douglas at 1400. Cycle to the hotel in Douglas (0.5 mile). Afternoon free in Douglas.

**Sun 16 July**  
Northeast Loop Ride: Cycle to Laxey with its old harbour and the historic Laxey Wheels. Continue to the coastal town of Ramsey before completing a circuit of the flat farming area in the north, with the option of visiting the Point of Ayre, the most northerly point of the island. Climb through Sulby Glen to reach the lower slopes of Snaefell before a long descent back to Douglas. (54 miles).

**Mon 17 July**  
Southwest Loop Ride: Cycle along Marine Drive, a car-free road that twists and turns above coastal cliffs and rocky headlands. Continue through Castletown and Port St Mary and climb to Cregneash with its stunning views of The Calf of Man. Descend to the seaside resort of Port Erin with its wide sandy beach before returning to Douglas on quiet roads giving open views of the central hills and Snaefell. (40 miles).

**Tue 18 July**  
Free day. Options include taking a trip on the Victorian Steam Railway from Douglas to Port St Mary and Port Erin or on the Manx Electric Railway to Laxey and Ramsey or to the cafe at the summit of Snaefell. Wander along the promenade and around the shops and cafes in Douglas or take a ride on a horse-drawn tram along the seafront. Alternatively, cycle the route of the famous TT motorcycle circuit. (41 miles).

**Wed 19 July**  
Northwest Loop Ride: Cycle out of Douglas onto a moorland road offering stunning views of the surrounding heather-clad hills. Descend steeply into Druidale, a remote, almost traffic-free valley in the heart of the central hills before emerging into the flat lanes of the island's northwest. Cycle to Jurby, home to the Manx Motor Museum before a return via Kirk Michael and the very steep climb back onto the moors before a long descent back to Douglas. (43 miles).

**Thu 20 July**  
West Loop Ride: Cycle to St John's and Tynwald Hill, site of the original 8th century Viking parliament. Cycle into the hills above St John's before descending to the west coast and into Peel with its magnificent 11th century castle overlooking the harbour. Continue along the coast and back up onto the open moorland before descending through Foxdale and back into Douglas. (41 miles).

**Fri 21 July**  
Morning free. Depart from Douglas at 1430 on the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company ‘Manannan’ fast ferry, arriving Liverpool at 1715, where the tour ends.

**Accommodation and meals**

The tour will be based in a 4-star hotel in Douglas. All rooms are en-suite, and the price is based on two people sharing twin-bedded or double-bedded rooms – couples booking together should indicate their preference on the Booking Form. A limited number of single rooms may be available for a supplement of £115. Meals are on a breakfast only basis, but a 3-course evening meal on the first night is included in the price of the holiday. A vegetarian option will be available. Participants with special dietary requirements should indicate this on the Booking Form.
Price £480

The price is based on a minimum number of 10 participants taking part in the tour. If there are insufficient bookings by 6 May 2017 we will contact you and return all monies paid, though in certain circumstances the tour may still run at below minimum numbers but at the same price.

Price includes:
- Return ferry travel for you and your bicycle between Liverpool and Douglas
- 5 nights hotel accommodation, bed & breakfast basis, sharing rooms
- 1 night hotel accommodation, half board basis, sharing rooms
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price does not include:
- Travel to and from Liverpool
- Meals in transit
- Evening meals, except on first night
- Drinks with evening meals
- Lunches or refreshments at morning and afternoon stops
- Entry fees at any attractions
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance (optional)

Payment schedule
A deposit of £50 per person must accompany the Booking Form, with the final balance of £430 per person to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 6 May 2017. See payment slip for how these can be paid.

Cancellations
Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

Written notice received: Cancellation charge:
Before 6 May 2017 Deposit (£ 50)
6 May 2017 through to departure 100% (£480)

To make a booking
Complete, sign and return the Booking Form and deposit part of the payment slip directly to the Tour Manager (address on Booking Form).

Passport / visa / health requirements
Passports are not required to enter the Isle of Man when travelling from the UK. Non-UK travellers will generally have to clear customs and passport control on arrival in the UK before travelling on to the Isle of Man.

UK residents visiting the Isle of Man will receive free NHS treatment should they become ill. It is strongly recommended that all visitors ensure they have appropriate insurance in place which will cover repatriation to the UK by air ambulance if it should prove necessary.

Travel Insurance
Obtaining travel insurance is optional for UK residents as your CTC membership provides third party cover. However, this does not cover any other risks such as cancellation charges, personal injury or lost property. We therefore strongly recommend that suitable insurance is taken out to safeguard against such risks. Members who do not reside in the UK are not covered for third party and are advised to obtain suitable cover before leaving their normal residence.

If you already have an annual policy, you may need to confirm that it will cover a UK holiday or make provision for it to do so.
The area covered by the Tour

Despite being just 33 miles long and 13 miles wide, the Isle of Man manages to contain a rich variety of scenery and terrain. There are almost 100 miles of unspoilt coastline with long sandy beaches around the north that contrast with the dramatic cliffs, rocky headlands and sheltered bays around the rest of the island. The coastline is dotted with isolated coves and several harbour towns and villages that have a very Cornish look and feel.

The far north of the island is predominantly flat, whereas the island's central region contains a range of high, rolling hills, 12 of which exceed 1,500ft in height. Dominating the landscape is the 2,036ft summit of Snaefell, the island’s only mountain. Several valleys and glens cut through the hills, many reminiscent of those found in Wales or North Yorkshire. The hills are surrounded by heather-clad moorland and forest plantations. Two large reservoirs, Sulby and West Baldwin, nestle amongst the hills to supply drinking water for the island's population of 86,000 residents. The south of the island consists of lower hills and rolling countryside and contains the picturesque seaside resorts of Port St Mary and Port Erin, the ancient Manx capital of Castletown and the rocky island of The Calf of Man at the island's southwestern tip.

As well as a wide variety of scenery, the Isle of Man also has a unique and varied heritage. It has the oldest continuous Parliament in the world, Tynwald, which dates back over 1,000 years. One of Europe's best preserved medieval castles, Castle Rushen, can be visited in Castletown, as well as the magnificent 11th century Peel Castle overlooking Peel harbour. The world's largest working waterwheel can be found in Laxey. The Douglas to Port Erin steam railway still uses its original Victorian carriages and locomotives, whilst the Manx Electric Railway is the longest narrow gauge electric railway in the British Isles, and it, too, still runs using its original Victorian and Edwardian rolling stock.

Rides and rest days

Rides will be offered on four days with an optional ride around the TT circuit on the rest day. The rides have been planned to enable the vast majority of the island to be explored and to highlight the incredible variety of scenery and terrain on offer. The rides vary in length from 40 to 54 miles, although some of the rides have optional extensions that take you to particular points of interest. I am happy to lead each ride as a group, but you are welcome to cycle independently at your own pace. On each ride there will be plenty of time to take photographs and for refreshment stops.

Detailed route sheets, maps and elevation profiles will be provided, which will indicate the location of cafés on the route. GPS tracks for each ride will also be made available for those that would like them.

We shall be riding on a mixture of roads from A-roads through to very minor country lanes. Although a large percentage of the roads on the island are classified as ‘A-roads’, the majority of these have very low levels of traffic, and many are no more than country lanes. We shall avoid the busiest roads wherever possible, but higher levels of traffic can be expected in and around Douglas, especially just after a ferry has arrived. Some of the very minor roads have a few potholes and some rough sections, but the vast majority of roads on the island have an incredibly smooth surface thanks to the low volume of traffic, the lack of hard frosts and the popularity of motorcycling.

With the exception of the far north of the island, there are very few flat roads on the Isle of Man, and, as a consequence, all of the rides on the tour are hilly. Several of the rides cross the central hills where the roads rise to an altitude of 1,400ft above sea level. The ‘A-roads’ tend to have gradients that do not exceed 10%, but several of the minor roads have short sections of up to 17% going uphill and downhill. To enjoy this tour, you will need to have experience of riding 40 to 55 miles in hilly terrain.

There is one rest day on the tour where you can either relax in Douglas or make use of the Manx Steam and Electric Railways to explore other parts of the island, including a trip to the 2,036ft summit of Snaefell. A route sheet is also provided if you fancy cycling the famous 38 mile TT motorcycle mountain circuit. (Peter Kennaugh holds the record of 1hr 23min 48sec set in 2015, beating Chris Boardman’s 1993 record by 4 seconds).

Please note that the suggested order of rides and the rest day is subject to weather conditions.

Accommodation / Meals

We shall be staying in a four star family-run hotel located in Douglas. All rooms have en-suite facilities and the price is based on two people sharing twin or double-bedded rooms. A limited number of single rooms may be available, subject to the payment of a single supplement.

The hotel has a bar, lounge and dining room as well as free WiFi. All rooms have a TV and tea & coffee making facilities. A large, secure garage for the storage of bicycles is available for our use. The hotel is located on the seafront just ½ mile from the ferry terminal and close to the main shopping centre. Several bars, restaurants and cafés are located nearby.
Meals are on a bed & breakfast basis except for the first night where a 3-course evening meal is included in the price of the holiday. The remaining evening meals will be taken in one of the nearby bars and restaurants. These can be booked for the whole group or individuals are free to make their own arrangements.

All of the organised rides include a café stop for lunch with most also offering café stops for mid-morning and afternoon breaks. The locations of cafés are marked on the route sheets and route maps for each ride. All of the towns and most of the larger villages that we pass through have some form of shop where participants can buy food and drink.

Travel and Parking

We shall be using the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's fast catamaran "Manannan" between Liverpool and Douglas. Liverpool has excellent rail links to the rest of the UK but please be aware that the ferry service is often subject to delays in bad weather, and this should be taken into account when booking a return train from Liverpool. For those wishing to drive to Liverpool, a long-stay car park is available a short cycle ride from the ferry terminal (£13.50 per day, 2015 price, via the ferry company's website www.steam-packet.com). Liverpool has numerous B&Bs, guesthouses, hotels and a YHA youth hostel for those participants wishing to travel to Liverpool the day before the start of the tour.

Group information

The maximum group size will be 16 including the Tour Manager.

Weather and clothing

The Isle of Man has a temperate climate with an average temperature in July of 18°C. The island has a reputation for its rapidly changing weather especially in the central hill region where a clear sky can quickly change to low cloud, fog and rain. Be prepared, therefore, for warm and sunny as well as wet and windy days. It can feel very cold in wind and rain, especially on the high roads in the central hills and on the long descents, so please ensure that you bring some gloves and an effective set of waterproofs. Bring a variety of layers that can be combined to cope with variations in temperature, as well as sunscreen and sunglasses for when the sun is shining. The wearing of a cycle helmet is not compulsory on the Isle of Man, so this is a matter of personal choice.

Cycles / Equipment

Touring, hybrid and road bikes as well as lightweight mountain bikes would all be suitable for this tour. The rides are hilly with some long and steady, as well as short and sharp, ascents and descents. You should ensure, therefore, that you have low enough gears for the hills. If in doubt, please discuss with me before the tour. Mudguards would be appreciated to avoid spraying others in the group if the weather turns wet. It is important to bring a front and rear light to improve your visibility in case of poor weather conditions in the central hills. It is also advisable to fit a calibrated cycle computer in order to follow the route sheets.

Your bike should be able to carry a bar bag, rear rack pack, saddle bag or rear pannier for your waterproofs, additional clothes, snacks, valuables, camera, etc for each day ride.

Please make sure that your bike is in good working order, particularly the wheels, tyres and brakes. Each participant is expected to bring some spare inner tubes and tools to deal with punctures and minor roadside repairs. There are two bike shops in Douglas and two more elsewhere on the island should urgent repairs or spares be needed during the tour.

Maps

Detailed maps, route sheets, elevation profiles and GPS files will be provided for each ride. If you would like to bring your own map then the Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 95 covers the whole of the Isle of Man.

Money

The Isle of Man has its own currency with the same denominations as the UK and still has £1 notes. UK currency is legal tender in the Isle of Man, but Manx currency is not accepted in the UK, although notes can be exchanged at UK banks.

About the Tour Manager

I have been leading CTC cycle tours since 2013, and this will be my third visit to the Isle of Man. During the last 25 years I have cycle-toured in many parts of the world including Vietnam, Laos and India as well as to New Zealand, Tasmania, North America, France, Spain, Switzerland and most parts of Britain. I have also led walking holidays in the UK, Europe and New Zealand since 1994 and love sharing the exploration of new places with like-minded people.

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