

Newport Historic (Pub) Walk



Newport & Carisbrooke
Parish Council



IW Branch CAMRA

An historic walk around Newport Town Centre, the route gives a glimpse into the past and the evolving social history of the Island's capital town, as it changes to meet the demands and needs of each new era.

Contents

An Introduction to Newport

Welcome to Newport, made the Isle of Wight's capital town by merit of its former rise in importance as a commercial port and central location, at the head of the navigable river Medina, which flows northwards to Cowes and the Solent. Newport has its own Quay, where this walk begins (and where the hub of the annual Beer & Buses Weekend is centred – Newport also hosts other well-known festivals).

Newport

Once a suburb of Carisbrooke, Newport rose in prominence with the increasing significance of its port as a centre for trade. It was granted its first charter as a town in the 12th Century, only to be burnt down in 1377 by marauding French in an attempt to take the Castle stronghold. This was the same raid that saw the demise of Newtown as the Island's principal Borough, also burnt down. A band of the invaders were captured, killed and buried under a mound that came to be known as Noddy's Hill (later Nodehill), Noddy being the then slang for body.

During the Civil War Charles I approached the governor of the Island, at Carisbrooke Castle, under the misguided belief that he could win his support and protection. Instead, he was imprisoned for a year, until some Parliamentarians negotiated the Treaty of Newport with Charles I, in an attempt to draw a conclusion to conflict, but the Treaty was repudiated by Cromwell when he saw that Charles was continuing to solicit outside military support.

Newport was incorporated as a Borough in 1608 and in 1974 incorporated into the formation of the new and larger Medina Borough and then into The Isle of Wight Unitary Authority, formed in 1995.

Mew Langton Brewery (*see back pages for label display*)

There had been breweries on the site since at least the 17th century, Benjamin Mew became involved early in the 19th century and had control by 1815. The brewery came to dominate Island brewing until its takeover by Strong's of Romsey and the cessation of brewing in 1969. The listed malt house was devastated by a mysterious fire in 1979; most of the site was redeveloped as domestic housing.

The Route Described

The following pages describe the various buildings and sites that we shall be talking about on our route. There is a lot more to Newport, stretching a lot wider. Newport was a garrison town as well as a port, and this had an inevitable bearing on its pubs and social structure. The barracks was at the site of the prison.

Recommended Reading

For more detail see: <https://www.wightpedia.org.uk/>; <http://www.newportwight.org.uk/>;
<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/carisbrooke-castle/history/>; www.wightpedia.org.uk;
<https://pubshistory.com/IsleofWight/Newport/index.shtml>; Newport Pubs (by Kevin Mitchell)

The Brewery History Society – (www.breweryhistory.com)

Formed in 1972 to research and record the history of brewing, the BHS has around 500 individual and corporate members who enjoy a range of visits and meetings throughout the year. The Society publishes Journals, Newsletters and a range of books

The Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA – (www.wightwash.org.uk)

CAMRA – The Campaign for Real Ale, was formed over 40 years ago and has since become one of Europe's most successful pressure groups with almost 200,000 members. The Island branch holds social meetings, surveys pubs and publishes a quarterly magazine, Wightwash.

Walk Compilers

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Newport Quay

Within living memory Newport Quay was a bustling industrial dock, loading materials and goods of all types, including beer from the local brewery, Mew Langton, in Crocker Street.



The Bargeman's Rest

A former warehouse in the area of docks known as Little London, this skilful pub conversion is a living maritime museum and one of a chain of pubs styled in a similar manner by the enterprising Gibbs family.

Quay Arts

As well as an art gallery and theatre, this thriving centre also hosts a range of international beers that any aficionado would be excited over as well as putting on the occasional specially commissioned cask beers brewed as interpretations of the old Mew Langton recipes, for which it was a former quayside store house.



Sea Street



There are two remaining former hostelries in Sea Street, the Dolphin Inn (on the corner of Quay Street, now Hotel) and the former pub licensed to Frederick King, now the private Quay House. Just before the junction with Holyrood Street, at the side of the car park on the northern side of the road can be seen the painted sign on the side of the building denoting the former industrial use of this site, part of which included an iron foundry. As you walk round Newport (or the Island), you may see industrial castings (manhole covers, posts, etc) that were made here.

The Medina Railway Tavern

At the bottom of Holyrood Street sits the Medina Railway Tavern (aka Railway Medina), right next door to the site of Newport Station. A plaque commemorates this on the wall of the modern building now in its place, occupied by the Funeral Directors, Hamilton and Marshal.

Opposite the site of the old station, on the northern side of Lukely Brook, where Lidl's now is, was Mew Langton's bottling store, with the former coal yard up behind it.



Mew Langton Brewery

The main brewery site was opposite the Medina Railway Tavern, extending along Crocker Street, on the south side of Lukely Brook. If you look up, at the right place and angle, you can see an oast house vane.

Colonel Francis Mew was a bit of a character and an architect as well. He designed some distinctive pubs about the Island that still stand today like the Woodvale in Gurnard.

The frequent assertion that Col Francis Mew was the first person to invent canned beer, sadly for the Island, is not quite true; It was Felinfoel of Llanelli.

A Short Historic Detour



across the road is the oldest house in Newport, and on the right, at number 62, is what was the Probation Office and a former school that trained young women, known as 'Blue Jenny's', for domestic service.

Turning towards Holyrood Street again, to complete the loop, with the old Mew Langton site now on your left, you will see the oast vane once more. Note the cast iron window veils on Malthouse Court (redeveloped brewery site), rescued from the old brewery.

The Wren's Nest

On reaching Holyrood Street, just up to the right across the road is the Wren's Nest, a modern bistro bar, mainly selling Yates' Isle of Wight beers.

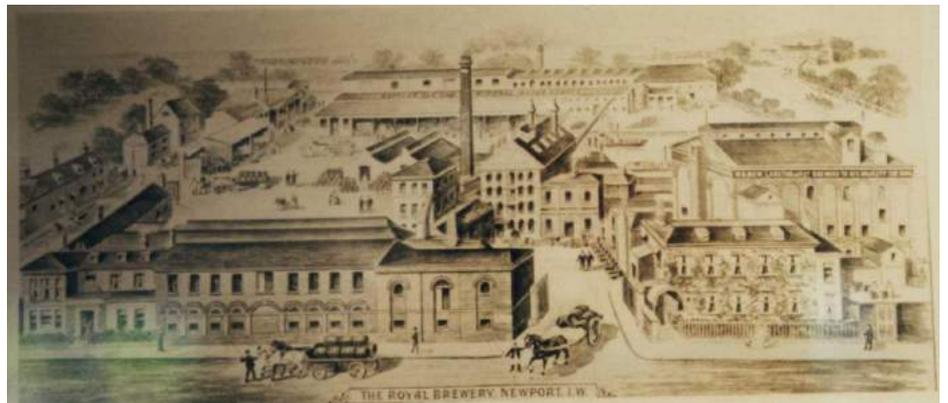
Newport Ale House

Continuing towards the town, the mock tudor building on the corner of Holyrood and Lugly Street was The Sun Inn, closed in 1976.



At the top part of Holyrood Street on the right is the Island's smallest yet one of the most popular alehouses, next to the archway signifying Read's Posting Establishment.

Branching to the left off Holyrood Street, at the top end, next to Calverts Hotel building, is the narrow Watchbell Lane, where a hand bell was kept that, they say, was sounded to mark a night time curfew and remind people to put out their fires for night time safety.



Walk past Lidl to the second mini roundabout, then left along Hunnycross Way towards the traffic lights; then take the footpath N34 and double back where the path crosses, down the along Lukely Brook, to the old Millhouse, the last of five mills that operated along Lukely Brook from Carisbrooke to Newport.

Walk straight up St Cross Lane to join Crocker Street, where just to the left



Newport High Street - East



At the junction of Holyrood Street with the High Street, where now resides 'Hong Kong Express', was the Vine. A handy location for people using the Courts that were housed in the Guildhall opposite - now a museum and office of Visit Isle of Wight, and (soon to be) the office of Newport and Carisbrooke Parish Council.

To the left along the east of the east end of the High Street is the Hogshead, occupying a former book shop, and the Slug and Lettuce, situated in the building that was the former Medina Cinema. Further down, near the Police Station, was the small and short-lived Jolly Sailor public house (1990s).

St Thomas Square

St Thomas Square is dominated by Newport Minster. If you are lucky you may catch sight of the pair of Perigrine Falcons that nest in the tower.

Going round to the front of the Minster, towards the War Memorial, on the right-hand-side is the Wheatsheaf Hotel and public bar, a traditional market town place of business. On the opposite corner is the building formerly known as The Rose & Crown, a place that had a 'rough' reputation in its day. Next to this is the marvellous brick building which was formerly the Corn Exchange, and opposite, Unity Hall.



The Green Dragon (former site)



Take a left alongside the Minster, to the alleyway turning south towards Town Lane, there is a substantial and significant building, restaurant and tea room, called God's Providence House, named so because it is reputed to be where the Plague ended in the 16th century.



Looking south down Town Lane, on the right, taking up the whole length of the lane (where now there is a modern building housing Pizza Express), was the Green Dragon Hotel, as described in Kevin Mitchell's excellent book 'Pubs of Newport'. The present Prince of Wales, on the corner of Town Lane and South Street would have been the Green Dragon Tap.

Church Litten

Across South Street is Church Litten road and park, once a graveyard. Where the Marks & Spencer building now stands was the site of Gould, Hibberd and Randall (soft drinks producers). To the east is Orchard Street where, on the corner, opposite the park entrance, was the Malt & Hops.

At the end of Orchard Street, on the junction with St James Street (aka Nodehill – see introductory page) is the former Plough Inn and further up St James Street (to the south) at no 66 was the John Lamb brewhouse and on the Trafalgar Road corner the markings of the Cranbourne can still be seen.

Opposite the Cranbourne is the iconic building, now a 6th form college, built in 1904 as a Technical Institute and the Country's first lending library <https://www.wightpedia.org.uk/detail2.php?id=81>.



Gould Hibberd Randall Logo

St James Square

Walking back down to St James Street to St James Square, the Duke of York and the Grapes were either side of the entrance to Bowling Green Lane, and at the junction with South Street, is the George, another traditional market town establishment.

In St James Square was the Bell Inn and Red Lion on the right-hand-side (where sits the current Nationwide and



Costa),

the Hare and Hounds (Barclays) and the Lamb at the traffic lights corner. The large stone building opposite is the County Club, a private members club for IW professionals.

Looking east down the High Street, from the Memorial, not as far at the Town Hall with its clock tower, is the former Bugle Hotel, which had a public bar and was Newport's foremost business facility with accommodation and function rooms.



High Street to Carisbrooke Road

On the junction of the High Street, Carisbrooke Road and Mill Street is the Castle, one of the Island's oldest pubs, rumoured to have secret tunnels connecting it to Carisbrooke Castle.

Unfortunately, back at the end of the 1970's the wooden stall partitions inside the pub were ripped out, in an act of wanton disregard by the then owners.



Further up Carisbrooke

Road, by the stone trough at the road's fork, is the mock-Tudor Crispin. Opposite, in Pyle Street, was the Brown Jug.

The Freemason's Tavern

Going back to The Castle, along Mill Street then east along Lugely Street to the cross-road junction with St James Street, on the corner next to the elaborate Masonic Lodge (one of the oldest in the Country), is the former Freemason's Tavern, now a derelict shop.

On the diagonally opposite corner was the Star Hotel, and the large stone

building on the other corner is the old King James Grammar School building. Further down the road, the white fronted building was The Trooper. A few steps on, after crossing the road, is the Bugle Tap, now a restaurant, but formerly the public bar to the posh Bugle Hotel. For more listings see the book 'Pubs of Newport' or <https://pubshistory.com/IsleofWight/Newport/index.shtml>



The Man in the Moon

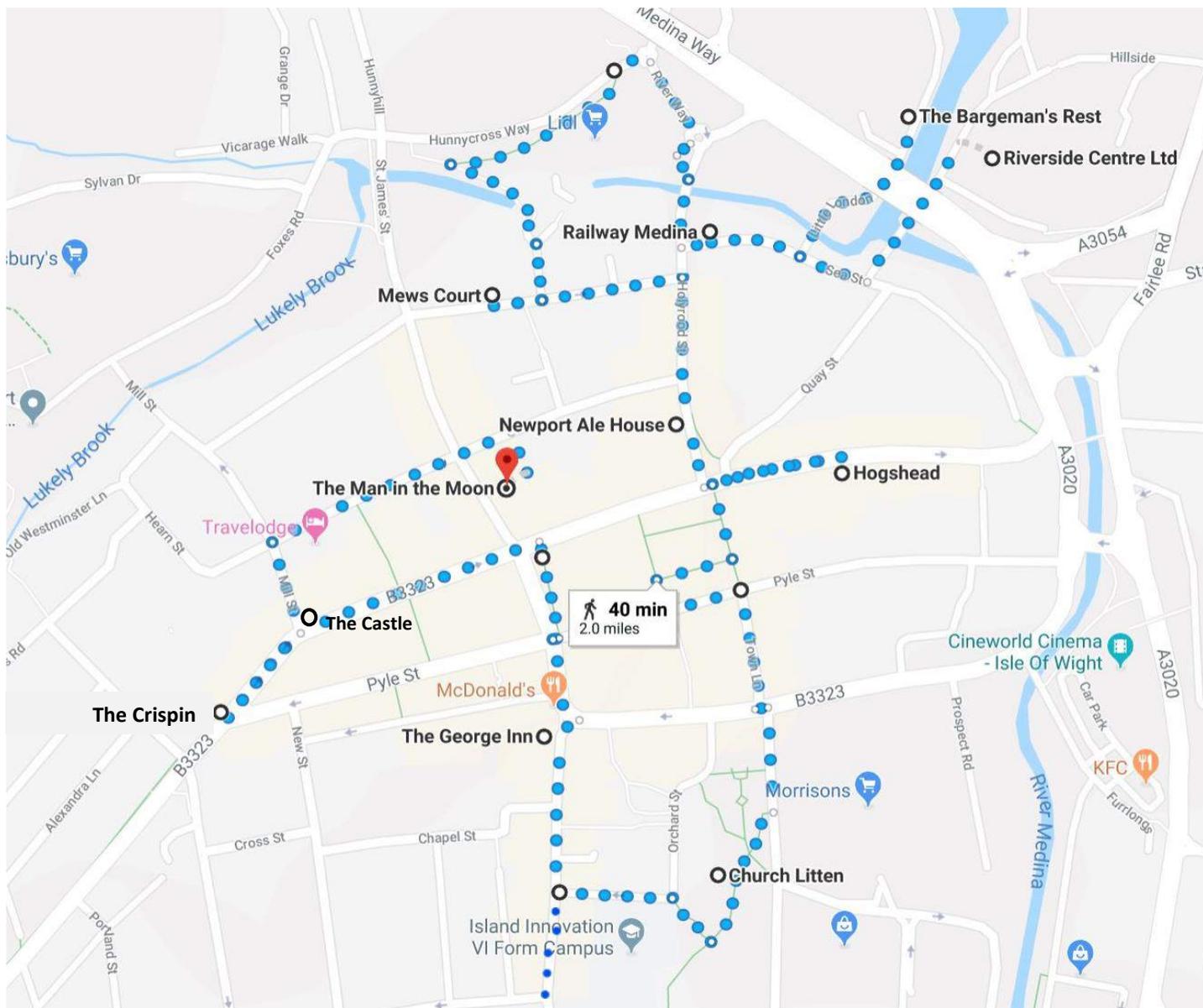
This very popular, award winning Wetherspoon's pub is situated in the converted Congregational Church in St James Street (between Lugley St and the High St) on a site known as 'The Man in The Moon' until the early 19th century, according to Wetherspoon's research.

<https://www.jdwetherspoon.com/pub-histories/england/isle-of-wight/the-man-in-the-moon-newport>.

Mew Langton Labels



Newport Historic Pub Walk Route Map



Route Map

- Newport Quay
- Bargeman's Rest
- Quay Arts
- Railway Medina
- S Cross Mill & Crocker St
- Wrens Nest
- Newport Ale House
- The Wheatshaf
- Hogshead
- Prince of Wales
- Church Litten
- Upper St James St
- The George
- The Castle
- St James Square
- The Crispin
- The Man in the Moon