The Mill Trail

The Mill Trail · heritage walk



The Mill Trail is supported by:
Biffaward,
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Historical introduction

At different times throughout history Newport and Carisbrooke have both been the capital of the Isle of Wight. This has been largely due to the proximity of both towns to the navigable River Medina and the requirements of trade and of protecting the Island from invasion.

The Lukely Brook which rises from a spring in Clatterford was an important source of fresh drinking water for the town, and was also harnessed as a source of energy for the seven mills once located along the Brook. The unusual name of the Brook is extremely ancient and means 'stream of the shining way'.



Introduction to the Mill Trail

The Mill Trail celebrates the industrial heritage of the rivers of Newport and Carisbrooke and can be enjoyed as either an eight mile town and country walk or a shorter four mile circular town route. There were once 14 mills located along the River Medina and Lukely Brook, plus several breweries, a tannery and crockers and dyers; all industries requiring large quantities of water for their work. Many of these buildings are still standing and can be seen along the route. To follow the trail look out for the mill stone logo that has been designed as an enamelled way marker.

If you decide to walk the longer town and country route we recommend that you are well prepared with suitable footwear and relevant supplies.

The Mill Trail heritage walk

1. Clatterford Paper Mill

At Clatterford the main stream is joined by a tiny tributary rising halfway down Froglands Lane. A paper mill was built upon its banks in 1710 and owned by an Isaac Tipps who is thought to have produced a coarse wrapping paper. The recent discovery of 18th Century Newport documents carrying a watermark with the initials "IT" may prove that Tipps also produced the rare commodity of writing paper which was only available to certain social classes and for the recording of commerce and essential borough and council meetings. The mill did not succeed; it was abandoned and unfortunately nothing now remains, apart from the two man-made ponds for soaking timber which are still visible opposite Frosthills Cottage.

Carry on around the corner and head over the ford which lies ahead, then turn right into Millers Lane.



2. Carisbrooke Mill

It is possible that a mill has stood on this site since Roman times as a Roman millstone was discovered here in the 1930s. The mill race is also thought to be the longest in the South of England at 250 metres. Carisbrooke Mill is now a private residence. It once stood within nine acres of pastures and waterways and was a working flour mill until 1939. When the mill was bought in 1983 the oldest parts had completely collapsed and Regency House, home of a previous prosperous miller had been demolished some years before. Millbank Cottage (on Castle Street), and some store buildings related to the mill have been restored and are still standing.

A short stroll takes you up to Carisbrooke High Street with the church opposite, turn right and use the pedestrian crosssing as there is no pavement on the right hand side of the road. The Priory Mill Pond is slightly hidden across the road, just past the Eight Bells pub.

3. Priory Mill

Located at the foot of Carisbrooke High Street. It was purchased by the Newport and Carisbrooke Water Company in 1848 and used to pump clean water to the town. Mill Cottage still stands, now called Waterworks Cottage. The large mill pond is still in situ, and is open to public access.

The Sanders Family – Farmers and Water Carriers

Straddled across the stream at the foot of Carisbrooke was the property of the Sanders family. They were farmers, watercress growers and suppliers of water to the citizens of Newport. Water at that time was still transported to the town by cart, as the river water was polluted downstream of Carisbrooke.

4. Tannery

A tannery once stood on the site of the present Ceramic Substrates, just downstream from the watercress beds. The area is now known as Tannery Place. The animal hides were washed in the stream to rid them of the last vestiges of flesh; a notoriously odious undertaking which would certainly have polluted the downstream river enough to make it unsuitable for drinking.

As you continue along the High Street you come to a mini roundabout and garage on your left. At this point turn left and walk up Wellington Road for about 50 metres; you will notice a public footpath on the opposite side of the road, turn right here - this will lead you to the site of West Mill.

5. West Mill

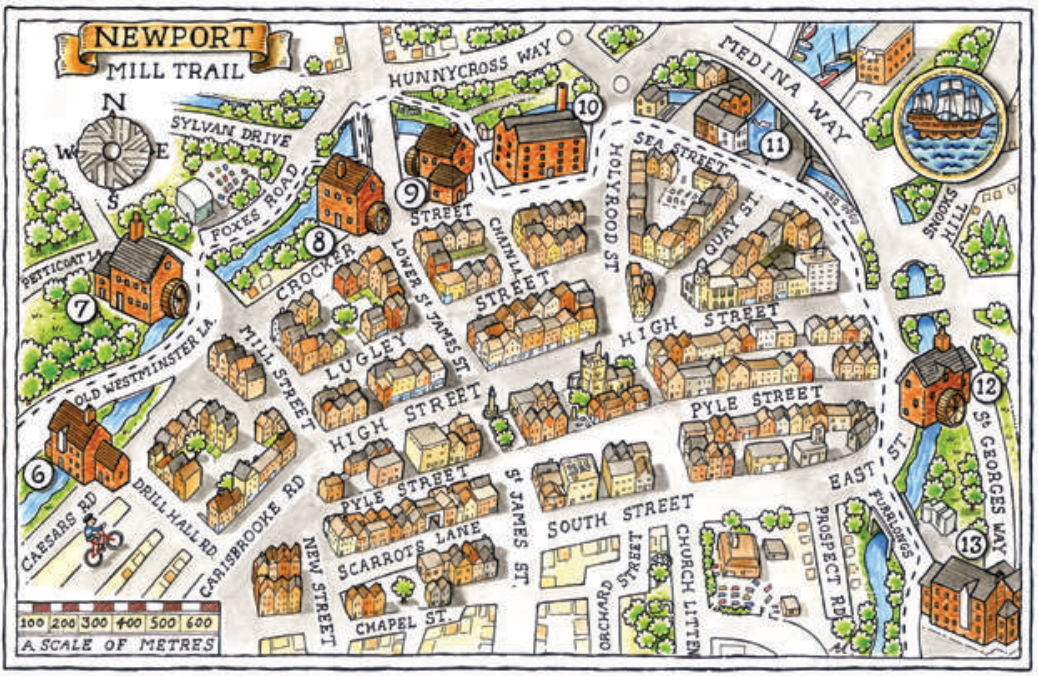
Located just off the Carisbrooke Road by the junction with Wellington Road. The mill pond transected the bottom of Wellington Road, and was infilled to create the new road. The Mill Cottage still stands on Carisbrooke Road. The mill itself ceased working in the 1950s. The mill building has been converted into flats, and can be seen from the cycle path.



Westminster Mill Pond

At the end of Wilver Road the stream can be seen at the point where it once entered Westminster Mill Pond, a beautiful lake at the bottom of the gardens on Caesar Road. It is now a modern housing development.

Continue along the cycle path, it will lead you along Wilver Road and ahead you will see a group of large trees, keep these to your right and walk through the new housing development.



Once through, immediately on your right is what survives of Westminster Mill.



6. Westminster Mill

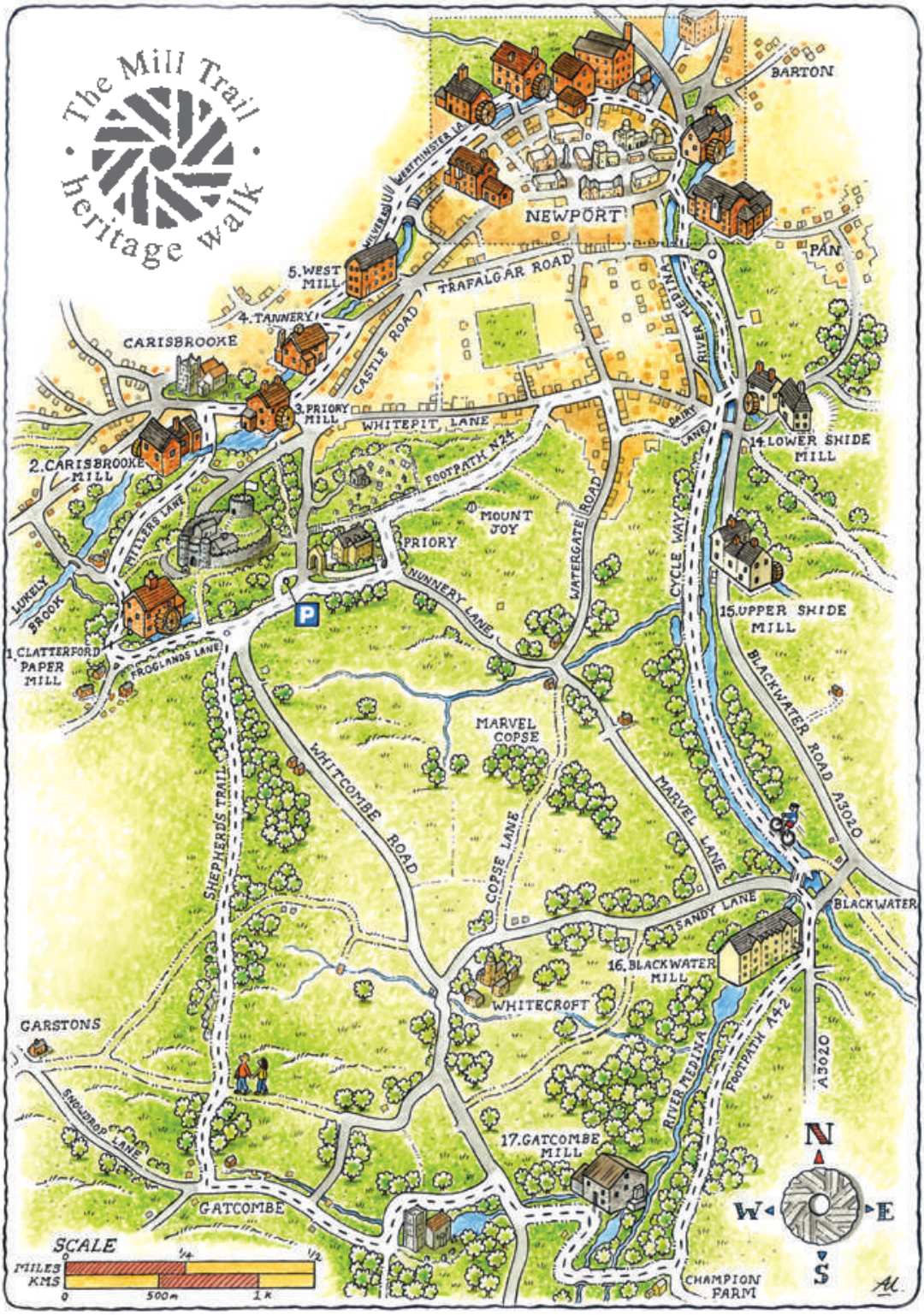
Westminster Mill was a fulling mill which processed cloth made from local wool. The building was originally built in 1773 and still survives at Westminster Place, converted into private residences.

Head through the narrow road on your left and go past the site of Home Mill.

7. Home Mill

Located on the site of new housing schemes, at the junction of Petticoat Lane and Mill Street. The Mill was purchased in 1935 and demolished to make way for a dairy, the Lukely Brook ran in culverts under the building. It was known as the Creameries for many years, and was, until very recently a working dairy. The Lukely has since been deculverted.

Once past the old creameries you need to turn left at the junction and ahead you will see Sainsbury's, continue in this direction up a short slope, turn right and aim for Towngate Pond which is marked by a number of sculptures.


The Mill Trail
heritage walk
BARTON
NEWPORT
PAN
WESTMINSTER LA
SILVERSMITH
5. WEST MILL
TRAFALGAR ROAD
4. TANNERY
CARISBROOKE
CASTLE ROAD
3. PRIORY MILL
WHITEPIT LANE
RIVER MEDINA
DAIRY LANE
14. LOWER SHIDE MILL
2. CARISBROOKE MILL
FOOTPATH N24
MILLERS LANE
MOUNT JOY
PRIORY
LUKELY BROOK
NUNNERY LANE
WATERGATE ROAD
CYCLE WAY
15. UPPER SHIDE MILL
1. CLATTERFORD PAPER MILL
FROGLANDS LANE
BLACKWATER ROAD A3020
MARVEL COPSE
WHITCOMBE ROAD
SHEPHERDS TRAIL
COPSE LANE
MARVEL LANE
SANDY LANE
BLACKWATER
16. BLACKWATER MILL
WHITECROFT
GARSTONS
SNOWDROP LANE
RIVER MEDINA
FOOTPATH A42
A3020
17. GATCOMBE MILL
GATCOMBE
CHAMPION FARM
SCALE
MILES
KMS
0
500m
1K
N
W
E
S

8. Towngate Mill



This was originally a Medieval mill site, although the most modern mill was built in 1836. The mill ceased working in 1939 and was demolished in 1998 due to its unsafe condition when Sainsbury's developed the area. It stood at the bottom of St James Street adjacent to the pond.

Towngate Pond

Although for hundreds of years a large pond stood adjacent to Towngate Mill, it was not in fact a mill pond, Towngate Mill receiving its power from a mill dam further upstream. The pond was used as a public facility in a town with a limited water supply, for watering beasts on their way to market, and for tightening iron cart wheels that had come loose. There was a slope at either end of the pond for easy access.

8 to 9 head for the traffic lights at the left hand corner of the pond and use the pedestrian crossing which will lead you to a path towards St. Cross mill.

9. St Cross Mill

Located in the oldest part of Newport and the last mill to be found on the Lukely Brook. The mill's last working use was a store for Fisk and Fisher, suppliers of animal feed, and it ceased to be used in 1939. The Mill is still standing today and it is probable that this site is the oldest milling site on the Isle of Wight.

Crocker Street

Originally called North Street, the name change was brought about by a local bye-law banishing the crockers, those makers of earthenware utensils, from the town owing to the risk of fire. They were moved to this location as it was on the periphery of the town and in close proximity to a plentiful water supply. The street also housed other local industries that required a good water supply for their trade, in particular, dyers, tanners and brewers.

You snake around the alleyway and turn right up into Crocker Street. Turn left.

10. Mew Langton Brewery

Records show that in 1643 there were at least three brewers on Crocker Street and five areas of land were shown to be in possession of the 'Mewes' family. In the late 18th century, Benjamin Mew started to purchase local public houses and beer shops and by 1814 he had a brewers premises on Crocker Street. The business prospered and in 1850 William Baron Mew was granted a Royal Charter to supply Queen Victoria at Osborne House. In the 1870s Walter Langton put capital into the business and the company became known as Mew Langton and Co.





The motor vessel "Wight" was built by Groves and Guttridge in 1920 to trade to the mainland. The brewery ceased production in 1969, and the site was sold to Medina Borough Council in 1979.

Part of the Brewery complex still stands on Crocker Street and has been converted into flats. The decorative iron work at the windows can still be seen.

The brewery used the Lukely Brook to transport their barrels. Lock gates were placed across the mouth of the stream just at the point where it joined the navigable section of the Medina. This enabled flat-bottomed barges to operate from within the Brewery to the Medina where ships were loaded with beer for the mainland. The lock gateposts can still be seen by the footbridge at the Quay Arts Centre at Town Quay.

Carry straight on and turn left at the road junction then first right where you will see the Quay Arts Centre up ahead. An excellent place to stop and enjoy.

11. The Quay Arts Centre

The Quay Arts Centre buildings all used to belong to the Mew Langton Brewery, and rails to run the barrels around to the ships can still be seen on the terrace at the Quay.

This next part can be a bit confusing but aim for the car barrier ahead, walk around it and follow the path along the side of County Hall until you are opposite the police station and at the pedestrian crossing. This is where you cross, go left then right and walk parallel to the roundabout. Follow the road until it curves to the right where you are heading for the small road in front of the cinema. There is a pedestrian crossing further on to enable you to cross the road safely.

12. Ford Mill

The mill was demolished in 1962 and was located immediately opposite the bottom of Pyle Street near Coppins Bridge. Pyle is an old word meaning Ford or crossing place and the original Coppins Bridge can be viewed under the modern road bridge.

Continue down this road with the river on your right and at the junction bear right and head for Matalan. Pan Mill is at this junction.

13. Pan Mill

Located by the recent cinema development complex. A large mill pond was situated on the site of the present Matalan car park. The mill was owned for a long time by Leigh Thomas & Co, and was working until relatively recently producing cattle feed. The mill buildings are still standing today as offices.

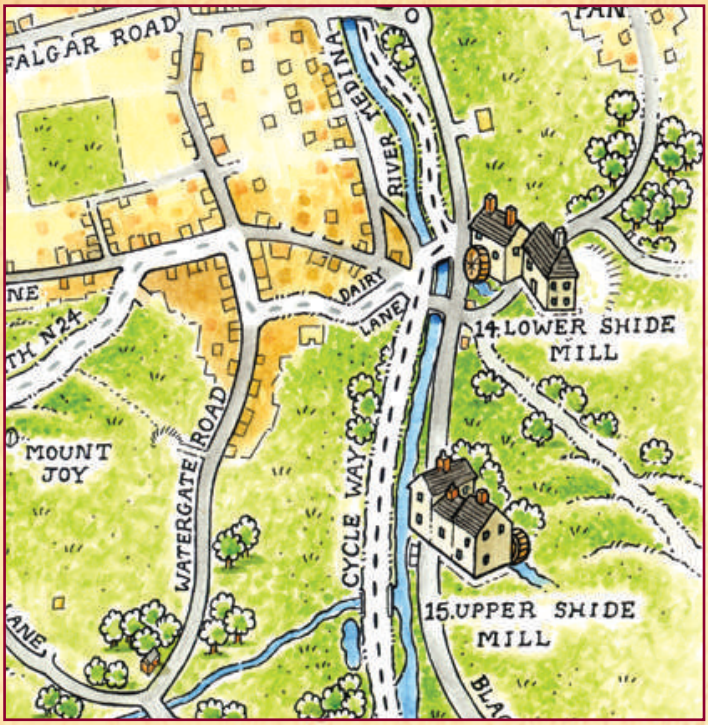


Keep to the path and head under the road bridge, you will now be in a surprising green area called Pan Mill Meadows. Follow the path until you come to a footbridge on your right, continue over the bridge and then turn left. You will come across a seating area and information point within a few minutes and then the junction with the cycle path.

At this point you continue along the cycle path if you are heading for the longer country section of the trail or turn right, then left into Dairy Lane for completion of the shorter town route.

Follow the signed public footpath past St. George's school, turn right then left at the mini-roundabout where you have to take care as there is a short section with no pavement until on your left you climb a few steps to join the raised footpath.

Continue then follow footpath N24 to Mount Joy, until the junction with Nunnery lane N26 which will lead you to Froglands Lane.



14. Lower Shide Mill

This once stood at the foot of the tiny footpath N22, which passes the property known as 'The Nest' and exits into Burnt House Lane. There is no trace of the Mill today.

15. Upper Shide Mill

Located just south of Shide, and is still standing as a private residence on the main road out of Newport towards Sandown. A stone incorporated in the garden wall is inscribed EGS 1762 which may denote the date of the mill building. The mill race can still be seen from the Shide cycle path.

The cycle path leads you to Blackwater where you come across an 'S' bend which incorporates a bridge crossing on your right, cross this bridge then turn left, then right at the main road junction. Look out for the bus shelter on your right, further around the bend, go behind it and you will find the footpath A42 which is signposted to Gatcombe and runs along a narrow stretch between fields on your left and the old mill building on your right.

You will be walking through farmland at this point so please be aware of the countryside code.



16. Blackwater Mill

The buildings of Blackwater Mill still stand, and now exist as a private nursing home. As you walk along the public footpath, glimpses of the large mill pond can be seen.

Follow the footpath and it will lead you past Gatcombe Mill and across a main road into Gatcombe. Just follow the road and eventually you will see on your right a path that leads you up to the Shepherds Trail which has spectacular views of the whole area. This will lead you eventually out to the junction of Froglands Lane where you turn left and rejoin the town section of the trail.

17. Gatcombe Mill

The mill is still standing, but in a poor condition, with much of the machinery still in situ. The mill ceased working in the 1960s.



The Countryside Code
Advice for the public

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

The Mill Trail Heritage walk follows existing footpaths, bridleways and highways. If you experience any difficulties with the route please contact the Highways Department of the Council. There are some stretches that have no pavement and special care must be taken in these areas.

This booklet was produced by Island 2000 Trust.
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