

Newhaven Heritage Routes - Map 1- West Quay and Beyond

In 2023, SCDA received a Heritage Lottery Grant to research and set up three Heritage Walks for Newhaven. Volunteers participated in this project and identified, as well as researched, points of heritage interest they wanted to bring to your attention. This walk is not designed to be a definitive version of Newhaven's heritage for this route, but hopefully it will encourage you to learn a bit about Newhaven's history and want to find out more, thus keeping Newhaven's rich heritage alive.

Welcome to Walk One of the Newhaven Heritage Routes. This walk has three parts to it- you can decide to do all, or some sections of the route.

Part one- West Quay Cormorant to Fort Road/Recreation Ground

(numbers 1-12 on map)

This section of the route takes you south along the West Quay walkway. This is a level access route with plenty of benches along the way. The pathway can be a bit uneven and the adjoining road is also a cycle path. When you reach the junction with Fort Road, turn left and continue along the pavement, crossing over the road to enter Fort Road Recreation Ground just past the junction with Court Farm Road. This section of the walk ends at the south-eastern end of the recreation ground by the Scout Hut.

1. Start – West Quay Cormorant.

The sculpture was created to represent a 'tribute to the heritage and future of Newhaven,' and is a symbol that seems to have been adopted by Newhaven, another Cormorant sculpture will be seen on our third Newhaven Walk. On 20th April 2003, a Riverside Festival was held to mark the opening of part of the West Quay redevelopment which included new fishing facilities, a fish market, walkway, cycleway and car park. The whole development which included houses and flats was completed at the end of the year. The total cost was £11million, with £7million coming from Sea Containers.



Photo: C Joslin 2023

2. The Ouse Navigation. *Researchers: Brian Hitchen, Linda Hitchen*

The River Ouse was occasionally used for transport in Saxon times (410 – 1066). By the 1720's, cargo was regularly moving between Newhaven and Maresfield Forge, 8.5 miles above Lewes.

At its peak, the river was navigable from the Ouse Valley Viaduct above Lindfield in the North and Uckfield in the East to Newhaven and there were 19 locks in total. While it could take 5 days to navigate this distance with a cargo of lime, chalk, manure, aggregates and coal, it was still quicker than using horse and cart.

After the railway to Newhaven opened in 1847 cargo barges steadily declined and stopped completely in the 1950's.



Sailing barges
Rear: 'Sirdar'
Centre: 'Will Everard' on route to Asham Cement Works
Foreground: 'May of Ipswich loaded with sugar (Silvertown Lighterage Services)
© Newhaven Historical Society A008-017

3. The London and Paris Hotel. *Researchers: R Adams and G Heffernan*

The hotel was built in 1847 when the railway extended from Lewes into Newhaven. It was constructed on the site of Newhaven Harbour Station, at the Marine Passenger Terminal. The hotel provided a valuable service for those travelling on the ferry to Dieppe.

It was described as a grand building and had a dance floor capable of holding 250 people. It had gardens filled with lilac trees. In 1936 Wallis Simpson, Duchess of Windsor stopped at the hotel waiting for her ferry and also trying to avoid the press-who wanted to talk to her about the abdication crisis.

During the 1890s Charles Wells – “the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo” – held such riotous parties there, he was asked to leave.

The hotel was demolished in 1957, having been requisitioned (and bombed) in WWII.
(More about the London and Paris Hotel will feature on Map 2 -East Side Newhaven)



London & Paris Hotel - East Quay, but seen from West Quay. © Newhaven Museum A003-062



Photo: view of Newhaven Harbour Station and site of London and Paris Hotel from West Quay

C Joslin 2023

4. The International Brigade. *Researcher: J Ede*

Newhaven was a gateway to Spain for the British Battalion of the International Brigade in the 1930s, travelling to fight fascism in the Spanish Civil War. Survivors of this brutal campaign returned to Britain through Newhaven. Among the 300 or so “brigaders” was Edwin Greening from South Wales, who recounted: “About 5pm on Wednesday 7th December 1938 the British Battalion disembarked at Newhaven to a great welcome from an enormous crowd with lots of Police in attendance as we marched to a special train and off to London”.

For more information go to:

<https://international-brigades.org.uk/>



Photo:1930's East Side disembarkation point for International Brigade (view from West Side).

CA: Information by the wooden Fish Tail Sculpture tells us Ice used to be brought in by boats, what do you think it was used for? (see photo below for more information)

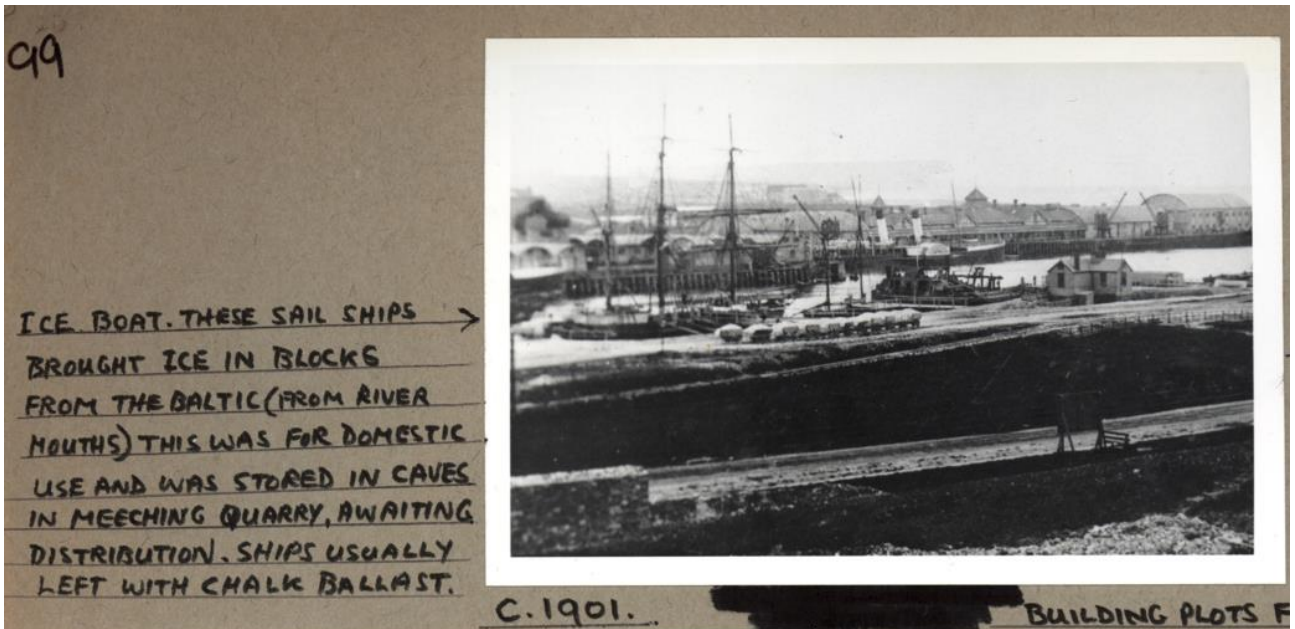


Photo: Ice Boats bringing in Ice into Newhaven for domestic and commercial use (until refrigeration introduced 1920's onwards). © Newhaven Museum A013-099

5. Newhaven Lifeboat. *Researcher: J Ede.*

Newhaven was one of the very earliest ports to obtain a lifeboat. The first Newhaven lifeboat arrived in May 1803, and was in service before the creation of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Local efforts to raise funds for a lifeboat took place after the sinking of the HMS Brazen in 1800, in which all but one of the whole crew drowned just off the Newhaven coast. Newhaven lifeboat continues its mission to this day, from its current location on the West Quay.



Rowing Lifeboat 'Michael Henry' © Newhaven Historical Society A003-080

6. Old Lifeboat Slipway



Christening of the 'Cecil and Lillian Philpott' by the Duke of Kent ,7 July 1931 © Newhaven Historical Society A057-025

7. Ho Chi Minh in Newhaven

A small black commemorative stone on Newhaven West Quay marks the arrival of Ho Chi Minh at Newhaven in the early part of the twentieth century. It is believed that at that time Ho Chi Minh was a pastry chef on the Newhaven-Dieppe ferry, but he went on to become the communist leader of Vietnam. Due to this historic link between Newhaven and Vietnam, Newhaven receives delegates and visits to this day from high-ranking staff at the Vietnamese Embassy in London.



Photo: C Joslin 2023

8. **Directions** from West Quay to Fort Road Recreation Ground

Follow the West Quay round to the junction with Fort Road, turn left and continue along the pavement. Cross over the road to Fort Road Recreation Ground.

9. Earl of Sheffield Tramway. *Researcher: J Ede*

In 1878, permission was sought to build a tramway in Newhaven. The aim of which was to link the proposed western breakwater, Meeching Quarry and the existing mainline railway. Goods including chalk, ballast and ice were hauled by steam engine to ships on the Ouse, or onto the mainline. At least part of this tramway was built on land then owned by the Earl of Sheffield. Steam engine Fenchurch No. 32636 regularly ran on the tramway between 1898 and 1955. This "Terrier" class engine is now owned by The Bluebell Railway, and still runs on that line.



Photo: 0-6-0 Stroudley Terrier "Fenchurch" © Newhaven Historical Society A052-012

10. Gift of Recreation Ground by the Earl of Sheffield. *Researcher: J Ede*

The cricket ground was given to Newhaven by the Lord of the Manor, the Earl of Sheffield, in 1890. The opening match on 26th May was between an eleven selected by Lord Sheffield and an eleven representing Newhaven. The *Worthing Gazette* described the occasion as one of “great rejoicing in Newhaven, the town being gaily decorated”. Lord Sheffield, had arrived in his yacht the day before and was met with an “enthusiastic reception from the inhabitants, who assembled in hundreds” to welcome him. The festivities ended with “a magnificent display of fireworks.” The freehold of the recreation ground was bought by the council in 1932 for £500 plus £50 for the shrubbery.



Photo: Opening of the Recreation Ground by the Earl of Sheffield 26.5.1890 © Newhaven Historical Society A006-062

11. Newhaven Football Club. *Researcher: J Ede.*

Newhaven Football Club is one of the oldest clubs in Sussex, formed at a meeting at The Bridge Hotel in December 1887. Newhaven Football Club has the nickname “The Dockers” and play at the Trafalgar Ground next to the Fort Road Recreation Ground and was one of the founding members of the Sussex County Football League, joining in 1920. Newhaven once had many other football clubs, including Newhaven Wednesday and East Side Rovers. During the football season the clubs many adult and youth teams can be seen in action. “Come on you Dockers!”.



Photo: Newhaven Football Team 1913-14 (Henry Amy with the ball) © Newhaven Historical Society A025-010

12. Directions to part two of the walk.

Walk along Fort Road to the Scout Hut, **the end of the first part of the walk.** You can finish here or continue with either part two or three or return back.

Part two- Fort Road to the Beach (*numbers 13-16 on map*)

13. Ravilious at the Hope Inn. *Researchers: R Adams, R Littleford and G Heffernan*

Originally a flint walled building, The Hope Inn was redeveloped in 1936 in the European Modernist style by the same architect who designed Shoreham Airport. After the redevelopment, some other improvements were noted, for example, the artist Edward Bawden wrote to Eric Ravilious (artist) stating, "Meals and service have brightened; gone are those soft, stale oyster-eyed eggs and there is less water and more gravy for example, with the meat." *

*Source: Edward Bawden to Eric Ravilious Letter (1936), referenced by Robjn Cantus.
<https://inexpensiveprogress.com/tag/eric-ravilious/>

For more information on the work of Eric Ravilious in Newhaven, please go to:

<https://newhavenenterprisezone.com/ravilious/>

<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1039129/newhaven-harbour-print-ravilious-eric/>

<https://inexpensiveprogress.com/950/edward-eric-in-newhaven/>



Photo: The Hope 1920s First Weigh in, Newhaven Angling Club, at The Hope © Newhaven Historical Society A007-056



Photo: The Hope 1936 © Newhaven Historical Society A009-073

14. Newhaven Fishermen's Memorial. *Researcher: J Ede*

When it was unveiled, the names of six fishermen were placed on the memorial, from incidents going back to 1979. The memorial is placed next to the river at the mouth of the River Ouse, where the fishing fleet can see it as they move through the port. The statue was designed and created by Christian Funnell, who has also placed other works of art in the town, including the bandstand on Denton Island, and the Cormorant statues in and along the river.



Photo: The Fishermen's Memorial 2023. © C Joslin

15. Newhaven Breakwater. *Researcher: Dr J Flood*

Work on the Breakwater began in 1878-9. Eastbourne Chronicle reported on an official visit to the works in March 1879, describing how the ships in the harbour “bore an unusually gay appearance”. A 19-gun salute at 12.25 announced the arrival of the visitors “in a magnificent special train” comprising two of the best saloon carriages belonging to the Brighton Railway Company. In a speech, the engineer, Mr Bannister described how concrete (rather than granite) would be used being cheaper but just as effective. The breakwater would be 1,000 yards in length and cost £150,000. The Eastbourne Chronicle concluded that “it will provide a splendid promenade for the inhabitants.”



*Photo: December 1879 from the cliff top - The breakwater leaves the shore, - notice the men digging away at the cliff for infill.
© Newhaven Historical Society A318/322-004*

16. Blue Bouldering in Newhaven and the Potteries of Staffordshire. *Researcher: R Adams*

In the 18th century it was discovered that flint stones (Blue Boulders) could be ground down and the powder used to whiten and harden clay. These stones were collected from the beach 'by the poor' and shipped to the Pottery Factories in Staffordshire. There was also a 'pumice factory' on West Quay where pebbles were ground up to be used as an ingredient in face powder. In 1823, 5000+ tonnes of boulders were exported to Staffordshire, providing a considerable source of employment for Newhaven's poor. The beach's narrow-gauge railway ("The Tramway"), carried ("Terrier") locomotives that ran on tracks in front of the Hope Inn and transported Blue Boulders to the quarry at the quay. A wall at Meeching Hall built with Blue Boulders can still be seen in Fort Road.



Photo: Tom Winder and his sister Elizabeth (Harvey) Blue Boulder picking on West Beach for Mr Amy. Circa 1928. They received 4s6d per ton. © Newhaven Historical Society A013-096

Part three- Fort Road/Fort Rise (to the Fort and Castle Hill Nature Reserve) (numbers 17-22 on the map). *Researchers: Dr J Flood, A Delaney, E Delaney*

17. The Fort

Commissioned by the Government, under Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, and designed by Lieutenant John Charles Ardagh (age 22), the present-day Fort was built to protect the area from invasion. Work started in 1862 and took almost 10 years to complete by which time the threat of attack had largely disappeared.

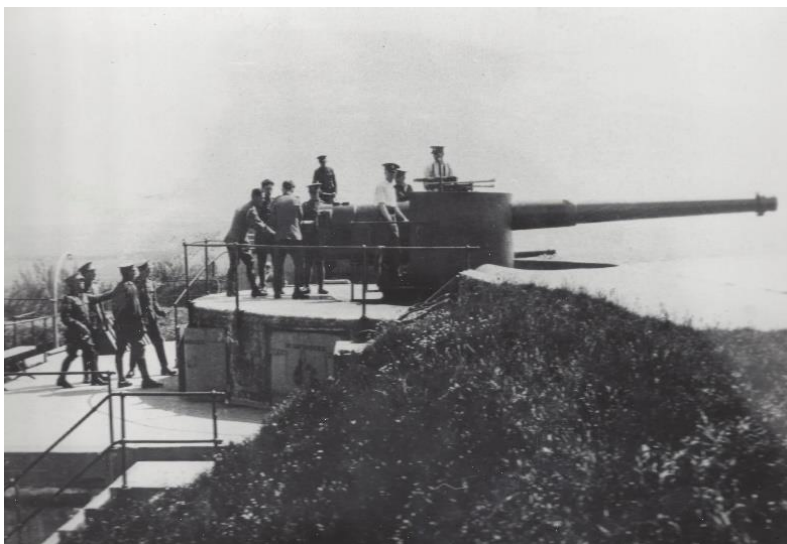
Ardagh's innovations included building the fort and barracks into the contours of the land, designing a new type of drawbridge (now replaced by a beam bridge leading into the fort) and using large amounts of concrete to line the walls and the 40ft wide dry moat on the Fort's North and West sides. Millions of bricks were used in its construction.



Photo: The Fort barrack rooms and parade ground 1880s. © Newhaven Historical Society A019-034

17. Newhaven Fort in the First World War

In 1914, Newhaven harbour became a major supply port to the Western Front, shipping 6 million tons of stores and munitions to the battlefields of northern France. Newhaven Garrison, based at the Fort, was tasked with defending the port and town from attack by land, sea and air. Working with the Naval examination vessel, which challenged all shipping coming into the harbour, the Fort's two 6" guns were ready to put a shot across the bows of any ship that refused to stop when ordered to.



Gun firing practice at the Fort 1918-1920s. © Newhaven Historical Society A325-047

17. Two notable events during the Second World War

Two notable events indicate the contrasting fortunes of war.

On 19th August 1942, the ill-fated Dieppe raid [Operation Jubilee] took place. German forces occupied the Channel coast of Northern France. Around 6,000 troops, mainly from Canada, crossed the Channel to attack the defences of Dieppe, most leaving from Newhaven. It was unsuccessful. Over half the soldiers who landed on the beaches were either killed, wounded, or captured.

Lessons were learned and two years later the D-Day invasion was launched. Around 162,000 men passed through Newhaven Port as part of the D-Day landings. Its success marked the turning point of war.



Troops arrive at Newhaven harbour, 1944 ©Newhaven Fort

Please take the opportunity to visit Newhaven Fort to find out lots more information.

<https://www.newhavenfort.org.uk/>

17. Castle Hill -pre-historic fort. *Researchers: A Delaney, E Delaney*

Castle Hill and the slopes around it have probably been settled for several thousand years. Neolithic flints, pottery shards, and workman's tools have been discovered, some dating back to the end of the ice age.

Castle Hill's first defences were probably constructed around 2500 years BCE. These were likely to be a circular series of ramparts and ditches which were dug out of the hillside. The cliffs and the sloped defences of Castle Hill were easier to defend and provided a place of safety for the local inhabitants and their animals.

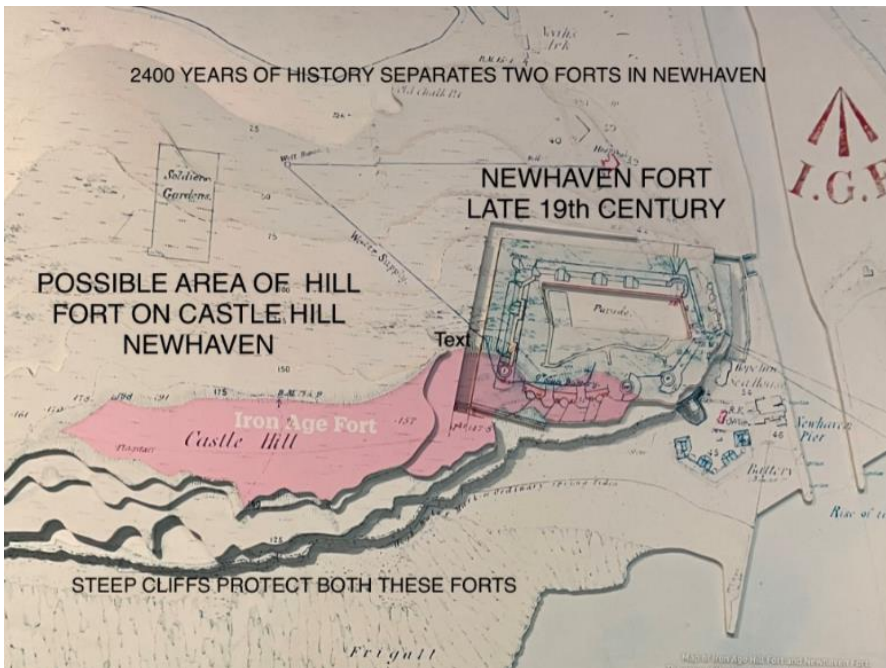


Image from the "Lost Fort Exhibition" Courtesy of Newhaven Fort © Newhaven Fort

18.Directions. Take the path leading to the Fort Car Park, there is a great view of the town and port at the round memorial bench.



Photos: Memorial Bench (inc. close up) Newhaven Fort. C Joslin 2023

CA. How many poppies are there on the bench sculpture?

19. **Directions** Head to the path on the south of the Fort Car Park and follow it along until you reach the disused Gun Battery.

20. National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) Tower. *Researcher: B Hitchen*

The NCI was established in 1994 following the death of two local fisherman at Bass Point in Cornwall. Its' aim was to be the "eyes and ears" of the Coastguard and to keep the users of the coast safe.

The **Newhaven branch** was formed in 2004 in the former Coastguard lookout overlooking Seaford bay. It is run by 70 volunteers covering from 08.00 to 20.00 or sunset, seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year.

For more information, go to: <https://www.nci.org.uk/newhaven>



Photo: The NCI Tower 2023 C Joslin

21. **Directions.** You can continue up the hill beyond the path onto the grass where you can enjoy the view over the sea (taking care on the uneven terrain). To the east you will see Seaford Bay, in front of you is the Breakwater and Harbour Mouth, and to the East are the cliffs towards Peacehaven.

22. HMS. Brazen – Sad Days in Newhaven. *Researchers: A Delaney, E Delaney*

In January 1800, HMS Brazen, under Captain James Hanson, was patrolling the south coast "for the protection of trade and the annoyance of the enemy". On 25th January a French naval vessel was detained and sent to Portsmouth along with some of the Brazen crew, while the Brazen continued to patrol the south coast. That night, a storm blew up and the Brazen was blown onto rocks just west of Newhaven.

At 6am the following morning, the alarm was raised. Local people hoping to rescue any crew were forced back by the waves. Meanwhile, a cage containing two men was lowered down the cliff face to rescue men in the water. Only one man, Jeremiah Hill, a non-swimmer was saved.



From a painting by Ted Shipsey © Newhaven Historical Society A029-084



From a painting by Ted Shipsey © Newhaven Historical Society A027-052

23. Castle Hill Nature Reserve *Researchers: A Delaney, E Delaney*

Castle Hill is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which occupies the Northern slopes of the hill and the clifftop area to the west of the Fort. The 164 hectare LNR is owned by Lewes District Council and managed by them, together with the Castle Hill Volunteer Group. It falls within the 46 hectare Castle Hill Nature Reserve, which was designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) in 1975. It is also part of the South Downs National Park, which was created in 2010. The Brighton to Newhaven Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest also partially overlaps the Castle Hill Nature Reserve.

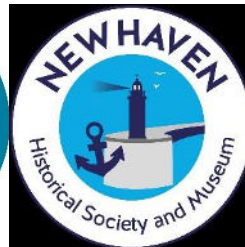
23. Wildlife on the Reserve *Researchers: A Delaney, E Delaney*

Castle Hill is an area of rich chalk grassland with the cliffs to the South and large areas of scrub with substantial grassy glades. It is home to badgers, foxes, rabbits, voles, and mice. Snakes (including adders and grass snakes) and Lizards are present though rarely seen. Fulmars, Gulls, and Kittiwakes nest on the cliffs and are best viewed from the beach. A wide variety of birds can be seen and heard during the year. The gorse, hawthorn and often dense scrub provide a home and food supply for different birds such as the stonechat, chiffchaff, whitethroat, and the Dartford warbler.

Castle Hill is regarded as one of the best sites in Sussex for Hymenoptera (bees, wasps, and ants).

SCDA would like to thank:

The National Lottery Heritage fund, Dr Jenny Flood, Newhaven Museum, St Michaels Church and the wonderful group of Newhaven locals who gave up their time and worked so diligently to produce this inciteful heritage route including: Jason Ede, Linda Hitchen, Brian Hitchen, Robert Littleford, Anthony Delaney, Eileen Delaney, Gretchen Heffernan and Rachael Adams.



There are two other walks as part of the Newhaven Heritage Routes Series- exploring East Side and Central Newhaven.

Further research

We recommend the following websites as a great starting point to further develop your knowledge of Newhaven's Heritage:

Newhaven Museum: <https://www.newhavenhistoricalsociety.org.uk/museum-archives>

Our Newhaven: <http://www.ournewhaven.org.uk/>

Newhaven Fort: <https://www.newhavenfort.org.uk/>