



Marshes & Meadows at Newtown!

Welcome to Newtown!

Newtown lies within the Isle of Wight AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) which, in total, covers almost 50% of the island and was designated in 1963.

It also lies within the Hamstead Heritage Coast, which was recognized in 1974 for its beautiful undeveloped and secretive coastline of soft clay cliffs, woodland, farmland, and estuaries with their inlets, creeks and saltmarshes.

The *Newtown National Nature Reserve*, owned and managed by the National Trust, is the only National Nature Reserve on the Isle of Wight. Even on a grey day this is clearly a very special place... let's find out why!



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A prosperous salt works once existed in Newtown and you can still see the large square ponds which were dug as salterns for the manufacture of salt close to the boathouse at the quay (pictured).

In 1344 it was assessed as twice the value of Newport; the port was thriving and was considered the safest on the island.

The 'new' Newtown...

The great dreams of those first inhabitants of Newtown that it would become a rich port were, unfortunately for them, short lived.

Along came the plague and in 1377 the French raided the town and destroyed much of it.



By the 16th Century, Newtown had been overshadowed by the more easily defended town of Newport, which then grew into the island's main port.

Actually, Newtown's failure as a port has meant that it is a rare example of a medieval new town that has not been developed over.

You can still see the Town Hall and walking down the street you will pass the boundaries of the house plots belonging to individual medieval tenants, known as 'burgage plots' – some of these have houses on and some remain as small paddocks.

Activity: Newtown Highlights!

Take a walk through the modern hamlet of Newtown and discover some its oldest building and features...

Can You Find?	Tick!
<p>The Town Hall with no town! This 17th Century building, now restored, is the only real evidence in this now tiny hamlet of the settlement's former prosperity and importance.</p> <p>It was given to the National Trust in 1933 by the mysterious 'Ferguson Gang'; a gang of mask-wearing young women with fictitious names like 'Red Biddy' who campaigned to preserve examples of 'traditional England'.</p>	
<p>Noah's Ark, once a public House, but closed in 1916 and now a private</p> <h2>Teaching resources by Education Destination Ltd.</h2> <p>Curriculum relevant materials supporting school trips to the Isle of Wight</p> <p>Book today with Education Destination and get full access to this and hundreds more quality resources</p> <p>www.edudest.uk</p>	
<p>Newtown's old high street, now much shorter than it once was. It contains some of the oldest cottages such as Hollis Cottage, owned by the National Trust. The last full time 'river man' in the town lived here until his death in 1893.</p>	
<p>Nobby's Butt, a small field beside Nobby's cottage, which was one of the old medieval 'Burgage plots'.</p>	
<p>The pump – a failed attempt at bringing piped water to the town, the project was abandoned when the digging found water which was contaminated and salty!</p>	
<p>The Church, built in 1837, built on the site of a chapel which dated from the 1400's.</p>	
<p>Rose and Myrtle Cottage, built from 1860-1885 by brick makers. Myrtle Cottage showcases their fine decorative yellow bricks.</p>	
<p>Gold Street, now grassed over behind a stile on the right hand-side. Named to demonstrate the aspirations of the early settlers.</p>	
<p>Marsh Farm House, built around 1830, on the corner before the path leads down towards the marshes and meadows.</p>	

Nature at Newtown!

Newtown Nature Reserve has a wide array of different habitats. Can you unscramble the jumbled-up words below to find out what types of habitats/ecosystems exist here..?

DMESAWO = _____

OHDSGERWE = _____

CBURS = _____

TMDFSAUL = _____

MHASASRLT = _____

OWDDLNOA = _____

After walking down past Marsh Farm House, you will reach the bird hide.

There is a lot of information here about the many different species of birds that are found here, and often there are also National Trust Volunteers on hand to help you identify what you can see.

Activity: Feathered friends...

See what birds you can observe and identify, and write them down in the box below.



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Black-headed Gull



Oystercatcher

Birth of the Saltmarshes

The saltmarshes you see here weren't always here. There was a Sea wall and behind it was grazing pasture. In November 1954 flooding breached the sea wall and 1.5m of sea water flooded the grazing pasture. Gradually, saltmarsh developed – this is how it works:

Saltmarshes start life as little more than a lot of mud! Mud is deposited in the sheltered waters and gradually builds up to above the water level. It's a pretty horrible place to try to grow, but some plants are tolerant of the very salty and very exposed conditions and will colonise the mud. These plants are called pioneer species and are just like the pioneers of the wild west who were the first to explore and settle there... these tough little plants are the first to 'settle' on the mudflats and start up a saltmarsh. As these first plants trap more sediment and add nutrients when they die and decompose, other plants are able to grow there.

And so it goes; the saltmarsh gradually becomes more and more developed and the higher marsh, which is not covered by the sea very often, contains a great variety of species. Creeks wind their way through the marsh, bringing water in on the high tide and out on the low tide. Between some of the creeks are salt pans which are shallow pools of sea water and it is far too hostile for anything to grow here!

Activity: Feature Foray! Can you find...

1. The following saltmarsh plants:

2. A salt pan and a creek?



Sea Lavender with its
striking purple flowers



The edible saltmarsh
Samphire



Walking up away from the saltmarshes you will pass through some of the richest flower meadows on the island.

Before the hay is cut, you will find a vast array of flowers, and butterflies which feed on them.

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1. Write down 3 colours that you can see:

2. Write down 2 sounds that you can hear:

3. Write down 3 adjectives (describing words) that best describe your special spot:

4. Draw a picture of your favourite view from your special spot:

