

Gurnard Historic (Pub) Walk

ISLE OF WIGHT
CLASSIC
BUSES
BEER
& WALKS
WEEKEND



Cowes Heritage



IW Branch CAMRA

An historic journey between the pubs of Gurnard Village and Seafront, marking the rise and development of the Village of Roman descent, whose priority was to build its pub before its church.

Contents

An Introduction to Gurnard

Welcome to Gurnard, a small village that shares its name with a bony, but, rather delicious fish. Which came first is difficult to say, but Gurnard was not always known by this name, in its present form, and history tells us of previous versions being Gurnet, Gurnore in 1333 and de Gonore in 1280.

Locality Background

There was settlement in the Gurnard area from, at least Roman times, confirmed by the discovery of a sunken Roman Villa of the headland west of Gurnard Marsh in the late 19th century. A fort was also built on the same region of headland, believed to date from around 1600, although that, too, was consumed by the tide and lay forgotten until it was rediscovered alongside the Villa. Before Cowes became an established port, the crossing point was from Lepe Beach, opposite Gurnard Bay, and the River Luck was a navigable water way, it is believed, right up to Pallance Road (then, Tinkers Lane), in Northwood. Recently large stone block with iron rings was found at the bottom of Harness Lane (off Rew Street), in a field called cannons field, which may have been a point of armament to repel the repeated French invasions of the era.

Establishment of the Current Village

In the late 19th Century, Gurnard was developed as a home for retired officers, up the hill, where the present heart of the village lies. By the end of the century, Gurnard had its own constable and nine coast guards (the cottages are at the top of Solent View Road), and a corresponding boathouse, with timber slipway, on the beach, and accessed via a path down from the cottages; by that time, it, also had a butcher, a baker, a grocer, dairy, boot maker, school, church, pub, post office too.

The Route Described

The following pages describe the various buildings and sites that we shall be talking about on our route.

Recommended Reading

For more detail see The Pubs of Cowes, Gurnard & Northwood by David Jones, published by Cowes Heritage (now in its 3rd edition), also, see Gurnard Parish Plan -

<https://www.iwight.com/azservices/documents/2777-Gurnard%20Parish%20Plan.pdf>

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

Cowes Heritage – (www.CowesHeritage.co.uk)

A voluntary group dedicated to recording and publicising the history of Cowes.

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

John Nicholson, Chairman IW Branch CAMRA (juann@btconnect.com)

Jeff Sechiari, National Chairman BHS (jeff.sechiari@btinternet.com)

Dave Jones, Cowes Heritage (davwin@talktalk.net)

Sheila Caws (local historian)

The Portland Inn, Worsley Road

The Portland is unusual; a pub that opened about 20 years ago in 1991/92. Portland House, originally named Elim, was built by Edmund Pritchett, a member of the well-known local brick making family, where he lived with his ten children. The brick works were behind the house

Later owned by the Matthews family and then by Froud's. Followed by Mr C Henry Jolliffe who started a bicycle shop and taxi business after returning from the First World War, his mother

owned Portland House which was also a grocer's shop and bakery. The old bake-house is still standing behind the Portland. Jolliffe's used one part as a grocer's and the rest for bicycle and motoring parts. The grocer's was later sold to Mr G Snook; many people will remember his sons Peter and Ron, ably assisted by



shop assistants, Hazel and Joyce, who ran it for many years, although they did give up bread making. Following the death of his father in 1964 Roy Jolliffe took over the taxi business running it until he retired.



Fred and Rita Moore took over the shop initially as a general store, later taking over Jolliffe's, next door, to sell hardware. Fred a Londoner and a real character felt life would be better as a pub landlord. After some battles with planning and licensing the new pub opened its doors in 1992 and the Portland Inn was born.

Fred's vision has proved to be a sound business venture. Today Mark and Kim

Hammond run this popular village pub that gives Gurnard something rapidly disappearing elsewhere, a village local.



Fred and Rita Moore with their daughter Linda. Fred is clearly in his element as a pub landlord



The Gurnard Hotel (former site)

A substantial building, situated on the corner of Church Rd and Worsley Rd. Demolished in the 1980s and replaced by Buckler's View semi sheltered accommodation.

The earliest recorded landlord is in 1871, one Joseph Ogburn. Later, landlord Alfred Kemp & his wife were convicted in January 1887 of assault of servant girl Fanny Bonner. As with many such cases there was an element of doubt but the bench believed the testimony of Fanny, a very simple soul. On 7th July 1888 Alfred's application for a carriage licence was refused, 2 weeks later he advertised a white mare & harness for sale; another good idea scuppered. 1896 & 1897 S Dredge is shown as landlord. In 1901 Alfred Perry was tenant although the licence was later transferred in November 1902 from the official receiver of bankruptcy as trustees of the estate of Alfred Perry to Harry James Humby. Landlords include: in 1906 Charles Spencer, 1931 Charles Albert Edward Brading, 1937 N.J. Rodd, 1939 Arthur Howard, 1951 Mrs V. Parker. She was followed by Maurice O'Sullivan whose personality made him a great landlord. The Gurnard Hotel really buzzed when both Mrs Parker and Maurice were behind the bar.



The 1950s Gurnard Hotel darts team. Back row from left Bob Ince, George Ince, Frank Squibb, Ken Ince, Lou Scott, ?, Claude Souter, Roy Jolliffe
Front; Den Jupe, ?, Jim Caws (with cup), Len Cook, ?

Under the headline "Newport Borough Councillor was refused a drink in Gurnard Hotel" the Portsmouth Evening News on 1st December 1970 told how Laurie Say a lecturer at the Isle of Wight Technical College entered the Gurnard Hotel accompanied by three young men and two young women, one of them being another Newport Councillor Mrs Daisy Krishnamma. Landlord George MacLauchlan told Mr Say that he would not be served. The Brickwood's area manager, who happened to be at the bar, said a landlord has the right to refuse anyone a drink without explanation. Apparently, it was company policy to discourage the "long haired hippy element". Laurie Say was not impressed by this discrimination, but left without a fuss. My only comment is does it make economic sense to turn away 6 customers, or was Mr Say going to upset the regulars by being nonconformist?

On the 2nd October 1980 the Southern Echo reported that Mrs Ann Wootton was taking over from the late Don Wootton and that estate agents were looking over the property. It closed shortly afterwards.



Worsley Road

Gurnard village began to take shape in the 1850s after Captain Wilkinson RN, who had retired to Gurnard Farm, died in 1851 and his land was put up for sale for development. The wide avenue style of Worsley Road, with substantial villas, was intended to attract retired service personnel who were coming to the Island because of its connections with Queen Victoria, at Osborne.

Edmund Pritchett, of the well-known brick-making family took the first plot in Worsley Road, and established a brickyard behind Elim House, now the Portland Inn

Gurnard soon became an established village with its own shops, post office, butcher, baker and school.



Steps and path down to the shore through the old clay pit

Coast Guard Boathouse

In the middle of this part of the bay was situated the wooden structure of the coast guard boathouse (similar to a lifeboat station), long ceased, but still used by the local fishing club until the early 70s, after which the structure fell into ruin. It was Harry Spencer who, then, removed the dangerous remains and recycled the timber to help create the wooden slipways that you see today, facilitating the footbath that serves the huts (and houses) on the footpath that leads behind the Sailing Club.

Gurnard Beach & Sailing Club



Clay Pit

At the north end of Worsley Road, as the road curves around into Shore Road, and Shore Path footpath, there lies, straight ahead the old clay pit for the brickworks. To the west side (LHS), in the bushes, are some steps and a path that leads down to the beach, near where the old coastguard elevated boathouse was. Caution, if you decide to use it, as it is very uneven and can be slippery.



The rocky centre ground marks the site of the old coastguard boathouse

The main beach area, off the green and at the bottom of Shore Road, was, in its day, in the 60s, 70s and early 80s, a beach with a putting green, diving raft and paddle rafts that you could hire. Gurnard Sailing Club founded in 1931 as a working man's dinghy club, and has hosted Cowes Dinghy Week and several national championships. In 1996, the club was rebuilt with a Lottery grant, but it remains a self-help club offering high quality dinghy racing and is recognised for its long-standing contribution to the community.

The Woodvale Hotel

Another relatively modern licensed premise the Woodvale Hotel was opened in July 1932. W B Mew Langton and Co had planned to open new premises in the expanding village for a few years. They had purchased the grounds of Seabrook House in Worsley Rd in 1926. Later this plot was exchanged for land where the new hotel would be built. This was a much better position with great views over the Solent particularly at sunset. Somewhat unusually a director of Mews, Francis Mew designed the building. James Ball & Sons of Cowes built it.



Apart from the white box like 1st floor extension the Woodvale has remained relatively unchanged externally since the 1930s.



Francis Mew drawings on display in the Woodvale

Permission to open new licensed premises was not easy. It involved agreeing to give up the licence of the Falcon in Medina Rd during the licencing meeting on March 2nd 1930. Even then the decision was deferred, and at the adjourned session complex legal argument suggested that Mews, because of ownership considerations, did not have a free hand regarding the disposal of the Falcon and the application was refused.

In November the following year Mews tried again, Francis Templeman Mew, director and also architect detailed the plans outlining an expected cost of £4000. This time, subject to alterations to the ladies toilet, the application was granted. Initially the permission for a bar was refused, the suggestion being that there would have had more opposition if a bar was included. Strangely the licence when granted later was for 5½ years.

In the 1950s it had more of a hotel lounge feel than a bar, being mostly rather relaxing sofas. George Sheppard was landlord at this time. Guy and Bee Langrick ran the hotel in



the 1960s and 70s. They were followed by Brian and Joy Wescomb. Brian left his post of director at Baker Perkins

Brian & Joy Wescomb with bar staff; Nicky, Sue and (mostly hidden) Chris. Fancy dress, New Year's Eve 1989.

in Peterborough in 1979 for the opportunity of a complete change of lifestyle. They appeared to take to it like ducks to water, being popular, welcoming and successful "mine hosts" until they retired in 1989. Sadly Joy died in 1997 but for many years Brian assisted his daughter Sue at the Pier View.



IW County Press - Another great charitable event the Annual Pickle War has raised over £30,000 for charity.

When the Wescombs retired managers were put into the hotel. Nick and Graham Floyd ran the hotel for a time, followed by Sue Brockwell and Doug Parkin who ran the Woodvale for 10 years from 1997 to 2007. When John and Paula Deadman took up the reins.

Today it is still a popular venue, sitting outside on a warm summer's evening, drink in hand, watching the sunset, is a real pleasure.



