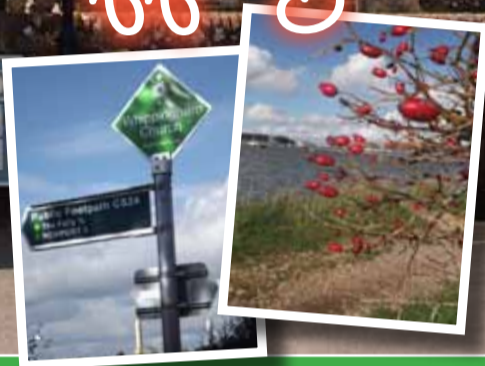


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# Waterside Whippingham



Follow the River Medina from historic Whippingham, with its close royal connections, past Island Harbour, and beyond, to Newport

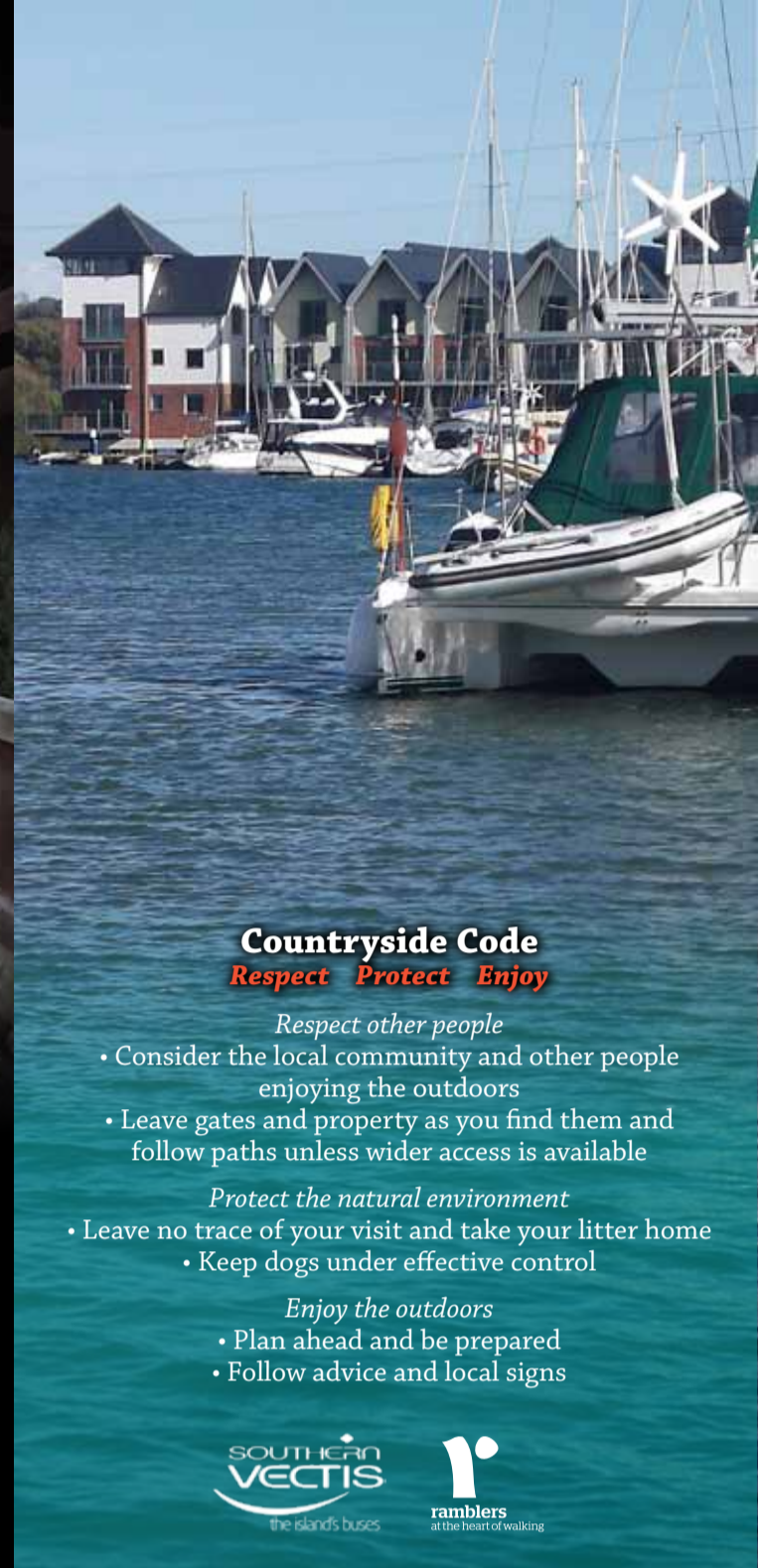
# Waterside Whippingham

**Description** This is a linear walk from Whippingham to Newport, county town of the Isle of Wight. The return journey to Whippingham can be made on the number 5 bus which leaves from the bus station in Newport. The walk explores St. Mildred's Church at Whippingham and then follows the River Medina south to Newport.

**Distance** 4.4 miles. **Start** Whippingham Forge bus stop. **Access information** This is a level walk which can become muddy in parts, depending on the weather and tidal conditions. A new improved and wider path is planned along the riverside, to enable it to be safely used by pedestrians and cyclists.

**Refreshments** Café/museum at the church, open in season Monday to Thursdays. Also the riverside Folly Inn. Café at Island Harbour. **Toilets** Inside the café at St Mildred's, also in the churchyard, and in Newport opposite the bus station. **Internet** All walks in this series can be downloaded from [www.iowramblers.com/page44.htm](http://www.iowramblers.com/page44.htm).

**Pictured** Lych gate at St Mildred's (this page); Looking east at Island Harbour (back cover); The five spires of the tower at St Mildred's (front cover)



## Countryside Code

Respect Protect Enjoy

- Respect other people
  - Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
  - Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available
- Protect the natural environment
  - Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
  - Keep dogs under effective control
- Enjoy the outdoors
  - Plan ahead and be prepared
  - Follow advice and local signs



# Waterside Whippingham

Whippingham is best known for its connections with Queen Victoria, especially its church, St Mildred's.

The village became part of the Queen's estate: she took a close interest in 'her people', providing for them in sickness and in health. This riverside walk links Whippingham with Newport, at the head of the River Medina.

## Whippingham

Perched high on the bank of the Medina and offering delightful views of the river and its surrounding countryside is St. Mildred's Church of Whippingham.

Closely linked to Osborne House, Queen Victoria's royal estate at East Cowes, the site has been a place of worship since Anglo-Saxon times. It was first redesigned by the famous Victorian architect John Nash in the early 19th century, and again in the 1850s by the Prince Consort, Prince Albert, when it became part of the royal estate.

As you step inside the church, you will be surrounded by mementoes of Victorian history and taste.

On your left is a font donated in 1860 by Queen Victoria and designed by her daughter HRH Princess Louise. Walk down the aisle towards the altar and as you come to the crossing at the centre of the building, look up to the impressive lantern tower, approximately 30 metres in height, and you will see a replica of the Order of the Garter. The rose windows in each transept are miniatures

modelled on windows in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Notice also the beautiful bronze screen of the Battenberg Chapel. It was designed by Sir Alfred Gilbert, better known for his statue of Eros in Piccadilly Circus, London. Behind the screen lies the huge marble sarcophagus of Prince Henry of Battenberg and his widow, Princess Beatrice, Queen Victoria's longest surviving child. A replica of her wedding dress can also be seen, opposite the chapel. The beautiful marble reredos (screen) at the back of the high altar is a representation of the Last Supper and was donated by King Edward VII in memory of his mother, Queen Victoria. Opposite the Battenberg Chapel is the royal pew with its own private entrance and at its centre Queen Victoria's original chair. Several memorial tablets adorn its walls, including that of the Prince Consort. Stained glass armorial windows show the arms of Queen Victoria, the Prince Consort and the Prince of Wales.

Outside the church, the churchyard contains many notable graves of famous residents of the Isle of Wight. Amongst them, the grave of Prince Louis of Battenberg and his wife Princess Victoria of Hesse, the parents of Earl Mountbatten of Burma.

## Uffa Fox

The grave of Uffa Fox, the famous yachtsman, naval architect and boat designer can be found near the north wall of the churchyard. His headstone shows a picture of a 27-foot lifeboat designed to be dropped from Vickers

Warwick aircraft to rescue downed aircrew or mariners in World War II. He became a friend of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1949 and they raced together at Cowes where he also taught the royal children to sail.



## Planes, boats and rockets

The land surrounding St Mildred's originally belonged to a farm which was converted to a larger country house in the Queen Ann style – Padmore House. The back of the house may be seen from the rose garden – it was occupied by Samuel Saunders who was a pioneer in aviation and boatbuilding. In 1910 he produced a lightweight boat which raised the world speed record to 46.5mph. The pilot was Tom Sopwith. In 1913, Sam Saunders produced the first successful amphibian flying boat, the Sopwith Bat Boat. During World War I, 80 Short 184 seaplanes were produced at the Folly Works on the bank of the River Medina. The design culminated in the Princess class long range seaplane, which could seat over 100 passengers.

Saunders-Roe was formed in 1929 and a variety of craft, planes and hovercraft was built. Rocket development also took place, with static testing of Black Knight and Black Arrow rockets at Highdown near The Needles.

Sam Saunders died in 1933. His grave is in the cemetery at St Mildred's.

# River Medina

home to Folly Works  
where World War I flying boats and seaplanes  
were designed and built



**Main picture** Looking north along the River Medina from Island Harbour  
**Inset** Prince Philip and Uffa Fox sailing at Cowes (top); Island Harbour (bottom)

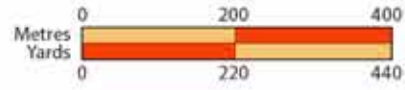
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# Waterside Whippingham

Newport has a wide choice of pubs, cafés, tea rooms and restaurants



**Route** From the bus stop near the forge in Whippingham **1**, follow the pavement on the main road towards East Cowes by the Priory School where estate children were educated in Victorian times. Queen Victoria kept a close eye on the progress of the children. Continue passing a second bus stop (Whippingham Heights) and a layby. Take the left footpath CS25 **2** towards Whippingham Church. Cross the stile and continue along the field edge to reach a stile leading onto a lane. Continue along the right side of the lane to reach St Mildred's Church **3** and to explore the many historical points of interest.

From the church return to the lane and go left passing Alms Houses to reach footpath CS24. Go left on the footpath towards The Folly and Newport. The enclosed path leads to another stile and then crosses a field with The Medina in the distance. Cross a wooden bridge and a stile and then across a field corner to enter a path in a small wood. Go over another stile and a wooden bridge and then continue on a grassy path by a wire fence. Continue through a wood to reach a lane **4**. Turn right and follow the lane to the Folly Inn by the riverside **5**. Go left through the car park on N122 footpath towards Newport Quay. The path follows the edge of the river over wooden bridges and fields to reach a marina at Island Harbour **6**. Go through a gate and then over the lock gates.

Keep to the path by the river passing the rusting hulk of the *Ryde Queen*, the last paddle steamer to operate from Portsmouth to the Island – she was withdrawn in 1969. Follow path N120 along the river edge, over bridges and recreation fields. A shingle path then takes you past buildings and to the quayside. Follow the road under a road bridge **7** and at a junction continue straight ahead on Quay Street by the law courts. At another junction, cross the busy road and continue straight on the path to the left of Newport Minster. At a road, continue straight ahead by a pizza restaurant and cross ahead at traffic lights and go into Orchard Street to find the bus station **8**.



**Pictured Inset** (top) View to the River Medina from the graveyard at St Mildred's; (bottom) The Folly Inn at the water's edge

**Information**  
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