

# Shanklin Historic Pub Walk

**ISLE OF WIGHT**  
**CLASSIC**  
**BUSES**  
**BEER**  
**& WALKS**  
**WEEKEND**



IW Branch CAMRA



**SHANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL**

*An historic walk around Shanklin, the route reveals the changing history of the settlement from a small fishing village to a major sea resort town and its continued development and popularity in the face of globalism; Shanklin still maintains its charm and character.*

# Contents

## An Introduction to Shanklin

Welcome to Shanklin, a seaside resort town, made famous by its chine, charm and water of both spring and sea.

## Establishment of the Current Village

It was not until the early 1800s that the small coastal fishing village that was Shanklin started to draw attraction and develop as a seaside holiday destination from such luminaries as Keats.

The transformation occurred relatively quickly, with the Chine becoming the first paying tourist attraction on the Island in 1817 and the Crab, Holliers and Daishes being in establishment by 1833, then increased at an even faster pace with the arrival of Queen Victoria at Osborne in 1845.

So, the revenue from smuggling activities changed to tourism and the cliff to Customs patrol paths became scenic caminaries for the visitors, now arriving by train after the opening of the line in 1864.

Noted for its pure spring water, sea air and pleasant scenery, Shanklin's heyday was in the early 1900s, and, maybe the now disappeared, after a WWII bombing raid, Royal Spa Hotel, on the Esplanade, may have marked the height of its climb, being resort of European Royals.

## Shanklin Pier

The Shanklin Esplanade & Pier Co. was formed in the 1870s and work began in August 1888 to the plans of F.C.Dixon and M.N.Ridley. The 1200 foot pier opened to steamers on 18th August 1890: facilities included a bandstand/500-seat pavilion and a pier-head landing stage. The pier was taken over by Shanklin Council in 1899. A £400 pavilion opened on 28th July 1909 but was destroyed by fire on 29th June 1918. In 1915, the landing stage was completed in 1931. During World War II, the pier was sectioned and suffered bomb damage. It was destroyed during a hurricane (made famous by BBC Weatherman Michael Fish) in October 1987. The Pier featured in the 1974 Film That'll Be The Day with David Essex and Ringo Starr.

## 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 Shanklin & District History Society <http://shanklinhistory.webplus.net/> and Shanklin Town council website <http://www.shanklintowncouncil.org.uk/history.php>. Isle of Wight History <http://www.iwhistory.org.uk/>. Visit Isle of Wight <https://www.visitisleofwight.co.uk/things-to-do/attractions/history-and-heritage>.

## The Brewery History Society – ([www.breweryhistory.com](http://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

## The Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA – ([www.wightwash.org.uk](http://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

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## Shanklin Railway Station

Dating back to 1864, this grade II listed building is the UK network's southernmost railway station.

### Jarge – the “outside” porter

Until the 1950s most holidaymakers arrived in Shanklin by train. As they came out of the station they might well have encountered a man on the forecourt, with a two-wheeled trolley, who hoped to earn a shilling or two by carrying their bags. This was George Hawksworth, known as *Jarge*, and the brass badge fixed to his distinctive brown trilby hat, showed him to be licensed by the Railway Company as an Outside Porter.

He always wore a suit, knee length gaiters and polished boots. His hat sat low on his forehead, perhaps weighed down by the heavy brass badge.

Spotting a likely customer, he would call out, *Carry your bag, Sir*, or even the unorthodox, *Carry your bag, Sir; Got hobnail boots, Sir; But can't I run, direckly minnet, Sir (!)* and if visitors went along with this, *Jarge* would load his red and green trolley and lead them to their hotel or guest house.

On Saturdays, though, when passengers emerged from a train, *Jarge* often faced competition from local lads whose homemade wooden handcarts trundled along on old pram wheels. They would use tricks to distract him, winding him up unmercifully, and pirate customers behind his back. Poor *Jarge* could seldom match these quick-witted youngsters and he was often reduced to cursing and threatening retribution.

In many ways *Jarge* was a throwback to the former golden era of rail travel. When he finally handed in his badge, a national newspaper reported him as the longest-serving Outside Porter in the entire country.



## The Marine Hotel (former site)

Known also as *The Station*, the Marine Hotel a convenient and popular stopping point for visitors to Shanklin and the station, with a busy public bar.



## Sacred Heart, Atherley Road

Destroyed by a direct hit during a bombing raid on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1943 in the Second World War the parish church was rebuilt in striking style by local architect, R Lethieullier Gilbert of Gilbert & Hobson of Ventnor.



## The Green Dragon (former site)

On the corner of Atherley and North Road, the former establishment dates from at least 1871, converted to housing in ?????.

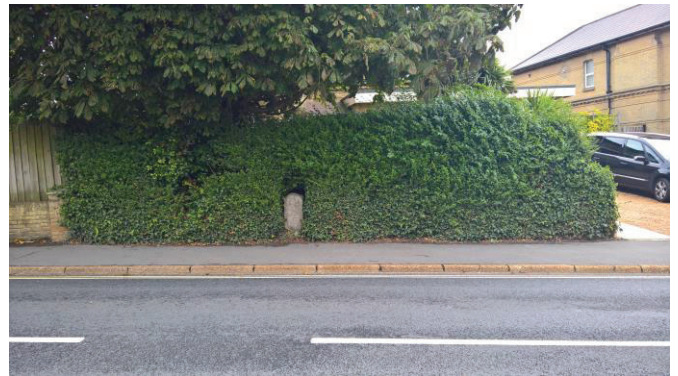


## The Madeira Bars (former site)

Annexed to the Madeira Hotel in Queens Road and dating back to at least 1889, the Madeira Bars was a spacious and popular venue right up to its closure and demolition in the 1989.

## Arthurs Hill

Tucked in the hedge on the south side of Arthurs Hill, near the junction with Beatrice Avenue, sits one of two milestones in Shanklin, this one marking the distance to Ryde. The other marks the distance to Ventnor and is situated in Church Road on the other side of the town.



## The Clarendon (former site)

Where North Road meets Clarendon Road, stood the Clarendon, which contained wood from the wreck of the Clarendon (1836 - which inspired engravings and poem). It finally closed its doors in 2006 and is now demolished and replaced with flats.

## Queens Road to The East Cliff Promenade

The walk along Queens Road takes you past the cross junction with Palmerston Road, named after one of the four Prime ministers in history to have come from the Isle of Wight, then to Osborne Road and the former Keats Inn, a popular venue and night spot originally built as built in around 1880 as Shanklin Club. a mixture of Gothic and Mughal styles and named to commemorate the famous poet who derived much inspiration from his time staying in Shanklin in 1819.

## Osborne Steps

The steps housed an important pill box during the second world war, it is thought that the pill box may have, originally, been intended as a strategic pumping station for PLUTO (pipeline under the ocean) fuel supply to northern France. More recently, from these steps, one would have seen our Olympic Gold Medallist, Louis Attrill practicing his rowing with Shanklin Rowing Club, based on the beach below.



## The Lift

The original lift, built in the early 1900s, was an hydraulically operated cage in a metal framework. Damaged during the war, it was eventually demolished and replaced with the current structure in 1958.

## The Royal Spa Hotel (former site) & PLUTO

At the base of the lift, where the carpark was sited, stood the Royal Spa Hotel, famed for its quality, its water and its entertainment. Disguised as bomb damaged, the Royal Spa Hotel was one of the pumping stations for the PLUTO (Pipeline Under the Ocean) fuel line, another being Shanklin Beach Hotel (formerly Ocean View Hotel), midway along the Esplanade.



## The Esplanade

Travelling down from the Chine Inn to the Esplanade, where three grand bars stand one next to the other. The Aqua, The Steamer Inn

and The Waterfront Inn, all offering full menus and accommodation for the modern visitor, the bars are also popular venues for locals who just want to pop in for a drink or a meal out.

## A Note on Darwin, Dickens, Longfellow & Marx

It was at the Waterfront Inn, previously known as the Norfolk House Hotel, where Charles Darwin stayed for a few weeks during 1858, whilst writing *The Origin of Species*. Dickens set a scene in *Our Mutual Friend* from his experience of Shanklin beach, Longfellow stayed in what is now Holliers, and the Marx visited Shanklin in 1875, with his wife, staying with friends.



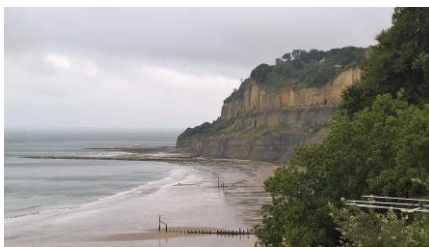
## Fisherman's Cottage

This shore side cottage sits at the foot of Shanklin Chine, or, historically, Chynklyng Chine, from which the name of the town is etymologically derived. Built in 1817 by William Colenutt who created the path through the Chine and developed its commercial aspect. He was, also, the first to operate bathing machines. The Cottage was famed for its heated seawater baths, the last of which was moved to the Chine museum in 1970. The Cottage remained in the same family until 1960. Now it is a freehouse open from March to October.

## The Chine Inn

Climb the zig-zagging Appley Steps to the Chine Inn, situated at the top of the mouth of the chine, the building can be traced back to as far as 1621.

## Dunnose Point Lookout



On the corner of Everton Lane and Chine Avenue is a superb vantage point, well worth climbing the few steps to see the spectacular view of Dunnose Point.



## Tower Cottage Gardens & Vernon Meadows

A brief walk through Tower Cottage Gardens, once the property of Tower Cottage, as the name suggests, which was lost to subsidence in 1947, the property still marked by the gate pillars at its entrance onto Chine Avenue, leading to Vernon Meadows, now a carpark, but once the gardens attached to Vernon Cottage. On the corner with the High Street stand the WWI war memorial and small garden, where 100 bulbs were planted to commemorate the centenary of the Great War, the first bulb being planted by Prince Edward.

## Old Shanklin Village Pubs

The Crab Inn has been serving the community since the 1830s, when Shanklin was no more than a few cottages set in this part of the Village, around the Chine, it's Longfellow Room named after the stay of Longfellow in July 1868. The Village Inn, on the other side of the road, was, once, the only shop in the village, as a grocers, bakers and general store. On the bend is Holliers Hotel, selected by Sir Edward Elgar for his honeymoon in 1889. Opposite is the celebrated King Harry's, a regular award winner in the local CAMRA pub of the year competition.



## Vernon Cottage

At the top of the hill, Built in 1817, and now a tourist information centre as well as renowned eatery and place to stay, in its day, Vernon Cottage was at the heart of Shanklin's smuggler heritage, with a secret tunnel to the chine and a hidden room inside the building – amongst other wonders and delights.

## Shanklin Brewery Co Ltd



was originally, opened in 1879 as the Shanklin Literary Institute and funded by public subscription. It comprised an entertainments hall and meeting rooms, and served as the Town Hall and Mayor's Parlour for the Urban District Council

In 1913 the Town Council determined that the entire building became Town Hall, and after a fire in the early 1930s, the building was restored and reopened in 1934 to incorporate Shanklin Theatre.

It was still used as the Town Hall when South Wight Borough Council was created in 1974, but ceased in this function when Isle of Wight Council Unitary Authority was created in 1995.

The present Theatre was taken over by a Trust, supported by the Town Council, in 2010, and continues in its tradition of playing host to many famous names and acts such as Al Murray, Acker Bilk, Julian Clary, and the Moscow State Circus.

## High Street to Victoria Avenue

Walking back up the High Street, passed the Rock Shop, featured in Anneka Rice's 1985 Treasure Hunt, it is worth glancing down Eastcliff Road at the cluster of old cottages and the empirical Masonic Hall.

At the top of the hill, sits Daish's Hotel, once graced by Queen Victoria, and just past that is Pomona Road, the site of the short lived Shanklin Brewery, (1944 – 53, see label collection, opposite), but sited there because of a natural spring.

Looking down Victoria Road, the white line on the outside of the Keep Clear sign marks the junction of the three pastoral parishes of St Blasius, St Paul and St Saviour.

## Shanklin Theatre

Given to the people of Shanklin by the Lord of the Manor, Mr. Popham-White, the building



## The Town Square

The Town Square is situated at the end of Western road, outside what used to be the Nat West bank, At the next junction, with Landguard Road, is the United Reformed Church, whose clock tower serves as the Town Clock and is being restored and maintained by the Town Council.

Looking down Palmerston Road, on the other side of the High Street, the striking yellow building with the rose



window in the gable was a former playhouse/ cinema and is now a Chapter one building.

## The Plough & Barleycorn

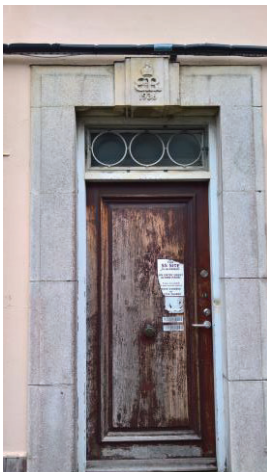
Situated in North Road, just past the junction with Regent Street, originally a pub serving the rural agricultural community of Gatten, now absorbed into the relatively new town of Shanklin, this thriving community establishment was completely renovated and reopened by its owners in 2015.

## Regent Street

Looking above the buildings along Regent Street, gives clue to their former history, such as that of the building currently housing CoOp.

## The Falcon

As indicated by the sign over the entrance, since its establishment in 1842, The Falcon has been a popular town centre pub hosting vibrant community engagement, sadly, now, one of only a couple left in the town centre.



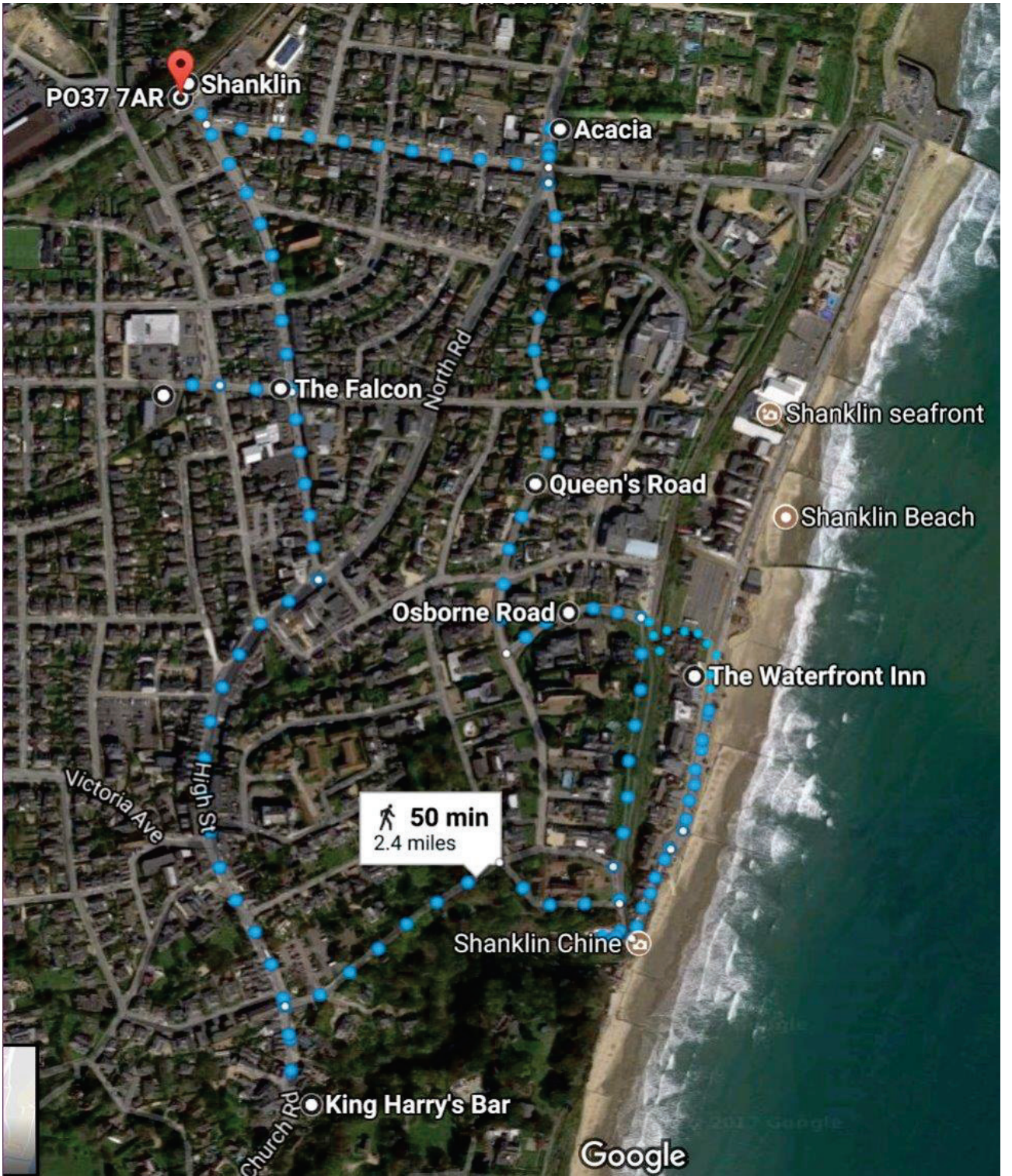
## Collingwood Road

A brief detour down Collingwood Road, past the beautifully kept British Legion club, dating from 1931, is the BT former Post Office building, with a crest over its doorway, marking its opening in 1936 and commemorating the King who was never crowned.



## Return to the Station

Passing back along Regent Street leads past the Church of St Pauls, with its unusual timber top to its tower. The church suffered a bomb dropped during the second world war, 1943, killing the resident vicar, the Revd Irons (relative of the famous actor, Jeremy).



**Route Map**

- Shanklin St Station Yard
- Atherley Road
- Arthur's Hill
- Queens Road
- Osborne Road
- Osborne Steps
- The Esplanade
- Appley Steps
- Everton Lane
- Tower Gardens
- High Street
- King Harry's
- Regent Street
- Collingwood Road
- Station Yard