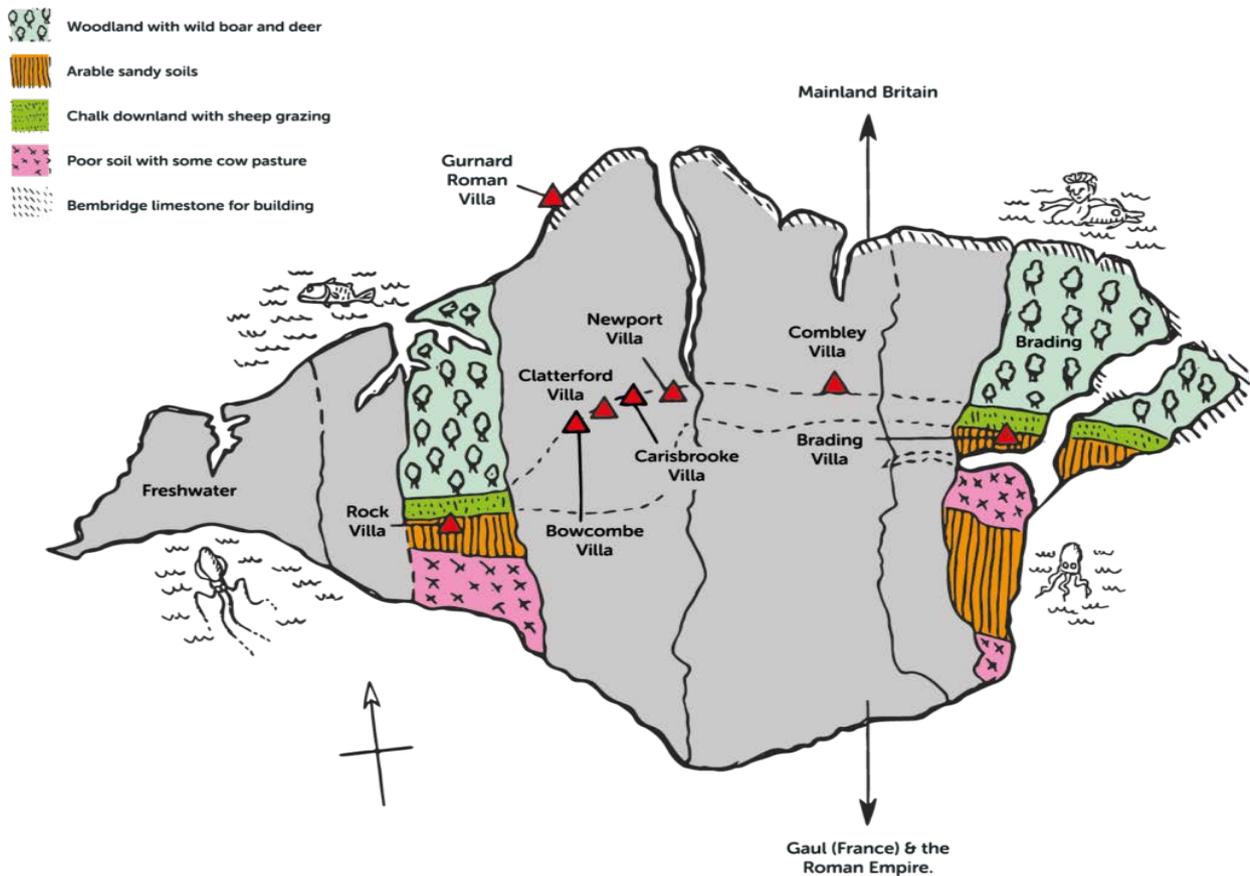


Eight Known Roman Villa sites in the Isle of Wight



Above illustration used with permission of Brading Roman Villa.

The eight known Roman Villas in date order of discovery.

Rock Villa, Near Brighthston:1831. In c1831 remains of a hypocaust were found at the site. The building is of a corridor house type on a terrace cut into the hillside. Partial excavation in 1975 has confirmed that the building includes a corridor lying north west-south east fronting a range of at least five rooms which lay to the north east of the corridor. The interior walls had been decorated with painted plaster. Coins and pottery dated the original structure to A.D.275-300.

Clatterford: 1856. Geophysical survey and excavations carried out by English Heritage revealed the plan of the later villa complex, and suggested that the villa, or its proto-settlement, may date to the time of the Roman Conquest.

Carisbrooke: 1859. An aisled farmhouse. Discovered in the garden of Carisbrooke Vicarage by Rev. Spickernall in 1859. The villa, which is aligned north west-south east, includes a bath house and hypocaust with further associated features, including rooms surrounding an atrium, to the north. These features have been revealed and their extent recorded by part excavation. The villa is recorded as being of 'basilican plan'.

Bowcombe: c1860? Awaiting excavation.

Gurnard: 1864. Mr. Edwin Joseph Smith first observed fragments of the Villa in 1864. In total 3 rooms were unearthed. The length of the south wall of the building is 42 feet 7 inches; and of the north wall, 35 feet, a portion of that wall having fallen into the sea. Between these two walls are three rooms, two of which were about 15 feet long, and 9 feet 9 inches; having a tessellated pavement without pattern, but composed, apparently, of small square pieces of broken tile.

On the pavement of the middle room were found several fragments of Samian ware and some coins. The west room had two doors. The vestiges of the door in the south wall are near the edge

of the cliff. The door on its north side is not opposite to this, but a few feet from the other end of the room. The remains have been lost by sea erosion.

Combley: 1864. An aisled farmhouse. Discovered in 1867 but excavations were started in 1910 by Mr Arnold. Further excavation was undertaken by the I.W. Nat. Hist & Arch. Soc. under Mr Fennelly in 1968-79. The main villa building aligned north east-south west, lies on the mid slope c.200m east of a spring which lies on the upper slopes of the combe. The villa complex includes a bath house and aisled building linked by a corridor with further associated features, including a courtyard to the south. These features have been revealed and their extent recorded by partial excavation. The main villa building, and bath house lie at the north end of a courtyard. *The Villa is in the grounds of Robin Hill country theme park.*

Brading: 1879. (known as Morton) A courtyard villa complex. Discovered in 1879 by Farmer Munns and Capt. John Thorp after Farmer Munns had found the first of 4 mosaics. The site was excavated under, John. E. Price & F.G. Hilton Price. (They were not related)
Brading Roman villa is situated between the lower slopes of Brading Downs and the floodplain of the River Yar, overlooking the former coastal inlet at Brading Haven. Excavations between 1881 and 1900 revealed a winged corridor type villa with evidence of occupation between the second and fourth centuries AD. The central, western block of the villa contained the living quarters which included four rooms with elaborate and extremely high-quality mosaic floors. Numerous finds such as painted wall plaster and window glass further indicate the high status of the villa. Brading houses some of the UKs best preserved mosaics.

Newport: 1926. Discovered in 1926. Excavated under Percy Stone from 1927. The villa, which is aligned north east-south west and has an entrance on its south side, includes two wings with a corridor joining them. shows the original arrangement of a bath-house and furnace in the south west wing with further rooms to the north east, one of which incorporated a hypocaust. The villa is of winged-corridor type, a single storey building with a corridor or verandah at the front between two projecting wings. In the room adjacent to the bath suite part of a tessellated floor and a fireplace remain in their original positions.

Victorian notes:

It is more than possible that much of the remains of the Roman colonization of the Isle of Wight was swept away in the terrific subsidence which pressed the natural ruins further and further towards the wide waste of waters which washed the rugged outline of the adjacent shore, until all those parts which were soluble became rapidly disunited, and the rocks which rolled onwards formed those long reefs which have been so prolific a scene of lurking dangers for the mariners of after years.

To the westward of Chale, it is very clear that portions of the cliff have been giving way under the action of the sea from a very distant date until the present day, and it is equally certain that those slips have carried away with them many relics of the early inhabitants of that part of the Isle of Wight at least, for in the month of May last (1855), whilst minutely examining the south side of the island, there were discovered in the cliff, at a spot named Barnes, in the parish of Bright-stone, traces of an extensive Roman pottery, of which every evidence would have been destroyed in the havoc of another winter. Whilst near Chale a funereal urn, partly exposed, was taken from the mouldering soil of the cliffs some few years since.

Source:

Tomalin, David. The Newport Villa and Roman Wight. 1975.

Tomalin David. Roman Wight 1987. IOW County Council.

IOW County Council.

Hillier, George. History and Antiquities of the IOW. 1856. See the Possession of the IOW by the Romans. Pp 12-19.

British Archaeological Association.

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Vectis Archaeological Trust. (VAT)

<http://www.vectisarchaeology.org.uk/>