

# Medieval settlement and cultivation remains at Newtown

## A Scheduled Monument in Calbourne, Isle of Wight

The monument, which falls into three separate areas of protection, includes abandoned areas of the medieval settlement of Francheville or Newtown, situated on a low spur between tidal creeks on the northern coast of the Isle of Wight. The settlement was founded by the Bishops of Winchester in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century and constructed in a planned manner with the two main streets, Gold Street and High Street, running parallel on an east to west axis. The streets were lined with burgage plots, narrow strips for the use of burgesses. Much of the pattern of the medieval town has been fossilized within later field boundaries and a representative sample is included within the scheduling. In the first area of protection the remains include an abandoned series of burgage plots immediately south of High Street and an adjacent area of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. The plots are rectangular in plan and measure approximately 20m by 50m with their long axes roughly north to south and their boundaries defined by low banks and ditches, some of which have been planted with later field hedges.

In the second area of protection the abandoned burgage plots are situated either side of the eastern end of the former High Street, now surviving as a field track. One of the plots to the north of the street contains a low rectangular platform 0.3m high, 10m in length and 7m in width which is thought to represent the location of a building. No structure is shown here on any of the surviving post-medieval maps and the platform is likely to be medieval in origin. A series of medieval strip fields with north to south orientated boundary banks and ridge and furrow cultivation are situated at the eastern end of the former street, and further smaller areas of ridge and furrow abut its southern side.

The third area of protection includes an abandoned section of the former Gold Street, north of which are a further series of burgage plots and a smaller east to west orientated street which maps show had fallen into disuse by 1768. The Bishop of Winchester's Court Roll for the year 1254-5 contains the first documentary reference to the settlement, then recorded as the new borough of Francheville or 'Freetown'. There are known to have been 73 plots in the borough, which was the last of the town foundations of the Bishops of Winchester and probably replaced an earlier settlement called Stretley. There is some evidence to suggest that by as early as 1334 the settlement was already in economic decline and in 1377 it was attacked and burned by French raiders. Two years later 31 households were considered eligible to pay the Lay Subsidy. In 1559 it was recorded that there were then no 'good houses' standing, and the 1674 Hearth Tax returns indicate that there were only eleven residences within the town, a number which remained relatively constant until the 20th century. Nevertheless, between 1584 and 1832, when it was disenfranchised, Newtown sent two representatives to parliament. A map of 1768 clearly shows the streets, plot boundaries and cultivation strips and both names them and identifies ownership. All fences, walls, feed troughs, ponds, modern services and the surfaces of all paths and tracks are excluded from the scheduling although the ground beneath them is included.

*Source: Historic England*

### Reasons for Scheduling

Medieval settlements in England were marked by great regional diversity in form, size and type, and the protection of their archaeological remains needs to take these differences into account. To do this, England has been divided into three broad Provinces on the basis of each area's distinctive mixture of nucleated and dispersed settlements. These can be further divided into sub-Provinces and local regions, possessing characteristics which have gradually evolved during the past 1500 years or more.

This monument lies in the East Wessex sub-Province of the south-eastern Province, an area in which settlement characteristics are shaped by strong contrasts in terrain. This is seen in the division between the chalk Downs, where chains of nucleated settlements concentrate in the valleys, and the Hampshire Basin, still dominated by the woodlands and open commons of the ancient New Forest, where nucleated sites are largely absent. Along the coastal strip extending into Sussex are more nucleated sites, while in Hampshire some coastal areas and inland valleys are marked by high densities of dispersed settlement, much of it post-medieval. Medieval settlement plans vary enormously, but when they survive as earthworks their most distinguishing features include roads and minor tracks, platforms on which stood houses and other buildings such as barns, enclosed crofts and small paddocks.

The medieval settlement and cultivation remains at Newtown survive well as a series of earthworks and buried deposits. Many areas have remained undisturbed since their abandonment and the survival of archaeological deposits relating to their occupation and use is likely to be good. These deposits will contain important information about the dating, layout and economy of the settlement, and together with contemporary documents relating to it, will provide a good opportunity to understand the mechanisms behind its development, decline and eventual abandonment.

### **Source: Historic England**

#### Sources

##### **Books and journals**

Basford, H V, The Vectis Report: A Survey of Isle of Wight Archaeology, (1980), 45-48  
Basford, H V, The Vectis Report: A Survey of Isle of Wight Archaeology, (1980), 45-48  
Hampshire County Council, , EUS of the Isle of Wights Historic Towns: Historic Newtown, (1997)

##### **Other**

Holyoak, V., Sketch Survey, Field Notes and key for Newtown, Isle of Wight, (1999)

Title: Ordnance Survey 6" Series, 1st Edition

Source Date: 1866

Author:

Publisher:

Surveyor:

Title: Plan of Harts Farm, Newtown, Isle of Wight

Source Date: 1880

Author:

Publisher:

Surveyor:

### **Source: Historic England**

#### Coordinates

Latitude: 50.7132 / 50°42'47"N = Longitude: -1.3989 / 1°23'56"W

OS Eastings: 442532.987167 = OS Northings: 90563.746889 =OS Grid: SZ425905

Mapcode National: GBR 8B6.74F =Mapcode Global: FRA 77Y6.BTB

**Entry Name:** Medieval settlement and cultivation remains at Newtown

**Scheduled Date:** 7 September 2000

**Source:** Historic England

**Source ID:** 1019196

**English Heritage Legacy ID:** 33957

**County:** Isle of Wight

**Civil Parish:** Calbourne

**Traditional County:** Hampshire

**Lieutenancy Area (Ceremonial County):** Isle of Wight

**Church of England Parish:** Newtown Holy Spirit

**Church of England Diocese:** Portsmouth.