

Introduction

Contacts

Harbour Master 01736 362523, VHF 12

Newlyn has got to be one of the busier fishing harbours in SW England in terms of the value of the catches that are landed there. Until quite recently the whole harbour, and surrounding areas were geared to the needs of fisherman, and the town was virtually run by one prominent fishing family. It was not set up for yachts or leisure boats in any way, and although visitors were accommodated overnight if space was available, they did not find themselves particularly welcomed. The fisherman rightly considered this harbour as their patch, and the new pontoons, recently installed, although looking like a marina, were specially funded with a European Fisheries Grant, to upgrade the facilities for the fishing fleet. Commercial activity takes precedence 100% in this harbour.

That situation is changing quite rapidly; the previous Harbour Master has retired and a new HM (Rob Parsons) is in post and he is in the process of continuing the work started by his predecessor to make Newlyn more yacht friendly. This harbour is the only non tidal harbour in Mounts Bay and thus is the only shelter between Lands End and Falmouth which is accessible at all states of tide. There are plans afoot to improve the services on the new pontoon, there are berths reserved for visitors, the harbour toilets are now in the RNLI building. Be under no illusions though, this harbour is still an extremely busy fishing port and its emphasis is on that; but it is no longer the case that you'll be elbowed to one side to accommodate them. They are even hoping to lay a further breakwater outside the harbour to protect against surge within the harbour in a South Easterly which in turn make it possible to install further pontoons; but that is in the future!

There are NO DOGS allowed in the harbour area (whether by land or sea); this is due to the fact that the harbour is mainly involved in the food (fish) industry and there is a local bye law banning them.

You need to contact the HM in advance to ensure that a berth will be available and give him some idea of your arrival time (but he will not reserve a berth for you!)

Quick link to: [Penzance Harbour](#) nearby.

Below is a link to a site devoted to the history of the fishing industry in Newlyn.
<http://www.newlynharbour.co.uk/>

Approach

If approaching from the East you will need to go south of the South Cardinal

..... Mountamopus Buoy YB (Q(6)+LFI 15s). This marks a 1.8 m Shoal, and you will see St Michael's Mount on the starboard bow. Penzance can be located by the conspicuous tower of St Mary's Church. Take note of Gear Rock Beacon, lying due South of Penzance Harbour, an isolated danger mark, red and black with two black spheres as a topmark (FI (2) 10s). This should be left well to your Starboard, as you head for Newlyn, which should be approached with the Pier Head bearing due West.

Further pilotage details:

Approach from the West involves leaving the Runnelstone S Cardinal, St Clements Island, Low Lee E Cardinal (Q (3) 10s), all well to Port, and approaching with the Pier Head bearing due West.

The whole area contains a large number of pot markers, which can be a hazard at night and during the day large numbers of small fishing craft will be seen working them. These pot boats should be given a wide berth.

The Harbour would be difficult to enter in strong onshore winds, when an approach at HW would be sensible, and in

any case it is essential to contact the Newlyn Harbourmaster on VHF channel 16 with working on Channel 12, or telephone 01736 362523 before entering the harbour, to see if a berth can be arranged.

It is dangerous to enter or exit the port, without permission, due to the numerous large and unwieldy fishing boats needing speed for steerage in a slightly awkward entrance.

Upon entering between the North Pier and the South Pier you will notice a red spar buoy, which is unlit and marks the end of the slipway. Pleasure craft are generally berthed on the new pontoons, and involves swinging your craft to starboard very soon after entry to avoid shallows. (See charts)

The area between Mary Williams Pier and pontoons is dredged to 2 m, with the smaller pontoon closer to the shore having about 0.7m, both at LAT.T

There is a good video of the harbour at the bottom of their navigation website at [Navigating Newlyn Harbour](#)

Berthing

In settled weather yachts can lay to their own anchor in Gwavas Lake,

.... about 200m NNE of the harbour entrance. Attention should be paid to the chart as there are some unmarked rocks, alongside the North Pier and further to the north-east Dog Rock. Anchor to suit draft. Another possible anchorage in offshore weather is 200 m Southeast of the harbour entrance, in about 2 m.

In both cases be very aware that with the large number of fishing craft coming and going, you will need a very bright anchor light if staying the night, and it would be advisable to show the day shape (black ball) in addition.

Anchoring or sailing within the harbour is prohibited.

If choosing to anchor..... even in perfect weather it is most inadvisable to leave your boat unattended even if you can clearly see it at all times. There was a report in the Yachting press a while ago of a salvage attempt made on an unattended yacht, that was clearly in no danger whatsoever. In this case the owner (an ex Naval Commander) had nipped ashore in the dinghy to walk his dog, and watched in amazement as his boat was pirated away to the harbour. In this incident the owner retrieved his boat with a bit of unpleasantness. Be warned.

If intending to enter Newlyn it is imperative that you call the harbour on #12 before Low Lea ECM to the SE or The Gear Isolated Danger Mark to the ENE

In all probability when you contact the HM he will allocate you a berth on the deep side of the pontoon; as soon as you have cleared the entrance alter to starboard towards the end of the Mary Williams pier and the pontoons will be seen to port of that; be careful of the depths on your port side if coming in at LW. The photo gallery contains plenty of shots where you can see the berthing arrangements. Harbour dues (2022) are £26 a night for boats up to 8 metres and £31 for those up to 12 metres, but this is not a long stay harbour, Penzance being the nearest place for a longer stay.

Facilities

Freshwater and shore power (£1.50 per night) is available on the pontoons, and Calor gas and camping gas can normally be obtained by asking the harbour master. Petrol is only available by Jerry can from the local garage, and

diesel by arrangement with the harbour master. There are a few shore power points on the pontoons and these are due to be increased for 2014. Security on the pontoons is due to be increased and a key will be available from the Harbour office

There are toilet and shower facilities for visiting yachtsmen in the new RNLI building at the head of the access ramp to the pontoon. You can gain access via the HM.

The repair yards are geared to fishing vessels, but may be able to help out in an emergency. The Chandlers stock big heavy gear which may be of much use if you have a larger traditional type boat.

The small town provides most provisioning needs, there's a supermarket with cashpoint, various small shops and a Barclays bank that is only open in the mornings.

Eating out at all levels is well catered for, from fishermen's cafes to wine bar/restaurants.

Newlyn is a bit isolated transport wise, but does have regular buses to Penzance, where you can connect with the mainline railway.

What To Do

You could try a very authentic Cornish pasty for lunch, and obviously very fresh fish and chips are available. Pubs include the Tolcarne and the Star and Swordfish close to the harbour, which do food. Chinese takeaway available, and a pizza restaurant nearby. The links below may give you some ideas:

Pubs

<http://www.beerinevening.com/pubs/results.shtml/el/Newlyn%3BCornwall/>

History

The settlement is recorded as Nulyn in 1279 and as Lulyn in 1290, and the name is probably derived from the Cornish for "pool for a fleet of boats".

Prior to the rise of Newlyn as important settlement the landing rights and most property within the Newlyn area was owned by the Manor of Alverton. Newlyn's history has been strongly linked to its role as a major fishing port. The natural protection afforded by the Gwavas Lake (an area of seawater in Mounts Bay) led to many local fisherman adopting this area as a preferred landing site. Newlyn harbour is first recorded in 1435 by the Bishop of Exeter, later large scale improvements to the harbour led to Newlyn becoming the predominant fishing port in Mounts Bay. Newlyn was also the home of William Lovett a leader of the Chartist movement.

In 1620 The Mayflower stopped off at Newlyn old quay to take on water. A plaque on the quay reads..

In memory of Bill Best Harris, historian who through rigorous research found that the Mayflower docked in Newlyn Harbour for fresh water as the water supplied in Plymouth was contaminated. Therefore Newlyn was the last port of call in UK for the Mayflower.

Prior to the 19th Century "Newlyn" referred only to the area near the old quay. The part of the village which now contains the fish market was known as "Streetanowan", this was separated at high tide from "Newlyn Town" the site of the lower part of the modern harbour being reclaimed land and formerly a beach.

In 1755 the Lisbon earthquake caused a tsunami to strike the Cornish coast over 1,000 miles away. The sea rose

ten feet in ten minutes at Newlyn, and ebbed at the same rate. The 19th Century French writer, Arnold Boscowitz, claimed that "great loss of life and property occurred upon the coasts of Cornwall".

Like the neighbouring communities of Penzance, Mousehole and Paul - Newlyn was destroyed during the Spanish Raid of 1595. During the 19th century Newlyn was the scene of the Newlyn riots following protests over the landing fish on a Sunday by fishermen from the north of England, the local Cornish fisherman being members of the Methodist church and as such strong supporters of sabbatarianism.

In 1915 the Ordnance survey tidal observatory was established in the harbour and for the next six years measurements of tidal height were taken every 15 minutes.

In 1937 the fishing vessel Rosebud sailed to London to deliver a petition to the Minister of Health on behalf of those villagers whose homes were threatened under the government's slum clearance scheme.

Prior to the 1890s Newlyn like Mousehole had strong connections with nearby parish of Paul. It was common for villagers to climb the relatively steep route from "Newlyn Cliff" to Paul via the area which is now known as Gwavas to worship at Paul Church. Until the mid twentieth century an ancient stone cross was present on this route at "Park an Grouse" (The Field of the Cross), this cross was one sites of veneration of the Cornish sea deity Bucca, (As were the beaches of Newlyn and Mousehole) the name bucca has often been used as nick name for people resident in Newlyn. The location of the Cross is now unknown.

Economy

Newlyn's economy is largely dependent on its harbour and the associated fishing industry. Because of Newlyn's association with the creative arts there are also a number of artists and art galleries that are established in the area. The Pilchard Works museum at its historic site, closed its doors at the end of summer 2005.

As of 2004, Newlyn harbour is the largest fishing port (by turnover >£18 million 2004) in England. The fishing fleet boasts a number of different catching methods: beam trawling, trawling, gill netting, potting and a large number of under 10m vessels that fish inshore. The port was a major catcher of pilchard until the 1960s. Today, a handful of vessels have resumed pilchard fishing and use a modern version of the ring net. The largest vessels are beam trawlers owned by the WS Stevenson and Sons, one of Cornwall's largest fish producers. Most of the other vessels are owned by their skippers.

The UK National Tidal and Sea Level Facility (NTSLF) maintains a tidal observatory at Newlyn, and the UK Fundamental Benchmark is maintained there. The Ordnance Survey, the United Kingdom's mapping agency, used to base all elevations including mapped contour lines and spot heights on the mean sea level at Newlyn defined by this benchmark; see Ordnance Datum Newlyn.

The Riots.

Background

In the late 19th century the fishing port of Newlyn was home to one of the UK's largest fishing fleets, and was also the regular landing port for many other fishing vessels operating off the Cornish coast. At the time Newlyn was also the home to as many as 5 separate Methodist and Non-Conformist religious groups, whose congregations included the local fishermen, most of whom practiced a ban on fish being landed on the Sabbath. The non-Cornish fishing crews, largely from Lowestoft and northern English ports, did not hold the same opinions with regards to Sabbath observation, and would regularly land fish on a Sunday attracting higher prices for their fish than those sold on a weekday

Early clashes

The riots began in the early morning of Monday May 18th when a group of up to 40 Newlyn fishermen, supported by a mob of around 1,000, boarded the boats of "East" (of Cornwall) fishermen moored in Newlyn Harbour and destroyed their catch. By mid morning some 16 boats had been seized and approximately 100,000 mackerel thrown overboard. By midday messages were sent to the fishing communities of St Ives, Mousehole and Porthleven for help in intercepting the further 100 non-Cornish fishing vessels still at sea in the area.

Police Mobilisation

Within minutes of the riots commencing a message was sent to the County police station at Chyandour in Penzance requesting assistance, and by mid morning a large number of police had assembled from all parts of West Cornwall. Since an estimated 100 Lowestoft vessels were still at sea a small steamer was dispatched, containing the Newlyn

harbour master, to advise them of the situation, which was duly chased by a local trawler. By late afternoon the Porthleven fleet arrived in support of the Newlyn men.

Rioting

The next day the police and local fisherman exchanged in a number of pitch battles around the Newlyn harbour. The only recorded injury was to local Police Inspector Matthews, who was knocked on the head by a fish box. As the rioting continued 7 "Yorkie" vessels were sited making for Penzance harbour to land their catch there. Around 300 of the rioters then made for that harbour and were met by a squadron of the Penzance Borough police, supported by a group of local Penzance youths. The strong resistance met on arrival in Penzance forced the rioters to return to Newlyn.

Military Arrival

By mid-afternoon the situation had become so serious that local authorities requested military assistance. At 6pm 400 soldiers from the Royal Berkshire regiment under Major Massard arrived by train at Penzance railway station and made for temporary barracks in Penzance to await orders.

Rioting spreads

Around 8:00pm a considerable riot broke out between the Newlyn, Porthleven and St Ives men, and the men of Penzance supported by the men of Lowestoft - who had by this time managed to land their catches. Around 100 police of both the Penzance and Cornwall force attempted to intervene but were beaten back, this leading the police to summon the assistance of the military recently stationed in Penzance. The soldiers immediately made for Newlyn, again joined by several hundred Penzance men, and, upon crossing Newlyn bridge, were met with stone throwing. The soldiers then made for the Harbour and occupied the piers. While this was occurring a torpedo destroyer entered the harbour. The arrival of the military calmed the rioters, and by midnight that day they had largely dispersed.