

# BURRISHOOLE LOOP WALKS

Walking in the West of Ireland

## NEWPORT TOWN



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### Newport Town

Newport Town was founded in the early years of the 18th century by Captain Pratt who leased the land from the Medicott family. Despite the existence of an older settlement at Burrishoole Abbey dating back before the 15th Century, Captain Pratt chose this new site because of its 'green field' nature and its potential for shipping. He introduced a Quaker community to Newport hopeful that they would develop the linen industry. This was not to be realised and by the 1730's they had departed. Some of the first houses built in the town still remain on Medicott Street. By the mid 18th century, the land agent, James Moore, controlled the town and it's hinterland. He was a successful businessman who encouraged building and trade. Travel writer, Dr. Pococke, said in 1752 "The market of Newport consists of frieze, yarn and different sorts of corn, beef a penny, a goose for 6 pence and they have a merchant who imports very good French wine at £16 a hogs head."

### Railway Viaduct

This cut-stone, seven arch bridge, which spans the Black Oak River, was one of the last stone bridges built by the Railway Company in 1894. It was part of the Westport to Achill line and was in service until 1937. A prophecy of Brian Rua O' Cearbhairn a 17th century visionary had foretold that 'carriages on iron wheels' would carry coffins on their first and last journeys. Sadly this prophecy came true.

### Newport House.

In the late 18th century the O'Donel family acquired the Medicott estate and built Newport House overlooking the harbour. This historic country house is currently a hotel.

### St. Patrick's Church.

This Catholic Church was completed in 1918 on the site of an earlier church (St. Josephs 1803). Built of local red sandstone, it is a fine example of a style known as Celtic Romanesque. There are panoramic views of the Nephin Mountains to the north, while inside, it houses one of Ireland's greatest stain glass treasures, "The Last Judgment" by Harry Clarke.

### Newport Harbour

Newport Harbour leading out to Clew Bay was described by the novelist Thackeray in 1843 as "A Miracle of Beauty". Some years before this, the building of a secure stone quay was a priority for the 18th century land agent James Moore. Ships from England, Spain, and France all docked here bringing cargoes of wine, tobacco, and general cargo. Timber, hides and wool were among the exports.

### DeBille House.

In 1782, following a storm, the Danish Naval Frigate 'Bornholm' limped into Newport Bay for repairs. Many of its crew were dead and dying from an unknown disease. Captain De Bille and his crew were cared for by the townspeople of Newport. In gratitude to the people of Newport, the Danish royal family financed the building of De Bille house on Market Street, now known as Main Street.

## Quay loop

Distance: 2 km  
 Highest point: Sea level  
 Trail Surface: Minor roads, Town  
 Difficulty: Easy  
 Duration: 25 minutes  
 Trailhead: Newport - GPS 53.883181, -9.545734



This short walk takes the visitor around the quay. On the way one can see a Tower House across the harbour, in this case a folly built to mimic the ancient tower houses of the county. Princess Grace Kelly Woodland Park is another quiet gem at the point of the quay.

## Church loop

Distance: 1.5 km  
 Highest point: 20 metres  
 Trail Surface: Minor roads, Town  
 Difficulty: Easy  
 Duration: 20 minutes  
 Trailhead: Newport - GPS 53.883181, -9.545734



This walk brings the visitor up Main Street and Barrack Hill to the Roman Catholic Church. The church was built in the second decade of the twentieth century and houses a magnificent Resurrection window by Harry Clarke the renowned stained glass artist. The walker can return across the viaduct that once carried the rail line on to Achill.

## Harbour Walk

Distance: 1.2 km  
 Highest point: level  
 Trail Surface: Minor roads, Town  
 Difficulty: Easy  
 Duration: 30 minutes  
 Trailhead: Newport - GPS 53.883181, -9.545734



A short walk to the Harbour. The apartments stand on the site of the old sea weed processing plant. Also look for the old quay with quaint pillars. Further along at the harbour entrance is a Tower House, not original but a folly.



Railway Viaduct



St. Patrick's Church



Newport Harbour