

TO THE *Men & Women* OF **NEWPORT.**

Did you know that around 22 men were shot dead on a Newport street in 1839? They were Chartists. They were demonstrating for freedoms we take for granted today.

Chartism a national movement trying to improve the living and working conditions for all through Parliamentary Reform.

"The People's Charter" consisted of six demands:

- Secret ballot
- Votes for all men over 21
- Payment for MPs
- Equal size constituencies
- No property qualification for MPs
- Annual Parliamentary elections

The Newport story starts in 1839 when thousands of working men gathered in the South Wales Valleys and marched on Newport through a cold and wet November night. The exact motives for the march are debatable. Some, including John Frost, were protesting about the injustices and asking for the release of fellow Chartists. Others were intent on creating an uprising.

This leaflet will help you to discover more about Chartism and to walk in the footsteps taken by those Chartists on 4th November 1839.

For an easy downhill walk, take the bus from the Bus Station to Newport Cathedral. Buses R1, 2C and 151 stop outside the Cathedral.

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OUR CHARTIST HERITAGE

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Cefnogwyd gan
Y Loteri Genedlaethol
trwy Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri



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WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE CHARTISTS



© Newport Museum and Art Gallery

Discover the part that Newport played in the last mass Treason Trial in the UK and the reason this city claims to be
"Newport: Home of the Vote"

THE OLD POST OFFICE
John Frost was born here in Thomas Street, now demolished. The site is marked with a plaque. Further along High Street was John Frost's draper's shop.



John Frost in 1840

CHARTIST SCULPTURES
Union, Prudence and Energy by Christopher Kelly, erected in 1991 to commemorate the Chartist Rising.



Chartist Statues
© Crown copyright (2016) Visit Wales

THE WESTGATE HOTEL
Built in 1799 (rebuilt 1886), it sits at the junction of Stow Hill and the old High Street. 22 Chartists died here and many more were wounded in their struggle for justice.



The Mayors House next to The Westgate following the Rising
©Newport Museum and Art Gallery

THE MAYOR'S HOUSE
Mayor Thomas Phillips' house was at the bottom of Stow Hill facing the Westgate Hotel, on the site of which is now Coral Bookmakers.

ST MARY'S CHURCH

The church was under construction at the time and the marchers called to the workmen to join them. Some of the Chartists made their way through the construction site to the back of the Westgate Hotel.



Artists impression of the soldiers burying the Chartists

NEWPORT CATHEDRAL CHURCHYARD

Ten unnamed Chartists were buried here in St Woolos by the military at the dead of night in unmarked graves. A memorial, erected in 1989, is located on the main path to the church.

ST WOOLOS SQUARE

A Chartist force of over 3,000 men led by John Frost and Zephaniah Williams passed this spot as they made their way down Stow Hill.

THE UNION WORKHOUSE

A company of the 45th Regiment of Foot Soldiers were billeted here. A detachment of 30 soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant Grey, were sent to take up position inside the Westgate Hotel early in the morning of November 4th.

THE SIX BELLS

18 year old Susan Stephens, giving testimony to Newport Magistrates said she "... saw the prisoner Lovell passing her house the 6 Bells on Stow Hill with a mob with a gun in his hand."

CITY OF NEWPORT

JOHN FROST SQUARE

Named after the Chartist leader, in 1839 this was an open space known as Friars Field, where Chartist meetings took place.



Frost Coin
©Newport Museum and Art Gallery

NEWPORT MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

The Museum has a comprehensive display about the history of Chartism and the events that took place in Newport.



Chartist weapons
©Newport Museum and Art Gallery

THE PARROT INN

This is where Frost called a meeting on 30th October 1838 when an audience of 400 - 500 people adopted "The People's Charter".



National Charter Association Membership Card.

ORIGINAL COTTAGES

The only evidence on Stow Hill of houses remaining from 1839.



Friars House

FRIARS HOUSE

Former home of Thomas Protheroe who managed the lands of Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar Park.

1 The Union Workhouse



Newport Cathedral and Stow Hill
© Crown copyright (2016)
Visit Wales

Stand at the gates of St Woolos hospital. In 1839 the red stone building was the newly built workhouse, the last hope for the local poor and destitute. On the morning of 4th November soldiers of the 45th Regiment were billeted here, and after the rising the wounded and prisoners were brought here.

2 Friars House



Thomas Protheroe
© Newport Museum and Art

Until 1831 this was the home of Thomas Protheroe, Agent for Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar Park and Clerk to Newport Council, an influential man who was also “an enemy” of John Frost. By the time the Chartist Rising took place, he’d moved to Malpas Court and Friars House had become the home to Octavius Morgan, youngest son of Sir Charles; he was away when the Chartists marched past but upon his return he played a major part in the Chartist Trials.

3 Newport Cathedral Churchyard

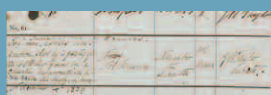


Newport Cathedral - © Crown copyright (2016) Visit Wales

How would you feel if one of your family was shot dead by the authorities and their body buried secretly?

This actually happened. Somewhere in this churchyard lie the remains of 10 Chartists, including George Shell, shot dead that fateful day whilst fighting for justice and freedom; their bodies buried by soldiers, in unmarked graves, in the dead of night.

4 St. Woolos Square



Section of the Burial Register.

What would you do if some of your friends had been arrested just for protesting against their working conditions?

Some Chartists had been arrested and were being held in the Westgate Hotel. Some historians think this was a trap to lure the Chartists into breaking the law. Can you imagine John Frost shouting to the huge crowd?

5 Six Bells Public House

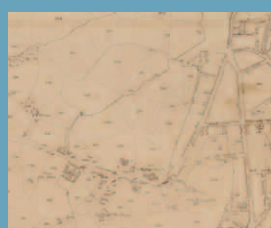


The annual children's march

The Marchers rallied at Cwrt y Bella, at the bottom of Belle Vue Lane and then made their way to this point. The route to the Workhouse was barred by Special Constables, as was the lane to the home of Lewis Edwards, the Chief Magistrate. So they were forced along Stow Hill, past the Six Bells Public House (now Church House) with John Rees (Jack ‘the Fifer’) and David Jones (Dai ‘the Tinker’) leading the way.

Nowadays, on the anniversary of the Chartist March, school children gather here to re-enact the events.

6 Cottages on Stow Hill



Tithe map showing the route down Stow Hill © Cynefin Project / National Library of Wales

Thousands of Chartists marched past these cottages – down Stow Hill shouting, singing and chanting as they made their way to the Westgate Hotel.

In 1839 it was not unusual for several families to live in a small cottage. Pay was low; at times you couldn’t afford fuel or food; children had to work to help make ends meet. The Chartists wanted a better life for all and wanted Parliament to better represent working people. They wanted ordinary people to be able to vote and even to stand as Members of Parliament. They wanted change - to some this was a threat.

7 St. Mary's Church

When the Chartists marched past this church it was still being built by Irish immigrant workers. The Chartists shouted to the workers up on the stone walls to join them. Some of the marchers even tried to get into the back of the Westgate Hotel by making their way through the building site.

8 The Mayor's House

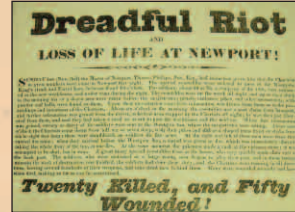


Thomas Phillips
© Newport Museum and Art Gallery

What would you have done if you were Mayor in 1839?

The Mayor and the authorities feared revolution. At 8.30am on 4th November 1839, the Mayor, Thomas Phillips and his Special Constables were joined in the Westgate Hotel by 30 armed soldiers of the 45th Regiment. They lay in wait behind the closed window shutters.

9 Westgate Hotel



“Give us up the prisoners!”
“Give us up the prisoners!”

the Chartists cried as they reached the Westgate Hotel, the hub of the town. The Chartists charged the front door which was defended by Special Constables. Guns were fired. Chartists pushed their way into the building. The shutters flew open; the soldiers filed past the window firing volley after volley of shots into the crowd, who panicked and fled.

The disturbance lasted just twenty minutes. The dead and dying Chartists littered the street and the sound of groaning broke the silence. Eighteen year old George Shell from Pontypool lay dying in the street but no-one was allowed to attend him. For 2 hours he lay bleeding, groaning and dying. A letter written by Shell was used in the trial of Zephaniah Williams to prove that this was a planned uprising:

*“Dear Parents,
I hope this will find you as well, as I am myself at present. I shall this night be engaged in a struggle for freedom and should it please God to spare my life, I shall see you soon; but if not, grieve not for me, I shall fall in a noble cause. My tools are at Mr. Cecil's, and likewise my clothes. Yours truly,
George Shell”*



Mulluck's engraving of the Rising
© Newport Museum & Art Gallery

10 Chartist Sculptures



Chartist Statues © Crown copyright (2016) Visit Wales

These sculptures mark the site where at least 22 ordinary men died campaigning for political change and a better life. Created by Christopher Kelly to commemorate the 150th anniversary, the sculptures form three groups, each representing a different aspect of the political and social change the Chartists sought. 'Union,' showing an idealised view of Newport; 'Prudence', shows the struggle for change; 'Energy', symbolises both labour and victory.

11 John Frost birthplace - High Street

John Frost 1784-1877 (Mayor of Newport 1836-7) was born in the Royal Oak, Thomas Street (now demolished). There's a commemorative plaque on the side of the Post Office where it joins the new office building and multi-storey car park opposite the Kings Hotel. Frost's draper's shop was further along High Street.



Chartist statue outside The Westgate © Crown copyright (2016) Visit Wales

12 The Parrot Inn



Thomas Walker © Newport Museum & Art Gallery

Near to the Westgate Hotel is the site of The Parrot Inn where Frost held a meeting on 30th October 1838 when an audience of 400 – 500 people adopted **“The People's Charter”**. The Landlord was Thomas Walker, who was also a Special Constable; he was injured during the march.

13 John Frost Square

This square was named after the local Chartist leader – John Frost. He had been a well-respected resident of the town, had been a magistrate, councillor and town mayor 1836 - 37.

Although John Frost was most definitely the local Chartist leader, he was reluctant to lead the march on Newport, uncertain that this was the right thing to do. He was arrested just hours after the march and was charged with High Treason. Following trial in Monmouth early in 1840 he was found guilty and was sentenced to death.

After a nationwide campaign for clemency, he and the other 2 Welsh leaders (Zephaniah Williams and William Jones) were transported to Van Diemens Land, eventually being fully pardoned in 1856.

John Frost and the memory of the Chartists live on in the respect and affection the city of Newport pays to them. John Frost Square is undergoing massive changes and soon there will be other artworks reminding us of the part that Newport played in securing the vote for all men and women.



John Frost © Newport Museum and Art Gallery

14 Newport Museum and Art Gallery

Newport Museum and Art Gallery has extensive Chartist displays, bringing the subject to life and exploring characters on both sides. Contemporary guns and other weapons sit alongside artworks and written accounts showing the devastating impact that the events of the 4th November 1839 had on the area and the country as a whole.

The Local Information Centre is located here and can direct visitors to other Chartist sites.
Tel: 01633 656656



Artefacts and displays © Newport Museum & Art Gallery