

'THE TRUMPETER' GRAVE MARKER IN SELBORNE, HAMPSHIRE

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*'The Trumpeter' Grave Marker at
St Mary's Church, Selborne, Hampshire, UK*

‘The Trumpeter of Selborne: Hero or Rogue?’ appeared as a short paper in the International Trumpet Guild Journal of March 2022¹. This expanded comprehensive paper draws on all available sources – documentary, anecdotal, local and descendant - with supplementary information that came to light in response to the March 2022 paper. This paper has been deposited in the Hampshire County Archive.

A unique grave marker stands in curious isolation on the tranquil plestor² of S^t Mary’s Church in Selborne, an archetypical English village with picturesque thatched cottages nestling in the verdant rolling Hampshire landscape, home to the celebrated pastor-naturalist Gilbert White³ and just five miles from Jane Austen’s home in Chawton. Embellished only with ‘The Trumpeter’⁴ below a cross and above a stylised trumpet, it stands in the shadow of the stump of the Selborne Great Yew, estimated to be up to 1,400 years old and one of the fifty Great British Trees recognised by the Tree Council at the time of the Queen's Golden Jubilee in June 2002. The grave marker is that of a Selborne farm worker who according to local lore in 1830 sounded his trumpet to rouse and lead a local rebellion. Trumpeters relish associations with heroism and thus to the historical mythology of the valiant trumpeters of Jericho, Kraków, Säkkingen and Stalingrad might perhaps be added, with less heroic justification, The Trumpeter of Selborne.

St Mary’s, Selborne and the Great Yew

The first church in Selborne was established in about 700, probably on this site, following the mission of S^t Birinius⁵ to Wessex in 634. The Domesday book, completed in 1086, mentions an earlier church standing on the site of S^t Mary’s which is believed to have been given by Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor⁶ and is thus referred to as a Royal Foundation. The “*Saxon font probably predates the Norman church and is certainly as old as the pillars*”⁷ while a Flemish triptych of c1520 is confidently attributed to Jan Mostaert⁸.

¹ COLIN BLOCH, *The Trumpeter of Selborne: Hero or Rogue?*, International Trumpet Guild Journal vol 46 no 3 March 2022, 14

² an open space or village green

³ 1720–1793, ‘parson-naturalist’ and author of *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, still in print.

⁴ location <https://what3words - informal.clearly.superbly> 51° 05'54.13"N 0°56'34.96"W

⁵ Birinus was the first Bishop of Dorchester and was known as the “Apostle to the West Saxons” for his conversion of the Kingdom of Wessex to Christianity. Born 600, died 3 December 650

⁶ www.hampshire-history.com/the-great-yew-of-selborne/

⁷ www.stmaryschurchselborne.co.uk/Timeline. The Saxon period was 400-1066, the Norman period 1066-1154.

⁸ N PEVSNER and D LLOYD, *The Buildings of England: Hampshire and The Isle of Wight* (Penguin Books London 1999), 495: “*Early Norman but mentioned in Domesday book completed 1086 (Register 8). The Saxon font may have predated what was probably a wooden Norman church.*” Jan Mostaert (c1475 - 1552/1553) was a Dutch Renaissance painter known mainly for his religious subjects and portraits. The church’s history is well documented on the church website www.stmaryschurchselborne.co.uk/Timeline.

In front of the church stands the stump of the Selborne Great Yew, probably planted in about 600AD⁹. *“The Famous Selborne Yew ... is supposed by many to be the oldest, finest and best preserved in England. ... Visitors seem to take more interest in in this yew than in anything else about the place.”*¹⁰ In 1903 it was described as *“The best-grown, healthiest, and most vigorous-looking yew of its size in Britain”*¹¹. It had a girth of 25 feet and was taller than the church tower¹². After some 1,400 years and still healthy, the yew was toppled and split by gales on Thursday 25th January 1990 and had to be cut to a stump of about 3 metres in height. The trunk was replanted but no new growth regenerated. The church contains many items made from the wood of this tree, sentinel over the church for its entire history, the font lid being just one¹³. It is close to this stump that the grave marker of ‘The Trumpeter’ is to be found.



Arboricultural and archaeological work on the fallen yew in 1990. “A serious attempt was made to resurrect it, but the trunk had split from top to bottom in the fall and the effort to bring it back to life failed”¹⁴.



The stump of the Selborne Great Yew with the grave marker in the foreground in about 1995.

⁹ www.hampshire-history.com/the-great-yew-of-selborne/

¹⁰ St Mary’s Selborne Register 1813-1940 commentary section A

¹¹ W H HUDSON, *Hampshire Days* (Oxford University Press 1980), 156

¹² www.hampshire-history.com/the-great-yew-of-selborne/

¹³ www.hampshire-history.com/the-great-yew-of-selborne/

¹⁴ <https://hampshirearchaeology.wordpress.com/tag/churchyard/>

The Swing Riots in Selborne

Southern England in 1830 was beset by the Swing Riots, named for the fictitious ‘Captain Swing’, signatory to threatening letters sent to farmers, magistrates, parsons and others, and the mythical figurehead of the movement. In Hampshire, agricultural workers rioted at Selborne and at nearby Headley¹⁵. Their grievances were (i) against compulsory payment of tithes to support the established Anglican Church, (ii) against the abuse of powers over the poor by administrators of the Poor Relief Act which had required the ‘impotent poor’ (people who couldn't work) to be cared for in an Alms House or a Poor House, and (iii) against rich tenant farmers progressively lowering workers' wages while introducing agricultural machinery. Convicted rioters faced imprisonment or penal transportation (a judicial sentence of banishment to penal colonies in the Americas, India, Australia and Van Diemen's Land, now Tasmania) but some were hanged, as were two of the Headley rioters. The Swing Riots of 1830 failed but in part led to the Reform Act of 1832 which extended the franchise to more working-class men and led also to the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, known widely as the New Poor Law, which in 1948 was revoked to make way for the modern welfare state.

John Newland's Role in the Swing Riots

‘The Trumpeter’ was John Newland (1791-1868)¹⁶, “*a big strong man*”¹⁷ and a farm labourer, recorded at birth as “*John Newlin son of John and Hannah Newlin*”¹⁸. He had fought in the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) with the 37th North Hampshire Regiment of Foot¹⁹ but a head wound had left him susceptible to the effects of alcohol. He lived in Selborne with his wife Anne whom he had married as a widow with two children and with whom he had six other children, relying on support under the Poor Relief Act and subsequently the New Poor Law²⁰. He was illiterate and innumerate²¹. At his trial Newland was to be described as being of good character and “*a quiet, inoffensive man, except when he had been drinking*”²².

¹⁵ John Owen SMITH, *One Monday in November ... The Story of the Selborne and Headley Workhouse Riots of 1830* (Smith, May 1983), 24. Smith is authoritative on the 1830 riots in Headley and in Selborne.

¹⁶ John Owen SMITH, op.cit. 32 provides biographical detail of Newland (born in Selborne on 2 Dec 1791) and his descendants.

¹⁷ Jean VIVIAN, quoted in John Owen SMITH op.cit., 13.

¹⁸ St.Mary's Selborne Register 1679-1812, D records the birth on (Friday) 2 Dec 1791 of John Newlin, baptised on Sunday 11th December 1791 by Rev Gilbert White who confirmed him in 1807. This is the only record of the spelling ‘Newlin’, most probably a clerical error or a mistranscription from verbal to written.

¹⁹ The regiment had been raised in Ireland in 1702 and is now merged into the Royal Hampshire Regiment. The attribution to Newland fighting in the Napoleonic wars may be incorrect as the regiment was posted to Gibraltar from 1812 to 1814 and to Canada from 1814 to 1826. Alternatively, the regimental assignment is incorrect.

²⁰ John Owen SMITH, op.cit., 13 refers to records in October 1827 when the family received 11/6d.

²¹ Jean NEWLAND, *Echoes of a Trumpet* (John Owen Smith, 1998), 136. Jean Newland is the publishing and birth name of Jean Vivian and is a great-great-grand-daughter of John Newland.

²² John Owen SMITH, op. cit., 8 et. seq.

The Selborne riots started on Saturday 20th November 1830 when dole recipients received their weekly allowance from John Harrison, Master of the Poor House. Harrison was later described in court as being “*particularly obnoxious to the poor of the neighbourhood*” and a man who aroused “*a universal feeling of disgust*”²³ when it was found that some in the Poor House were chained to the walls. Discontent fermented until Monday 21st November when “*a mob about 300 in number ... had entered Selborne armed with large clubs ...*” and at the Poor House in Gracious Street were “*pulling tiles off the roof, breaking up furniture and smashing windows*”. A fire was started and according to evidence later presented in court “*Newland was there, blowing his horn and carrying the flags.*”²⁴ Reverend Cobbold²⁵, Vicar of St Mary’s, was coerced to reduce the annual tithes from £600 to £300²⁶.

Cobbold’s character may have played a role in provoking the riot in Selborne. He appeared neither to seek nor to gain local respect and died in office aged 68 after being run over by a mail cart on Ludgate Hill in 1841, his death being ascribed to great corpulence that concealed internal trauma, and medical neglect. The nastiness of his character was recorded by a former pupil of Cobbold’s at Madgalen College: “*From a bilious constitution, betrayed by his yellow-tinted complexion, he was ill qualified to bear kindly and patiently with little ignorant boys. ... (he used) a sharp cut with a cane, or a sharper twitch of an ear ... extending several times to the partial tearing the ear from the head of a dull boy*”.²⁷

A riot of greater violence followed on Tuesday 22nd November in Headley, some seven miles to the east, inspired and supported by the Selborne mob. This was eventually to lead to two of the Headley rioters being hanged.

Newland evaded arrest by hiding in a hanger²⁸ at nearby Woolmer Forest but on Friday 26th November when venturing home for food he was arrested, possibly by a nephew of Jane Austen²⁹. As one of ten men put on trial on Thursday 23rd December 1830, initially he was charged with having “*... riotously assembled ... and feloniously and with force begun to demolish the Poor House*”³⁰.

²³ www.johnowensmith.co.uk/riot/

²⁴ www.johnowensmith.co.uk/riot/

²⁵ www.johnowensmith.co.uk/riot/ Cobbold was “*regarded as arrogant by his parishioners, and on his own admission seemed to be in constant conflict with his vestry. For a parish which could still remember the gentle curacy of Gilbert White, this must have been an unhappy situation indeed. We have records of acrimonious notes passing between him and the officials of the parish, and of court actions taken by him and them. Following the events of 1830 he acquired a mastiff dog with a neck 'as thick as a lion's' for his protection; its collar can be seen to this day in the church.*”

²⁶ John Owen SMITH, *ibid.*, 10

²⁷ John Owen SMITH, *op. cit.*, 33.

²⁸ Derived from the Old English word *hangra*, meaning a steeply wooded slope.

²⁹ John Owen SMITH, *op. cit.*, 13 suggests possibly by E Knight Jnr

³⁰ John Owen SMITH, *op. cit.*, 24

At the trial at Winchester Castle (where the Duke of Wellington assisted on the bench³¹) all ten men were acquitted on a technicality but Newland and eight others were promptly re-arrested. They were re-tried six days later on a different charge of having “... *by threats compelled the Reverend William Cobbold to sign a paper agreeing to reduce his tithes to £300*”³². All were found guilty. Newland served a light sentence of six months hard labour in Winchester Prison as he had been charged only with mobbing and not with rioting nor with arson³³. It is thought that public sympathy prevented him from being transported to Australia³⁴ which was the fate of the Selborne rioters’ leader, Aaron Harding. Ironically Newland’s daughter Ellen was to be transported to Australia in 1849 with her baby daughter for the attempted murder of her husband “*with arsenic in a pudding*”³⁵.

John Newland was imprisoned at Winchester to where his wife would walk the round trip of thirty-six miles to visit him, carrying with her their infant son who incurred a frostbitten nose which marked him for life; he was still remembered as such in a Parish Register inscription in 1939³⁶. Newland’s sentence was indeed light; of some 2,000 rioters who were tried, 252 were sentenced to death (but only 19 were hanged), and 481 to penal transportation³⁷. The Swing Riots failed but success would have been historic: “*If the rising of 1830 had succeeded, and won back for the labourer his lost livelihood, the day when the Headley workhouse was thrown down would be remembered by the poor as the day of the taking of the Bastille*”³⁸. The riotous action of that day is the basis of two modern plays³⁹.

By 1841 the Newlands were recorded as ‘paupers’. John Newland died in his bed in 1868 aged 77 at a time when life expectancy for men of his cohort in England was less than 40. He was buried on Sunday 28th June 1868⁴⁰ near to the yew tree where ‘The Trumpeter’ grave marker now stands, alone and not in the cemetery in the churchyard. His wife Anne re-married a third husband and lived to be 86⁴¹.

³¹ John Owen SMITH, op. cit., 24 One of three judges assisting the chief judge, Sir John Vaughan. Wellington was on the bench in his capacity as Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire and who until 16th December, just a week before, had been Prime Minister.

³² John Owen SMITH, op. cit., 24

³³ ‘Hampshire Archives Trust: The Myth of the Selborne ‘Trumpeter’” <https://hampshirearchivestrust.co.uk/search/Selborne-Trumpeter>

³⁴ Rev James ANDERSON, Vicar of Selborne 1987-1999 in an email to the author 4th November 2020.

³⁵ Hampshire Archives Trust, op. cit.

³⁶ S.Mary’s in Selborne Register 1813-1940, D

³⁷ Brian T. ROBSON, *The Saviour City: Beneficial effects of urbanization in England and Wales* in Douglas, *Companion Encyclopedia of Geography: The Environment and Humankind*, 297

³⁸ J. L. HAMMOND and B.B. HAMMOND, *The Village Labourer 1760 - 1832* Longmans, Green & Co., London 1912

³⁹ Jean Newland, op.cit., 145 refers to two works by John Owen SMITH: *RIOT (or ‘This Bloody Crew’)* performed locally in 1993 and in 2002; and ‘*Condemned (or ‘Not Fit to Live in England’)*’, a version of the same material re-written for radio, broadcast in 1994.

⁴⁰ S.Mary’s in Selborne Register 1813-1940,120

⁴¹ John Owen SMITH, op. cit., 32

The Myth of ‘The Trumpeter’

John Newland was neither a musician nor a trumpeter. He was a military veteran, an illiterate and impoverished labourer reliant on state welfare, but he was not the leader of a failed rebellion. The Selborne and Headley rioters received heavy sentences but all that Newland was charged with and convicted of was ‘mobbing’, specifically for his role in coercing Reverend Cobbold to agree to reduce tithes.

Throughout his long life Newland would doubtless have revelled in his status as ‘The Trumpeter’ who heroically led the mob with rousing clarion calls. The probable truth is that on a cold mid-winter day he was reluctantly cajoled out of his house with his bugle and jostled to the front of a criminal mob where by his own account he sounded just one note. On this one note the local myth is founded and endures.

Local lore nevertheless persists that John Newland rallied and led the rioters. At his trial he claimed that he was pressed into accompanying the rioters, that he blew his horn “*only once*” and that later he was “*knocked down by some of the party for not having taken an active part*”⁴². A descendant wrote that “*... he was not the leader ... but because he had a horn or bugle, most likely kept from his military service, he was persuaded to walk in front of the mob*”⁴³. A local historian observed that “*The myth that ‘The Trumpeter’ was the leader of the riot had been based largely on interviews which W H Hudson recorded with two daughters of John Newland early in the twentieth century*”⁴⁴ ... *In fact these daughters, Eliza and Harriet, had not been born at the time of the riot, and were passing on to him a family legend which appears to have grown with the telling!*”⁴⁵.

The parish records of S^t Mary’s Church refer to the mobbed vicar as “*Victim of the Tithe Agitation, led by John Newland, Trumpeter*”⁴⁶. The elaborated myth rather than the man is memorialised and local historians acknowledge the hyperbole that still surrounds Newland and the event⁴⁷.

⁴² John Owen SMITH, op cit., 13

⁴³ Jean NEWLAND, op.cit., 143

⁴⁴ John Owen SMITH, op cit., 32 records the interviews as being in October 1902. W.H.Hudson 1841-1922 was an Argentina-born writer and naturalist who lived in England from 1874.

⁴⁵ Jean NEWLAND, op.cit., 144, quoting John Owen Smith

⁴⁶ S.Mary’s in Selborne Register, J

⁴⁷ Hampshire Archives Trust, op cit.

The Grave Markers

The parish record of his burial notes him as “*John Newland (The Trumpeter?)*”⁴⁸ but no explanation is given for the location of the grave although Newland was the last but not the first to be buried there; the twenty-seven earlier Medieval graves that modern archaeology has identified under the yew would then have been unrecorded and unknown to the church.

A commentary written in 1903, based on interviews with two of Newland’s children (including the son with the frost-bitten nose) notes: “*There was one idea, an anxious wish that his descendants should not allow him to go out of memory. And there was no way known to them to keep him in mind except by burying him in some spot by himself, where his mound would be alone and apart. Finally, brother and sister*⁴⁹, *plucking up courage, went to the vicar, the well-remembered Mr Parsons ... and begged him to let them bury their father by the yew tree near the porch, and he good naturedly consented.*”

“*That was how Newland came to be buried at the spot; but before many days the vicar went to them in a great state of mind, and said that he had made a terrible mistake, that he had done wrong in consenting to the grave being made there, and that their father must be taken up and placed at some other spot in the churchyard. They were grieved at this, but could say nothing. But for some reason the removal never took place, and in time the son and daughter themselves began to regret that they had buried their father there where they could never keep the mound green and fresh. People going in or coming out of church on dark evenings stumbled or kicked their boots against it, or when they stood there talking to each other they would rest a foot on it, and romping children sat on it, so that it always had a ragged, unkept appearance, do what they would.*”

“*It is certainly an unsightly mound. It would be better to do away with it, and to substitute a small memorial stone with a suitable inscription placed level with the turf*”⁵⁰.

This is corroborated by a note in the Parish Register: “*When he died, two of his children, anxious that he should not be forgotten, thought his memory would be kept alive, if he was buried under the Yew Tree, under which there were no other graves. Vicar Parsons gave them leave: but a few days after the*”

⁴⁸ S. Mary’s in Selborne Register 1813-1940, 120

⁴⁹ William and Eliza, according to Newland’s great-great-grand-daughter Jean Vivian in an email to the author 2 October 2020

⁵⁰ HUDSON, op. cit., 171

funeral came to them in great agitation, saying that he had made a great mistake, & that the body must be moved & reburied elsewhere. However, this was not done but later his children regretted the burial spot, for nothing will grow on the grave in the deep shade of the yew⁵¹.

In the absence of sources other than the two above, which are mutually corroborative, it can be assumed that in 1903, twenty-five years after Newland's burial, there was still no grave marker but only a mound. The most likely explanation for the absence of a grave marker would have been the cost; nowhere is there an explanation as to why the children, so anxious that their father should not be forgotten, did not erect a marker on his grave but allowed him to rest in anonymous isolation.



The grave of John Newland photographed soon after the erection of the oak grave marker in about 1940⁵². The inscription is facing the camera, and the mound indicates the position of the body beneath. After the 1990 storms and the stumping of the yew, the grave marker was replaced in the correct position, but turned to face the church porch.



*The oak marker erected over Newland's grave from about 1940 to 1967 in its current position in Farnham. It is in Bishop's Mead, at the side of Willmer House, now Farnham Maltings.
51° 12'47.65"N 0°48'16.07"W*

⁵¹ S.Mary's in Selborne Register 1813-1940, C

⁵² S.Mary's in Selborne Register 1813-1940, 5

All sources indicate that Newland's grave remained unmarked from his burial in 1868 until about 1940, but the 1940 photograph confirms that it remained visible as an overgrown mound. In about 1940 a wooden post, similar in size and design to the current granite grave marker⁵³ was erected, sponsored by retired Brigadier-General Arnold Robinson Burrowes⁵⁴ CMG DSO, then aged 73, who lived in Gracious Street, Selborne. It may be that this was a gesture of military benevolence as there is no regimental connection between the two soldiers. There is no certainty whether the marker in the photograph was placed at the head or foot of the grave, but it is reasonable to assume the former.



Captain A R Burrowes in the Monaghan Regiment of Militia, 1904



Brigadier-General A R Burrowes, Savoy Hotel dinner, 1922

The Newland myth remained sufficiently current in Selborne for the approaching centenary of his death in 1968 to generate an initiative to replace the oak grave marker with a more permanent granite grave marker, although there is no record of who initiated or sponsored this. *“The wooden post was returned to the carpenter who made it and his widow gave it to the Farnham Museum in West Street where it stands in Bishop’s Mead, a side street, against the building. The granite post was erected in 1967 (centenary of burial) and turned round after the fall of the yew in 1990 to face the porch”⁵⁵*. The oak grave marker remains fixed to a side-street wall outside Willmer House, now Farnham Maltings and a Grade I listed building⁵⁶. *“The post is still in this location just outside Farnham Museum. It was accessioned into the collection in 1988, it is catalogued in our collection management system and its condition is continuously monitored as part of the museum collections care program. It is in a stable condition with no conservation issues and currently does not require any intervention, however this is reviewed on a regular basis.”⁵⁷*

⁵³ The lettering on the gravestone, copied from the preceding wooden marker, is Berlin Sans font by Lucian Bernhard (1883-1972)

⁵⁴ Arnold Robinson Burrowes. 26.3.1867–8.2.1949 (son and second child of Arnold Burrowes (1820-1907) and Jane Elizabeth Clark (1835-1925) married Lilian Emma Pigott in 1893 in Allahābād, Uttar Pradesh, India. Burrowes’ obituary is at www.karkeeweb.com/patterns/burrowes/html/obit.html

⁵⁵ S.Mary’s in Selborne Register, 5

⁵⁶ location <https://what3words - search settle/mega/huddle>

⁵⁷ Email from Sofie Chandler-Heal, Farnham Maltings, 17th June 2022

As noted above, it had been thought at the time that Newland was buried in isolation. Associated with the felling of the yew after the 1990 gales, archaeologists discovered groups of individuals' bones which by error became mixed together. A contemporary record notes that the remains of at least twenty-seven people were found under the yew dating, through pottery found alongside, to the 13th or 14th century⁵⁸. It is not clear whether Newland's remains were disturbed as they were not directly beneath the tree. It is reasonable to assume that they remain where they were buried. On conclusion of the arboricultural and archaeological work Newland's grave marker, removed during the work, was returned to its original position (probably but not certainly at the head of his grave), but re-orientated to face east.

John Newland's thatched cottage, now named 'Trumpeters'(sic⁵⁹), still stands in Adams Lane, Selborne, much altered and extended⁶⁰. It is statutorily protected as a historic building partly because of the association with Newland. The listing record shows:

Listed Grade II on 19th October 2000 ref SU7433 ADAMS LANE 1645/11/10008 Trumpeters 19-OCT-00 "House. Circa early C18; extended in the C19 and C20. ...

NOTE: Trumpeters was the home of John Newland, the 'trumpeter' who led the Selborne Workhouse Riot of 1830, when the workhouse was attacked because of increases in Poor Rate and Church tithes."



'Trumpeters', John Newland's home in Adams Lane, Selborne, Hampshire UK

⁵⁸ <https://hampshirearchaeology.wordpress.com/tag/churchyard/>

⁵⁹ correctly it should be named 'Trumpeter's'

⁶⁰ location <https://what3words - search muted.interacts.warbler> 51° 05'35.88"N 0°56'22.85"W

Newland's 'Trumpet'

Newland's instrument is variously referred to as a cow horn, a horn, but most frequently as a trumpet. In court, Edward Ticknell referred to "*Newland ... blowing his horn...*"⁶¹. Owen refers to a 'horn'⁶². Church records repeatedly refer to him as '*The Trumpeter*' and this is the most commonly applied epithet. Newland's great-great-grand-daughter wrote "*The trumpet – or as we believe, bugle was lost without trace somewhen in the past; unfortunate as I would have loved to hold it*"⁶³.

In 1830, there was no significant difference between a military bugle and a military trumpet other than that they were coiled differently with a different bell flare. A trumpet with valves was first made in Leipzig in 1820 and patented in Paris in 1839⁶⁴ so to Newland and his contemporaries a trumpet was not what we know it today to be. His instrument was almost certainly not a trumpet but a bugle 'retained' from his military service.



Examples of an early 19th century British military bugle (left) and a military trumpet (right) sometimes in the longer form referred to as a cavalry trumpet. One of these is likely to be similar to Newland's instrument. Bugles had been introduced in 1764. A bugle has a more conical bell, whereas a trumpet bell is flared. Both have the same length of tubing, but wrapped differently.

⁶¹ John Owen SMITH, op.cit., 10

⁶² John Owen SMITH, op.cit., 13

⁶³ Email to the author 2nd October 2020

⁶⁴ Colin BLOCH, *Rotary and Piston Trumpets*, International Trumpet Guild Journal vol 46 no 1 Oct 2021, 30

Addressing the Myth: Residual Mysteries

The myth of Newland as the heroic trumpeter leading a riotous mob is easily punctured. Newland was not even a rioter in the eyes of the law as he was convicted only of ‘mobbing’⁶⁵, probably today’s legal equivalent of ‘threatening behaviour’. He was not convicted of violence, rioting, arson, or theft. Newland’s great-great-grand-daughter deserves a final word: “*If, in fact, John Newland had really been the leader and organiser of the mob he would surely have suffered the same fate instead of getting off with a six-month prison sentence. ... He was not the leader – not in the accepted sense of the word – but because he had a horn or bugle, most likely kept from his military service, he was persuaded to walk in front of the mob*”⁶⁶. Nevertheless, local legend trumps historical fact and endures with some pride.

This research has shed light on historical questions which will linger unanswered in the sands of time. They are these:

Why was Newland buried where he was, in an isolated unmarked grave?

Newland’s grave was on church land but remote from other graves in the churchyard. His children requested this because it would perpetuate his memory yet they never erected a grave marker, leaving only a mound. One source suggests that this was a place of honour⁶⁷. The case for the unaffordability of a grave marker is thin, as he had nine children and as a ‘local hero’ a subscription for a grave marker would easily have been raised. The usual reasons for an isolated burial do not apply⁶⁸.

Why was there no grave marker from 1868 until 1940, and what prompted the 1940 oak grave marker?

It is known only that Brigadier-General Burrowes, living in Selborne and retired, sponsored the erection of the first oak grave marker in 1940, but not why, nor why Newland’s name was excluded from it.

Where exactly does John Newland rest?

During the 1990 work to cut the Selborne Great Yew to a stump the gravestone was removed and replaced in the same spot but facing east⁶⁹. Because the original orientation is not known it is no longer clear where John Newland lies exactly in relation to the stone, but we can assume safely that either his head or his feet are proximate to it.

⁶⁵ <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/mobbing-and-rioting> “An important distinction between mobbing and other crimes of disorder is that the former requires a common purpose”

⁶⁶ NEWLAND, op.cit., 143

⁶⁷ Hampshire Archives Trust, op cit.

⁶⁸ Isolated burial was sometimes due to not being baptised, criminality, death from an infectious disease such as cholera, suicide, or doubts over identity.

⁶⁹ ANDERSON, op. cit.

The Future of the Grave Markers

Newland's grave marker at St Mary's Selborne enjoys Grade I curtilage listing by virtue of being within the curtilage of St Mary's Church (Grade I listed). Gilbert White's grave marker and the war memorial, also both within the curtilage, nevertheless are each listed Grade II separately.

An application to Historic England to have the grave marker listed was considered but Historic England currently has an enfeebled mandate and will only consider listing assets that are under demonstrable threat and not those of historic value, such as John Newland's grave, nor the oak marker at Farnham Maltings. However, both are currently in good stewardship and are not under threat, and both unusually enjoy the benefits of curtilage listing – the Grade I curtilage of St Mary's Church in Selborne, and the Grade I curtilage of Willmer House (Farnham Maltings) in Farnham.



St Mary's, Selborne. 'The Trumpeter' grave marker is circled, close to the overgrown yew stump.



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