

Places along the Canal – Newport

NEWPORT, a parish, post, and market town in South Bradford hundred, county Salop, 8 miles N.E. of Wellington, 11½ S.W. of Stafford, and 19 E. by N. of Shrewsbury. It is a station on the Shropshire Union railway. The town, which is situated on the Shrewsbury canal and the river Strine, near the Roman road, Watling-street, is a polling and petty sessions town. It formerly belonged to the Audleys, and Lords Newport, and gives the title of viscount to Earl Bradford.

It obtained its first charter under Henry I., and had various privileges granted by succeeding sovereigns until the time of Edward VI. The streets are well paved and lighted with gas, and contain many good shops. There are two commercial banks, a savings-bank, gas-works, a mechanics' institute, and ancient market cross, and townhall. In this last building petty sessions are held fortnightly for the Newport division of the hundred, and the county court sits monthly. The poor-law guardians meet once a fortnight at the board-room, in the union poor-house, erected in 1855. The Poor-law Union of Newport comprises 16 parishes or townships, 10 of which are in the county of Salop, and 6 in that of Stafford. The corporation consists of a high steward, deputy steward, two bailiffs, and 28 burgesses.

The principal industries are agricultural implements and machinery works; also turning. In the vicinity are collieries, iron-mines, and limestone quarries, giving occupation to many of the inhabitants of the town. The living is a perpetual curacy in the diocese of Lichfield, value £275, in the patronage of the lord chancellor. The church, dedicated to St. Nicholas, is an ancient structure, formerly belonging to Shrewsbury Abbey. It was alienated by permission of Henry VI, to Thomas Draper, by whom it was made collegiate in 1441. The church, which has a square tower, was repaired in 1838, at a cost of £2,000. The parochial charities produce about £1,760 per annum. There are two sets of almshouses; those known as the town almshouses for four poor females, were originally founded in 1446 by William Glover, and rebuilt in 1836 by voluntary contributions; the other almshouses were founded by William Adams in 1656.

There is a free grammar school, with four exhibitions to the universities; also National, English, and infant schools. Under the provisions of an Act of Parliament, passed in the 4th year of George III, a trust was formed for enclosing 112 acres of waste land, the proceeds to be appropriated to the keeping of the streets, repairs of the market hall and market cross, &c.; also a bridge-trust, formed in 1750, for like purposes. The Independents, Wesleyans, Primitive Methodists, and Roman Catholics, have each a place of worship. At a short distance from the church are Lilleshall Abbey ruins.

Tom Brown, a witty but licentious poet of the 17th century, was a native of this

town. Market days are Saturday for the sale of corn and provisions, and every alternate Tuesday for live stock. Fairs are held on the first Tuesday in February, the Saturday prior to Palm Sunday, 28th May, 27th July, 25th September, and 10th December, principally for live stock.

[Description from *The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland* (1868)]